



48 HOURS IN

Sedona

HIGH DESERT · HIGH COUNTRY

WELCOME

Welcome to Sedona.

Sedona sits where the Colorado Plateau breaks apart into red sandstone buttes and spires, the iron oxide in the rock turning the whole landscape a deep rust-red that shifts color through the day. The formations here — Cathedral Rock, Bell Rock, Courthouse Butte — are geologically similar to the rest of the Colorado Plateau, but concentrated into a compact area that makes Sedona uniquely walkable for red-rock scenery most places require a much longer trip to see.

What most first-time visitors miss: Sedona isn't only Jeep tours and vortex tourism, though both are genuinely part of the local economy and worth understanding rather than dismissing. Oak Creek Canyon's drive down from Flagstaff is one of the most scenic roads in Arizona in its own right, Tlaquepaque Arts & Crafts Village recreates a Mexican colonial arts village in convincing detail, and the trail network — Devil's Bridge, the Cathedral Rock trail — offers some of the best short hikes in the American Southwest.

Sedona is well suited to solo travel — trailheads are busy enough that solo hiking feels entirely normal, restaurant patios and bars make solo dining easy, and the compact Uptown and Village of Oak Creek areas are simple to navigate without much driving.

Day One · Uptown · Chapel of the Holy Cross · Airport Mesa

8:00 AM Breakfast: Coffee Pot Restaurant

2050 W Highway 89A: a longtime local institution famous for its extensive omelette menu — over 100 varieties — with red rock views from the dining room. \$12–20.

Insider Tip: Go early on weekends — this is a genuine local favorite and the wait builds fast after 9am.

9:30 AM Chapel of the Holy Cross

780 Chapel Road: a striking 1956 chapel built directly into a red rock formation, with sweeping views from its small public prayer space. Free.

Insider Tip: Whatever your relationship to the religious purpose, the architecture and view alone justify the short detour up the access road.

11:00 AM Tlaquepaque Arts & Crafts Village

336 State Route 179: a meticulously built Mexican colonial-style arts village with galleries, shops, and courtyards, modeled on the real Tlaquepaque near Guadalajara. Free to wander.

Insider Tip: The courtyard fountains and archways reward slow wandering — treat it as a piece of built environment worth its own hour, not just a shopping stop.

1:00 PM Lunch: Elote Cafe

350 Jordan Road: upscale, inventive Mexican cooking with a devoted following and genuinely long waits — no reservations taken. \$22–35.

Insider Tip: Put your name in and explore Uptown while you wait — the elote-inspired corn dish that gives the restaurant its name is the reason people return.

2:30 PM Airport Mesa

Airport Road, above town: one of Sedona's most accessible named vortex sites, with a short walk to a mesa-top view over the whole red rock basin. Free.

Insider Tip: This is also the classic sunset spot in town — if you're not doing a proper sunset hike later, this view alone is worth returning to at golden hour.

4:00 PM Bell Rock Pathway

Highway 179, south of town: an easy, mostly flat trail circling the base of Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte, two of Sedona's most recognizable formations. Free; Red Rock Pass required for parking.

Insider Tip: This is one of the most solo-friendly trails in Sedona — well-trafficked, easy to navigate, and genuinely scenic without technical difficulty.

7:00 PM Dinner: Mariposa Latin Inspired Grill

700 SR-179: upscale Latin American cooking with panoramic red rock views from an elevated dining room, especially striking at sunset. \$35–60, bar seating available.

Insider Tip: Request a sunset-facing table or bar seat when you arrive — the view is a genuine part of the experience here.

Day Two · Devil's Bridge · Oak Creek Canyon · Jerome

7:30 AM Devil's Bridge Trail

Dry Creek Road trailhead: Sedona's largest natural sandstone arch, reached via a moderate 4-mile round-trip hike with a short exposed scramble at the top. Free; high-clearance vehicle or long walk-in needed for the trailhead.

Insider Tip: Start early — this is Sedona's most popular hike and the arch itself has a real photo line by mid-morning.

11:00 AM Lunch: Back in Uptown

A quick casual lunch in Uptown Sedona before the Oak Creek Canyon drive — cafes and taco counters are easy to find along the main strip. \$10–18.

Insider Tip: Keep it quick and casual — the canyon drive and Jerome trip deserve the rest of the day.

12:30 PM Oak Creek Canyon Scenic Drive

Highway 89A north toward Flagstaff: a dramatic canyon drive through red rock walls and forest, with numerous pull-offs and overlooks. Free.

