

## UA Sense of Place Trip #2: Tucson Mountains

Trip #2 circumnavigates the Tucson Mountains, which were formed by explosive, caldera-style volcanism 70 million years ago, when Arizona was located on the western edge of the continent and colliding with subducting oceanic crust (Bezy, 2005; Kring, 2002). Geology emphasizes describing rocks and deciphering what they tell about landscape history, all for the purpose of visualizing plate tectonics and geologic time.

At each stop of Trip #2, iconic plants of the Sonoran Desert are featured. In particular, Prospect Wash allows easy entry into a lush, diverse tract of Sonoran Desert, where multiple leguminous tree species as well as many cactus species are common (Phillips and Comus, 2000). Shreve's (1936) concepts of multiple layers and varied life forms in the Sonoran Desert become obvious, as does the fact that the Sonoran is a highly productive desert (McGinnies et al., 1968). Various food and drink items derived from desert plants are sampled on this trip, including prickly pear pads and saguaro lemonade, thereby challenging conventional opinion that deserts are desolate places with limited food resources.

A rock art site known as Signal Hill emphatically connects geology and ecology with cultural history. At Signal Hill, prehistoric Hohokam and historic O'odham left marks on basaltic rocks overlooking the desert. Both groups integrated floodwater farming with foraging as part of an annual cycle to adapt to desert areas far removed from perennial streamflow (Castetter and Bell, 1942; Crosswhite, 1980; Doolittle, 2000:309–346).

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