

Friday Hikes — Fall-Spring 2026–2027

Date	Destination	Meet	Description
Oct 16	Sunset- Aspen Trails	Meet by 7:45 am at the Sunset Trailhead parking lot at approximately milepost 22.9, on the left side of Catalina Highway, for signup and briefing. The hike begins at 8:00 am. Option to meet by 6:45 am at the parking lot near the McDonald's on Tanque Verde and Catalina Highway, to carpool/caravan to the trailhead. We leave the parking lot promptly at 7 am.	Join us for our first fall Friday Hike. This is an out and back hike along the Sunset Trail, crossing Sabino Creek at Marshall Gulch, then climbing a short distance up the Aspen Trail. We will break for a snack near a scenic rocky outcrop, overlooking the creek below. The aspen trees will be transforming into their beautiful fall colors. Restroom near trailhead parking area. Approximately 4 miles and 500-foot elevation gain.
Oct 30	Old Ski Run from Sunset Trailhead	Meet by 7:45 am at the Sunset trailhead parking lot at approximately milepost 22.9, on the left side of the Catalina Highway. Option to meet by 6:45 am at the parking lot near the McDonald's on Tanque Verde and Catalina Highway, to carpool/caravan to the trailhead. We leave the parking lot promptly at 7 am.	Join us to check out the beautiful old growth trees including aspens with their colorful fall foliage. We will hike on a trail, passing through a culvert and following the trail to the base of the Old Ski Run. On the return, we will visit an historic dam just off the trail. Restroom near the trailhead parking area. Option for a late breakfast at Mt. Lemmon Lodge and to check out their Halloween and fall decorated theme. Approximately 3 miles and 300 feet of elevation gain.
Nov 6	Pima Canyon	Meet at 7:00 am for signup and briefing at the Iris Dewhirst Pima Canyon Trailhead parking lot at the east end of Magee Rd, approximately 2 miles east of Oracle Road. The hike begins at 7:15 am.	One of several canyons in the Pusch Ridge Forest with spectacular views of the surrounding cliffs and of Tucson below. A gradual rocky/sandy ascent, with a slickrock natural dam for a nice break and snack before returning to the trailhead. There are NO restrooms at the trailhead. This is a medium difficulty hike of approximately 6.5 miles roundtrip, with an elevation gain of approximately 1000 feet.

Date	Destination	Meet	Description
Nov 20	Bird Canyon Loop	Meet at Sabino Canyon Visitor Center, at 6:45 am for a signup and safety briefing. The hike begins at 7:00 am .	This hike begins at the Visitor Center, with just over a mile of relatively flat terrain before transitioning into rocky climbs and descents. Along the way, enjoy the sights and sounds while entering the smaller Bird Canyon and of the scenic views from a distance of Thimble Peak and Sabino Canyon. We'll take a short snack break at a sandy boulder-filled spot in Bird Canyon before continuing on a return loop back to the Visitor Center. Restrooms are available at the Visitor Center and near mile markers 4 and 5. Approximately 5.5 miles and 750 feet elevation gain.
Dec 4	Tanque Verde Falls Rim Trail	Meet at 7:45 am for signup and briefing at the middle Tanque Verde Trail parking lot on Reddington Road. The hike begins at 8:00 am. Option to meet by 7:15 am at the parking lot near the McDonald's on Tanque Verde and Catalina Highway, to carpool/caravan to the trailhead. We leave the parking lot promptly at 7:30 am.	The Tanque Verde Rim Trail connects the three older trails that lead to the Falls and creek bed. The route has some easier hiking and some steep grades as well. Restroom is located at the trailhead. This is approximately a 3.7-mile hike with 660 feet of elevation gain.
Dec 18	Ventana Canyon to Maiden Pools	Meet at 7:45 am for signup and a safety briefing at the Ventana Canyon Trailhead near Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort on Kolb Road. Turn right onto Resort Drive, then turn left into the parking area, just before the main resort entrance. Proceed and park towards the back end of the parking lot. Please allow extra time to arrive if you are unfamiliar with the parking area. The hike begins at 8:00 am.	The Ventana Trail (#98) in Tucson's Santa Catalina Mountains is a rugged, scenic medium difficulty out-and-back route that leads to the seasonal rock pools named Maiden Pools. We will have a snack break at the pools before our return. This hike is approximately 5.5 miles and 1300 feet in elevation gain. NO restroom at the trailhead.

Date	Destination	Meet	Description
Jan 1	Blackett's Ridge/ Phoneline-Phoneline Link option	Meet at Sabino Canyon Visitor Center, by 7:45 am for signup and briefing. The hike begins at 8:00 am . Restrooms located at the Visitor Center and near the 1-mile/final-mile mark.	This is an out-and-back trail, leading up to the Sabino Canyon ridge to stunning views of the canyon and Tucson below. It is considered difficult due to steep elevation gains and with little shade. The views will be worth the effort. Roundtrip mileage approximately 6 miles and 1700 feet total elevation gain. For an alternative yet still impressive route, after 1.5 miles, a second moderate hike will split off to another iconic trail, the Phoneline Trail, and return via the Phoneline Link and Creek Trail to the Visitor Center. Approximately 4.5 miles and 600 feet elevation gain.
Jan 15	"Cardiac Gap" (Prospect to Esperero Saddle)	Enter Sabino Canyon Recreation Center from the OVERFLOW PARKING LOT, approximately .35 miles north of the main entrance. Meet at 6:45 am in the Overflow Parking Lot for signup and a safety briefing. The hike begins at 7:00 am .	As indicated in the local name given for this hike, "Cardiac Gap" is considered a difficult out-and-back hike due to its portions of steep climbing/descents and rocky switchbacks. The hike will start from the Prospect Trailhead at the Overflow Parking Lot, then head up the Esperero Trail to the saddle/ridge area. There will be a well-deserved snack break before our return. This destination rewards us with beautiful views of Esperero Canyon and Tucson below. Approximately 6 miles and 1800 feet of elevation gain.

