

DRIVING



ARIZONA

THINKING
South

PLANNING YOUR NEXT GOLF TRIP COULD START ON INTERSTATE-19



Photo Courtesy of Tubac Golf Resort

Tubac Par-3 18th Hole

In a state so rich in championship golf, playing them all would be a lifelong marathon, a dream worthy of any avid golfer. From the highest elevations to the Valley, the panoramic vistas, manicured grounds and country club ambience make Arizona golf the premier destination.

One case in point is the “old west” south of Tucson, on Interstate Highway 19, where the Santa Rita Mountain range serves as border and higher elevations offer slightly cooler temperatures. The small towns of Southern Arizona have a certain charm. Just 25 minutes south of Tucson is Green Valley, the start of your drive. This coined retirement town is home to a handful of challenging, affordable courses including San Ignacio and Canoa Ranch. A bit farther south of Green Valley are two of Southern Arizona’s most talked-about properties—the Tubac Golf Resort and Rio Rico. Tubac, home to a U.S. Open qualifier in the movie “Tin Cup,” is a classic Red Lawrence-designed course that winds its way around the lush turf of the Santa Cruz River Valley. Rio Rico is a classic Robert Trent Jones, Sr. layout with a \$2.5 million renovation that has given the resort a modern, pristine look.

Most of Southern Arizona is at a lofty elevation of 4,000 feet. This means golfers of any ability can watch their drives sail through the lighter air for an extra few yards.

Book your trip yourself, or see the included properties for packages, but don’t let the golf be your only distraction. Many of the properties offer alternative activities, including spa retreats, horseback trails, casual shopping and guided trips to Mexico.

So when it comes to “Driving Arizona,” let this profile be the start of get-away vacation.

Canoa Ranch Golf Club



One of the newer courses in the area, Canoa Ranch Golf Club has gained many accolades. Designed by the team of Lee Schmidt and Brian Curley, Canoa Ranch GC features six par 3s in a championship track that measures 6,549 yards at par 70. “It’s all about grass here,” said Dave Powell, General Manager and Director of Golf at Canoa Ranch. “We are using Chaparral ryegrass with some Kentucky bluegrass in the fairways all year, keeping us green year round, without overseeding. And on the greens it’s a bentgrass.”



Tony Roberts

Panoramic vistas at San Ignacio (right) and Rio Rico Resort (above) demonstrate architectural excellence. And golf is just part of the total picture: Amenities include spa retreats, horseback riding, shopping and guided trips to Mexico.

San Ignacio Golf Club

Immediately adjacent to the Inn at San Ignacio with the same panoramic views of Elephant Butte and the Santa Rita Mountains is an Arthur Hills design measuring more than 6,700 yards from the tournament tees. And if you can manage a par or better on the challenging 535-yard par-5 8th hole, which features a narrow landing area bordered by out of bounds and a ravine, then the rest is downhill, literally. With Bermuda fairways, Penncross bent-grass greens, four lakes, and numerous small mounds, the course provides challenges for players of all levels. Landing areas are clear but tight, and the course design will reward good course management and shot-making.

No. 13 at San Ignacio Golf Club



Tony Roberts

Besides the manicured look, the ambience of the Santa Rita Mountains sets the tone for relaxation. After the round the 19th hole is The Grill on the Green, in a clubhouse that has recently been extended 3,000 square feet

The unique course design spotlights two signature holes that challenge the skills of every player and incorporates the natural beauty of the surrounding community. The 15th hole features a vintage windmill, which once used to pump water for cattle but now adds character and an “old west” feel to the location. The 18th hole is an “island green,” surrounded by water.

Rio Rico Resort & Country Club

Capturing the beauty of the high Sonoran Desert with its mesquite, pine, cottonwood and weeping willow tree-

lined fairways is Rio Rico Resort. This 18-hole championship Robert Trent Jones, Sr. golf course, built in 1971, is nestled in the beautiful Santa Cruz Valley nearly 4,000 feet above sea level, affording spectacular views and the finest golf in the Southwest. Lush year-round ryegrass fairways and bent-grass greens offer the finest playing experience possible.

Located in one of the few remaining environmentally pristine areas of Arizona surrounded by mountains, many species of birds and other wildlife can be seen on the course throughout the year. It is one of the few courses in the United States selected to host the first stage of PGA Tour qualifier. Summer temperatures are 10-15 degrees cooler than Phoenix or Tucson with winter temperatures being comparable. After a round, or two, enjoy the Sunset Bar & Grill’s full service bar and casual cuisine.



South Tucson

Head south on I-19 for a whole lot of Arizona green.

- Canoa Ranch Golf Club
- San Ignacio Golf Club
- Tubac Golf Resort
- Rio Rico Resort

Tubac Golf Resort

Changes have taken place at Tubac Golf Resort. Relaxation is the word. Carefully blended are conveniences within the 100-acre historic Otero Ranch surrounded by both the Santa Rita and Tumacacori Mountain Ranges. Established in 1789, the ranch was the first Spanish land grant in the Southwest received by Don Toribio de Otero, a descendent of Spanish nobility.

In 1959 a group of Tucson businessmen and the late entertainer Bing Crosby acquired the Otero Family Ranch and began the operation which today is Tubac Golf Resort. The presence of generations of Oteros can still be felt throughout the entire property. The original hacienda houses meeting rooms and a honeymoon suite. The old stables, hayloft and bunkhouse are now the restaurant, lounge and business office. Golf carts can be found in the family dairy barn next to massive vacant grain silos.

The jewel of Tubac Golf Resort is the mature, championship, Red Lawrence–designed golf course that is immaculately kept and challenging for all levels. Golf course renovations include a new par 3 featuring an island green which can be viewed from the Stables Restaurant’s dining room and patio. A remodel of the 9th hole includes a large lake, an acre in size, hugging the left side of the fairway. In addition, a complete renovation took place with the tees, bunkers, greens and cart paths of all 18 holes. The Resort practice range was reviewed as one of the best in the state by local peers.

Movie fans of golf’s “Tin Cup,” a romantic comedy set in the world of professional golf, will remember Tubac Golf Resort. A large portion of the movie was filmed there in

STAY & PLAY

Canoa Ranch Golf Club

Green Valley
6,549 yards, par 70
Lee Schmidt and Brian Curley, designers (2003)
520-393-1966
canoaranchgolfclub.com
Directions: 25 minutes south of Tucson, I-19 south, exit 56

Rio Rico Resort & Country Club

Rio Rico
7,119 yards, par 72
Robert Trent Jones, Sr. designer (1971)
800-288-4746
rioricoresort.com
Directions: 45 minutes south of Tucson, I-19 south, exit 17

San Ignacio Golf Club

Green Valley
6,704 yards, par 72
Arthur Hills designer (1989)
888-450-5444
Innatsanignacio.com
Directions: 25 minutes south of Tucson, I-19 south, exit 56

Tubac Golf Resort

Tubac
5,915 yards, par 68
Red Lawrence designer (1959)
800-848-7893
tubacgolfresort.com
Directions: I-19 south 33 miles, exit 40

Additional Tracks

- Canoa Hills, Green Valley**
(520) 648-1880
- Del Lago GC, Vail**
(520) 647-1100
- Haven GC, Green Valley**
(520) 625-4281
- Kino Springs CC, Nogales**
(520) 287-8701
- Palo Duro Creek GC, Nogales**
(520) 761-4394
- Quail Creek CC, Green Valley**
(520) 393-5802
- Santa Rita GC, Corona del Tucson**
(520) 762-5620
- Torres Blancas GC, Green Valley**
(520) 625-5200

