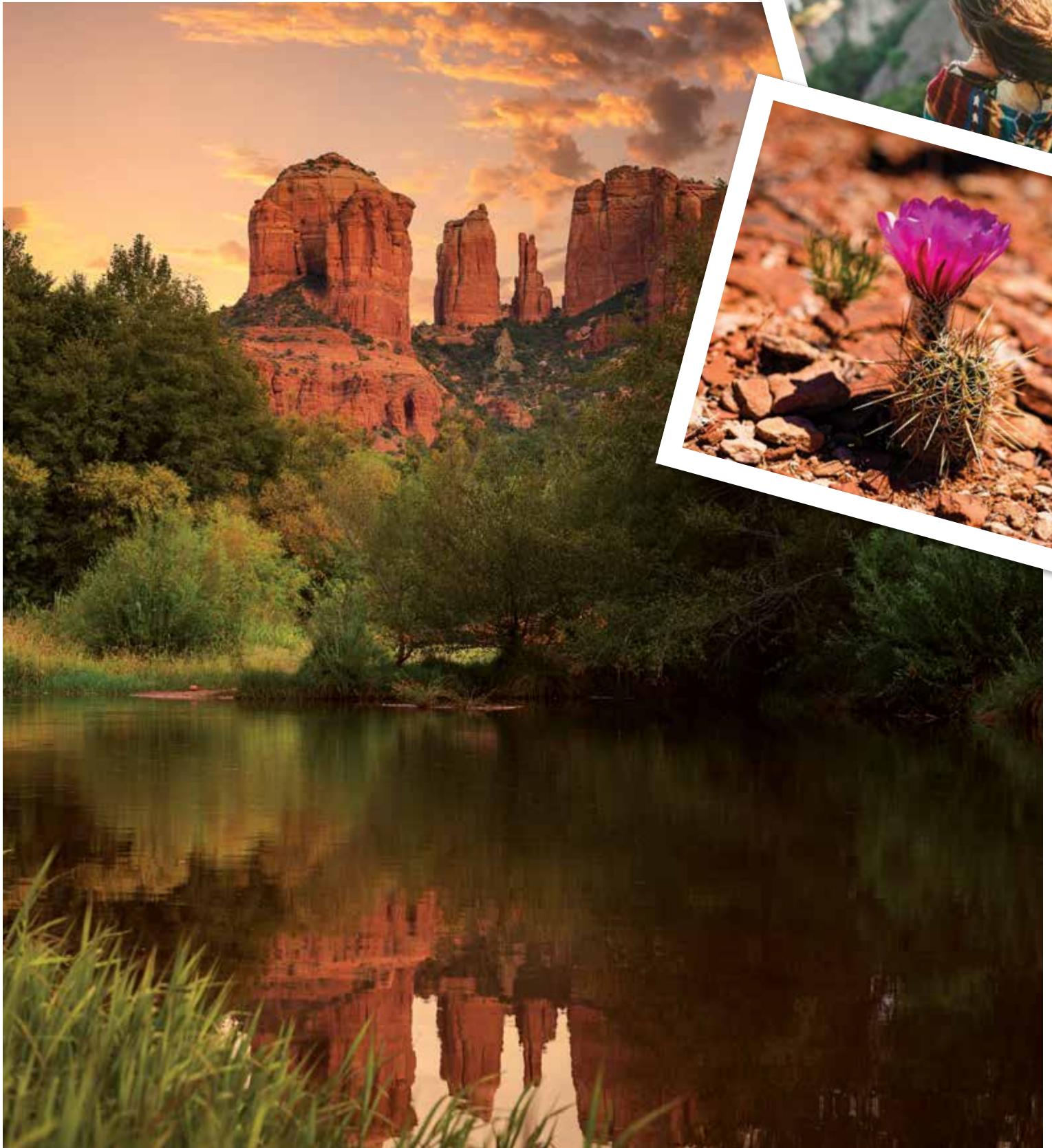




southwestern wonder

SEDONA, ARIZONA

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Whether you are looking for a wellness retreat, a locale to inspire your artistic talents, or just a beautiful place to get lost (metaphorically), Sedona, Arizona is here to answer the call. For decades, Sedona has been known as a New Age destination for wellness seekers, especially because of its believed spirit-balancing vortices. The surrounding area is filled with dramatic contrasts of red rocks and blue sky, providing an epic backdrop for hiking, mountain biking, and scenic drives. With so much to offer, let this tour whet your appetite for a real dose of Red Rock Country.



