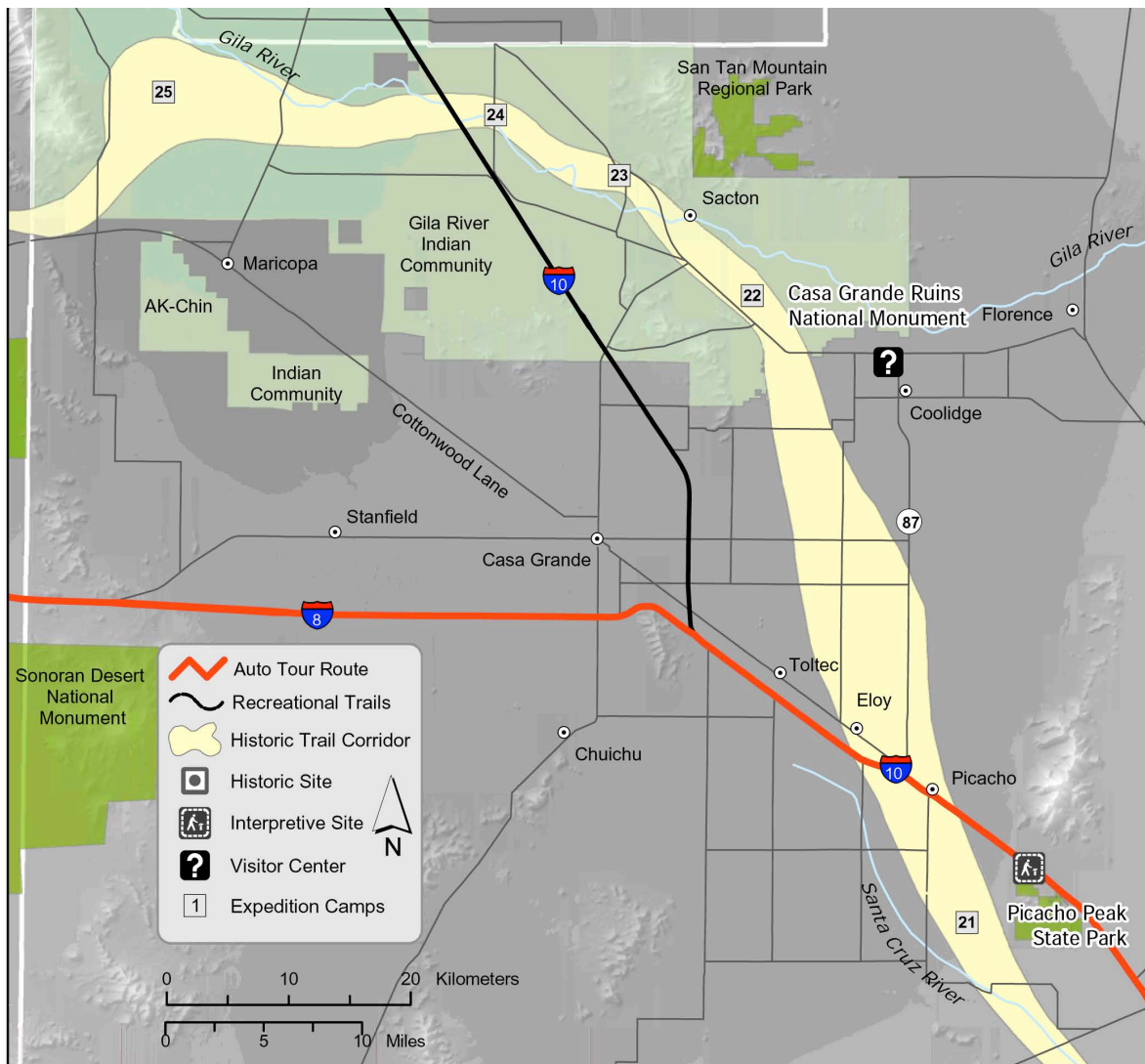


Pinal County – To the Casa Grande and the Gila Peoples





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Picacho Peak (at far left) and the Casa Grande Ruins.

Photos: Ron Ory

**Driving Directions for Auto Route**

From Pima County, drive northwest on I-10. To visit Picacho Peak State Park take exit 219. To visit the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, take the Coolidge exit and follow the signs to the park entrance off Arizona Route 87/287. To continue to Maricopa County, drive west on I-8 to Gila Bend.

**Hiking/Biking Ideas**

Hiking is possible at Picacho Peak State Park and within the National Monuments: Casa Grande Ruins and Sonoran Desert. Some bicycle trails exist along frontage roads along the auto route.



