



For immediate release

FAMILY TRAVEL

Mesa: Bringing Families Together

2009 (MESA, Ariz.) – Blending education with fun is a winning combination for families traveling to Mesa. Whether creating a work of art, panning for gold, or feeling your way through a dark cave, Mesa offers an enriching experience for every family.

Looking to soak up some rays? Mesa offers plenty of exhilarating or lazy activities for families to do outdoors. At the end of the day, stop in at one of Mesa's kid-friendly restaurants sure to satisfy your appetite. The following is just a preview of the countless destinations and activities that make Mesa a leading destination for families.

MESA'S WET N' WILD SUMMERTIME HOTSPOTS

Grab your bathing suits because it's time to get wet in Mesa. [Salt River Tubing](#) and [Golfland Sunsplash](#) give visitors a new way to cool off during the Arizona summers. Salt River tubers will enjoy floating down the mountain-stream waters while taking in the beautiful views of the surrounding valley and mountains. Kids will love the wildlife found on the riverbanks including wild horses and blue herons. Does your family like to play games? Golfland Sunsplash is the place to cool off while enjoying exciting family friendly games such as miniature golf, laser tag, and bumper boats. Sunsplash is Mesa's premier water park offering visitors several classic waterslides, a wave pool, and three unique slides sure to cool you off on even the hottest of days. Young kids won't be left out at this park, there is a special one-foot deep pool with slides for them to enjoy as well.

RUN WILD AT MESA PLAY CENTERS

Let your little ones burn some energy for a few hours at these Mesa play centers. [Amazing Jakes](#) Food & Fun, a 90,000 indoor amusement park, provides activities for adults and tots alike. Amazing Jakes has everything from go-carts, laser tag, miniature golf, rock climbing, bumper boats and cars, a full sized bowling alley, and even a mini-roller coaster. Hours of entertainment are sure to be found at Jakes. Families can enjoy bonding as a team at [Stratum Laser Tag](#), the world's largest technotainment arena, featuring 15 levels of 90 ramps, towers and bridges. Laser tag is perfect for the high-tech and adventurous family.

Mesa Riverview is home to two family play centers, each offering their own style of entertainment. Kids who are bouncing off the walls and full of energy will love [Jump & Shout](#). Giant inflatables and climbing gyms fill this 10,000 square foot facility. Kids can play for hours, while parents relax in the lounge complete with televisions and a café. [Howie's Game Shack](#) is bringing a new way for Xbox and PC gamers to play. The social gaming center is the nation's largest arena for gamers to come together interactively. Open everyday, the center includes sound chairs, state-of-the-art gaming PCs, high-definition LCD displays, world premier game releases and tournaments. Howie's lets families play together in a fun environment making for a more social gaming experience. The center also has pizza and snacks available to enjoy between games.

EDUCATIONAL AND FUN MUSEUMS

Kids like history too, especially when there are dinosaurs involved! At [Arizona Museum of Natural History](#) families can venture through the Dinosaur Hall to see some of the biggest creatures to ever walk the Earth, pan for gold in the History Courtyard, be locked inside a real

territorial jail, experience an indoor flash flood running down a three-story mountain, and discover many more of the unique exhibits the museum has to offer. Interactive learning for kids is the highlight of the [Arizona Museum for Youth](#). The museum offers a number of changing exhibitions throughout the year and features ArtVille, an art-town ideal for children under 5 years old to play and create their own masterpieces. Art classes, workshops and family programs are also offered to educate children on the principles and techniques of art. Parents will want to know about Mesa's '3 For Free' program offered the first Sunday of each month where these two museums along with [Mesa Contemporary Arts](#) offer free admission to visitors.

KID APPROVED DINING

[Organ Stop Pizza](#), home of the world's largest theater organ, serves up great food and entertainment. The infamous Wurlitzer organ, built in 1927, towers above the dining room providing restaurant goers with a unique dining experience. Kids will love requesting their favorite songs at this musical restaurant.

Cowboys and girls are sure to rustle up a good meal and a fun time at these western restaurants. Located at the base of the Superstition Mountains in Apache Junction, [Mining Camp Restaurant](#) resembles an old mining shanty and epitomizes the old west experience. Kids will feel like cowboys with the family-style menu served up on traditional tin plates. [Rockin R' Ranch](#), Arizona's Wild West Town, lets visitors feel what it was like to live on a ranch in Arizona's pioneer days. Wagon rides, gun fights, and gold panning are some of the activities accompanying the traditional cowboy BBQ menu.

Theater lovers can enjoy kid-friendly lunchtime productions at [Broadway Palm Children's Theater](#). Children will be delighted with menu items such as corn dogs and macaroni and cheese, and parents will be pleased with the imagination inspiring performances.

