

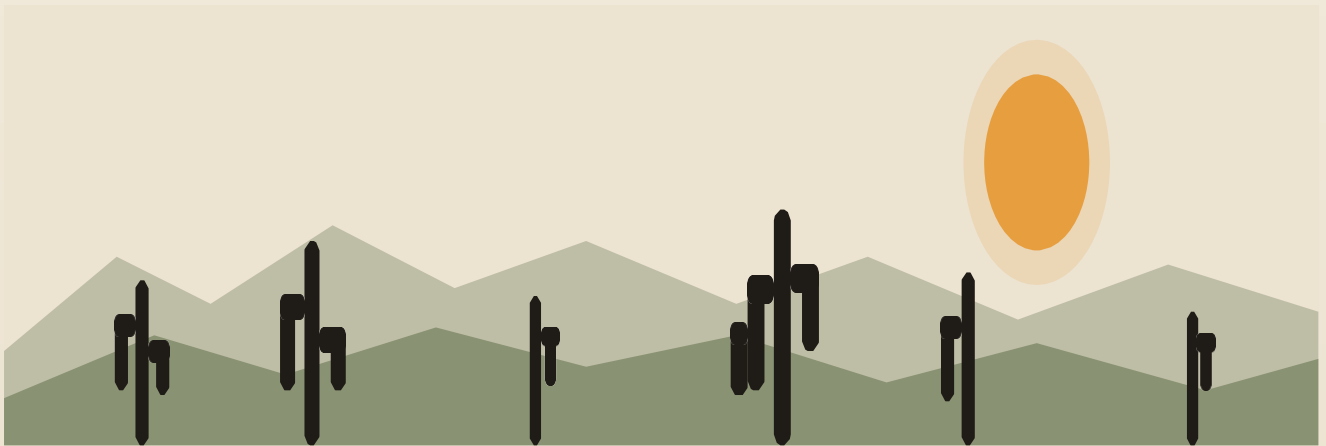


2026 NATIONAL PFAS CONFERENCE · LOCAL GUIDE

# Welcome to *Tucson.*

*A UNESCO City of Gastronomy — the first in the United States — with a deep Sonoran food tradition, a thriving craft beverage scene, and iconic desert landscapes within a short drive of downtown.*

◆ RESTAURANTS   ◆ COFFEE & COCKTAILS   ◆ MUSIC   ◆ ATTRACTIONS



**\$0** SUN LINK STREETCAR  
Always free for everyone

**10<sup>m</sup>** FREQUENCY  
Every 10–15 min, weekdays

**2,400<sup>ft</sup>** ELEVATION  
Hydrate generously

**MST** TIME ZONE  
No daylight saving

# Restaurants

Quick lunches between sessions, networking dinners, and one historic landmark you can't leave Tucson without trying.

## Quick Lunch & Casual

5 PICKS

CASUAL · DOWNTOWN


### Cup Cafe

 [311 E Congress St](#)

Inside the historic Hotel Congress. Solid American menu, reliable service, patio seating, and central enough to get back to the conference quickly.

TOP-RATED · WEEKDAYS

### Raptor Canyon Cafe

 [75 E Pennington St](#)

Tucson's highest-rated lunch counter. Huge menu, exceptional quality, family-run. Closed weekends — book it for weekday lunch breaks.

BRUNCH · COURTYARD · \$\$

### Coronet Cafe

 [353 S Meyer Ave](#)

Cozy European-style café with Sonoran-inflected breakfast/lunch and a lovely courtyard. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

BRUNCH · \$\$

### Café à La C'Art

 [150 N Main Ave](#)

Tucked behind the Tucson Museum of Art, this brunch/lunch spot has a beautiful courtyard and is perfect for informal daytime meetings.

COUNTER-SERVICE · VEGAN-FRIENDLY · \$\$

## The Monica

 [40 E Congress St](#)

Counter-service with a wide menu — breakfast through pizza and burgers — strong vegan and vegetarian options, and plenty of seating for quick group lunches.

## Dinner

7 PICKS

EDITOR'S PICK · HISTORIC LANDMARK

## El Charro Café *Downtown*

 [311 N Court Ave](#)

The oldest continuously family-operated Mexican restaurant in the United States — established 1922 in an adobe homestead built in 1896. The signature carne seca (sun-dried beef cured on the roof) is unlike anything you'll taste elsewhere and is the reason this restaurant exists on every serious Tucson food list. Run today by descendants of founder Monica Flin, with rambling dining rooms scattered across the original home, an enclosed porch, and a sunny patio. Reservations strongly recommended — and yes, this is the historic original; Charro Steak & Del Rey is its newer sister restaurant on Broadway.

