

The Richardson Lab's Guide for Visitors to Flagstaff

(Version 2, 3 January 2026)

***Restaurants, Coffeehouses,
Bars & Breweries, Things to See & Do,
How to Get Here, Hotels, and Medical Facilities***

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Welcome to Flagstaff!

Sitting at an elevation of 7,000' (2133 m) on the southern rim of the Colorado Plateau, Flagstaff is surrounded by mountains and pine forest in all directions. The climate is semi-arid, with distinct wet (summer and winter) and dry (spring and fall) seasons. Some years the summer rains are abundant, thanks to the North American Monsoon. Winter snowfall averages over 100 inches, but over 160 inches fell in the winter of 2022-23. On average there are 266 sunny days per year in Flagstaff.

The population of the City of Flagstaff is about 75,000, while the metropolitan area (which includes all of Coconino County, the second largest county in the US by area) population is about 144,000.

Flagstaff is quite isolated. The nearest large cities are Phoenix (144 miles to the south), Las Vegas, Nevada (253 miles to the west), and Albuquerque, New Mexico (323 miles to the east). The Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, and the red rock desert of southern Utah lie to the north, with Moab (population 5,000; 323 miles from Flagstaff) serving as the gateway town to Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, and Dead Horse Point State Park.

The Flagstaff area has been inhabited by Native Americans for over 8000 y, and the San Francisco Peaks are sacred to Hopi, Navajo (Diné), and Havasupai, along with other Southwest tribes, including the Southern Paiute, Hualapai, Yavapai, and Apache peoples.

Northern Arizona University (NAU) has about 21,000 students, including 5,500 graduate students. With over \$100 million in annual research expenditures, NAU was recently elevated to R1 (very high research spending and doctorate production) status in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. With over 25% of the student body identifying as Hispanic, NAU was federally designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2021. NAU is also unique in its mission to become the leading university serving Native Americans, and the student body represents over 100 tribal nations throughout the US.

Members of the Richardson Lab have assembled this guide for visitors. We hope you enjoy your stay, and we welcome any feedback you might have (email Andrew.Richardson@NAU.edu).



L to R: Welcome to Flagstaff, Inner Basin on the north side of the San Francisco Peaks, Aerial view of town

Restaurants

| Restaurant | Cuisine | Location | Comments |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Asia Station | Asian | 121 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of Asian dishes (orange chicken to pad Thai to curries to duck noodles). (Jacob). They also make the best pho in town and provide a cozy environment (Darby) |
| Biff's Bagels | Bagels/Cafe | 1800 N Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bagels are great, but if you're in a hurry, they do take their time! (Darby) |
| Brandy's Restaurant & Bakery | American/Bakery | 1500 E Cedar Ave, Flagstaff | |
| Cafe Stella | Italian | 7 E Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a scratch Italian restaurant that serves both brunch and dinner. Brunch has an exceptional variety of food. Dinner focuses on pasta dishes; you won't find Italian pizza's here! They make their pasta fresh every day and have a gluten free option. If the weather is nice, I would suggest the patio. (Darby) |
| Cornish Pasty | Cornish | 26 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chicken tikka pasty is the bomb (Andrew) |
| Dara Thai Restaurant | Thai | 14 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | |
| Delhi Palace | Indian | 2500 S Woodlands Village Blvd, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always a winner! (Andrew, +3 Jen, Oscar, and Jacob) |
| Diablo Burger | Burger | 120 N Leroux St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fancy burgers on English muffins. I recommend the señor smoke (Oscar). Any of their daily specials are also delicious (Darby) |
| Evans Fish and Chips | Fish and Chips | 113 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Killer fish and chips and meat pies. Just not much sit down space except for the side alley (Oscar) |
| Ewa's Thai Cuisine | Thai | 110 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I like fried rice and drunken noodles (Yujie). |
| Fat Olives | Italian | 2308 E Route 66, Flagstaff | |

