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The Ideal Tucson Getaway In The Heart Of Nature



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Travel

I cover adventure, luxury and family travel.

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The hotel is nestled in the foothills of Tucson National Park. JW MARRIOTT TUCSON STARR PASS RESORT & SPA

Looking for a weekend getaway to truly get back in nature—think plenty of hikes, desert sunsets, and mountain biking? Add to that an award-winning golf course; plenty of restaurants featuring fresh ingredients and local produce; plus, plenty of places to just relax and veg by the pool. We found the spot.

JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa is a full-service destination resort. What sets it apart is its location nestled in the foothills of Tucson National Park, overlooking the city lights of Tucson and minutes from downtown and the airport. And, because of its location in the mountains, there are dozens of hiking trails surrounded by hundreds of saguaro cacti right outside the lobby entrance. The resort is surrounded by all types of indigenous flora and fauna and wildlife. It's the only resort in Tucson with a lazy river and a waterslide, and the golf club and its two golf courses have been honored by the Audubon International as a certified Audubon cooperative sanctuary.

The resort caters to families, couples, girlfriend getaways, group golf trips, and more. Many travelers come from drive markets such as Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, and the Midwest.

The Food and Beverage Scene



The Salud patio restaurant has amazing views and boasts over 100 tequilas. JW MARRIOTT TUCSON STARR PASS RESORT & SPA

The property has plenty of food and drink options.

· **Signature Grill.** This is the hotel's main restaurant, and it's open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There are a variety of dishes—pasta, meat, and seafood—many of which have a Native American, Mexican, or Southwest twist. Popular dinner options include red wine braised short ribs; chili-crusted tuna steak; pozole (a local favorite made with cabbage, cilantro, onion, radish, and lime); chorizo queso fondue and churros for dessert (served with prickly pear syrup).

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· **Catalina Barbeque Company & Sports Bar.** This restaurant is located at Starr Pass Golf Club and is known for its award-winning house-made sauces and rubs. Think pulled pork, brisket, ribs, served up with tasty sides like baked beans, mac n' cheese, sweet potato fries, and coleslaw. Be sure to leave room for the local favorite for dessert: Sahaurita pecan tart (they use locally sourced pecans).

· **Salud.** If you want amazing views, try out this patio dining option. It has an impressive menu of more than 100 tequilas, plus a variety of margaritas and handcrafted cocktails. There's also light bites that pay homage to regional ingredients and flavors. Don't miss the complimentary tequila toast ritual, held every evening, honoring the legend of "Arriba, Abajo."

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- **Plunge.** Kids especially love this casual poolside dining option, which has salads, tacos, wraps, a kid's menu, and cocktails.
- **JW Market.** If you're looking to get salads, artisan sandwiches, and snacks to go, this is the place. It's great for picking things up before a hike or grabbing something at the end of the day. It has beer on tap. For those with a sweet tooth, Tucson's own Isabella's hand-dipped ice cream is a nice must-try.
- **Starbucks.** For that coffee, tea, latte, macchiato fix, this is the place. It also serves muffins, pastries and scones.
- **Primo.** Featuring Italian cuisine with Mediterranean, French, and Spanish influences, this restaurant is currently closed until May.

Activities and Rituals





The Mitakuye Oyasin morning ritual JW MARRIOTT TUCSON STARR PASS RESORT & SPA

The Mitakuye Oyasin morning ritual on the Salud terrace is a unique activity allowing guests to participate in a traditional Native American ceremony and unique Sonoran Desert experience. During the ritual, the Native American flute is played, sage is burned, and blessings are given—all to inspire people to see life from a different perspective. People are encouraged to set their intention for the day and find their inner focus by connecting their mind, body, and spirit. This activity is complimentary.

The guided morning hike is another complimentary experience well worth taking advantage of during your stay. A professional guide leads the hike through the desert and along the mountainside filled with a variety of cacti including saguaros, cholla, and prickly pear cactus.





The property offers complimentary guided hikes each morning. JW MARRIOTT TUCSON STARR PASS RESORT & SPA

There's also 27 holes of Arnold Palmer signature golf and the Starr Pass Golf Club, tennis, access to multiple hiking and biking trails on property (the resort has bicycles for rent), and a 20,000 square-foot Hashani Spa (although that's currently closed due to Covid).

Water enthusiasts will enjoy the multi-level swimming pools, the monsoon falls water slide, the Starr Canyon lazy river, the reflection pool, and the dancing fountains.

Rooms at the Resort



Views from the rooms vary, but some overlook the pool. JW MARRIOTT TUCSON STARR PASS RESORT & SPA

Many of the 575 guest rooms feature private patios or balconies with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and scenic views. Room views vary but include mountain, desert, pool, lazy river, or city views. Oversized bathrooms boast granite countertops, large tubs, walk-in showers, and plush robes. One- and two-bedroom suites have a separate living and dining area.

For a true decadent experience, book the presidential suite—it's expansive and allows for plenty of room to spread out (it's 2,200 square feet). The bedroom closes off for privacy and has direct balcony access. The dining room has a table that seats up to six and is the perfect place to share a meal with friends or family. The living room area is a great place to relax and take in the views. The outdoor balcony is also a great place for morning coffee or evening cocktails; it's a good size at 40 square feet. The marble bathroom is a really nice size and includes a bathtub and a separate shower.

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My work has appeared in over 30 publications including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel Leisure, Robb Report, Afar, Family Vacation... **Read More**

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