ITALIAN · RESERVATIONS

## Perche' No Italian Bistro

 [46 W Congress St](#)

A polished, intimate Italian bistro with handmade pastas, a famously rich lobster bisque, and butternut squash ravioli that regulars order on autopilot. Strong wine list, attentive service, and a Little-Italy feel that punches above its block.

AMERICAN · LATE-NIGHT

## Elliott's On Congress

 [135 E Congress St](#)

Cocktail-forward American comfort food in a friendly, neighborhood-bar feel — open until 2 AM nightly, making it one of downtown's best late-night picks. Duck sliders, cod tacos, and the tuxedo cheesecake are signatures.

AMERICAN · ICE CREAM · \$\$

## HUB Restaurant & Ice Creamery

 [266 E Congress St](#)

A buzzy, lively downtown anchor known for elevated American comfort food — prime rib fries are a signature — and one of Tucson's most beloved house-made ice cream programs. Order the lavender or cornbread ice cream for the full experience.

BRUNCH · WEEKEND RESERVATIONS


## Nook

 [1 E Congress St](#)

New American breakfast and brunch institution with fluffy pancakes, the cult-favorite Godfather Benedict, cinnamon roll griddle cakes, and steak and eggs that regulars rave about. Reservations recommended for weekend brunch.

STEAKHOUSE · GROUPS · \$\$\$

## Charro Steak & Del Rey

 [188 E Broadway Blvd](#)

The El Charro family's upscale steakhouse sibling — a striking two-room dining space serving prime steaks, lobster queso fundido, Sonoran-influenced sides, and an extensive Cadillac-margarita lineup. Excellent for polished group or client dinners.

LIVE MUSIC · VEGAN-FRIENDLY

## JoJo's Restaurant

 [76 W Washington St](#)

A relaxed courtyard with live music and a large, vegan-friendly menu — a real Tucson vibe for an evening out.


## Vegetarian & Vegan

DEDICATED

*Dedicated kitchens — not just "has options."*

PLANT-BASED · AWARD-WINNING

## Tumerico

 [2526 E 6th St](#)

Award-winning, plant-based Sonoran and Latin food. A daily rotating menu means repeat visits are worth it. Carnivores often leave stunned at how good plant-based food can taste.

02 · DRINK

## Coffee & Bars

*Early-morning roasters for laptop work, after-session cocktail bars, and one of the country's most underrated craft drink scenes.*


## Coffee Shops

7 PICKS

*For early meetings, laptop work, and between-session breaks.*

SPECIALTY ROASTER

## Presta Coffee Roasters

 [501 E 9th St](#)

Arguably Tucson's best roaster; also has a location inside Mercado San Agustín. Try the lavender latte with honey.

SEASONAL · DOWNTOWN

## Talega Coffee Roasters

 [236 S Scott Ave](#)

Small, precise, very friendly. Excellent seasonal Sonoran-inspired drinks — try the Pica Latte. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

COZY · PASTRIES

## Harley's Coffee Co.

 [316 E 6th St](#)

Local favorite on the north edge of downtown — roomy seating, strong seasonal menu, churro banana bread worth grabbing early.

COFFEE + MARKET

## Sonoran House

 [1610 N Tucson Blvd](#)

Coffee plus a curated small-maker marketplace; a quick stop with real character.

RELIABLE · NEAR CAMPUS

## Panera Bread

 [845 N Park Ave, Suite 125](#)

A familiar fallback near the University of Arizona campus when you need fast Wi-Fi, a reliable bagel, and a predictable cup.

TEA HOUSE · NEAR CAMPUS


## Scented Leaf Tea House

 [943 E University Blvd #165](#)

A loose-leaf-forward tea house on Main Gate Square. Solid choice for an afternoon switch from coffee to something gentler.

CAMPUS · QUIET

## Catalyst Café

 [1230 N Cherry Ave, BSRL Building](#)


Tucked inside the BSRL Building on the University of Arizona campus — handy for a quick coffee between conference sessions.

## Bars

8 PICKS

RIALTO THEATRE · THU–SAT


## R Bar

 [350 E Congress St #110](#)

Tucked behind the Rialto Theatre down a little alley, R Bar is the Rialto's own direct subsidiary — every drink funds the upkeep and programming of one of Tucson's most beloved historic venues. The all-red interior glows under a backlit mural of iconic Tucson scenes (yes, including Kitt Peak Observatory). House shot + tall beer specials at \$6.

