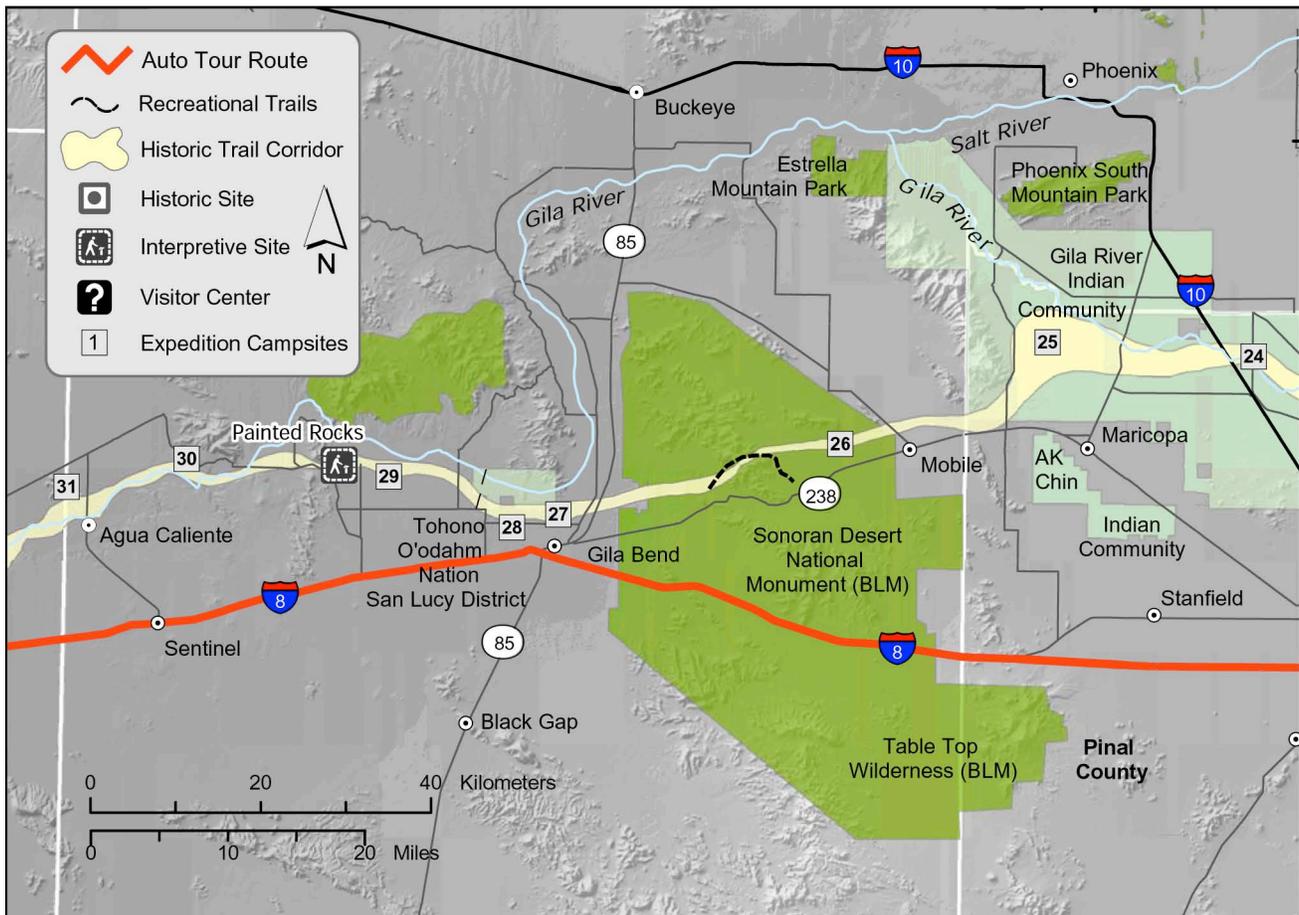


Maricopa County – To the Gila River and Agua Caliente





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On November 14, Father Font noted, “On leaving camp, we ascended a small sierra formed of boulders and black rough rocks piled up, but thereafter, the country is level...We forded it [the Gila River] without mishap...”