Insider Tip: The switchbacks near the top of the canyon offer the single best overlook of the whole drive — pull off if traffic allows.

1:30 PM Slide Rock State Park

6871 N Highway 89A, in Oak Creek Canyon: a natural rock water slide formed by Oak Creek, hugely popular on hot days. Admission \$30–35 per vehicle (seasonal pricing).

Insider Tip: Water shoes help on the slippery rock, and the park can reach capacity on summer weekends — arrive early or check current entry status.

3:30 PM Jerome

About 45 minutes from Sedona via Highway 89A: a former copper-mining boomtown built into a steep hillside, now a quirky arts community with galleries, wine tasting rooms, and the reputation of a genuine ghost town. Free to wander.

Insider Tip: Park once near the top of town and walk down — Jerome's streets are steep switchbacks and parking is easier to find uphill.

6:30 PM Return Drive & Sunset

The drive back to Sedona via 89A times well with sunset over the red rocks. Free.

Insider Tip: Pull off at one of the marked scenic overlooks on the return drive rather than trying to watch the sunset while driving.

7:30 PM Dinner: Cress on Oak Creek

301 L'Auberge Lane: creekside fine dining at L'Auberge de Sedona, with tables directly along Oak Creek. \$50–75, bar seating available.

Insider Tip: Ask for creekside seating specifically — the setting is a meaningful part of the experience and not guaranteed without asking.

WHERE TO EAT

Sedona's Table

UPTOWN

Elote Cafe

UPTOWN · \$\$\$

Inventive Mexican cooking with a devoted following — no reservations.

Coffee Pot Restaurant

WEST SEDONA · \$

A local institution known for its 100-plus omelette menu.

Wildflower Bread Company

UPTOWN · \$

A reliable casual bakery-cafe good for a quick solo lunch.

VILLAGE OF OAK CREEK & 179

Mariposa Latin Inspired Grill

SR-179 · \$\$\$

Upscale Latin cooking with panoramic sunset red rock views.

Tlaquepaque Restaurants

TLAQUEPAQUE VILLAGE · \$\$

Several dining options set within the arts village courtyards.

Cress on Oak Creek

L'AUBERGE DE SEDONA · \$\$\$\$

Creekside fine dining along Oak Creek.

CASUAL & COFFEE

Golden Goose

WEST SEDONA · \$\$

A cozy, art-filled restaurant popular for a relaxed solo dinner.

Indian Gardens Cafe

OAK CREEK CANYON · \$

A trading-post cafe on the canyon drive, good for a scenic coffee stop.

The Hudson

UPTOWN · \$\$

A modern American bar and restaurant with a solid solo-friendly counter.

GETTING AROUND

Navigating Sedona

MODE	COST	NOTES
Walking	Free	Uptown and Tlaquepaque are walkable; most trailheads require a drive or shuttle.
Sedona Shuttle	Free-\$	Seasonal shuttles serve some popular trailheads, reducing parking pressure.
Uber / Lyft	Limited	Available but less reliable than in larger cities — a rental car is more dependable.
Rental car	\$50–75/day	The practical way to reach most trailheads, Oak Creek Canyon, and Jerome.
Red Rock Pass	\$5–15	Required for parking at most Forest Service trailheads around Sedona.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

TOPIC	DETAILS
Getting There	Sedona has no major airport; most visitors fly into Phoenix (PHX), about 2 hours south, or Flagstaff (FLG), about 45 minutes north.
Best Time	March through May and September through November bring the mildest temperatures; summer is hot in town but still cool at higher elevations like Oak Creek Canyon.
Solo Dining	Restaurant patios and bars make solo dining easy, and solo hiking is genuinely common on Sedona's busier trails.
Reservations	Elote Cafe doesn't take reservations and has real waits — plan around it rather than against it.
Trail Conditions	Flash flooding is possible in slot-canyon-adjacent areas during monsoon season (July–September) — check forecasts before hiking then.
Useful Apps	AllTrails for hike conditions, and the Red Rock Pass website for current trailhead parking requirements.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Get a Red Rock Pass before parking at Forest Service trailheads
- ☐ Start Devil's Bridge and other popular hikes early to beat crowds and heat
- ☐ Check monsoon-season flash flood forecasts if visiting July–September
- ☐ Bring more water than feels necessary on any red rock hike
- ☐ Book a high-clearance shuttle or Jeep tour if your rental car can't handle Dry Creek Road
- ☐ Reserve or plan around Elote Cafe's no-reservation wait
- ☐ Pack sun protection — high-desert sun is stronger than it feels

GoingSolo.Life

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.



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TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.

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