



Meagan Estees

REALTOR  
YOUR AZ HOME GIRL

THE COMPLETE

# Greater Tucson

## Relocation Guide

---

YOUR INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LIVING, LOVING & THRIVING IN THE SONORAN  
DESERT

**Meagan Estees | Your AZ Home Girl**

520.980.9880 | [Meagan@EsteesHomesAz.com](mailto:Meagan@EsteesHomesAz.com) | [EsteesHomesAz.com](http://EsteesHomesAz.com)

# What You'll Find

---

- 01 A Quick Hello from Meg**  
Your personal guide to Tucson

---

- 02 Get to Know Tucson**  
City overview, key facts & why people love it

---

- 03 Cost of Living**  
Housing, rent, taxes, utilities & comparisons

---

- 04 Neighborhoods**  
All major communities with prices & lifestyle profiles

---

- 05 Schools & Education**  
Top districts, ratings, higher education

---

- 06 Job Market & Economy**  
Major employers, industries & remote work

---

- 07 Weather & Seasons**  
Climate guide, monsoon tips & seasonal living

---

- 08 Healthcare**  
Major hospitals, specialists & urgent care

---

- 09 Outdoor Life & Recreation**  
Hiking, cycling, golf, birding & more

---

- 10 Food, Culture & Arts**  
Local favorites, UNESCO gastronomy & events

---

- 11 Family Life**  
Kids activities, youth sports, family resources

---

- 12 Retirement & Active Adult Living**  
55+ communities, amenities & snowbird life

---

- 13 Pet-Friendly Tucson**  
Dog parks, trails, vets & wildlife safety

---

- 14 Shopping & Services**  
Malls, markets, grocers & local boutiques

---

- 15 Insider Tips**  
What nobody tells you before moving to Tucson

---

- 16 Transportation**  
Getting around, driving distances & the airport

---

- 17 Real Estate Market**  
Current prices, trends & buyer tips

---

- 18 Planning Your Move**  
Meg's 5-step process & vendor network

---

- 19 Relocation Checklist**  
Before & after move action items



WELCOME

# A Quick Hello from Meg!

---

Hello there! I'm Meagan Estees — wife, mom of two, travel enthusiast, avid concert-goer, and a proud Tucson local. Whether you're considering a move from across the country or just across town, I created this guide to give you everything you need to fall in love with this city the way I have.

Inside, you'll find honest, data-driven information about neighborhoods, schools, the job market, healthcare, and the cost of living — paired with the warm, local insights that only come from someone who truly lives here and loves it.

Tucson is a city that surprises people. It's more vibrant, more beautiful, and more welcoming than most people expect. I hope this guide helps you feel a little more at home — whether you're just browsing or already packing boxes.

## A few things I love about life here:

- ▶ The stunning desert landscapes and five mountain ranges
- ▶ The best Mexican food you will ever eat in your life
- ▶ The warm, genuine community spirit
- ▶ 350+ days of glorious sunshine every single year
- ▶ World-class outdoor adventures right outside your door
- ▶ A city that feels like a small town, no matter how long you've lived here

— Meagan Estees

---

---

OVERVIEW

# Get to Know Tucson

---

Tucson is a city that defies expectations. Nestled in the Sonoran Desert and surrounded by five dramatic mountain ranges, it's a place where ancient Native American history, rich Hispanic heritage, and modern innovation come together to create something truly unique. It's a city of over 550,000 people that somehow still feels like a community — warm, welcoming, and wonderfully authentic.

1.08M

POPULATION

350+

DAYS OF SUNSHINE /  
YEAR CITY

#1

UNESCO CITY OF  
GASTRONOMY IN THE  
U.S.

130+

MILES OF BIKE PATHS

34

MEDIAN AGE

\$340K

MEDIAN HOME PRICE

## Why People Love It Here

- ▶ **Affordable Living:** Housing and overall costs are below the national average, giving your money more power than in most major metros.
- ▶ **Outdoor Paradise:** Five mountain ranges, two districts of Saguaro National Park, and hundreds of miles of trails put nature right at your doorstep.
- ▶ **World-Class Food Scene:** As the first UNESCO City of Gastronomy in the U.S., Tucson's culinary culture is celebrated worldwide.
- ▶ **Thriving Arts & Culture:** From vibrant street murals and galleries to the Rialto Theater and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, the arts are alive and well.
- ▶ **Top-Tier University:** The University of Arizona brings intellectual energy, world-class research, and a vibrant sports culture to the city.
- ▶ **Friendly, Small-Town Feel:** Despite its size, Tucson maintains a genuine sense of community and a welcoming, unpretentious vibe.
- ▶ **Growing Economy:** Aerospace, healthcare, tech, and education provide a diverse and stable economic foundation.
- ▶ **Gem & Mineral Capital:** Home to the largest gem and mineral show in the world, drawing collectors from every corner of the globe.

