

Sustainability Initiatives: Agritourism

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Agritourism

Agritourism creates stronger **connections from consumers to farm lifestyles and products**, in both urban and rural communities.

Agritourism is a commercial enterprise of a working farm, ranch, horticultural, or agribusiness operation conducted for the **enjoyment, education, or active involvement of visitors**. This business is used to generate supplemental income to the owner of the enterprise.

Agritourism is important to local tourism because it offers an outlet to build relationships between the agricultural community and **local tourism** industry by incorporating opportunities for tour groups, educating school children, and hosting public events. Agritourism **empowers** farmers and connects them to the tourism sector. It increases rural economic development with **added income**, more jobs and longer term employment into shoulder seasons. Agritourism also provides additional uses of the land resource.

Economic Impact

Agritourism creates cultural capital for destinations, as well as economic impact. According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, **144,530 farms sold \$1.3 billion** in fresh edible agricultural products directly to consumers. Nearly 50,000 farms **directly sold to retailers** such as restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses/organizations which then sold to consumers. Over **33,000 farms** offered agritourism and recreational services in 2012.

As a **\$17.1 billion** industry in Arizona, agriculture is a sizeable sector of the economy. Arizona is ranked 8th in total horticultural sales alone, according to USDA NASS 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties report.

Creating **multifunctional** farms adds to the sustainability of businesses. Agritourism creates further economic impact, as well as awareness of local food production. In Hawaii, for example, a 2006 study found agritourism activities to be valued at **\$38.8 million and 112 farms** gained income from agritourism.

Results of USDA's 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey will be released in December 2016 providing further information on the impact of agritourism.

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Abundance of Local Food & Beverage Production

Today's travelers value authentic and unique experiences. Locally produced food and unique culinary creations help give a **destination character** and create a unique sense of place for consumers.

All around the state of Arizona there are a number of local food and beverage production farms of many types, including distilleries, wineries, dairy, citrus, peach farms and many more.

As one example, Yuma, AZ (and surrounding area) is the **world's largest producer** of premium-quality Medjool dates and the winter vegetable capital of the world.

Visitors to Arizona can find lavender, citrus, olives, honey, apples, chili peppers, corn, lettuce, dates and more.



<http://arizonaexperience.org/land/u-pick-farm-map>

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Abundance of Local Food & Beverage Production

Visit Mesa, of Arizona, has a user friendly webpage, titled the **Fresh Foodie Trail**, that has information on surrounding agritourism hotspots and itineraries for travelers to utilize when planning their next adventure.

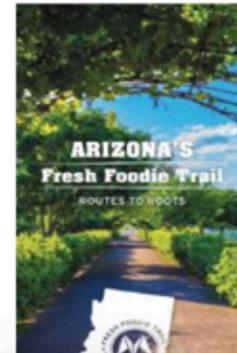
www.visitmesa.com/lifestyles/fresh-foodie/

A similar template can be used in regions throughout Arizona. Itineraries can also be created to connect agritourism sites across the state.

AGRITOURISM IN CITY LIMITLESS® FRESH FOODIE TRAIL

In Mesa, our bountiful harvest is one that we proudly share with our visitors all year long. Here, fresh experiences and a treasured heritage of family farms and long-standing festivals make for lasting memories. The area has long served as a culinary gateway to Greater Phoenix with the neighboring farms and agritourism attractions providing a continuous bounty of seasonal goods for visitors to enjoy. Now, visitors can hop in their car and take a road trip filled with delights and culinary education. A dozen popular food-driven experiences line the Fresh Foodie Trail that winds visitors through Mesa and beyond into our regional towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek. Experience charm and serene landscapes as you head south and east on a quest for the freshest food you can find – all from Arizona.

Plan your visit at all these stops on the Fresh Foodie Trail:

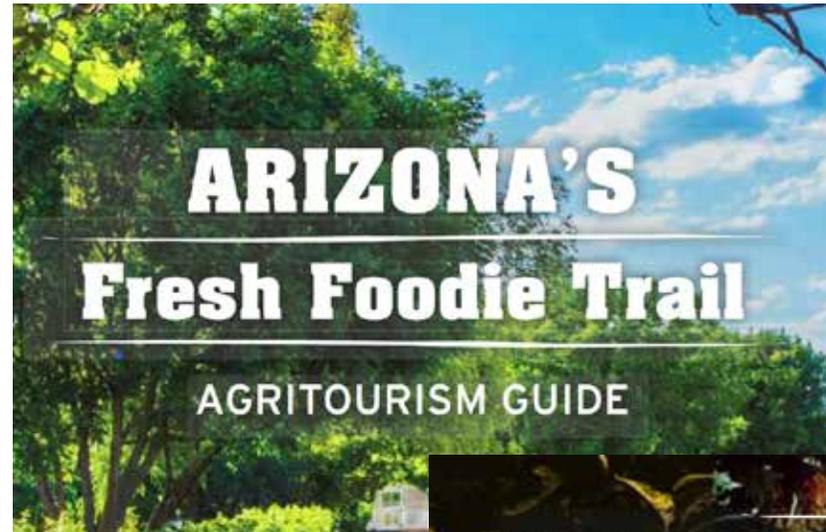


- The Orange Patch
- True Garden Urban Farm
- Superstition (Dairy) Farm
- Queen Creek Olive Mill
- Schnepf Farms
- Hayden Flour Mills at Sossaman Farms
- Agritopia
- Vertuccio Farms
- Mesa Urban Garden
- The Pork Shop

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Abundance of Local Food & Beverage Production

Visit Mesa's "Fresh Foodie Trail" information is also available as a **printed brochure**.

This creates great **opportunity** for distributing agritourism information at various outlets including farmers markets, restaurants, hotels, farms, Arizona visitor centers, airports, grocery stores, and other tourism partners.



Arizona Agritourism Assets: Abundance of Local Food & Beverage Production



Similar to the Visit Mesa website, www.kentuckyfarmsarefun.com, provides an up-to-date and highly **interactive** website showcasing agritourism within the state of Kentucky.

As seen to the left, each of the pictured icons are links to a specific sector of agritourism, with further information about the user's selection.

The website also highlights the **importance of agritourism**, under the scope of industry, to communities and the state overall.

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Urban Culinary Scene

In 2015, Tucson was designated the first **UNESCO Capital of Gastronomy** in the U.S. as part of UNESCO's Creative Cities initiative. The agricultural history of Tucson, sustainable agriculture, and an innovative culinary scene makes Tucson an urban culinary asset in Arizona.

Additionally, the urban area of Phoenix is often popping up new establishments that host an array of culinary creativity in the Valley. An often touted, and trending, success in the culinary industry is the use of **farm-to-table** practices. Farm-to-table has become a prized aspect of foodie culture due to the distance society has created between consumers and what they eat.

The website www.knowwhereyourfoodcomesfrom.com has a farm-to-table page that allows consumers to locate legitimate participating establishments in a given region of the world. Arizona currently has 23 dining establishments mentioned on the website.

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Urban Culinary Scene

Urban hotels have also begun supporting the farm-to-table philosophy in cities such as Seattle, Portland, New York City, and Toronto. Select hotels are creating **rooftop gardens**, greenhouses and bee farms of their own, while others source food from **local farmers**.

These gardens generally are not used to supply the entire culinary production, however, they can be an **enticing feature** and additional job creator for any food-oriented facility.

A **growing segment** of consumers are focused on making **healthy food** choices such as local, organic, vegetarian, vegan and gluten free. Hospitality providers that **specialize** and promote these types of cuisine are likely to grow their operations and food system.

Local, Sustainable & Organic Foods



The Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor includes a page on their website listing all farms from which they source food.

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Unique (Foodie) Communities

While the larger urban centers of Arizona host an array of **culinary culture**, it is important to not forget about all of the smaller communities throughout the state that also feature a variety of agritourism experiences. These include u-picks, breweries, horseback riding, rodeos, bed and breakfasts on farms and ranches, road-side markets, agriculture education, and others.

These smaller, and often more rural, communities often provide their **own flare** to any new-coming traveler. Agritourism generally acts as a secondary, but at times primary, means of economic growth to smaller areas.

Europe and Asia have been utilizing agritourism as a means of financial stability in rural areas for several decades now. Approximately 1/3 of all farm businesses in the United Kingdom currently engage in non-traditional agricultural enterprises. The United States has been slow to adopt the development of the agritourism industry, however, **successes** in areas such as the West Coast and Northeast have helped further the movement (Bernardo, Valentin, & Leatherman, 2004).

Arizona Agritourism Assets: Unique (Foodie) Communities

Overnight stays at farms, volunteer opportunities and seasonal festivals/events are other opportunities to incorporate agritourism into business practices.