| Restaurant | Cuisine | Location | Comments |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| The Station Café | American | 1800 N Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good paninis, and a convenient stop on your way out of town on Rt 180 (Andrew) |
| Forêt Flg | Cafe | 2 S Beaver St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French inspired great breakfast, award-winning scrambled eggs, 2024 James Beard Award nomination for Best Chef: Southwest (Jen) |
| Fratelli Pizza | Pizza | 119 W Phoenix Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come before 4pm to get pizza by the slice (Jen) |
| Gloria's Bakery | Mexican | 2106 N Fourth St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for breakfast and lunch; eat-in recommended because take-out can be very slow (Andrew, +1 Darby) |
| Himalayan Grill | Indian/Nepali | 801 S Milton Rd #3, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second best Indian food in town after Delhi Palace. Great naan. (Jacob) |
| Hot Wok Restaurant | Chinese | 1451 S Milton Rd, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic Chinese food. Grilled fish is good, but it takes some time to wait (Yujie) |
| Karma Sushi Bar Grill | Asian | 6 E. Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good bento box lunches, ramen, and pretty good sushi for a small town in the middle of nowhere (Andrew) |
| Macy's European Coffeehouse | Cafe/Tea | 14 S Beaver St, Flagstaff | |
| MartAnne's Burrito Palace | Mexican/Southwestern | 112 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supremely tasty, and you will never leave here feeling hungry! Try the breakfast chilaquiles (Andrew) |
| My Pita Wrap | Mediterranean | 1800 S Milton Rd #15, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great traditional Mediterranean cuisine, best pita in town, and large portions. (Jacob) |
| Pato Thai Cuisine | Thai | 20 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good value lunch special (Andrew) |
| Pizzicletta | Pizza | 203 W Phoenix Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More expensive than other pizza places in town, but excellent quality Neapolitan style pizza (location at Dark Sky Brewing also recommended) (Andrew) |
| Sosoba | Noodle House | 12 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great happy hour deal on food and drinks from 5-6pm daily (Jen) |

| Restaurant | Cuisine | Location | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---|
| Swaddee Thai | Thai | 115 E Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good value lunch special (Andrew) |
| Tacos Los Altos (eastside location) | Mexican | 3650 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer to Sonoran-style Mexican food compared to other places in town. Great breakfast burritos. (Jacob, from Tucson) |
| Toasted Owl | Cafe | 12 S Mikes Pike St, Flagstaff | |



L to R: Martanne's Burrito Palace, Heritage Square, Mother Road Brewing.

Coffee Shops and Cafés

| Coffee Shop | Type | Location | Comments |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Awa Kava | Coffee | 218 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | |
| Cedar House Coffee Shop & Bakery | Coffee, Tea and Pastries | 2009 E Cedar Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is on the east side of town, if you find yourself here. They are never too busy, so it is a great place to get work done. Their coffee is good, but their pastries are even better! (Darby) |
| Fire Creek | Cafe | 22 Historic Rte 66, Flagstaff | |
| Forêt Flg | Cafe | 2 S Beaver St #170, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See note about food above – coffee good too (Jen) |
| Kickstand Kafe | Cafe | 719 N Humphreys St, Flagstaff | |
| Late for the Train | Cafe | 19 E Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back outside patio is great in warmer weather (Jen) |
| Lund Canyon Coffee | Coffee | 601 Piccadilly Dr #10, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European-style cafe nestled in a busy shopping plaza with lots of restaurants and fitness studios nearby. A nice walk from campus. Customer service is the best in town, and their coffee is bold. (Jacob) |
| Macy's European Coffeehouse & Bakery | Coffee and breakfast/lunch | 14 S Beaver St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking distance from campus. Reasonable prices and all sorts of good coffee drinks from americanos to the infamous “Macy’s special” (latte made with chocolate milk). Great grab-n-go pastries and hot food for dining in. Patio seating is a great way to experience Flagstaff in motion. (Jacob) |
| Matador | Cafe | 203 S Milton Rd, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great breakfast burrito (Jen) |
| Petit Marche | Coffee | 111 E Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small interior but can grab coffee from window and walk around downtown (Jen) |
| Single Speed Coffee Roasters | Coffee | 1000 E Butler Ave #111, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally roasted espresso, indoor and outdoor seating, and unique coffee/matcha drinks. Their Southwest burrito is AMAZING. (Jacob) |

| Coffee Shop | Type | Location | Comments |
|-------------|------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sosta | Cafe | 413 N San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the higher \$ end but a good place to work (Jen) |
| Steep | Tea | 1 E Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you can get a seat by the window, it's a great place to people watch or work (Jen) |