FINANCES

# Cost of Living

One of Tucson's most compelling advantages is its affordability. The overall cost of living is approximately **3% below the national average**, with housing costs sitting even lower. Compared to Phoenix, Scottsdale, or most major coastal cities, your dollars stretch significantly further here — without sacrificing quality of life.

Category	Tucson Index	Arizona Avg.	National Avg.
Overall	97.0	106.4	100
Housing	93.2	119.7	100
Groceries	95.5	96.1	100
Utilities	99.4	102.7	100
Transportation	96.6	107.0	100
Healthcare	85.4	97.3	100

## Housing & Rent

The median home sale price in Tucson is around \$340,000 — well below the national median of ~\$440,000. For renters, a one-bedroom apartment averages around \$874/month and a two-bedroom around \$1,350/month.

Area	Median Home Price
Tucson City	~\$340,000
Sahuarita	~\$365,000
Vail	~\$485,000
Marana	~\$430,000
Oro Valley	~\$540,000
Catalina Foothills	\$650,000+

## Taxes

- ▶ **State Income Tax:** Flat 2.5% — one of the lowest in the U.S.
- ▶ **Sales Tax (Tucson):** 8.7% combined (state + county + city)
- ▶ **Property Tax:** ~0.5% effective rate — very competitive
- ▶ **No Tax on Social Security** — great news for retirees

## Utilities

Electricity is your biggest utility expense due to summer A/C. Average monthly electric bill: **~\$140**. Water, internet (~\$84/mo), and other utilities are near national averages.

### MEG'S MONEY TIP

*Arizona has no tax on Social Security income — making Tucson an especially smart financial choice for retirees.*

WHERE TO LIVE

# Tucson Neighborhoods

The Greater Tucson area is a mosaic of unique communities, each with its own distinct personality and lifestyle. From historic urban neighborhoods to master-planned suburban communities, there's a perfect fit for every family, budget, and lifestyle preference.

If You're Looking For...	Consider These Areas
Top-Rated Schools	Vail, Oro Valley, Tanque Verde, Catalina Foothills
New Construction Homes	Rocking K (Vail), Gladden Farms (Marana), La Estancia, Sahuarita
Historic Charm & Walkability	Sam Hughes, Armory Park, West University, Barrio Viejo
Luxury & Mountain Views	Catalina Foothills, Oro Valley, Starr Pass
Outdoor Access & Nature	Vail, Tanque Verde, Catalina Foothills, Marana
Affordability & Value	Sahuarita, Rita Ranch, Midtown Tucson, Marana
Active Adult / 55+ Communities	SaddleBrooke (Marana), Quail Creek (Sahuarita), Sun City Oro Valley
Urban Vibe & Dining	Downtown, Mercado District, Main Gate Square, 4th Avenue

## Oro Valley

NORTHWEST TUCSON

Median: ~\$540,000

A premier suburb known for stunning mountain views, excellent schools, and family-friendly atmosphere. Safe, well-maintained, and packed with parks, golf courses, and upscale shopping.

- TOP SCHOOLS
- GOLF
- FAMILY-FRIENDLY

## Vail /Rocking K

SOUTHEAST TUCSON

Median: ~\$485,000

Home to the award-winning Vail School District, this area offers new construction, mountain views, and a strong sense of community. Ideal for families who love the outdoors.

- #1 SCHOOL DISTRICT
- NEW BUILDS
- HIKING

## Catalina Foothills

NORTH TUCSON

Median: \$650,000+

Tucson's most prestigious address. Luxurious homes, breathtaking city and mountain views, world-class resorts, and immediate access to hiking in the Santa Catalinas.

Luxury

SCENIC VIEWS

RESORTS

## Sam Hughes

CENTRAL TUCSON

Median: ~\$500,000

A beloved historic neighborhood near the University of Arizona, known for character-filled homes, tree-lined streets, walkability, and a vibrant community spirit.

HISTORIC

WALKABLE

UNIVERSITY AREA

# More Great Communities

## Marana

NORTHWEST TUCSON

Median: ~\$430,000

A rapidly growing community offering a mix of affordable family housing, new construction, and active adult communities. Great amenities, a relaxed pace, and easy freeway access.

Growing Area

NEW BUILDS

ACTIVE ADULT

## Sahuarita

SOUTH TUCSON

Median: ~\$365,000

One of the most affordable areas in the metro, Sahuarita offers great value, newer homes, and a tight-knit community feel. Home to Quail Creek, a popular 55+ resort community.

AFFORDABLE

55+ OPTIONS

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

## Tanque Verde

NORTHEAST TUCSON

Median: ~\$500,000+

A peaceful, semi-rural area with larger lots, stunning desert scenery, and access to some of the best hiking in the region. Served by the highly-rated Tanque Verde School District.

