



Saguaro National Park (East) Naturalist Program Schedule December, 2015

Programs meet at the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center, 3693 S. Old Spanish Trail unless otherwise noted. All programs are subject to change. Call the visitor center at (520) 733-5153 for updates. See www.nps.gov/sagu for other programs.

December 1, 4, 7, 8 10:00 a.m. **Sonoran Lifestyles** *Guided Walk*
11, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 28, 29

Join a park naturalist on this 2-hour, 1-mile walk to discover how plants and animals adapt to life in the desert. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water.

December 1, 7, 8, 14 11:15 a.m. **A Taste of the Desert** *garden walk*
15, 21, 22, 28, 29

Join us for a stroll through our cactus garden and learn what plants can be used for food, clothing, medicine, shelter and much more. *Wheelchair accessible.*

December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 9:00 a.m. **Desert Morning Hike** *Guided Hike*

Join volunteer Dick Hollenback on this 3-hour, 4-mile hike to explore Saguaro National Park. Wear sturdy hiking boots and bring water and a trail snack.

December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 10:00 a.m. **Visitor's Choice/Naturalist's Choice** *Guided Walk*

Here's your chance to take a walk with a park naturalist with 10+ years' experience in the Sonoran Desert. Bring your favorite question or topic, or just enjoy the best stories of the day: wildlife, wildflowers, or wilderness, as the weather and the seasons change. Sturdy shoes and water are recommended.

December 2 & 23 11:00 a.m. **A Sticky Situation at Saguaro** *Presentation*
12 1:00 p.m.

Here at Saguaro National Park East we have 20 species of cactus and each is beautiful in its own way. Finding them all can be a challenge, but we will see each one in a stunning photo gallery and learn a few uses these plants have to those living here and beyond. Theater presentation. *Wheelchair accessible.*

December 2, 9, 23 2:00 p.m. **Cactus Caravan** *Auto Tour*

Begin your exploration of the Cactus Forest Drive with a park ranger and become familiar with some of the common cacti. A great introduction to the park! *Wheelchair accessible*

December 3 & 17 10:00 a.m. **Where Have All the Saguaros Gone?** *2 mile guided hike*

Why does it look like our saguaros are disappearing? Join a park naturalist to discover what historic activities, including lime kilns, have affected our saguaro forest and learn how these giant cacti are faring today.

December 3 & 17 2:00 p.m. **Drive-Thru Geology** *1 hour auto tour*

Hop in your car for a journey through 25 million years of earth history...in one hour! We'll observe the varied landforms of the desert – bajadas, washes, outcrops – and find out why geology students from around the world come to see the Rincon Mountain foothills. (Hint: it's the mylonitic gneiss!)

December 4, 18, 11:00 a.m. **The Changing Cactus Forest*** *Presentation*

Join us in the visitor center auditorium to discover how the changes in the Cactus Forest over the years relate to potential changes in the future. Included will be a discussion of major climate change effects on parks, relating each to Saguaro national Park.

- December 4, 11** 2:00 p.m. **The Saguaro Nursery** *½ mile guided walk*
The reports of the saguaro's demise were greatly exaggerated! Take a stroll along a trail to see the next generation of young saguaros and the gradual renewal of the Cactus Forest.
- December 4 & 18** 3:00 p.m. **Creating Saguaro National Park** *presentation*
Join staff in the visitor center auditorium to discover how abuse, failure, politics, commitment, recovery and the Tucson Garden Club all played a part in creating today's Saguaro National Park. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- December 5** 10:00 a.m. **Sharing the Desert's Stories** *Activity*
Children 5 to 10 years of age and parents are invited to come join us in the visitor center auditorium as we bring some of the Sonoran Desert's stories to life. This month's theme will be Winter in the Desert. **Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling (520) 733-5153.** *Wheelchair accessible.*
- December 5** 10:00 a.m. **Meet the Cholla** *Guided Walk*
On this easy walk, you will be introduced to the diverse members of the cholla cactus family and their relationships with the desert community. Wear comfortable walking shoes.
- December 5 & 12** 11:00 a.m. **Naturalist Table** *Patio Talk*
Join a park naturalist on the visitor center patio to explore a variety of natural history topics.
- December 5 & 26** 1:00 p.m. **Flash, Whoosh, Gush, and Growth: Sonoran Desert Monsoon Rain***
16 11:00 a.m. *Presentation*
The summer heat and humidity bring the mighty and sometimes destructive monsoon rain. Saguaros, toads, and others *depend* on these drenching storms to begin a new season of life in the dry desert. A fabulous video opens this theater presentation. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- December 5, 12, 26** 2:30 p.m. **Living in a Cactus Forest**
Our "Cactus Forest" was protected as a National Monument in 1933. But that doesn't mean it hasn't changed. Take an easy stroll through this desert preserve to learn about the past AND discuss the future of your National Park and the growing Tucson community.
- December 6** 2:00 p.m. **History 101** *Guided Walk*
Join a park ranger on a 1 – 2 mile walk and learn about some of the history that has made Saguaro National Park the great place it is today. Wear comfortable walking shoes.
- December 8** 12:30 p.m. **Living With and Without Reptiles** *Presentation*
Join volunteer and herpetologist Bob Brandner in the visitor center auditorium to explore the biology of Sonoran Desert reptiles and how we can share the desert with them,
- December 9 & 30** 11:00 a.m. **The Point of the Matter is Cactus** *Presentation*
19 1:00 p.m.
Cactus are much more than strange plants with spines. They are uniquely equipped to thrive in the desert environment, and every year bloom with spectacular flowers. This theater presentation will highlight these survival marvels with a beautiful photo gallery. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- December 10** 7:00 p.m. **Star Party** *illustrated program & activity*
Join park naturalists for an introduction to astronomy and a look at the desert night sky. Telescopes and binoculars will be available. **Reservations required. Call 733-5153.** *Wheelchair accessible.*
- December 11** 9:00 a.m. **The History of the Rincon Valley** *Guided Hike*
Take a stroll down the Hope Camp Trail and learn about the homesteaders and ranchers who settled here, as well as other aspects of the Rincon and Tanque Verde Valleys. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water and a trail snack. **Advance reservations are required and can be made by calling (520) 733-5153.**
- December 11** 3:00 p.m. **A Century of Tales** *Presentation*
Join us in the visitor center auditorium as we review a century of fun and interesting stories from those who lived and worked in what is today Saguaro National Park. *Wheelchair accessible.*

