

» THE FEED  
OUT & ABOUT TUCSON



## TUCSON ON FOOT

By Eric Lucas

» **There are many kinds of dogs**, and the one I have in hand right now is a mixed-breed dog, indeed. The Sonoran hot dog is one of Tucson’s highlights, a blend of culinary influences that, here at Ruiz Hot Dogs, south of downtown, deliciously represents this Arizona city’s food culture.

This delicacy—which many say originated in Mexico before gaining popularity in Tucson—usually consists of a Mexican *bolillo* (a thick bread roll) holding a fat, grilled frankfurter wrapped in bacon and topped with rancho or pinto beans, mayonnaise, onion, tomato, jalapeño and perhaps a chile sauce.

It may not have been due to the dog, but in 2015, Tucson became America’s first UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy—to honor the area’s deep agricultural history (as well as local food traditions). And in this town that’s often called “The Old Pueblo,” Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures create an urban area ripe with the flavors of diverse culinary, historical and linguistic influences. A stroll through the city center reveals many of these.

Tucson’s Turquoise Trail (formerly called the Presidio Trail) walking tour begins at the Presidio San Agustín del Tucson Museum, a reconstruction of the 1775 fort that Spanish soldiers built to colonize a valley hitherto inhabited by Pima and Tohono O’odham peoples. Nearby, a statue of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa

reflects links to the area’s Hispanic past, while The Hotel Congress is the site where the gangster John Dillinger fled a fire and was captured (peacefully) by local police in 1934. Today this snazzy, updated establishment is a lively boutique hotel, restaurant and music venue.

The renovated Tucson Historic Amtrak Depot complex hosts a transportation museum and a farmers market on certain days where patrons can find local delights such as prickly-pear jelly, mesquite-flour baked goods and chile pepper-infused chocolate. Nearby, Cafe Poca Cosa is a venerable culinary establishment devoted to gourmet Southern Arizona cuisine.

» **The Presidio San Agustín del Tucson Museum has re-enactors and docents, such as at top left, to explain local history. The site is a starting point for a walk on the Turquoise Trail, above.**

Detour slightly south to find Barrio Viejo, a neighborhood of old adobe houses, galleries, cafes and shops that feature local goods.

To top off a Tucson walk, visitors can tuck into Downtown Kitchen + Cocktail’s “J Dawg,” which ups the hot dog ante with chorizo black beans, smoked poblano crema and pickled nopalitos (cactus slices). Any fancier, and this dog would need a pedigree. ✂



### MORE TUCSON HIGHLIGHTS

- **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum:** Nearly 100 acres of living exhibits, mostly outdoors. Live saguaros, mesquite, bobcats, javelinas and hummingbirds are among the highlights.
- **Saguaro National Park:** Dramatic landscape and varied recreation activities, with units east and west of Tucson.
- **Mission San Xavier del Bac:** An ornate Spanish colonial church south of downtown; construction ended in 1797.
- **Pima Air & Space Museum:** Explores the region’s long aeronautical history; houses about 350 historical aircraft.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PEDRO ROMANO; LEE MCLAUGHLIN; PETE GREGOIRE