



The Country Shop in Tubac offers a wide selection of Mexican pottery.
PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD MCCAIN

EXPLORING TUBAC

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Southern Arizona

There are three things you'll learn about Tubac when you visit: 1) It's a real place, not just a dot on a map; 2) it's the epitome of an artist's town; and 3) there's a little something for everyone, whether you like to eat, shop or explore art galleries.

If you've never been, Tubac is an easy place to pass when you're driving up or down Interstate 19, but if you have some time to spare, you won't regret a stop. Better yet, make it a destination — with only three meals in a day, you'll want more time to try every restaurant, bistro and café on the town map.

There's plenty to choose from. Cafés and delis line the streets. If you're looking for a light meal, grab a hot dog or panini at The Snack Bar Gallery and eat while surrounded by amazing local art. Or, enjoy free Wi-Fi, a cup of joe and freshly made pizza at the Tubac Deli & Coffee Co. If Mexican

is your cuisine of choice, head to Wisdom's Café, which is run by three generations of the Wisdom family. Don't be fooled by the giant chicken statues that stand guard at the entrance; the food is anything but foolish — even if you only order an original, mango or strawberry margarita, which the menu promises will “knock your socks off.” And don't forget a devilish seasonal fruit burrito à la mode.

When you aren't wiping the drool from your chin, explore the more than 30 art galleries in Tubac. The artwork ranges from Southwestern (Hal Empie Studio) to pottery (Clay Hands Gallery & Studio) to wrought-iron sculptures (Karin Newby Gallery & Sculpture Garden). In Tubac, you not only have a chance to purchase original artwork, but you can also watch the artists hard at work on their masterpieces, and they're more than willing to answer any questions you might have about the pieces in their studios.

In addition to burritos and pottery, another option in Tubac is a game of golf at the Tubac Golf Resort & Spa. The historic Otero Ranch sits on 500 acres and features 98 guestrooms, a 27-hole championship golf course, spa, salon and restaurant that is “great for couples, singles and families,” according to Cristella Lopez, the resort's groups coordinator. By the way, movie fans might recognize the resort as the primary setting for the Kevin Costner film *Tin Cup*. After spending a weekend in Tubac, you'll be able to tell your friends and family that it is, in fact, a real place, not just a dot on the Arizona map. And your impression of the tiny town will evolve from “that easily missed place along the highway” to an enormous, living, breathing piece of communal art that has been carefully crafted over the decades by one-of-a-kind people who bring truth to the town's tagline: “Where Art and History Meet.”

— Jodi Cisman

Information: Tubac Chamber of Commerce, 520-398-2704 or www.tubacaz.com

In the Neighborhood: Tubac Golf Resort & Spa, 1 Avenue de Otero, 520-398-2211 or www.tubacgolfresort.com; The Snack Bar Gallery, 2221 E. Frontage Road, Suite E102, 520-370-1556 or www.laentradadetubac.com; Tubac Deli & Coffee Co., 6 Plaza Road, 520-398-3330 or www.tubacdeli.com; Wisdom's Café, 1931 E. Frontage Road, 520-398-2397 or www.wisdomscafe.com; Hal Empie Studio, 33 Tubac Road, 520-398-2811 or www.halempiastudio-gallery.com; Clay Hands Gallery & Studio, 5 Camino Otero, 520-398-2885 or www.clayhands.com; Karin Newby Gallery & Sculpture Garden, 19 Tubac Road, 520-398-9662 or www.karinnewbygallery.com