JAZZ LISTENING CLUB · MEZCAL

## The Century Room

 [311 E Congress St #1811](#)

Adjacent to the legendary Hotel Congress — a proper jazz listening club, owned and curated by a world-class jazz musician who modelled the space after Manhattan's Village Vanguard. Intimate sets from nationally touring acts, excellent small plates, mezcal-leaning bar that takes its desert influences seriously.

GIN BAR · OPEN LATE


## Juniper

 [222 E Congress St](#)

Downtown's only dedicated gin bar, in the historic former home of Iron John's Brewing. The wall behind the bar holds an impressive lineup of gins, transformed nightly into elaborate G&Ts, martinis, and creative negronis. Open until 2 AM on weekends — a rarity downtown.

SPEAKEASY · BESPOKE COCKTAILS


## Prohibición

 [124 E Broadway Blvd · downstairs from Sonora Moonshine](#)

If you can find the entrance, you're in. A somewhat-hidden speakeasy beneath Sonora Moonshine where bartender Kelly Lemons builds bespoke cocktails on request — just describe what you like (smoky, citrus-forward, herbal, sweet) and he handles the rest. Drinks run \$17–20; care behind them justifies it.

SUBTERRANEAN · COCKTAIL-FORWARD

## Snake & Barrel

 [118 E Congress St · downstairs from Batch](#)

The subterranean sibling of Batch (the donut-and-whiskey bar upstairs). Its own entrance, a wider selection of unusual spirits, and a cocktail-forward menu built for unwinding rather than partying. Comfortable couches, low lighting, off-menu requests welcome.

CRAFT COCKTAILS · PATIO

## Owls Club

 [236 S Scott Ave](#)

A historic former funeral home turned sophisticated cocktail bar — high ceilings, dim ambient lighting, an outdoor patio. The cocktail program leans creative (house bartenders aren't afraid of unusual ingredients), and the music programming pulls a loyal regular crowd.

OLD WORLD SPEAKEASY · WED–SAT

## Nightjar

 [347 S Meyer Ave](#)

Behind an unassuming wooden door in the Coronet Cafe courtyard, Nightjar is an Old World–style speakeasy with hand-painted artwork, a beautiful wooden bar, and a courtyard that opens to the southwest sky. Small, moody, aggressively atmospheric — the kind of place that rewards a slow drink and a long conversation.

AGAVE-FOCUSED · WED–SAT

## Bar Crisol

 [196 W Simpson St](#)

The most beautiful space on this list — a historic building dressed in agave art, vintage maps, and a collection of antique typewriters. By day it's Exo Cafe; by night Wed–Sat it transforms into Bar Crisol, a serious agave-focused bar with mezcals and tequilas the owner sources on trips into Mexico. Thursday agave tastings are the move.

### 03 · LISTEN

## Live Music & Late Night

*A surprisingly deep music calendar for a mid-size city — from historic Congress Street rooms to converted chapels.*

HISTORIC MID-SIZE · ~1,200 CAP

## Rialto Theatre

 [318 E Congress St](#)

Historic mid-size venue with touring acts nearly every night — check the calendar before you arrive in town.

CLUB-SIZED · ECLECTIC

## 191 Toole

 [191 E Toole Ave](#)

Smaller club-sized sibling to the Rialto — indie, metal, country, comedy across the calendar.

OPEN UNTIL 2 AM · NIGHTLY

## The Rock

 [136 N Park Ave](#)

Open nightly until 2 AM — live music, pool tables, and comedy shows for keeping the evening going past closing time elsewhere.

RETRO LOUNGE · KARAOKE NIGHTS


## The Jackrabbit Lounge

 [2000 N Oracle Rd](#)

'70s-lounge aesthetic with live music, karaoke, and trivia nights — loose, friendly, ideal for off-the-clock team drinks.

