

When the snow begins to dust the streets across Chicagoland, Arizona is where Windy City golfers jettison the street slush and their snow shovels for a Sonoran retreat. From the greater Phoenix/Scottsdale area down south to Tucson, great golf is as abundant as sunshine. With nearly 300 days of sunshine per year, this destination tops the country in that category, and provides the perfect escape from Old Man Winter. The sunshine is so good for the soul, not to mention your game.

GOLF AND FUN UNDER THE ARIZONA SUN

by *Dave Weretka*
with *Dave Lockhart*

From the copper and orange-banded mountains to the cactus-dotted deserts, this region is bursting with colors. Arizona golf is a paradise with sunscreen and shorts. In addition to ideal temperatures (without humidity, thank you), the variety of golf courses offers Chicagoans a unique experience that cannot be found in the Midwest.



A selection of tasty dishes from Hash Kitchen.
Credit: MVM Studios



Bloody Marys at Hash Kitchen in Gainey Village.
Credit: Hash Kitchen

Sunrise ... Sunscreen ... Golf ... Let's Eat ... OK, so we took some liberties with country music star Luke Bryan's song, but you get the picture.

In addition to world-class golf courses, the Southwest cuisine available in the area is unmatched with dining options galore.

For breakfast, **Hash Kitchen** is a must, with many creative options that we're sure that you haven't seen or sampled before. They have a build your own Bloody Mary Bar that includes over 50 craft toppings. With six locations, you're bound to find yourself around the corner from one of them. Don't forget to try the Cannoli Donuts or the Bacon Beignets ... eat here and you'll be able to skip a

meal later in the day.
<https://www.hashkitchen.com/>



Hole 3 on the Short Course at Mountain Shadows.
Credit: Dave Sansom Photography



The Short Course at Mountain Shadows.
Credit: Mountain Shadows

The **Canopy by Hilton** hotel just opened earlier this year in Old Scottsdale, and has a rooftop lounge complete with a secluded swimming pool that includes views of Old Scottsdale and Camelback Mountain. An adult beverage or two at sunset would be a perfect way to finish up the day.
<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/phxotpy-canopy-scottsdale-old-town>

Mountain Shadows Resort is a boutique hotel at the base of Camelback Mountain. The hotel was reintroduced in 2017 after being rebuilt from the ground up. The resort has a very cool alternative to most of the big championship courses found in The Valley of the Sun. **The Short Course** is an 18-hole par-3 course. Don't think of this as a pitch and putt, as some holes stretch out to nearly 200 yards. Originally designed in 1961, the course is a refreshing encounter, and a treat to walk and smell the flowers. Challenging for seasoned golfers that want to hone their short game, and fun for beginners and resort guests alike.

Dining options on site, including **Hearth '61**, serve savory dishes with the chef's ingredient-driven menu creations. The Beef Tenderloin with a side of truffled mash was one of the finest meals we have ever savored. It's a top-notch experience, from the craft cocktails and appetizers in the swanky bar, the modern cuisine, and all the way to the desserts. Mountain Shadows is offering a Stay & Play Unlimited Golf Package from now until December 18, 2020. Enjoy unlimited golf for up to two adults per stay and welcome drinks upon arrival.

Tee times must be reserved between check-in and check-out. This is really a "tee-rrific" package that also includes free Ping golf club rentals and golf cart.

www.mountainshadows.com.

Home of the PGA Tour's Waste Management Phoenix Open, **TPC - The Stadium Course** is high on every golfer's list when they come to town. The course that hosts 200,000 daily spectators during the WMO will be a little quieter when it's played during 2021 if attendees are limited during the tournament. The cool part is that this is one of the few courses on Tour that welcome the general public to play. And believe me, this is a real treat to tee it here up with long views of the mountains and beautiful water features. Tom Weiskopf and his team carved out a real beauty in the heart of the valley that was completely renovated in 2014. It's a track that will test all of the shots in your bag.

TPC - The Champions course across the street holds its own against the Stadium Course, and still hosts the final stage of PGA Tour Champions Tour Q-School, which says a lot about the pedigree of this course.

Assistant General Manager Doug Hodge tells folks they should give this place a look, "With the two different courses the facility offers two distinct price points. The Champions course is a bit of a hidden gem and offers some great shot values."



TPC Scottsdale Hole 16.
Credit: An Pham for Experience Scottsdale



Hole #3 on the Stadium Course at TPC Scottsdale.
Credit: Chip Henderson.



Hole 12 on the Talon course at Grayhawk Golf Club.
Credit: Bill Hornstein.



Hole 8 on the Raptor course at Grayhawk Golf Club.
Credit: Bill Hornstein.

Grayhawk Golf Club is a rugged, pure 36 holes of desert golf at its finest. Nearly every hole on both courses is in its own corridor, assuring a relaxing peaceful round amongst nature. Phil Mickelson made his home here early on in his career. He still has the Grayhawk logo on his bag to this day. The facility also includes **Phil's Grill**, a place for relaxation, food, and libations surrounded by some cool Lefty memorabilia and vintage photographs from his career in the game. **The Talon Course** was designed by two-time Major Champion David Graham and architect Gary Panks. This layout has routinely been on *Golf Magazine's* significant list of "top 100 courses you can play in the U.S."

The Raptor Course was laid out by the award-winning architect Tom Fazio, and opened for play in 1994. This track is also on many prestigious lists and is a must-play for any avid player. They will also be hosting the NCAA Division 1 Men's and Women's Championships for two consecutive years starting in 2021. Travis Mccutchan, Grayhawk's Head Professional, advises that putting is the key to a successful round. "The Raptor Course will play three to four shots tougher than the Talon. The greens are very challenging, and offer two to three tiers. You've got to make sure you hit the right tier. Everything moves away from Pinnacle Peak toward the valley."

The Westin Kierland Resort offers 27 holes of resort golf designed by Scott Miller.

Director of Golf Nancy Dickens says, "Whether you're a single digit handicapper or a 30 handicapper, you're going to enjoy the golf experience. It's fun, and anybody can play the course. It always has a great vibe and is in great condition."

Kierland have always been early adopters in alternative means of transportation. Yes, they have regular golf carts, and you can walk at certain times, but you really should try something away from the norm. I mean after all you are on vacation! They call their alternative options their "Quintet of Fun." This includes Golfboards, Golf Bikes, Segways, Turf Riders, and the new four-wheeler option from Sweden called the Elwee. Think an ATV equipped for the links!
www.kierlandresort.com

The Valley of the Sun is truly golf heaven with its plethora of incredible scenic golf courses, abundant sunshine, fantastic cuisine, friendly people, and clean comfortable hotels. If you've been here before, this is the perfect time to return, and if you haven't, then what are you waiting for!!!!???

For more info on everything Scottsdale, please visit www.experiencescottsdale.com



Acacia Course at The Westin Kierland Golf Club at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa.
Credit: The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa



Quintet of Fun