Recipe demonstrations are also advised to **engage visitors** in learning and continuing to use local produce.



At Winvian Farm in Connecticut guests have a array of activities to choose from including enjoying the gardens and farm-to-table dining.

www.winvian.com

Other Best Practices

A recent NPR report revealed some restaurants are wrongfully claiming to be farm-to-table. With that in mind, a **deep commitment and constant compliance** to sustainable efforts is imperative. Rather than using words such as sustainable and local in marketing efforts, product features such as **labeling**, compliance standards and auditing should be highlighted for the consumer.

Harvested Here Food Hub in Chattanooga, TN connects farmers to the local community. The “Harvested Here” stamp is placed on all items they collect, which is a recognized and **trusted brand standard** in the community.

Arizona labeling can **connect** agritourism throughout the state. Hotels, restaurants, museums, and even national and state parks, can utilize standard Arizona labeling. Unique to Arizona is the large amount of tribal land and native culture. As business develops on these lands, labeling processes can also be utilized on tribal lands to create a **cohesive** image throughout the state.

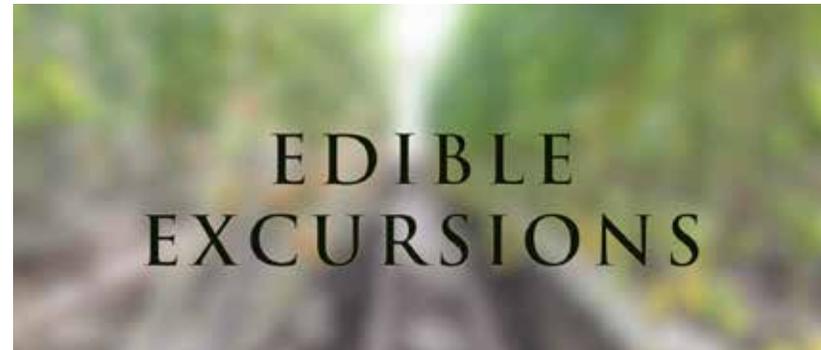


www.harvestedhere.org

Other Best Practices

[Edible Baja Arizona](#) is a magazine dedicated to connecting consumers to local food production and reporting on **the flavors and rich culture** of the Baja Arizona region. They offer “Edible Excursions,” group tours which bring the pages of the magazine to life and follow the trail from farm to table. Guests go behind the scenes at local farms and wineries, meet farmers and chefs, and enjoy great culinary experiences.

Arizona businesses (tour operators, hotels, farms, etc.) can partner to create other similar experiences to expand agritourism practices under a **farm-to-table branding**. <http://ediblebajaarizona.com/edible-excursions>



Other Best Practices

Storytelling creates an **emotional connection** between consumers and businesses. It is recommended that marketing pieces, such as e-newsletters, blogs, brochures, etc. feature employee vignettes and stories as an opportunity to learn about the operation of farms and food production. This provides a more **personal relationship** with visitors (and potential visitors).

The agricultural history of the land of Arizona and how it was acquired by the current owners can be highlighted. Also, family farms can highlight their family history in agriculture.

Schnepf Farms is a designated “Arizona Treasure” with a rich history to share.

www.schnepffarms.com/farm/history/



Resources

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center
www.agmrc.org

Agritourism World
www.agritourismworld.com

American Agritourism Council
<http://americanagritourismcouncil.org>

American Farm Bureau Federation
www.fb.org

Arizona Farm Bureau's Fill Your Plate
<http://fillyourplate.org>

Arizona Department of Agriculture
<https://agriculture.az.gov>

Arizona Farm Bureau
www.azfb.org

Arizona Office of Tourism
<https://tourism.az.gov>

Edible Baja Arizona
<http://ediblebajaarizona.com>

Edible Phoenix
<http://ediblephoenix.com>

Local First Good Food Finder
<http://goodfoodfinderaz.com>

USDA Census of Agriculture
www.agcensus.usda.gov

Bernardo, D., Valentin, L., & Leatherman, J. (2004, August). Agritourism: if we build it, will they come. In *Risk and Profit Conference, Manhattan, KS* (pp. 19-20).

NPR Staff (April 2016). 'Farm To Fable'? Tampa Probe Finds Many Restaurants Lie About Sourcing. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/04/14/474258801/farm-to-fable-tampa-probe-finds-many-restaurants-lie-about-sourcing>