Top Schools

LARGE LOTS

HIKING ACCESS

## Downtown / Mercado

URBAN CORE

Varies Widely

Tucson's urban heart is experiencing a renaissance. The Mercado District and downtown area offer walkable living, vibrant dining, arts venues, and a lively community of creatives.

WALKABLE

ARTS SCENE

DINING

### A Note from Meg: Finding YOUR Perfect Neighborhood

Every family and every buyer is different. The best neighborhood for you depends on your lifestyle, your commute, your school needs, and what makes you feel at home. I've helped hundreds of families find their perfect fit in Tucson, and I'd love to do the same for you.

- I offer virtual tours and neighborhood consultations for out-of-state buyers
- I can connect you with local parents, residents, and community members in any area
- My deep local knowledge means I know the nuances that Zillow simply can't tell you
- I'll never steer you toward a neighborhood that doesn't fit your life — only the right one

EDUCATION

# Schools & Education

Tucson offers a rich and diverse educational landscape, from highly-rated public school districts to Excellent charter, private, and higher education options. School district boundaries are a key factor in neighborhood selection, and I'm always happy to help you navigate this important decision.

District	Area Served	Notable For	Great Schools Rating
Vail Unified	Vail, Rocking K, SE Tucson	Academic excellence, innovation programs	8-10 / 10
Tanque Verde Unified	NE Tucson	High achievement, small community feel	8-9 / 10
Catalina Foothills USD	N Tucson / Foothills	College-prep, high performance	8-10 / 10
Marana Unified	NW Tucson / Marana	Diverse programs, growing community	6-8 / 10
Amphitheater USD	Central/North Tucson	Arts & STEM programs, diverse	5-8 / 10
TUSD (Tucson Unified)	Central Tucson	Largest district, magnet schools	Varies

## Spotlight Schools

- ▶ **Cienega HighSchool (Vail):** Consistently ranked among Arizona's top high schools
- ▶ **Ironwood Ridge High (Marana):** Award-winning academics and athletics
- ▶ **Basis Tucson:** Top-ranked charter school, nationally recognized
- ▶ **Salpointe Catholic High:** Premier private school with strong athletics
- ▶ **Pusch Ridge Christian Academy:** Faith-based education with excellent academics
- ▶ **Tucson High Magnet School:** Prestigious magnet programs downtown

## Higher Education

**The University of Arizona** is a flagship research university and one of the nation's top public universities. It's a Pac-12 institution known for astronomy, optics, biomedical research, and its beloved Wildcats sports teams.

**Pima Community College** is one of the largest community colleges in the Southwest, offering affordable pathways to degrees and certifications across multiple campuses.

# Job Market & Economy

Tucson's economy is diverse, resilient, and growing. Anchored by major institutions in aerospace, Healthcare and education, the city also has a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem and is increasingly attracting remote workers and tech professionals drawn by its affordability and quality of life.

## Major Industries

- ▶ **Aerospace & Defense:** Raytheon Missiles & Defense is one of Arizona's largest employers. Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is also a major economic driver with 15,000+ personnel.
- ▶ **Healthcare & Bioscience:** Banner Health, Tucson Medical Center, and UA Health Sciences anchor a growing healthcare and biotech sector with 150+ life sciences companies.
- ▶ **Education:** The University of Arizona employs thousands and drives significant economic activity through research, healthcare, and spin-off companies.
- ▶ **Optics & Technology:** Known as "Optics Valley," Tucson has a world-leading concentration of optics and photonics companies.
- ▶ **Tourism & Hospitality:** World-class resorts, golf courses, and the gem show drive a strong hospitality sector year-round.

## Top Employers

Employer	Sector
Raytheon Missiles & Defense	Aerospace
University of Arizona	Education/ Research
Banner Health	Healthcare
Tucson Medical Center	Healthcare
Davis-Monthan AFB	Military
Pima County Government	Public Sector
City of Tucson	Public Sector
Freeport-McMoRan	Mining
Amazon	Logistics/Tech

### REMOTE WORK

Tucson is increasingly popular with remote workers. Its affordability, quality of life, and growing co-working scene make it an ideal base for professionals who can work from anywhere.

# Weather & Seasons

Tucson's climate is one of its greatest assets. With over **350 days of sunshine per year** and four distinct seasons, the weather here supports an active, outdoor lifestyle year-round. The key is understanding and embracing each season's unique character.