CONVERTED CHAPEL · JAZZ · FOLK

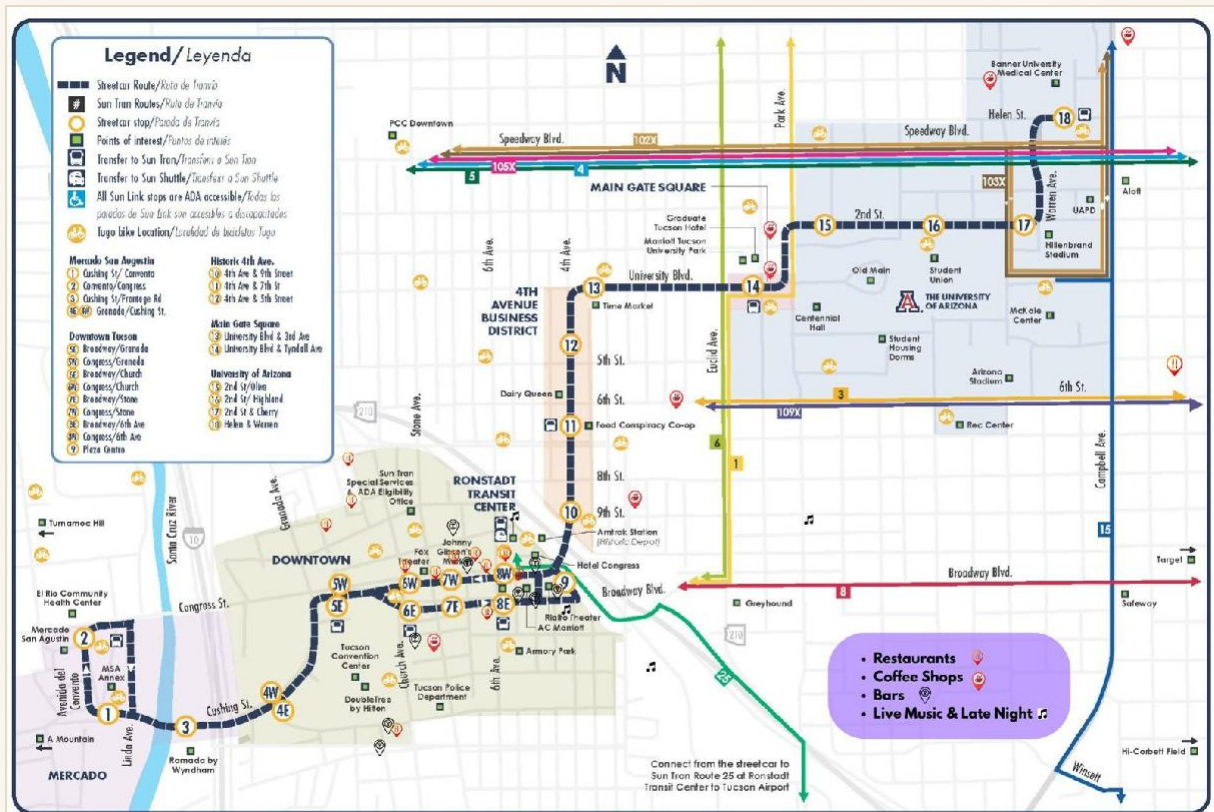
## La Rosa

 [800 N Country Club Rd](#)

A converted chapel with outstanding acoustics — hosts jazz, folk, and indie acts. A genuine "must-see the space" venue, regardless of who's playing.

# The Streetcar Map

Every venue in this guide is plotted along the free Sun Link Streetcar corridor — restaurants, coffee shops, bars, and live music venues — running from the Mercado District through downtown and 4th Avenue to the University of Arizona.



**RESTAURANTS**  
 Dining picks from quick lunch to upscale dinner

**COFFEE SHOPS**  
 Roasters, cafés, and tea houses

**BARS**  
 Cocktail bars, speakeasies, agave-focused

**LIVE MUSIC**  
 Concert venues & late-night spots

# Attractions & Things to Do

*A current exhibition directly relevant to PFAS research, half-day escapes, hour-long museum stops, and one of the most distinctive desert ecosystems anywhere on Earth.*

## Must-See Tucson

IF YOU ONLY HAVE HALF A DAY

OUTDOOR · PLAN 3–4 HOURS

### Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

 [2021 N Kinney Rd](#)

Don't let the word "museum" fool you — this is a sprawling, mostly-outdoor zoo, botanical garden, and aquarium rolled into one, introducing you to every creature and plant of the Sonoran Desert. Wear comfortable shoes; don't miss the hummingbird aviary. Open daily 8:30 AM–5 PM.

NATIONAL PARK · \$25 / VEHICLE


### Saguaro National Park

 [East & West districts of Tucson](#)

Two districts of cactus-studded desert bookend the city, each with scenic loop drives, accessible trails, and photo stops at every turn. Sunrise and late afternoon light are magical; a \$25 vehicle pass is good for both districts for a full week.

