

Southwest weekend

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1. Real-deal sushi bar

It's easy to be skeptical of a sushi restaurant in a strip mall, except that all the chefs at **Tanuki Sushi Bar & Garden** are from Okinawa. Specials and additions to the menu are handwritten on sheets of paper and taped willy-nilly to the walls; the shelves are stuffed with plastic sumo wrestlers and ceramic geishas. If the menu gets confusing, just ask waiters for a recommendation. \$\$; closed Sun; 1221 E. Fry Blvd.; 520/459-6853.

BY DINA MISHEV | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA M. GÓMEZ

Arizona day trip Sierra Vista

Why go now: This high-altitude town is a great way to escape the heat and enjoy incredible ethnic eats. **Bonus:** In late summer, you'll catch the area's second wave of wildflowers (if rainfall cooperates). **Population:** 45,908 **Distance from Tucson:** 72 miles **Main drag:** Fry Boulevard **Outside influence:** This small community experienced a growth spurt during World War II, when U.S. troops were stationed at nearby Fort Huachuca. Thanks (most likely) to the time soldiers spent overseas, it's now a hotbed for German, Japanese, and other ethnic restaurants. **Number of restaurants:** 40 **German restaurants:** 4 **Sushi bars:** 4 **Slice of history:** The Military Intelligence Museum at Fort Huachuca (\$2 donation suggested; State 90 at Fry Blvd.; 520/533-5736; be prepared to show vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and ID) has a 12-foot section of the Berlin Wall on display. **Spend the night:** At Casa de San Pedro (from \$160; bedandbirds.com), a B&B with never-ending views.

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Southwest Day trip



2. Pretzel time

At the second-generation German restaurant **Bobke's Bread Basket**, the pretzel rolls are usually gone by noon. Peter Bobke starts making cakes, pastries, and breads for the next day at 10:30 p.m., using recipes his father-in-law developed during his years in Germany. Go for great schnitzel, bratwurst, *brötchen* (warm, doughy rolls), and pastries. \$; 355 W. Wilcox Dr.; 520/458-8580.



Getting to Sierra Vista

From I-10, take State 90 south and follow it for about 27 miles; Sierra Vista is right off the highway.

3. Sierra Vista's second spring

Ramsey Canyon Preserve is located where the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts and the Sierra Madre and Rocky Mountains merge. The result? An ecosystem even Darwin would have appreciated. To make the most of the wildflowers, hike up to higher elevations: The switchbacking Hamburg Trail takes you from the preserve into the Coronado National Forest. \$5, ages 16 and under free; 27 Ramsey Canyon Rd.; 520/378-2785.



Take it home

This area may not look like Burgundy, France, but the dirt is almost identical. When a soil scientist discovered that fact in the 1970s, he set about planting vineyards—and in 1983, **Sonoita Vineyards** (290 Elgin Canelo Rd., Elgin; sonoitavineyards.com) opened. Whether you drive 45 minutes from Sierra Vista to the winery or hit **Cactus Spirits** in town (4273 S. State 92; 520/803-9292), pick up a bottle of MeCaSah, a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah.



4. Authentic Vietnamese

The decor at the **Peacock Vietnamese Restaurant** is kitschy at best, but the food is delicious. Standouts are the *pho bò* (beef noodle soup), *gỏi cuốn* (a summer roll), and *bún bò giò heo* (hot and spicy beef and pork soup). If you're lucky, chef and co-owner Hiep Wingate will deliver your meal herself, hanging out long enough to share tales of her initial shock at life in the States. \$\$; 80 S. Carmichael Ave.; 520/459-0095.

More things to do in and around Sierra Vista

SEE ALL THE WAY TO MEXICO

Drive to the top of Montezuma Pass (6,575 feet) in **Coronado National Memorial**, and hike the easy 0.8-mile Coronado Peak Trail. Stop along the way to take in views of the San Pedro and San Rafael Valleys and, yes, even Mexico. 4101 E. Montezuma Canyon Rd., Hereford; nps.gov/coro

TRAVEL BACK 11,000 YEARS

The **Murray Springs Clovis Site** gives you a glimpse of how the Clovis people—nomads who were the area's first inhabitants 11,000 years ago—lived and what life was like in the late ice age. 1.1 miles north on Moson Rd. from State 90; 520/439-6400.

EXPLORE A HIDDEN CAVE

Kartchner Caverns State Park was kept secret from the state for 10 years by the original landowner. See Gothic-looking stalactites, stalagmites, and spires, and you'll understand why. The state caps visitors and allows only guided tours, so buy tickets in advance. Tours from \$12 (plus \$5 per vehicle); State 90, Benson; 520/586-2283.



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