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## ACCOMMODATIONS

Posted by: **Jan Ross**

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Desert Landscape

When the temperatures start dropping this fall or winter, it's the perfect time to start planning that trip to Phoenix, Arizona. This incredibly gorgeous and scenic location has the perfect weather in the cooler months of the year. While the desert weather is well into the 100's in the summer, the cool, dry desert weather is absolutely perfect in the fall and winter. Outside is warm enough to swim and relax by the many pools in the area, but cool enough in the evenings to enjoy a

warm fireplace and hot rum toddy. With more than 300 days of sunlight every year, Phoenix and the surrounding areas offers a variety of lovely hotels, resorts, spas, tours and restaurants which will keep you happy and entertained during your stay. Each of the locations where we stayed and visited are within short driving distances of each other.

Start with a couple nights at the **Inn at Eagle Mountain** in nearby Fountain Hills in Scottsdale, one of the many small towns that form a ring around the big city of Phoenix. Tucked away in the saguaro-dotted desert and surrounded by mountains, this resort has a beautiful pool and Jacuzzi, golf course, and gorgeous rooms and suites which all have lovely gas fireplaces to warm your toes on those cool desert evenings. We

really enjoyed our fireplace in the evenings! Spend one morning touring **Taliesin West**, Frank Lloyd Wright's desert architectural masterpiece. The 90-minute tour is fascinating, but make sure you leave time to stroll around the grounds and visit the wonderful, large gift shop. Head into Phoenix for lunch at **Cibo**, a darling little neighborhood bistro. Park on the street and eat outside on the lovely patio – the hot sandwiches are delicious!



Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home.

Your next couple days should be spent at the **Hotel Valley Ho** in old Scottsdale. Designed as a mid-century marvel, the hotel has been renovated to maintain the mid-century vibe but stay lovely and comfortable. You will love the furnishings, music, and decor, which are all true to the mid-century theme. Choose one of the cabana rooms and enjoy being just a few steps from the pool with your own private patio and

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lounge chairs. Have a meal at [Zuzu's](#) on the patio overlooking the pool and enjoy their comfort food-designed menu – I recommend the tomato soup with croutons made of tiny grilled cheese sandwiches!



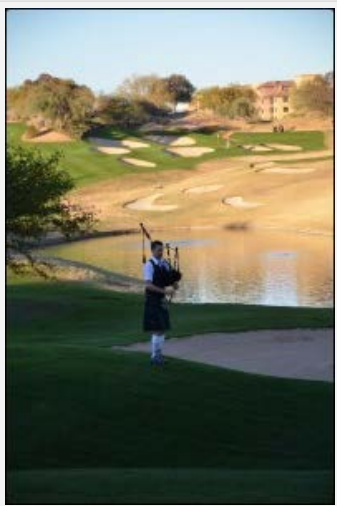
Lobby at the Hotel Valley Ho.

cream as you learn about the history of Old Town Scottsdale. Leave time for shopping because there are tons of great shops [in the area](#) and even a mall where you can find some great deals.

Each hotel is wonderful, but the sublime experience at the [Westin Kierland Resort and Spa](#) in Scottsdale will take you to that perfect relaxation spot. Don't miss the bagpipes playing every evening on the golf course – a nod to Arizona's Scottish heritage. Sign up for a yoga class, take a class in seasonal eating, and then relax with a massage all at the fabulous [Agave Spa](#). Then, rent a private cabana for a day out by the adults-only pool. Turn on the ceiling fan, lie back in your lounge chair, and order lunch with an adult beverage from the attentive waiter. Now that's relaxing! This was one of the best days I spent in Phoenix.

After that wonderful day, get dressed up and head to [Deseo](#) for dinner. Order their distinctive "muddled" cocktail made by combining ingredients, usually fresh herbs and spices, by pressing them with a small wooden muddler that looks like a tiny baseball bat before you add the liquid ingredients. I recommend the mojito grand grande made with fresh lime, mint and grand Marnier. Yum!

You are not quite ready to head home because you have one more fabulous hotel you must visit: the [Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort](#) in Chandler, Arizona. This lovely place is so far removed in atmosphere from the rest of the area, it might as well be on the moon. Drive two miles through the gorgeous, golden desert landscape before you even reach the Native American-inspired building of this resort. You might have to drag yourself away from the incredible view from your balcony, but I promise a trip to the [Aji spa](#) will be worth it. Select one of their signature treatments, then lay out by the pool or unwind in the inside or outside Jacuzzi. The next day, book a horseback riding adventure at the [Koli Equestrian Center](#) and see the incredible desert from horseback. Depending on your horseback riding experience, you may need to book another massage! Be sure to plan dinner at Ko'Sin in the resort and order the incredible Caesar salad and filet mignon – I guarantee you won't be disappointed.



Playing bagpipes at the Westin Kierland Resort.

As you head home on your last day, you may be sorry you didn't plan more time in Phoenix – I know I was. We will just have to plan on heading back to this lovely oasis in the desert – with any luck, that will be sooner rather than later!

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Tags: , Arizona, Arizona Food Tours, Deseo, Hotel Valley Ho, Inn at Eagle Mountain, Phoenix, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass, Taliesin West, Westin Kierland Resort and Spa, Wine Me Dine Me



For twenty years, I worked as a librarian in an elementary school but finally decided to get serious about travel writing and devote all my time to it. Now, I travel the world and write all about it. I can't imagine a more fabulous or fulfilling job. I write a regular travel column for two regional, Central Kentucky magazines and contribute regularly to other magazines and online travel sites, such as The SavvyGal, A Luxury Travel Blog and

The Vacation Gals. I'm an avid reader and stay active with Yoga, Pilates and Zumba classes. My favorite place in the whole world is a beach - any beach. I have been married for 34 years and my husband is my favorite travel companion. I also rely on him for his excellent photography skills. We have two grown children and the best grandson in the world. Slowly but surely, we are visiting all the places we have dreamed about. Hopefully, the next one will be the one you want to read about!

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