



# Making the Grade

Story | **HALEY SHAPLEY**

**N**o matter how long ago your academic career was, there's something about college towns that's irresistible. Add these three to your bucket list—they score an A any day.

## TAKE SOME TIME TO TOOL AROUND TEMPE

Although it lives somewhat in the shadow of Phoenix, Tempe is a destination unto itself, and not just because it houses Arizona State University. You can feel a bit like a college coed when staying at the Graduate Tempe, a hip hotel decorated like the dorm room you wish you had. Room keys look like old student IDs, and a giant ant farm greets you behind the front desk.

Soak up some of that energy floating in the air from all the young people and get active—there are tons of opportunities for recreation here. An early morning hike up A Mountain (so named because there's a giant "A" on the side) is a great way to start the day, as is a stack of sweet potato pancakes at Snooze. Then get out on the water at Tempe Town Lake, where you can float in a kayak or pedal boat under bridges, with mountains on the horizon that look more like a painting

than real life. And don't miss the Desert Botanical Garden, where the huge variety—and surprising beauty—of all the cacti is sure to blow you away. Finish off the day in college-student style with a custom ice cream sandwich for only \$2.50 from Slickables.

## LEGENDS AND LORE

First celebrated in 1917, the century-old tradition of Lantern Walk involves ASU students, faculty, alumni and supporters climbing to the top of A Mountain with lanterns in hand the Friday night before Homecoming.

ADAM RODRIGUEZ





## APPRECIATE THE ARTS IN ANN ARBOR

If your first thought when you hear Ann Arbor is the Big House—aka Michigan Stadium, the largest stadium in the United States—you're not alone. But the hometown of the University of Michigan is about so much more than football. It has a charming downtown with a pedestrian shopping area, fantastic food for a city of its size, and plenty of impressive arts and culture opportunities.

For a one-of-a-kind stop, head to Motawi Tileworks, where every Thursday at 11 a.m. there's a free tour of the facility. This is where beautiful American art tiles are created, and even if you're not familiar with the name, you've surely seen the striking designs. Each tile is touched at least 40 times in the process of being made, adding new meaning to the term "handcrafted." For more art, browse the galleries clustered near the intersection of Main and Liberty streets, or drop in to the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), which always has multiple special exhibits on display in addition to a robust permanent collection of more than 21,000 works. While you're art hopping, grab a casual bite at Cuban-inspired Frita Batidos, where the crisped plantains and tropical milkshakes are a delightful pick-me-up.

### LEGENDS AND LORE

Rumor has it that if you steal a kiss with your sweetie under the Engineering Arch at the stroke of midnight, you're destined to marry. For those tying the knot on campus, it's a popular spot for photos.



## DIG INTO THE CULTURE OF BOULDER

Nature lovers, foodies, shopping enthusiasts and academics are all equally at home in Boulder, site of the University of Colorado Boulder campus. Set the stage for your visit with a little history lesson—Boulder Walking Tours does a great job covering what makes the city special. If it's the historic feel you're after, stay at circa-1909 Hotel Boulderado or at Chautauqua Park, which has charming cottages, each with their own personality.

There are more great opportunities for tours, including at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), at Redstone Meadery and with Local Table Tours, which will take you on a tasting extravaganza on and around Pearl Street, hitting a mix of old favorites and new hot spots. For a restaurant that somehow manages to combine those two qualities, the Roadhouse Boulder Depot is less than 2 years old, but it's set in a train depot from 1890—the mix of original touches and new décor strikes just the right balance.

When you're ready for afternoon tea, your options are as endless as a bottomless kettle. Take a tour of the Celestial Seasonings factory, drop into the Ku Cha House of Tea for a cup of matcha, or settle in at the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse for a proper afternoon tea complete with a three-tiered tower of pastries and sandwiches. ♡

### LEGENDS AND LORE

Before every home game at Folsom Field, fans rub the horns of the bronze buffalo sculpture out front. Inside the stadium, watch real-life buffalo mascot Ralphie run in a horseshoe pattern, handled by a team of student-athletes.

