

Tucson's Canyon Ranch

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen

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Feel like you're worlds away—without even stepping foot on a plane—at Tucson's Canyon Ranch.



About two hours outside of Phoenix awaits a world where the focus of life is shifted from hustling and bustling to slowing down and taking stock of everything needed to live healthy and happy. That place is Tucson's wellness destination of Canyon Ranch. People don't travel to Canyon Ranch from around the globe to simply relax (though there is a whole lot of opportunity to do that, too). Guests of all ages flock to the resort to restore and unwind, grow and learn and, ultimately, transform their lives.

The Canyon Ranch journey begins before guests even arrive at the property. Prior to checking in, guests are contacted by the program advising staff at the resort. At that time, they chat with the advisors regarding which one-on-one activities the guest wants to schedule—from nutrition and exercise physiology consultations to heavenly spa treatments to good-for-you cooking classes. Guests are also invited to fill out a quick optional health assessment if they are interested in meeting with a registered nurse while on property to discuss health-related goals. After the paperwork is complete, the true Canyon Ranch experience kicks in.

While there won't be much loafing around the room (there are far too many nature hikes, spa treatments and informative lectures to enjoy), the accommodations at Canyon Ranch are top notch. (Like any high-end resort, check-in time isn't formally until 3 p.m.; however, Canyon Ranch retreaters are welcome to the property at any time to start their experience and are able to make use of the dining and spa areas.) The warm, earthy palette in the rooms is reminiscent of the vast desert that awaits outdoors, and the super-soft feather bed is similar to the clouds floating in Tucson's bright blue sky. And though flat-screen televisions and WiFi are available in each room, keeping unplugged might just be the biggest indulgence of all.

Daily Activities

Every day, from (even before) sun up to sun down, Canyon Ranch offers life-enhancing daily activities on the hour for guests to take part in. Fitness buffs—or those looking to infuse exercise back into their everyday regime—have dozens of classes and activities to choose from. (Think usuals like Zumba, yoga and Pilates alongside out-of-the-box workouts like Wallyball, On the Ball, which showcases exercises on the stability ball, and H2O Power, an in-water aerobics class.) Though it is important for guests to not overdo it, the fitness classes give them a sampling of what types of workout programs are out there and what they might want to incorporate into their at-home life.

Cycling and hiking are also big components of daily life on the Ranch. Each morning, guests are invited on hikes and biking trips for all levels of expertise—or lack thereof. While some activities take place at the picturesque Ranch, others take adventure-seeking guests to the likes of Mt. Lemmon with a backpack full of snacks, water and more in tow.

Informative lectures also make for hours of intrigue. For those wanting more insight into the wellness-related topics of sleep positions, the joys of sexuality, the importance of joint health and posture and dozens of other areas of interest, several 50-minute lectures occur each day.



Though much of what takes place at Canyon Ranch is part of its all-inclusive program, there are many other services that guests are invited to take part in. A nutrition consultation, for example, will guide a guest on a path of healthy eating, even leaving their appointment with a doable meal plan based on the guest's lifestyle. Likewise, a sit-down with one of the Ranch's expert exercise physiologists will steer guests into a workout plan that will suit their body goals, time restraints and place of exercise (whether it be at home, the gym or outdoors). Those looking for mental, emotional or spiritual guidance also have the opportunity to meet with in-touch advisors to gain understanding and get direction.

The centerpiece of Canyon Ranch would likely be its spa, an 80,000-sq.-ft. complex that offers a blissful escape from everyday life via a laundry list of luxe treatments. From the signature Canyon Ranch massage and a variety of Ayurvedic body treatments to pedicures and facials, there are dozens of spa experiences designed to make guests look and feel their absolute best. (The spa's whirlpool and eucalyptus inhalation room, among other luxury facilities, make a great break between heart-pumping fitness classes and lectures, as well.) One of the spa's most standout treatments is its Watsu experience, during which the therapist uses in-water massage techniques to soften muscles and stretch tissue. Not only does Watsu result in Jell-O-like limbs, but the soft swooshing of the water and gentle dancing motions put guests in an utterly relaxed state.

Eat Well

Hours of working out and exploring the desert by foot or bike are bound to work up one's appetite. Thankfully, Canyon Ranch has more than enough deliciousness to go around. The Ranch shows guests how they can eat healthfully while still giving into a craving once in a while. Guests have the option of taking their meals in the clubhouse dining room, complete with a full-out salad bar for p.m. meals and an omelet station come breakfast time, or Double U Café, a more casual spot where diners can take a seat poolside and enjoy themed eats (like surf and turf or A Taste of Italy).

Not only does Canyon Ranch offer variety—Chilean sea bass on a bed of snap peas and pureed white beans one night and beef tenderloin sided

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with shrimp and a baked potato another—but each menu item is accompanied by nutritional values, including calorie and carb counts. And though alcohol isn't offered at the resort, palate-pleasing elixirs are served each night in the clubhouse. (The minty Almosjito is a favorite.) Heading out for a hike or spending the afternoon exploring Tucson? Meals can also be packaged to-go.

Though there is plenty to see and do at Canyon Ranch, it is equally as important to take time to enjoy the act of doing nothing at all—whether that is soaking up sun at one of the Ranch's three outdoor pools or taking a breather beside an on-property babbling water feature. Even at its most still, Canyon Ranch has plenty to bestow on its lucky guests.

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