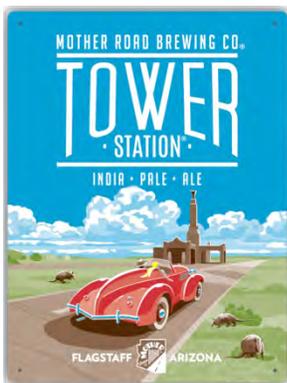


L to R: Fire Creek, Matador, Macy's.

Bars and Breweries

| Bar | Type | Location | Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Beaver Street Brewery | Brewery | 11 S Beaver St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family-friendly with good American cuisine food (Jen) |
| Dark Sky | Brewery | 117 N Beaver St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimental beers, big patio and events almost every weeknight (Jen); Pizzacletta pizza is great but may not fill you up (Andrew) |
| Flag Brew | Brewery | 16 E Route 66, Flagstaff | |
| FLG Terroir | Wine bar | 17 N San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fantastic wine selection, tasty desserts (get the tiramisu if you can), and a nice view of downtown while sipping. (Jacob) |
| High Country Motor Lodge Bar and Lounge | Bar | 1000 W Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off the beaten path, at a boutique hotel, also has food that I've heard is good. Drinks are pricey, but the liquor selection is good, and the vibe is relaxing. Sometimes they have live music. (Jacob) |
| Historic Barrel House | Brewery | 110 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside patio and inside taproom; more chill than Mother Road. Huge array of house-brewed beers (Andrew) |
| Hops on Birch | Bar (? Might be only beer) | 22 E Birch Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dogs allowed inside and trivia on Thursdays (Jen) |
| Lumberyard | Brewery | 5 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very popular with out-of-towners, not so much with locals (Andrew) |
| McMillan | Bar | 2 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5 martinis/cocktails on Thursdays (Jen) |
| Mother Road | Brewery | 7 S Mikes Pike St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try the 'famous' tower station (Jen); great beers a long-time favorite but often too busy to be enjoyable (Andrew) |
| Mountain Top Tap | Bar | 10 E Route 66, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trivia on Tuesdays and can get hotdog with chips for \$6 (Jen) |
| Pay n Take | Bar | 12 W Aspen Ave, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local spot, can get single canned drinks to-go (Jen) |
| Rendezvous | Bar | 100 N San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best espresso martini in town, good coffee during the day, younger crowd at night, and in a historic location (Hotel Monte Vista). (Jacob) |

| Bar | Type | Location | Comments |
|-----------------|---------|----------------------------------|---|
| The Annex | Bar | 50 S San Francisco St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft cocktails (Jen); outside patio within a historic Basque handball court (Andrew) |
| Uptown Pubhouse | Pub | 114 N Leroux St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool tables (Jen) |
| Wanderlust | Brewery | 1519 N Main St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside food allowed, still has that local brewery feel, owned by good friends, trivia on most Wednesdays (Jen) |
| Zane Grey | Bar | 23 N Leroux St, Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balcony with great views of downtown especially at sunset, great happy hour deals from 5-7pm (Jen) |



L to R: The most famous beer in Flagstaff (named after a Route 66 tourist stop in Shamrock, Texas), Historic Barrel House, Wanderlust Brewing.