<p><b>Spring</b> <b>70–90°F</b> March–May. Wildflowers bloom.</p> <p>Low humidity makes warm days feel comfortable. Perfect for hiking and outdoor events.</p>	<p><b>Summer</b> <b>91-108°F</b> June–September. Hot and dry</p> <p>Dramatic monsoon storms arrive in July–August with spectacular lightning and refreshing rain.</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> <b>65-85°F</b> October–November. Arguably the best time of year.</p> <p>Warm, comfortable days and cool evenings. Ideal for hiking and outdoor dining.</p>	<p><b>Winter</b> <b>40-68°F</b> December–February. Mild and sunny.</p> <p>Daytime temps in the 60s–70s. Snow is rare in the city but dusts the mountains beautifully.</p>
--	---	---	---

## The Monsoon Season

The summer monsoon is one of Tucson's most beloved and unique features. From roughly mid-July through mid-September, dramatic afternoon and evening thunderstorms roll in from the south, bringing heavy rain, gusty winds, and some of the most spectacular lightning shows you'll ever see. The desert transforms almost overnight, turning lush and green. Locals look forward to monsoon season — it's a cherished part of life here.

## Tips for Newcomers

- ▶ **Beat the heat:** Plan outdoor activities for early mornings or evenings in summer
- ▶ **Stay hydrated:** The dry desert air means you need more water than you think
- ▶ **Respect the washes:** Never drive through flooded washes during monsoon rains
- ▶ **Embrace the escape:** Mt. Lemmon is just an hour away and can be 30°F cooler
- ▶ **Sunscreen always:** The UV index is high year-round — make it a daily habit
- ▶ **Windshield sunshade:** A must-have for every car in Tucson

# Healthcare in Tucson

Tucson has a robust and well-regarded healthcare system, anchored by nationally recognized hospitals and a comprehensive network of specialists and clinics. Whether you need routine care or specialized treatment, the Greater Tucson area has excellent options.

## Banner — University Medical Center

### ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER

A nationally recognized academic medical center and the primary teaching hospital for the UA College of Medicine. Features a Level 1 Trauma Center and cutting-edge research programs. Ranked among the best hospitals in Arizona.

LEVEL 1 TRAUMA

RESEARCH HOSPITAL

## Tucson Medical Center (TMC)

### COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

A beloved, locally governed non-profit hospital known for exceptional women's and children's services, orthopedics, and cardiovascular care. Consistently recognized for patient satisfaction and quality of care.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

ORTHOPEDICS

## Carondelet Health Network

### ST. JOSEPH'S & ST. MARY'S

Two hospitals with a long history of serving the Tucson community. Known for compassionate care, neurology, and cardiac services. St. Mary's is conveniently located near downtown.

NEUROLOGY

CARDIAC CARE

## Oro Valley Hospital

### NORTHWEST TUCSON

A full-service hospital serving the rapidly growing northwest Tucson and Oro Valley communities. Offers emergency care, surgical services, and a wide range of specialty care close to home for northwest residents.

EMERGENCY CARE

SURGICAL SERVICES

## Additional Resources

- ▶ Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
- ▶ El Rio Community Health Center (affordable primary care)
- ▶ UA Cancer Center — nationally designated
- ▶ Tucson Heart Hospital — specialized cardiac care
- ▶ Concentra & NextCare Urgent Care — multiple locations

### HEALTHCARE COST ADVANTAGE

Tucson's healthcare cost index is 85.4 — nearly 15% below the national average. You'll pay less for the same quality care here than in most major U.S. cities.

# Outdoor Life & Recreation

If you love the outdoors, Tucson will feel like paradise. The city is surrounded by some of the most dramatic and diverse desert landscapes in North America, offering world-class hiking, cycling, birding, and more — all within minutes of your front door.

## Must-Do Experiences

- ▶ **Saguaro National Park (East & West):** The iconic saguaro cactus is Tucson's symbol. Both park districts offer scenic drives, hiking trails for all levels, and stunning desert landscapes.
- ▶ **Sabino Canyon:** A desert oasis in the Catalina Mountains with a popular tram ride, hiking trails, seasonal creek, and breathtaking scenery. One of Tucson's most beloved spots.
- ▶ **Mount Lemmon:** Drive the scenic Catalina Highway to the top of the Santa Catalinas (9,157 ft). Enjoy cooler temps, pine forests, hiking, and even skiing at Ski Valley in winter.
- ▶ **The Loop:** A 130+ mile network of paved, car-free paths perfect for cycling, running, and walking. One of the best urban trail systems in the country.
- ▶ **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum:** A world-renowned combination zoo, natural history museum, and botanical garden. A must-see for newcomers and lifelong residents alike.

## Sports & Recreation

- ▶ **Golf:** 30+ courses including world-class resort courses at Loews Ventana Canyon, Omni Tucson National, and Starr Pass.
- ▶ **Cycling:** Recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community, Tucson hosts El Tour de Tucson, one of the largest cycling events in the U.S.
- ▶ **Birding:** One of the top birding destinations in North America with 500+ species recorded in the region.
- ▶ **Rock Climbing:** Mount Lemmon and other areas offer excellent climbing for all levels.
- ▶ **U of A Wildcats:** Catch a Wildcats football, basketball, or baseball game — the passion for U of A sports is real and infectious.
- ▶ **Pickleball:** Tucson has a booming pickleball scene with courts throughout the metro.

