

Lady's Sunny Itinerary for 3 Days in Mesa, Arizona

Today I want to bring you my travel itinerary for spending 3 days in Mesa, Arizona. This city is known for being the culinary gateway to the American Southwest. With a patchwork of charming family-run farms and a crop of delicious restaurants, Mesa and the surrounding area offer visitors the opportunity to take an exciting foodie road trip under the Sonoran Desert sun. In this advertising feature in partnership with Visit Mesa, I'll show you my top picks for things to do here.

3 DAYS IN

Mesa, AZ

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3 Days in Mesa, Arizona

I've traveled to Mesa for 3 days to experience the culinary highlights of the city and discover some of the best things to experience between meals. There's a Fresh Foodie Trail here, and lots more besides.

After flying into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, I meet my press trip group. We're picked up by a driver from Boss Transportation for the 45-minute drive to the first stop on our itinerary: The Cozy Peach.



The Cozy Peach

The Cozy Peach is a unique glamping site. It's located on Schnepf Farms, a fourth-generation family homestead in Queen Creek near Mesa.



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Set across hundreds of acres of land, the farm features everything from peach orchards to carnival rides, animals, shops, cafes, and wedding venues.

It also offers accommodation. The Cozy Peach at Schnepf Farms is a collection of vintage trailers like classic Airstreams, Silver Streaks, and Pullman Trains.



Each has been restored and fitted out in mid-century decor that matches the trailer's original year of issue.

Upon arrival, I'm shown to my trailer, a 1948 Spartan Manor. It has everything from a comfortable bed to a kitchenette and a full bathroom with a shower. There's air

conditioning, too.

It's a fun home-away-from-home, and it has great views of the San Tan Mountains.



Schnepf Farms

After getting settled in and checking out the barbecues, picnic tables, and vintage chairs dotting the grounds, my group sets off for a Forage with the Farmer tour.

It's a combination of a cooking class and gardening class, and it starts with vegetable picking with one of the farm's owners.



She leads us through the garden, pointing out an assortment of vegetables and telling us what to pick. We harvest everything from cherry tomatoes to artichokes, lettuce, and herbs.

At the end we head into a kitchen where we wash and prep the veggies and make fresh bread.

A couple hours later, we sit down to an amazing meal featuring everything we've gathered from the garden and more. Set on a beautiful table with fresh-cut flowers, it's a farm-to-fork dream.



Queen Creek Olive Mill

The next morning we drive for a few minutes to get to Queen Creek Olive Mill. Just east of Mesa, this place is Arizona's only family-owned-and-operated working olive mill and farm.

Olives are grown and pressed here to produce extra virgin olive oil and other culinary treats.

We start with brunch on the terrace. Everything from vanilla olive oil waffles to avocado toast goes down a treat with bright pink prickly pear juice.



After the meal we take a guided tour. We start outside, where we learn about oil production and see some olives growing on the trees.

From there we move indoors for an educational talk about how olive oil is made and what constitutes extra virgin olive oil. At the end we get to taste several samples.

After the tour we're let loose in the shop. There's everything from olive oil to vinegar, gifts, ice cream, and wine here. It's a great place to pick up souvenirs and treats to take home.



Windmill Winery

Our 3 days in Mesa continue with a visit to Windmill Winery in Florence, Arizona. Located on the site of a historic windmill, this boutique winery produces a range of award-winning wines from regionally-grown grapes.

We settle into one of the tasting rooms to sample the different varietals and enjoy lunch.

Everything from Pinot Grigio to Chardonnay, Pinotage, Barbera, and Cabernet Sauvignon graces the table as the owner tells us about his experience establishing Windmill Winery and growing grapes in Arizona.



After the tasting we're treated to a carriage ride through the grounds. We see two wedding venues, one in a historic barn from Wisconsin, and one on a lake.

The horses also pull us past large sheds full of vintage carriages and other antiques that look like they're straight out of the Old West.