Things to See & Do, In and Around Flagstaff

| Activity | Description | Location | Comments |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| Aspen Corner/Arizona Trail hiking | A parking area/trailhead on the way up Snowbowl Road. Beautiful at all times of year, but especially in autumn when the leaves are changing. There are many hiking and trail running options. A 20-minute drive northwest of town. | Northwest of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A great spot to explore the Arizona Trail from. Leaf-peeping is best in October. Hike north from the trailhead for a mile to get spectacular views to the west. Free! (Jacob) |
| Buffalo Park | A 2-mile hike offering beautiful views of the San Francisco Peaks. | Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close place for good star gazing and beautiful sunsets (Jen) |
| Downtown Flagstaff | Explore shops, museums, and parks in the heart of the city. | Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very popular with out-of-towners! Small-town feel and lots of local shops (Andrew) |
| Flagstaff Community Market | Every Sunday from May to October, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Right next to Wheeler Park downtown in the City Hall parking lot (211 W. Aspen Ave.). | Downtown Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nice weekend activity with Flagstaff- and Arizona-based vendors. Jewelry, clothing, produce, and food. (Jacob) |
| Flagstaff Extreme Adventure Course | An outdoor adventure park featuring zip lines and obstacle courses. | Flagstaff | |
| Grand Canyon N.P. | One of the world's natural wonders, offering spectacular vistas, hiking, and more. | Northwest of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It certainly is Grand! (Andrew) • The best way to truly experience the canyon is to backpack down into it (ideally to Phantom Ranch) but if that's not an option the paved trail along the South Rim is very accessible with great overlooks and stops like the Geology Museum. I also recommend taking the shuttle or biking to Hermit's Rest to escape the crowds and enjoy quieter vistas. A short hike I'd recommend is South Kaibab Trail to Ooh Aah Point but the canyon is no joke so go prepared (Jen) |

| Activity | Description | Location | Comments |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Lava River Cave | Explore a ¾ mile-long lava tube formed 700,000 y ago. Dress warmly and bring very bright headlamps. | Northwest of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitch black and near-freezing temperatures year-round, be prepared! Also an amazing experience (Andrew) |
| Lowell Observatory | A historic observatory offering educational programs and telescope viewing. | Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My recommendation is to explore the grounds during the day (they offer lots of tours) and then come back after dinner for stargazing when they have the telescopes set up, your ticket is good all day for re-entry (Jen) |
| Meteor Crater Natural Landmark | A well-preserved meteorite impact site with a visitor center and guided tours. | East of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Privately owned and may seem like a tourist trap, but also a phenomenal impact crater. Still, there is nowhere else like it on earth! (Andrew) |
| Montezuma's Castle National Monument | Stunning 5-story dwelling set into an alcove in a high cliff; built over 700 y ago by the Sinagua people. | Camp Verde | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worth a visit, especially if you have an "America the Beautiful" parks pass (which you should, anyway, if you are in the area for long) (Andrew) |
| Museum of Northern Arizona | Showcases the art, history, and science of the region, with a focus on Native cultures and natural history. | Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small local museum with some amazing artifacts; budget a few hours to learn about the history of the Colorado Plateau (Andrew) |
| Northern Arizona University Art Museum | Features both contemporary and historical art with a focus on the American West. | Flagstaff | |
| Red Mountain | Short and mellow hike through pinyon-juniper woodlands into the amphitheater of a 740,000 year-old cinder cone. | Northwest of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great for families (Andrew) |
| Riordan Mansion State Historic Park | Tour this 1904 mansion with its original Arts and Crafts style interiors. | Flagstaff | |
| Sedona | Known for its stunning red rock scenery, vibrant art scene, and spiritual new-age vibe. | Sedona | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive early or be prepared for heavy traffic (Andrew) Airport loop is quick and accessible, offering 360 views, while hikes like Subway Cave (close to vortex too), Cathedral Rock, Devil's Bridge, or Soldiers Pass get you closer to the red rock scenery. West Fork is also beautiful, with water crossings and gives off vibe of Zion's Narrows (Jen) |

| Activity | Description | Location | Comments |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Sunset Crater National Monument | Short hikes around a volcano crater exploring lava flows. | Northeast of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lava flows are a remarkable contrast to the pine forests to the south and grasslands to the north (Andrew) |
| Walnut Canyon National Monument | Features interesting geology, beautiful views, and Sinagua society ruins accessed via short hike. | Southeast of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Trail passes by 25 archaeological sites; absolutely worth the hour it takes to do the hike (Andrew) |
| Wupatki National Monument | Trails through Native American archaeological sites and ruins (including a 104 room pueblo) on the plains north of Flagstaff. | Northeast of Flagstaff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy hiking and some amazing sites pre-dating European settlement. Worth a trip given proximity to Flagstaff (Andrew) |



L to R: The Grand Canyon, Lava River Cave, and Wukoki Pueblo at Wupatki National Monument.