130+

MILES OF BIKE PATHS  
(THE LOOP)

30+

GOLFCOURSES IN THE  
METRO

500+

BIRDSPECIES IN THE  
REGION

# Food, Culture & Arts

Tucson's soul lives in its food and its art. As the first **UNESCO City of Gastronomy** in the United States, The city's culinary heritage is a point of immense pride—a rich tapestry woven from Native American, Mexican, and American traditions. And the arts scene? It's vibrant, accessible, and deeply woven into everyday life.

## Coffee Shops

[Cartel Roasting Co.](#)

[Presta Coffee Roasters](#)

[Savaya Coffee Market](#)

[Black Crown Coffee Co.](#)

[Crave Coffee Bar](#)

## Breakfast & Lunch

[Baja Café](#)

[The Cup Café at Hotel](#)

[Congress](#)

[5 Points Market &](#)

[Restaurant](#)

[Seis Kitchen](#)

[Prep & Pastry](#)

## Dinner

[Tito & Pep](#)

[The Parish](#)

[BATA](#)

[La Frida](#)

[El Charro Café](#)

(est. 1922)

## Sweet Treats

[Hub Ice Cream Parlor](#)

[The Screamery](#)

[Le Cave's Bakery](#)

[Isabella's Ice Cream](#)

[Chocola Tree](#)

## Support Local

[Mercado San Agustín](#)

[Pop Cycle \(gifts & art\)](#)

[Rialto Theater](#)

[The Loft Cinema](#)

[4th Avenue Street Fair](#)

## Annual Events

[Gem, Mineral & Fossil Showcase](#)

[All Souls Procession](#)

[Tucson Festival of Books](#)

[El Tour de Tucson \(cycling\)](#)

[Tucson Rodeo \(La Fiesta de los Vaqueros\)](#)

### MEG'S FOOD TIP

*El Charro Café, founded in 1922, is the oldest continuously operating Mexican restaurant in the U.S. — and it's right here in Tucson. Your first visit is a rite of passage for every new Tucsonan!*

# Family Life in Tucson

Tucson is a wonderful place to raise a family. With a warm climate that encourages outdoor play year round, a rich cultural heritage, excellent schools, and a strong sense of community, it's a city where kids thrive and families put down deep roots.

## Things to Do with Kids

- ▶ **Reid Park Zoo:** A beloved community zoo featuring over 500 animals. Affordable, walkable, and a perennial family favorite.
- ▶ **Tucson Children's Museum:** Interactive, play-based exhibits designed for discovery and creativity. Locations downtown and in Oro Valley at Tohono Chul.
- ▶ **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum:** Part zoo, part museum, part botanical garden — an unforgettable educational experience for all ages.
- ▶ **Splash Pads & Pools:** Tucson has numerous free splash pads and community pools throughout the city, perfect for summer fun.
- ▶ **Sabino Canyon Tram:** A fun and educational tram ride through the canyon, great for kids of all ages.
- ▶ **Brandi Fenton Memorial Park:** A beautiful park with playgrounds, splash pad, dog park, and community events.

## Youth Sports & Activities

- ▶ Tucson Parks & Recreation youth leagues (soccer, baseball, basketball)
- ▶ Club soccer, travel baseball, and competitive swim teams throughout the metro
- ▶ Tucson Padres (Minor League Baseball) — great family outings
- ▶ Extensive summer camp programs through the city, YMCA, and private organizations
- ▶ Gymnastics, martial arts, dance, and arts studios in every neighborhood
- ▶ Scouting, 4-H, and other youth organizations with active Tucson chapters

### PARENT TIP

*Many Tucson parks have free splash pads that open in the spring — a lifesaver during the hot summer months. Check the City of Tucson Parks website for locations and hours.*

# Retirement & Active Adult Living

Tucson is consistently ranked as one of the best retirement destinations in the United States, and it's easy to see why. The combination of a warm, sunny climate, affordable living, excellent healthcare, and a wealth of outdoor and cultural activities makes it an ideal place to enjoy your next chapter in style.

## SaddleBrooke

### 25 MILES NORTH OF TUCSON

A sprawling Robson Communities development with 5,000+ homes. Features 36 holes of golf, multiple clubhouses, fitness centers, pools, performing arts theater, and 200+ clubs. Homes range from mid-\$300Ks to \$1M+.

GOLF

RESORT AMENITIES

200+ CLUBS

## Quail Creek

### GREENVALLEY (35 MIN SOUTH)

A gated Robson community with 4,000 homes, 27 holes of championship golf, resort-style pools, 16 pickleball courts, and a creative arts center. Homes from mid-\$300Ks to mid-\$600Ks. Low-maintenance lifestyle.

