

TOWN OF GILA BEND SCENIC DRIVE

Agua Caliente Loop

OVERVIEW

This 128 mile loop is a wonderful scenic drive that takes you through the heart of our region. Because it's a loop, you can start out in either direction and have a fantastic experience. Aside from driving through the beautiful Sonoran desert, you will also come across some great photo ops at Painted Rock Petroglyph site, lava rock fields, and adobe ruins and a hotel built in 1897 in Agua Caliente, named for the hot springs used by local tribes.

Other interesting points of note are the Sundad abandoned town and mine, and the Historic Gillespie Dam Bridge. The Sundad site is believed to have been created for use as a sanitarium for Tuberculosis patients during the 1920's. The site also has an abandoned mine and shaft. Today, the site is riddled with fancy rock designs and ornamental features that are a site to behold! The Gillespie Dam Bridge is amazing feat of architecture. The bridge is 120 foot long steel truss bridge that takes you over the Gila River.

As you continue along Agua Caliente Road along the northern boundaries of the Woolsey Peak Wilderness Area, keep your eyes peeled for wildlife!

Best time to do the drive:

November through early April

Average Time:

About 4 hours without stops.

How to get there:

From Gila Bend, take the I-8 to Rocky Point Road (also Painted Rock Road) and go North. Follow road till you reach the Painted Rock Petroglyph site. From here, go west on Rocky Point Road for about an hour till you come to Hyder Rd. At Hyder, go left (West). Take Hyder to 571st Avenue and go South to Old Agua Caliente Road, make a right. To continue onward, back track to Hyder Rd., go right on Hyder and then a left onto Agua Caliente Road heading North to Sundad. Go back out to Agua Caliente Road, make right and continue the drive to Old Hwy 80 and Gillespie Dam Bridge. Follow Old Hwy 80 South to Gila Bend.