Getting Here

Flagstaff is located at the intersection of two major interstate highways: I-17, which runs south to Phoenix (where it connects to I-10, running west to Los Angeles, and southeast to Tucson and beyond), and I-40, which runs west through the Mojave Desert to Barstow and Bakersfield, California, and east to Albuquerque and beyond).

Flagstaff is served by a small airport (FLG), which has multiple flights daily to Phoenix (PHX) and Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) on American Airlines.

The Phoenix airport is one of the country's busiest, and is highly ranked for its amenities, convenience, and operational efficiency (recognized as #1 by the WSJ in 2023 and #3 for mega airports in J.D. Power's 2024 study, according to Google's AI overview). It is served by all the major US airlines and many international airlines, with flights to Mexico, Canada, Asia, and Europe (<https://www.skyharbor.com/flights/where-we-fly/>).

If possible, it is highly recommended to fly in and out of Flagstaff. The small size of the airport and proximity to town (about 3 miles) make for convenient, hassle-free travel. However, flying in and out of Phoenix opens up many more options in terms of flights and airlines.

To get from FLG airport to campus or a hotel in Flagstaff, it is not necessary to rent a car. Taxis and Ubers are inexpensive and the trip is short.

To get from PHX airport to campus or a hotel in Flagstaff, renting a car at the PHX airport may be the most convenient option. The Groome Transportation shuttle (<https://groometransportation.com/flagstaff/>) makes multiple trips daily between PHX (stops at all terminals) and Flagstaff.

Where to Stay

Flagstaff has a large number of hotels, from dirt cheap to somewhat upscale. While the least expensive options (<\$100) may seem like a good deal, location, cleanliness and safety are likely concerns. The Motel du Beau (19 W Phoenix Ave, Flagstaff 86001) is one exception, and it may be a good option for visitors on a tight budget (previous visitors who have stayed there gave it positive reviews).

Proximity to campus and downtown make these good options where many Richardson Lab visitors have stayed in the past:

- Drury Inn & Suites, 300 S Milton Rd, Flagstaff 86001
- Embassy Inn & Suites by Hilton, 706 S Milton Rd, Flagstaff 86001
- Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, 224 S Mikes Pike St, Flagstaff 86001

The Little America Hotel (2515 E Butler Ave, Flagstaff 86004) is a bit farther from campus (5 minute drive, 2 mile walk) and somewhat more expensive than the above options, but it is a bit more unique (not just another chain hotel), and it is very popular with families. It backs up against Ponderosa pine forest, where there are walking trails and a disc golf course.

TripAdvisor and Expedia both have more extensive lists of local hotels.

For long-term stays, the Merriam-Powell Research Center has a small apartment at the Flagstaff Arboretum which may be available for rent by the week or month. It is about a 5 mile drive from campus, and has a very remote feeling — it is surrounded by ponderosa pine forest and open meadows, and elk, deer, and the adorable Abert's squirrel are all likely to be spotted.



L to R: Little America Hotel, Abert's squirrel, Drury Inn & Suites.

Nearby Medical Facilities

1. Flagstaff Medical Center

- Location: 1200 N Beaver St, Flagstaff 86001
- Services: Offers comprehensive emergency services, including a Level 1 Trauma Center, and full-service hospital care with specialized medical and surgical services.
- Contact: +1 928-779-3366

2. Flagstaff Urgent Care

- Location: 2700 S Woodlands Village Blvd #700, Flagstaff 86001 (just southwest of campus)
- Services: Offers treatment for common illnesses, minor trauma injuries, and disease symptoms. They accept most insurance plans. No x-rays or vaccines on-site.
- Contact: +1 928-440-5406
- Website (see hours): <https://www.flagstaffurgentcare.com/>

There are numerous pharmacies in Flagstaff. The Walgreen's on S. Milton is a short walk from NAU's North Campus, and there are also pharmacies inside the Target and Safeway stores along S. Milton.

There is no 24 h pharmacy in Flagstaff.