Date	Destination	Meet	Description
Feb 5	Phoneline—Stop #9	Meet at Sabino Canyon Visitor Center, by 7:45 am for signup and briefing. The hike begins at 8:00 am. Restroom at the Visitor Center and near the 1-mile mark. Additional restroom stops along the Canyon road if choosing to walk past stop #9.	This is a <u>one-way</u> hike with approximately 5.4 miles and 1000 feet elevation gain. The trail follows along the side of the Sabino Canyon with great views below. Medium difficulty hike on clear, but narrow, exposed trail. Official end of hike is at shuttle stop #9. Allow additional time to catch the shuttle back to the Visitor Center or to walk back for an additional 3.7 miles. Plan in advance before the hike to take Sabino Crawler shuttle service from shuttle stop #9 back to the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center. Either buy an advance ticket for \$15 at sabinocanyoncrawler.com or pay \$8 by credit card to “onboard” from shuttle stop #9. The shuttle may be full, and there is no guarantee of available spaces. Please review their website. Alternatively, the walk to the Visitor Center is an additional 3.7 miles from shuttle stop #9.
Feb 19	Seven Falls	Meet at Sabino Canyon Visitor Center by 6:45 am for signup and briefing. The hike begins at 7:00 am. Restrooms at the Visitor Center and near the 1-mile and 7-mile marks.	Bear Canyon #29 Trail from Visitor Center to Seven Falls. This is a longer and moderately difficulty hike. Some rock hopping if water is present in the creek. We will break for snacks near the falls area, where there will be at minimum a picturesque pool of water. 8.4 miles roundtrip with an elevation gain of approximately 1450 feet.

Date	Destination	Meet	Description
Mar 5	Molino Basin	Meet at 7:45 am at the Molino Basin trailhead parking lot at milepost 5.6 on the west (left) side of Catalina Highway. Take precautions with oncoming traffic when turning into the parking lot. The hike begins promptly at 8:00 am. Option to meet by 7:15 am at the parking lot near the McDonald's on Tanque Verde and Catalina Highway, to carpool/caravan to the trailhead. We leave the parking lot promptly at 7:30 am.	Molino Basin Trail is described as a moderately challenging out-and-back route, starting relatively flat before turning rocky with gradual climbs and short switchbacks. We will take a snack break at Gordon Hirabayashi Campground. The eco-environment is mostly oak/juniper/grassland, offering less shade than at higher elevations. Restrooms located at the trailhead and the snack/turnaround point. Approximately 5 miles and 800 feet elevation gain.
Mar 19	Sycamore Reservoir	Meet at 7:50 am for signup and safety briefing at the trailhead parking lot, approximately 7 miles up Mt. Lemmon Highway to Prison Camp Road. Turn left (west) into the parking area. Restroom at the trailhead parking area. The hike begins at 8:00 am. Option to meet by 7:15 am at the parking lot near the McDonald's on Tanque Verde and Catalina Highway, to carpool/caravan to the trailhead. We leave the parking lot promptly at 7:30 am.	The hike will start near the Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Site. The terrain is relatively flat before dropping down into the rugged, rocky depths of Sycamore Canyon. Wide vistas provide majestic views of Thimble Peak and Cathedral Rock. We will break for a snack in a riparian area near an old reservoir dam. Expect ascending elevations on the way out of the canyon. Part of this trail is also a segment of the Arizona Trail. Approximately 5 miles and 940 feet of elevation gain.
Apr 2	To be determined		
Apr 16	To be determined		

About the Friday hikes:

- All hikes are free, guided, and open to the public, with no reservations required. (Forest Service fees at parking lots will apply.)
- Start times are not the same for all hikes, due to varying starting locations. All mileages are round trip numbers, unless otherwise noted.
- Hikes are NOT “nature walks”; rough and often steep terrain can be expected.
- Hiking boots or sturdy shoes, hiking poles, sunscreen, and rain gear are recommended.
- Bring plenty of water and a snack or lunch for longer hikes.
- No pets allowed. No smoking. No vaping. No guns. Silence the cell phones. Please!!
- Cell phones for emergency only.
- Please remember many of these hikes are in National Parks or National Recreation Areas. Do not remove any plants, rocks, or artifacts.
- Children under 18 years must be accompanied by a parent.
- Subject to last minute cancellation due to inclement weather or road closure. Call Catalina Highway closure information at 520-351-8844 or check the website calendar at <https://www.sabinonaturalists.org> on the morning of the hike for closures.
- If you have questions, contact Beatriz at fridayhikes@sabinonaturalists.org.

Parking fees:

- United States Forest Service pass is \$8/day, \$10/week, \$40 annual. Also accepted: Interagency Senior Pass, Interagency Access Pass; Interagency Annual Pass \$80/year
- (Veterans and active-duty military may be free or discounted. Check with locations)

Please watch the SCVN website (<http://www.sabinonaturalists.org>) for a schedule of summer 2027 hikes