TRAM + TRAILS · 2–3 HOURS

### Sabino Canyon Recreation Area

 [5700 N Sabino Canyon Rd](#)

A dramatic desert canyon just northeast of town, threaded with creeks, towering saguaros, and easy-to-moderate trails. Ride the narrated electric tram up and hike back down — the easiest way to experience the canyon in a couple of hours.

ESSENTIAL FOR PFAS ATTENDEES · THROUGH JUNE 2026

## Living With Injury *at MOCA Tucson*

265 S Church Ave · MOCA Tucson, East Wing Galleries

An exhibition that belongs at the top of every PFAS attendee's list. *Living With Injury* chronicles one of the earliest and most successful environmental justice movements in the United States — Tucson's predominantly Mexican American southside community, who in the 1980s organized against defense-industry pollution that had contaminated their aquifer with TCE and other groundwater contaminants. The exhibition marks the 40th anniversary of **Tucsonans for a Clean Environment (TCE)** and is curated by Dr. Sunaura Taylor (author of *Disabled Ecologies: Lessons from a Wounded Desert*) and Alisha Vasquez, with work by artists and researchers Alex! Jimenez, Franc Contreras, and Dr. Denise Moreno Ramírez. The historical parallels to contemporary PFAS contamination — same defense-industry sources, same patterns of community impact, same questions of who bears the burden — make this an unusually direct piece of context for the work you do.

**Visit details:** Open Wednesday–Sunday, 11 AM–6 PM · Free with admission · Walking distance from downtown hotels and Streetcar Stop 5W/5E · [Exhibition page](#) →

LATIN AMERICAN · CONTEMPORARY

### Tucson Museum of Art

 [140 N Main Ave](#)

A compact, thoughtfully curated downtown museum with strong Latin American and contemporary collections, plus a lovely outdoor sculpture garden. An easy hour or two between sessions — steps from some of the best lunch spots in this guide. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

SCIENCE · PLANETARIUM · UA CAMPUS


## Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium

 [1601 E University Blvd](#)

On the University of Arizona campus — this planetarium and science center is especially strong on space and Earth science, a natural fit for a science-minded audience. The planetarium shows are a highlight. Closed Mondays.

HIDDEN GEM · UNEXPECTED


## The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

 [4455 E Camp Lowell Dr](#)

A surprisingly enchanting museum of tiny worlds — dollhouses, dioramas, and fantasy scenes spanning centuries and cultures. Leave more time than you think you'll need; there's more here than meets the eye.

RESEARCH FACILITY · 45 MIN NORTH

## Biosphere 2

 [32540 S Biosphere Rd, Oracle](#)

The famous 1990s experimental enclosed ecosystem, now a University of Arizona research facility open for self-guided tours (about 45 minutes north of town). Walking through rainforest, ocean, and desert biomes under glass is an experience you can't get anywhere else — especially meaningful for an environmental science audience.

NICHE · AUTO ENTHUSIASTS

## Rolling Thru Time

 [4750 S Park Ave](#)

A massive 77,000-square-foot private automobile museum on the south side — heavy on Ford Model Ts, muscle cars, and vintage fire trucks. Niche, but for car enthusiasts, a real treasure. Open Thursday through Saturday.

## PRACTICAL NOTES

### Things worth knowing *before* you arrive.

#### AIRPORT

Tucson International (TUS) is a 15-minute drive from downtown. Uber and Lyft are readily available.

#### WEATHER

Spring and fall are ideal. In summer, schedule outdoor activities before 9 AM or after 6 PM, and carry more water than you think you need.

#### DIETARY NEEDS

Tucson is unusually strong on vegan and vegetarian options — nearly every restaurant in this guide has well-executed plant-based dishes, not just token ones.

#### GETTING AROUND

The Sun Link Streetcar is the easiest way to connect the University of Arizona, 4th Avenue, downtown, and the Mercado San Agustín — and it's free. Outside that corridor, plan on rideshares; Tucson is spread out.

#### RESERVATIONS

For parties of 5+ at upscale restaurants, book 1–2 weeks ahead — especially for El Charro, Perche' No, Charro Steak, and HUB.

#### HYDRATION & TIPPING

Carry a refillable water bottle — altitude and dry air dehydrate visitors faster than expected. Standard US tipping is 18–22%.