GATED

27-HOLE GOLF

PICKLEBALL

## Sun City Oro Valley

### 20 MILES NORTH OF DOWNTOWN

A Del Webb community with 2,400 homes and stunning Santa Catalina Mountain views. Three recreation centers, 18-hole golf course, and hundreds of clubs and activities. Elevation of 3,000 ft means cooler summers.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS

DEL WEBB

3 REC CENTERS

## La Cholla Hills

### NORTHWEST TUCSON

An established 55+ community within Tucson proper, offering 389 homes at more accessible price points (\$200Ks-\$400Ks). Convenient access to all city amenities, healthcare, and shopping.

AFFORDABLE

CITY CONVENIENT

RESALE

## Why Retirees Love Tucson

- ▶ **No tax on Social Security income** in Arizona
- ▶ Mild, sunny winters — perfect for escaping cold climates
- ▶ World-class healthcare within easy reach
- ▶ Abundant outdoor activities for active lifestyles
- ▶ Rich cultural scene: museums, symphony, theater
- ▶ Cost of living well below national average
- ▶ Strong snowbird community for seasonal residents
- ▶ Easy access to Mexico for day trips and medical tourism

# Pet-Friendly Tucson

Tucson is a wonderfully pet-friendly city, with a wide range of dog parks, pet-welcoming trails, outdoor dining patios, and excellent veterinary care. That said, living in the Sonoran Desert does require some extra awareness to keep your furry family members safe.

## Dog Parks & Trails

- ▶ **BrandiFenton Memorial Park:** Popular off-leash dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs
- ▶ **Smiling Dog Ranch at George Mehl Family Park:** Large, well-maintained off-leash area
- ▶ **Ivan's Spot:** A beloved community dog park in central Tucson
- ▶ **Sweetwater Preserve:** Dog-friendly hiking trails with stunning desert scenery
- ▶ **Agua Caliente Park:** Beautiful dog-friendly park with a natural spring and wildlife
- ▶ **The Loop:** 130+ miles of paved paths — perfect for dog walks and runs

## Pet-Friendly Dining

- ▶ Barrio BrewingCompany — dog-friendly patio
- ▶ Baja Café — welcoming outdoor seating
- ▶ Culinary Dropout — shaded patio
- ▶ Saguaro Corners Restaurant & Bar — pet-friendly patio
- ▶ Redbird Scratch Kitchen + Bar — outdoor seating

## Veterinary Care

- ▶ **Pantano Animal Clinic:** Highly rated, comprehensive care
- ▶ **Acacia Animal Hospital:** Full-service, well-reviewed
- ▶ **University Pet Clinic:** Affordable, convenient
- ▶ **Veterinary Emergency Group (VEG) Oro Valley:** 24-hour emergency care
- ▶ **Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson:** Specialists & emergency
- ▶ **VCA Valley Animal Hospital:** 24-hour emergency services

## Desert Wildlife Safety for Pets

- ◆ Enroll your dog in rattlesnake avoidance training (HSSA offers classes).
- ◆ Never leave pets unattended outdoors — coyotes can scale 8-foot fences.
- ◆ Keep cats indoors to protect them from predators and venomous creatures.
- ◆ Protect paws on hot pavement — if it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for their paws.
- ◆ Always carry water for your pets on hikes.

# Shopping & Services

---

Tucson has a diverse and growing retail landscape, from luxury shopping centers to vibrant local markets and farmers markets. Whether you're stocking your new home or exploring local boutiques, you'll find everything you need right here.

## Major Shopping Centers

- ▶ **LaEncantada:** Southern Arizona's premier luxury outdoor shopping center. Features West Elm, Anthropologie, Crate & Barrel, Apple, Lululemon, and acclaimed restaurants like North Italia and True Food Kitchen.
- ▶ **Park Place Mall:** Tucson's largest enclosed mall with major anchors and a wide range of retail and dining options.
- ▶ **Tucson Premium Outlets:** Outlet shopping with 100+ brand-name stores at significant discounts.
- ▶ **Foothills Mall / "Uptown":** Currently being redeveloped into a modern mixed-use urban village with retail, dining, and residential.
- ▶ **Mercado San Agustín:** A vibrant local market in the Mercado District with artisan vendors, restaurants, and community events.

## Grocery Stores

- ▶ **Fry's Food Stores:** Most widespread, great prices and selection
  - ▶ **Safeway:** Convenient locations throughout the metro
  - ▶ **Whole Foods Market:** Organic and specialty items (La Encantada area)
  - ▶ **Sprouts Farmers Market:** Multiple locations, great produce and bulk
  - ▶ **AJ's Fine Foods:** Upscale grocery with excellent prepared foods
  - ▶ **Trader Joe's:** Popular for unique items and great prices
  - ▶ **Walmart & Target:** Multiple locations throughout the metro
  - ▶ **Costco:** Two locations serving the Tucson metro area
- 

### LOCAL MARKET TIP

*Don't miss the Heirloom Farmers Markets — held weekly at multiple locations around Tucson, they're the best place to find fresh local produce, artisan goods, and the true flavor of the community.*

# Insider Tips for Newcomers

Every city has its quirks, its unwritten rules, and its hidden gems. Here are the things that locals know — and that will help you feel like a true Tucsonan from day one.