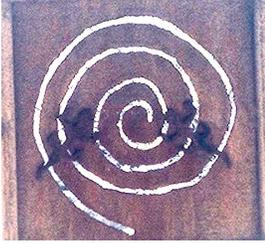
Photo: Ron Ory

Driving Directions for Auto Route

Interstate 8 (I-8) is the auto route from Pinal county. A combination of dirt and gravel roads, however, follow the historic route more closely. These include highway 238 from Mobile to Gila Bend and roads from Gila Bend past the Painted Rock Petroglyph Site to Hyder. To reach the Painted Rock Petroglyph Site, drive west on I-8 and exit at Painted Rock Dam Rd. (Exit 102) approximately 12.5 miles west of Gila Bend. Travel north (paved) 10.7 miles to Rocky Point Rd. (unpaved). The site is 0.6 miles west of Painted Rock Dam Rd. on Rocky Point Rd. To most easily continue to Yuma County, travel west on I-8.

Hiking/Biking Ideas

Immediately to the southeast and northeast of Gila Bend is the Sonoran Desert National Monument with its Maricopa Wilderness. A hiking trail is located near highway 238 between Mobile and Gila Bend in the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) North Maricopa Mountains Wilderness. The BLM’s Painted Rock Petroglyph Site has trails, camping and an Anza interpretive site.



Petroglyph pattern on a gate at the Painted Rock Petroglyph Site.
Photo: Ron Ory

Gila People

Gila (Pronounced "hee-la") Bend, near a sharp bend in the Gila River, is located near a prehistoric Hohokam Indian village. In 1699, Father Eusebio Francisco Kino visited a *ranchería* there, and it was again visited by Anza in 1774 and 1775. Called both Opas and Cocomaricopas in the diaries, the natives farmed wheat, maize (Indian corn), and *calabazas* (squash). They call themselves Pipatsje, 'people,' Maricopa being their Pima name, and spoke a language related to the Yuma, but had been at war with them. They allied themselves with the Pima (Gila River O'odham) whose language they could not understand. To this day, this alliance has remained, and many people of Maricopa descent reside with the O'odham.

About Your Visit to Maricopa County

Leaving *Laguna del Hospital*, the expedition traveled west through lands of the Opa and Cocomaricopa peoples. They left the Gila River to bypass its large bend to the north, rejoining the river again in the vicinity of Gila Bend. Renewing Anza's friendship with the natives along the river, Anza and the colonists followed the Gila River to Agua Caliente.

Sites of Interest

A. Gila Bend and Expedition Camps #26-28

At about one in the afternoon on November 7, 1775, the expedition left their "Lake of the Hospital" and made a *tardeada* west to a dry *arroyo* (Camp #26). A *tardeada* was two short marches between two places that had water that could not be made in one normal day's travel. The encampment for the night between the two spots (in this case, Camp #26) was without water other than what they were carrying. Anza remarked that their camp was in the neighborhood of the Pass of the Cocomaricopas. Today, west of this camp and somewhat parallel to Highway 238, the Sonoran Desert National Monument (BLM) has a trail where one can hike a portion of the second stage of the *tardeada*. On the 8th of November, the expedition camped at a village they called San Simón y Judas de Uparsoytac (Camp #27). They rested here until November 11, in part because a woman who had a stillborn baby (on November 2) needed rest. This gave the colonists time for some needed chores, as recorded by Font, "...Since we were camped on the bank of the river, the people were able to wash their clothing." While there, and again further on, Anza noted seeing more American Indians than during his first visit (1774), and attributed this to the peace with the *Yuma* people (*Quechan*) he helped secure during that time. Expedition Camps #27 and #28 were most likely located within the Gila Bend Indian Reservation, home today to the San Lucy District of the *Tohono O'odham*. Fortaleza, an important spiritual site, is located on top of a volcanic escarpment on the reservation in the vicinity of the town of Gila Bend. The site was probably settled about 1200 A.D. by migrants from the Tucson area, and contained three large reinforced adobe ceremonial chambers and rooms grouped in social units of two or three houses.