OPENING SPREAD: There are vistas around each corner in Red Rock Country, Arizona. THESE PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Cathedral Rock at sunset. Checking in with mind, body, and soul. Beautiful cactus blooms dot the landscape. Mountain biking trails abound for off-road, two-wheeled adventures.

travel tips.

When to Go: For milder temperatures, escaping both chilly winter and sizzling summer temps, plan a trip from March through May or September through November.

How to Get There: The Sedona airport doesn't host commercial flights—only private planes and local tour operators. Instead, fly into Phoenix (PHX), Tucson (TUS), or Flagstaff (FLG) and rent a car for the drive.

Bucket-List Sites:

Cathedral Rock
Devil's Bridge
Bell Rock
Chapel of the Holy Cross

Adventures:

Off-road Jeep tours
Verde Valley Wine Trail
Red Rock Scenic Byway

Drive.

Located eleven miles south of Sedona, the Red Rock Scenic Byway (State Route 179) is a short highway that encompasses an unforgettable, seven-and-a-half-mile drive. Many refer to this stretch of the road as a museum without walls. Although the drive without stops takes approximately twenty minutes, most travelers plan for several hours. The route, winding through sandstone formations, is gorgeous and worth the time. Locals stress to visitors that the landscape is very distracting; take advantage of the scenic overlooks and park your vehicle to take in the postcard-worthy vistas.

Admire.

One of the most popular stops along the Red Rock Scenic Byway is Cathedral Rock. Located in Red Rock State Park, this iconic, Arizona landmark is a Sedona must. Not only is it a shutterbug's delight, but Cathedral Rock is also home to one of Sedona's four vortexes (the other three are at Bell Rock, Airport Mesa, and Boynton Canyon). Many believe that vortexes are where the earth emits an energy that fosters healing, self-exploration, and meditation. If you feel like taking a hike to get a bird's-eye view from the top of Cathedral Rock, the park hosts a short, one-and-a-quarter mile out and back trail, which still requires proper hiking boots. The trail can be strenuous in some places, requiring scrambling over rocks on a steep incline. For avid hikers, Sedona area has more than 200 trails covering over 400 square miles. Visitors and locals alike love Bell Rock, Devil's

Bridge, and Birthing Cave. For those who enjoy two- or four-wheel, off-road adventures, there are amazing mountain-biking trails and many operators that offer Jeep tours.

Refuel.

After a full day of sightseeing, a little downtime may be in order. As a wellness destination, there is no shortage of spas and salons offering massages, meditation, aromatherapy, sound baths, and other holistic services. If a little nectar of the vine is up your alley, explore the Verde Valley Wine Trail. Within an hour drive of Sedona, visitors can enjoy tastings at Alcantara Vineyards, Page Springs Cellars, Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery, and many more. You can get a self-guided map and Verde Valley Wine Trail passport online, or turn to a variety of wine-tour operators.

Gaze.

The magic doesn't stop when the sun goes down. Stargazing in Sedona can be a life-altering experience. Away from big-city lights, the desert sky comes alive. Fortunate visitors may see a meteor or two. Locals recommend parking your vehicle at Beaverhead Flat Scenic Overlook or on Dry Creek Road and bringing a blanket and a flashlight.

Whether you are looking for a self-care getaway, a romantic couple's weekend, or a family trip, Sedona has an eclectic array of activities bound to please even those with the most discerning taste. Let loose and explore your sense of wonder in this Southwestern gem. Your heart and soul will thank you. 