Epicenter at Agritopia

In the evening we're driven over to Gilbert to go to Epicenter at Agritopia.

Located in the heart of a development focused on village life for people of all ages and all stages, Epicenter features everything from shops to health clubs, yoga centers, restaurants, and cocktail bars.

We make our way to Barnone, an Arizona Craftsman Community in Epicenter, to go wine tasting at Garage-East. It's a winery that takes the state's best grapes and serves wine on tap for visitors.

We sit at an outdoor table and enjoy a unique test-tube wine flight alongside delicious charcuterie boards.



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Belly Kitchen and Bar

After wine tasting we hop over to Belly Kitchen and Bar. This restaurant serves a range of Vietnamese, Thai, and Japanese-inspired cuisine in a sleek, low-lit space.

From small plates to craft cocktails, there's a lot of deliciousness on offer. We tuck into everything from soft-shell crab bao buns to papaya salad, spring rolls, and pho. My main course of crispy white fish is divine.



Brunch at Liberty Market

The next morning we check out of The Cozy Peach, and our itinerary for 3 days in Mesa continues with brunch at Liberty Market. Located in the heart of Historic Old Town Gilbert, this restaurant is housed in a former grocery store.

We sit outside on the patio and enjoy larger-than-life cinnamon rolls, spicy chilaquiles, eggs, and other brunch staples.

Afterwards we have a few minutes to walk around the old town, which is buzzing with restaurants, ice cream shops, and bars.



Rose Garden at Mesa Community College

From brunch we're driven to the Rose Garden at Mesa Community College. This is the Desert Southwest's largest public rose garden, and it's home to 9,000 bushes.

We go on a special tour with the designer of the garden. He takes us through each area of the green space, pointing out everything from unique roses to military memorials.

It's amazing to see so many in bloom, and to smell the fragrant scent every time the breeze picks up.



Ceramics Class at Mesa Arts Center

The next stop on our Mesa itinerary is the Mesa Arts Center. This gleaming performing and visual arts complex in downtown Mesa is the largest comprehensive arts campus in Arizona.

We're here to take a ceramics class, and we file into a room where an instructor guides us through the process of making a clay cup. It's a fun way to get a hands-on experience and create our own souvenirs.

After class we walk over to the Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) Museum. It's a visual art exhibition space with five galleries showcasing curated and juried exhibitions of contemporary art. We even spot a couple pieces by our ceramics instructor.



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Lunch and Cider Tasting at Cider Corps

From Mesa Arts Center, it's a short drive to Cider Corps. This craft cidery in downtown Mesa features a military-themed taproom with unusual flavors like sangria, blueberry, and POG (passion, orange, guava).

The cider is much sweeter than the stuff I'm used to back in Britain, but it's fun to try a range in a tasting flight. There's an on-site pizzeria, too, and we enjoy hot slices as we sip.



Residence Inn Mesa East

From the cider tasting we check into our hotel for the night, the Residence Inn Mesa East. The rooms are huge, and each one features a kitchen, living area, work space, bed, and bathroom. Everything looks brand new, too.

Stellar Adventures Stargazing Tour

After getting settled in, we're picked up in a Hummer-turned-safari-vehicle for a stargazing adventure in Arizona. It's an hour's drive through the desert to get to the meeting point with our host from Stellar Adventures.

He takes us on a 2.5-hour nighttime tour of the greatest wonders of the galaxies. From constellations to planets and stars, we see it all. A telescope allows us to get a closer look at everything from the Big Dipper to Orion and stars like Arcturus.



3 Days in Mesa, Arizona

The next morning we have breakfast at the Residence Inn Mesa East before getting driven to the airport for our flights home.

It's been a great trip to Mesa, and I've enjoyed discovering both the culinary highlights of the area and the unique things this part of Arizona has to offer. If you love food and sunshine in equal measure, I'm sure you'll have a great time here, too.

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