## Desert Living Essentials

- ▶ **Hydration is non-negotiable:** The dry desert air is deceptively dehydrating. Carry water everywhere, always. Aim for more than you think you need.
- ▶ **Sunscreen every single day:** Even in winter, the UV index in Tucson is significant. Make SPF a daily habit, not just a beach thing.
- ▶ **Get a windshield sunshade:** Your car's interior will thank you. Without one, your steering wheel becomes untouchable in summer.
- ▶ **Scorpion awareness:** Bark scorpions are common in Tucson. Shake out shoes before putting them on, check bedding, and seal any gaps around doors and windows.
- ▶ **Never drive through flooded washes:** "Turn Around, Don't Drown" is a real and serious rule during monsoon season. Flash floods are fast and deadly.
- ▶ **Pest control is a standard service:** Most Tucson homeowners have a regular pest control service. It's not a luxury — it's just part of desert living.

## Local Knowledge

- ▶ **The "Tucson Slow":** Locals joke about Tucson's relaxed pace of life. Traffic is light compared to Phoenix, and people are genuinely friendly and unhurried.
- ▶ **Mount Lemmon is your summer escape:** When it's 105°F in the city, it's 75°F on top of Mount Lemmon. It's only an hour away and feels like a different world.
- ▶ **The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is not just for tourists:** Locals have annual passes and visit regularly. It's one of the best things about living here.
- ▶ **Tucson is a late-night food city:** Many of the best restaurants don't fill up until 8 or 9 PM. Embrace the later dining culture.
- ▶ **Explore beyond the city limits:** Bisbee (1 hour), Tombstone (1 hour), Patagonia (1 hour), and Nogales are all incredible day trips from Tucson.
- ▶ **The monsoon is magical:** Don't dread it — embrace it. The smell of rain on desert soil (petrichor) is one of the most beautiful scents in the world.

## Meg's #1 Piece of Advice for Newcomers

Get outside in the early morning. Whether it's a walk in your neighborhood, a hike in Saguaro National Park, or a bike ride on The Loop — the desert at sunrise is breathtaking. It will make you fall in love with Tucson faster than anything else I can recommend.

# Transportation & Commuting

Tucson is primarily a car-friendly city, and most residents rely on personal vehicles for their daily commute. That said, the city has made significant investments in alternative transportation, including an award-winning cycling infrastructure and a modern streetcar system.

## Getting Around Tucson

- ▶ **ByCar:** Interstate 10 is the main artery connecting Tucson to Phoenix (~1.5–2 hours north). Most commutes within the metro are 20–30 minutes.
- ▶ **Sun Link Streetcar:** A modern, free-to-ride streetcar connects downtown Tucson to the University of Arizona and 4th Avenue.
- ▶ **Sun Tran Bus:** Tucson's public bus system covers most of the city with regular routes.
- ▶ **Cycling:** With 130+ miles of The Loop and extensive bike lanes, cycling is a genuine and popular commuting option.
- ▶ **Rideshare:** Uber and Lyft are widely available throughout the metro area.

## Flying In & Out

**Tucson International Airport (TUS)** offers direct flights to major hubs including Los Angeles, Dallas, Denver, Chicago, Phoenix, and Las Vegas. Phoenix Sky Harbor (PHX) is ~1.5–2 hours away for more international connections.

## Proximity to Key Destinations

Destination	Drive Time
Phoenix, AZ	~1.5–2 hours
Nogales / Mexico Border	~1 hour
Bisbee, AZ	~1 hour
Tombstone, AZ	~1 hour
Sedona, AZ	~3 hours
San Diego, CA	~5.5 hours
Las Vegas, NV	~7.5 hours
Grand Canyon	~4 hours
Rocky Point, Mexico	~4 hours

### DAY TRIP TIP

*Tucson's location makes it a perfect base for exploring the Southwest. Bisbee, Tombstone, Patagonia wine country, and the Mexican border are all within an easy hour's drive.*

# The Tucson Real Estate Market

The Greater Tucson real estate market offers exceptional value compared to most major U.S. metros. After the rapid appreciation of 2020–2022, the market has settled into a more balanced state, creating a favorable environment for buyers who are ready to make their move.

**\$340K**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE  
(CITY OF TUCSON)

**30–45**

AVERAGE DAYS ON  
MARKET

**2.5%**

ARIZONA STATE INCOME  
TAX (FLAT RATE)

## Market Overview

The Tucson market is currently more balanced than it was during the pandemic frenzy, giving buyers more negotiating power and more time to make thoughtful decisions. Inventory has improved, and while prices remain strong, the days of extreme bidding wars have largely passed.