B. Painted Rocks and Expedition Camps #29-31

The expedition continued west camping at three villages of the Maricopa peoples the last they called *Agua Caliente*, for the hot spring of water there. Here, Anza selected a native, he called Carlos, as Governor of the Cocomaricopa tribe (Maricopa) who later traveled with the expedition to verify the peace with the tribe in Yuma. Today, the Painted Rock Petroglyph Site (BLM land) is within the expedition's historic corridor. The site, on the National Register of Historic Places, offers a fine example of early petroglyphs etched on a small mound of black rocks. It also includes interpretive panels on the Anza Trail, as well as camping and water. Many other trails were near the petroglyph site, including those of the Mormon Battalion and the Butterfield Overland Mail. Near expedition Camp #31, an Interstate 8 roadside rest stop at Sentinel provides an opportunity for visitors to reflect on the Agua Caliente camp and to orient oneself to the Gila River camps.

Learning On The Trail in Maricopa County

Questions on the Trail

Photo: Ron Ory



The spirals and other patterns on the black rocks at the Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site are also seen at other sites from Mexico to Northern California. Nearby Gila Bend was a stopping point for the 1846 Mormon Battalion Trail and for the Stagecoach line.

Question: Why has the Gila River area been an important migration route for thousands of years? [Hint: What's special about the area?]

Heard in Maricopa: The Cocomaricopa

In Maricopa county at *Agua Caliente* (which is still known by that name today) Anza selected a Governor and *Acalde* from the *Cocomaricopa* tribe [Maricopa]. Father Font writes on Wednesday, November 15, 1775, "It was decided to halt here today in order that the saddle animals might rest, for they were now in very bad shape for lack of pasturage. Many Cocomaricopa Indians assembled to see us. They are the same as the Opas, but are distinguished in name by the district which they inhabit. The commander, in the name of the king our sovereign, gave the cane and title of governor of all the tribe to an Indian whom they themselves elected and whom we called Carlos, and to another, chosen by them and called by us Francisco, he gave the cane of *Acalde*. After they were instructed in their new charges and duties, and as soon as they were confirmed in their offices, the rest of the Indians assembled, saluted them in turn, and shook hands with them, and then a distribution of tobacco and glass beads was made to all... The Indians whom I saw assembled here I estimated at about two hundred souls, all unarmed and friendly. They remained until after midnight singing in their key, which is very funereal." Indian Lands that the Maricopa are on today are within the Gila River and AK-Chin Indian Communities.

Additional Resources

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Phoenix Field Office –
21605 N. 7th Ave.,
Phoenix, AZ 85027;
tel.: 623-580-5500,
web: blm.gov/az/st/en/fo/lower_sonoran_field.html

Painted Rock Petroglyph Site
tel.: 623-580-5500,
web: blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/recreation/camping/dev_camps/painted_rock.html

Tohono O'odham
San Lucy District,
Gila Bend Reservation –
P.O. Box 837
Sells, Arizona 85634;
tel.: 520-383-2028,
web: itcaonline.com/tribes_tohono.html

The AK-Chin Indian
Community – 42507 W.
Peters and Nall Rd.,
Maricopa, Arizona 85239;
tel.: 520-568-2227,
web: itcaonline.com/tribes_akchin.html

The Gila River Indian
Community – P.O. Box 97,
Pima St. and Main St.
Sacaton, Arizona 85247;
tel.: 520-562-3311,
web: itcaonline.com/tribes_gila.html

Gila Bend Museum on
South Pima Street,
Gila Bend Chamber of
Commerce – 644 W. Pima
St., Box CC, Gila Bend
85337;
tel.: 928-683-2002