December 11 7:00 p.m. **Night Walk** 1 mile guided walk
Join a park naturalist for this easy two-hour hike to explore and experience the Sonoran Desert at night. Dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring water and a flashlight. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153.

December 13, 20, 27 11:00 a.m. **The GIANT Cactus** ¾ mile guided walk
Saguaro National Park is famous for its gigantic saguaros. Still, you have to know where to look to find a real giant among giants. The best way is to join a ranger for a walk along a desert wash for a lesson in trees of the desert and a look at the only tree-like cactus in the U.S. You'll be surprised by the size! Sturdy shoes and water are recommended.

December 13 2:00 p.m. **Desert Discovery** Guided Walk
Take a stroll with a park naturalist through the Cactus Garden just outside the visitor center to discover what makes the Sonoran Desert such a special place.

December 13, 20, 27 3:00 p.m. **CENTENNIAL!** Presentation
Celebrate the National Park Service's 100th Anniversary with a tour through time. We'll share history and scenery from every corner of the country, going back 100 years and more!

December 14 9:00 a.m. **The Destruction of Granite: A Trip to the Fault** Guided Hike
Join a ranger on a guided auto tour and hike inside the loop drive at Saguaro National Park. We will discuss the geological history of the park as well as southeastern Arizona. The hike portion will be 5 miles round trip. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring water and a trail snack. Advance reservations are required and can be made by calling (520) 733-5153.

December 15 12:30 p.m. **Tortoises of the United States*** Presentation
Join volunteer and herpetologist Bob Brandner to discover the different species of tortoises found in the U.S and which ones call Arizona home.

December 19 9:00 a.m. **Young Adult Hiking Club** 5-mile hike
Young adults 18 years and older are invited to come hike off that turkey dinner with a park ranger. The emphasis will be fitness and fun. Space is limited, so reserve your spot early by calling the visitor center at (520) 733-5153. Wear comfortable walking/hiking shoes; bring water and a light trail snack

December 19 All Day **Toy Fair** Presentation
Bring the youngest members of your family and come check out the educational toys sold at our Western National Parks Association Bookstore, All items will be available for hands-on exploration. **Join us at 2:00 p.m. for a special story telling time.**

December 20 2:00 p.m. **Walk with the Past** Guided Walk
Join park staff as we step into the past to learn about the lives of the prehistoric Hohokam. Sturdy shoes and water recommended.

December 22 12:30 p.m. **Venomous Reptiles at Saguaro National Park** Presentation
Come discover the fascinating lives of the venomous reptiles that call the Sonoran Desert their home in this auditorium presentation by volunteer and herpetologist Bob Brandner..

December 30 5:00 p.m. **Holiday Caravan** Auto Tour
Explore the natural lore of the solstice holiday on a unique nighttime drive through the park's loop drive. Auto tours will be offered at 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30 and 8:00 p.m., and will feature several stops along the 8-mile Cactus Forest Drive. Each tour lasts approximately 1½ hours. Cookies and cider will be offered at the visitor center all evening. Samples of desert food products will also be available for tasting. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *This program is wheelchair accessible.*