New construction is booming in areas like Marana, Sahuarita, and Vail, offering buyers the opportunity to get a brand-new home with modern features and builder incentives, including rate buy-downs.

## What Buyers Should Know

- ▶ Get pre-approved before you start shopping — it strengthens your offer.
- ▶ HOA communities are common in newer areas; review CC&Rs carefully.
- ▶ Home inspections are essential — desert homes have unique considerations.
- ▶ Consider the school district boundaries when choosing a neighborhood.
- ▶ New construction builders often offer rate buy-downs and incentives.

## Price by Area (2025–2026)

Community	Median Price
Tucson City	~\$340,000
Sahuarita	~\$365,000
Vail	~\$485,000
Marana	~\$430,000
Oro Valley	~\$540,000
Catalina Foothills	\$650,000+



## Scan to Visit My Website

Browse current listings, get market updates, and schedule a free consultation at [EsteesHomesAz.com](https://EsteesHomesAz.com)

---

---

LET'S DO THIS

# Planning Your Move

---

Moving to a new city is one of the biggest decisions you'll make, and I'm here to make it as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Here's the process I guide every client through to set them up for success in Tucson.

## 1 Schedule a Call

Let's start with a conversation. I'll answer all your questions about Tucson and learn about your goals, budget, and timeline, and help you figure out which neighborhoods and communities are the best fit for your lifestyle. No pressure, just good conversation.

## 2 Take a Tour (In-Person or Virtual)

This is the fun part! We'll explore homes and neighborhoods that match your criteria. Not local yet? No Problem — I provide comprehensive virtual tours and neighborhood video walkthroughs so you can make confident decisions from anywhere in the country.

## 3 Find Your Home & Submit an Offer

When we find the right home, I'll guide you through crafting a strong, competitive offer. I'll negotiate on your behalf to get you the best possible terms and price.

## 4 Navigate the Contract Period

Once under contract, there's a 30–45 day period to complete inspections, appraisals, and financing. I'll be by your side every step of the way, coordinating with all parties and keeping you informed.

## 5 Close & Welcome Home!

Closing day is an exciting milestone. After the keys are in your hand, I'll share my trusted vendor list — movers, contractors, landscapers, and more — so you can hit the ground running in your new Tucson home.

### My Trusted Vendor Network is Yours

Moving to a new city means building a new network from scratch. I've done that work for you. My curated list of trusted local vendors — movers, electricians, plumbers, landscapers, interior designers, pest control, and more — is available to every client. Consider it handled.

---

---

YOUR ACTION PLAN

# Relocation Checklist

---

## Before You Move

- Schedule a consultation call with Meagan
- Get pre-approved for a mortgage
- Research neighborhoods & school districts
- Take a virtual or in-person home tour
- Get quotes from moving companies
- Check employer relocation reimbursement
- Research AZ vehicle registration requirements
- Set up mail forwarding with USPS
- Notify banks, insurance & subscriptions
- Arrange pet health certificates if flying

## After You Arrive

- Register vehicle with AZ MVD (90 days)
- Get an Arizona driver's license (90 days)
- Register to vote in Arizona
- Set up utilities (TEP electric, Tucson Water)
- Set up internet service (Cox or Lumen)
- Enroll children in school
- Find a primary care physician
- Set up pest control service
- Visit Saguaro National Park
- Try El Charro Café — you've earned it!

“Meagan is the absolute best! Extremely professional, knowledgeable, and easy to work with. She made my cross country relocation from Connecticut to Arizona, a super smooth, stress-free process. I was on a tight timeline and thanks to her hard work, we were able to close within 3 weeks after making an offer. No doubt I'll be choosing her again for my future property needs.”

— JACK SANNER

“Meg was great to work with and accommodated our crazy work/travel schedules, taking phone calls and emails late into the evening to make sure everything flowed smoothly. We would definitely recommend Meg for your home purchase!”

— C ANDERSON

“Hands down I have to say having Meg was one of the best things that could have happened during the home buying process. Without her I would not have known what was needed nor would I have had someone to fight for the things I should have gotten. I could not ask for a better realtor than her! For anyone looking for help with the home buying or selling process I highly recommend Meg.”

— DENA SCHAAF SMA



Meagan Estees

REALTOR  
YOUR AZ HOME GIRL

# Let's Find Your Home

in the Sonoran Desert

## Meagan Estees

Realtor | Your AZ Home Girl

520.980.9880

Meagan@EsteesHomesAz.com

www.EsteesHomesAz.com



SCAN TO VISIT ESTEESHOMESAZ.COM

**exp**<sup>®</sup>  
REALTY

**L & R**