Families in Mesa can roll up their sleeves and get a taste of life on the farm. At [Superstition Farms](#) in east Mesa, guests can enjoy public tours of a fourth generation dairy farm. Tours are aimed at demonstrating to visitors daily life on a working "agritourist" family farm. Extended stay visitors will want to pick up a fresh produce basket full of organic fruits and veggies. Also on site is a **petting zoo**, **Milk Bar** featuring a dozen flavors including Butterscotch and Peaches & Cream, and the **Mooster's Moo-tique**, a fully stocked boutique featuring toys, novelty items, games, candy, fresh eggs, cheeses, and local jams and honey. Not to be missed is the **Udder Delights** homemade ice cream.

DESERT EXPLORERS:

Feeling ghoulish? Head out to [Goldfield Ghost Town](#) to learn about the rich history of the old mining town. Take part in an underground mine tour, watch a live gunfight or take a ride on Arizona's only operating narrow gauge railroad. Whatever you may decide, Goldfield Ghost Town will certainly make you feel like you took a step back in time with their authentic looking buildings and Wild West activities.

The [Apache Trail](#), which links Apache Junction with Theodore Roosevelt Lake, winds its way around 40 miles of steep Superstition Mountains and past Canyon and Apache Lakes. The narrow winding road is just east of Tortilla Flat, Arizona's living ghost town with a population of 6. Apache Trail is Arizona's only recognized Historic and Scenic Highway. You will be sure to walk away with some beautiful pictures after taking a tour along the trail. [Apache Trail Tours](#) takes adventurous visitors on Jeep and hiking tours along the trail. Travelers can expect to see sheer summit cliffs, vast canyons, jagged mountain peaks and shimmering lakes. Tours run from 1 to 8 hours in your choice of open-air Jeeps or air-conditioned SUV's.

After two years of construction, the newly completed [Children's Garden at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#) is now open to the public offering kids a full-sensory desert experience. The garden features four interactive stations focusing on touch, texture, color, sound and scent as well as a human sundial and maze. Each interactive area allows children to strengthen their senses. For

example, kids rely on sense of touch to feel their way through dark caves and mysterious forests in the Texture Garden; learn about the color spectrum and see how rainbows are formed in the Color Garden; hear a variety of animal sounds and chimes that warn of danger and hidden treasures in the Sound Garden; use their noses to discover plant aromas in the Scent Garden; and test their explorer skills in the Maze. Animal tracks and designated characters including Dani Deer, Reggie Roadrunner, Suzy Skunk, Frankie Fox and Javi Javalina lead kids from one activity area to another.

UNIQUE BOUTIQUES

[Little Blue Choo Choo](#), at Dana Park Village Square, specializes in educational and fun handcrafted wooden toys. The store features popular favorites such as Thomas & Friends, Brio Railway, and Calico Critters. Little Blue Choo Choo incorporates three hands-on activity centers throughout the store where kids can play and exercise their imagination. In the same shopping center, parents can find **Sweet Age Children's Boutique** featuring stylish clothes for youngsters.

Little princesses will love Mesa's girly boutiques and party planning services. [Glitter Box](#) in downtown Mesa is a mega frilly boutique offering unique party packages for young girls. With names like Popstar Diva, Tutu for Toddlers, Spoiled Royale, and Perfectly Pampered Princess your little one is sure to steal the limelight on her special day. [Girly Girlz](#), at the Dana Park Shoppes, boasts more than 20,000 girly items in their boutique filling it from top to bottom with glitzy accessories. Girly Girlz specialized parties include Tea Party Palace, in which girls dress up like princesses and feast on a three-course meal; Diva Day Spa, where your rock star and her friends can be primped and pampered; and you can even bring the party to your house with the use of the Glam Van. Bring Disney princesses to life at [Mrs. Potts Tea Party](#), also in downtown Mesa. Girls will have their choice of over 250 dresses, 80 hats, over 100 hairpieces, and hundreds of other accessories to adorn themselves with before the tea party commences. Parties are customizable and girls have the option of choosing their favorite Disney princess to host tea.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Michelle Streeter, Director of Public Relations
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau
Direct: 480-682-3638 Toll-free: 800-283-6372 x345
E-mail: Michelle@VisitMesa.com

About the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau:

The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau is responsible for marketing Mesa, Arizona as a leading vacation, small meeting and sports travel destination to regional and national target audiences, including travel agents and group tour operators, meeting planners, leisure visitors and media.

Editor's Note: Readers can request a complimentary 2009 Official Mesa Arizona Visitors Guide at VisitMesa.com or by calling 800-283-6372.

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