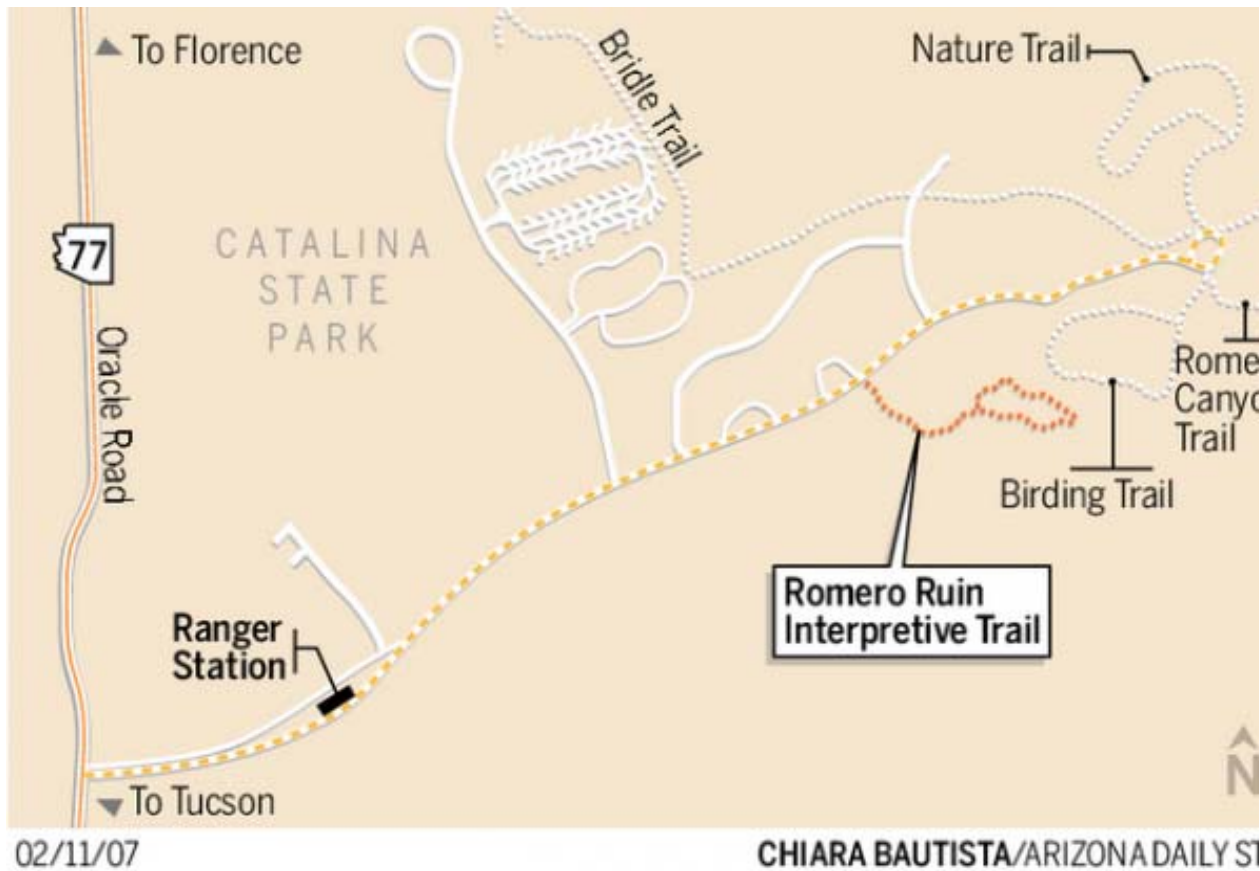


http://tucson.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/romero-ruin-interpretive-trail-tracing-human-history-in-the-area/article_7c18fd6f-8026-5c69-a4e4-a00581c61ab8.html

Romero Ruin Interpretive Trail: Tracing human history in the area

By Doug Kreutz [Arizona Daily Star](#) Feb 11, 2007



Hike to the crumbling ruins of a house built by rancher Francisco [Romero in the mid-1800s](#) and you might think: Now that's old!

Ah, but age is relative.

Trek a little farther along the Romero Ruin Interpretive Trail and you'll come to the remains of a wall put up around A.D. 1150 by Indians known today as the Hohokam.

Old? Yes. But not compared to the nearby pit-house village site dating to perhaps A.D. 500.

And so it goes on a sort of time-trek into history on the 0.75-mile trail at Catalina State Park north of Tucson.

The route, which is mostly flat after a brief climb at the beginning, leads to no grand, well-preserved structures from centuries past. Instead, it winds among piles of stones, fragments of walls and other faint signs of lives lived long ago.

Information panels along the way trace human history in the area to approximately 1,500 years ago.

At that time, residents of the neighborhood made their homes in simple pit houses that were partly embedded in the earth.

Later in the history of the site, the Hohokam constructed a walled village measuring roughly 250 feet by 180 feet, according to archaeological evidence.

A depression in the terrain marks the site of an ancient ball court — an 80-foot-long playing field apparently used for a game involving a ball made from plant sap.

By the time rancher Romero built his small house on a ridge a century-and-a-half ago, the Hohokam dwellings were already ancient history.

You'll note that all those former residents of the area had picked a very scenic spot to live. Craggy ridges of the Catalina Mountains form a dramatic backdrop for the site.

To reach Catalina State Park from Tucson, go north on Oracle Road, which becomes Arizona 77. The entrance to the park is at Milepost 81 on the highway.

When you pay the park's \$6 per vehicle entrance fee, you'll get a map that will direct you to the trailhead.

Next week: Off the beaten path.