Adobe ruins at the Casa Grande

Photo: Ron Ory

## Native Peoples

The *Gila* (pronounced “hee-la”) River Indian Community has long been the home of the Akimel O’odham, also known as the Gila River Pima, and the Pi-Posh, also known as the Maricopa. Currently, the two tribes live together and are over ten thousand strong. The Maricopa people first lived along the Colorado River, but moved to avoid battles with the Mohave and *Yuma* tribes. Today, many live in the Gila and AK-Chin Indian Communities. The *Akimel O’odham* (Pima or River People) lived along the Santa Cruz River, while the Tohono O’odham lived in the desert. The O’odham trace their ancestry to the *Hohokam* or “those who came before.”

## About Your Visit to Pinal County

The expedition followed the Santa Cruz River Valley for several miles before turning north just past Picacho Peak to reach known sources of water. Font and Anza made a detour to survey the Casa Grande ruins. After following the Gila for several miles through what is now the Gila River Indian Community, they camped at *Laguna del Hospital* (Camp #25). They then continued west, bypassing a bend in the Gila River.

### Sites of Interest

#### A. Picacho Peak State Park and Expedition Camp #21

On October 29, 1775, Father Font describes that the expedition camped at a place “a little beyond a *picacho* or peak which the Indians called Tacca.” Anza called the place, “the flat of *El Aquituni*.” Upon leaving the next day, Anza comments on a, “...lack of water, any of which is found only by rare accident. Nevertheless, no dissatisfaction whatever has been shown by the people who have made the march, and this is a thing to marvel at, especially in the women and children, and their patience under the hardships is an indication of the contentment with which they are accepting their lot.” Picacho Peak was often used as a landmark. During the 17th century, the Jesuit priest Father Kino mentioned Picacho Peak in records of his journeys. In 1846, the Mormon Battalion, on their way to California to fight in the war with Mexico, constructed a wagon road through Picacho Pass. Today, Picacho Peak State Park is found a little west of Anza’s camp. An Anza Trail interpretive exhibit is found on the west side of the park overlooking a campsite area and the Anza route through the Santa Cruz River valley.

#### B. Casa Grande and Expedition Camps #22 - 25

As noted by Anza and Font, expedition Camps #22 to #25 were at Pima villages, where the expedition was well-received and cared for, as illustrated in what Font wrote, “...These Pima Indians of the Gila are gentle and of good heart, and to show their appreciation for our coming they begged permission from the commander [Anza] to dance, and then they went from tent to tent of the soldiers dancing, the women linked together in their fashion.” The campsites are within the boundaries of the Gila River Indian Community today. The Anza expedition camped approximately five miles to the northwest of the *Casa Grande*, and on October 31, 1775, Font and Anza visited the ruins there in order to check the accuracy of Father Kino’s prior descriptions and measurements. At this time Font recorded the Bitter Man story as told to him by a Pima native. The *Casa Grande* ruins, which translates as the “Big House”, date to around A.D. 900-1450 and include an ancient Hohokam farming village as well as the four-story Great House. The ruins were the first archeological preserve in the United States and are today located within Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (1100 Ruins Dr., Coolidge, AZ). They are about an hour drive from either Phoenix or Tucson. The Gila Indian Center museum is located along Interstate 10 at the Casa Blanca Interchange. The Gila Heritage Park, run by the tribe, features self-guided tours of traditional Indian homes including the Pima, Maricopa, Papago and the Apache. Camp #25 (November 3-6) was called *Laguna del Hospital* because the sickness experienced there by the animals as well as two women. One of the women, who was pregnant, was given medicines.

## Learning On The Trail in Pinal County

### Questions on the Trail



After visiting the area surrounding the Gila River –  
 Question: How has the diet and culture of the Gila River Indian Community changed since Anza passed through?

Photo: NPS

### On the CD: The Casa Grande

O'odham Song: *Casa Grande Song* (flute), also called "*Song After the Inhabitants of Casa Grande were Killed*"  
 Music for Fandango: *La Merlequina*.

Font and Anza took a side trip to visit the Casa Grande ruins. Font writes on October 31, 1775 "...We went to it after Mass and returned after noon, accompanied by some Indians and the governor of Uturituc [a Gila Pima village], who on the way recounted us the history or tradition which the Gila Pimas preserve from their ancestors concerning this Casa Grande... The Indians said that through these holes, which are rather large, the prince, whom they call The Bitter Man, looked at the sun when it rose and set, in order to salute it... A long time ago there came to that country a man who was called The Bitter Man because of his ill nature and his harsh rule. This man was old, but he had a young daughter. And there came in his company a young man who was not a relative of his or of anybody else, and married the daughter, who was very pretty as he was handsome. And this old man brought as servants the Wind and the Clouds... the old man went away to a sierra where there are many pines, and, calling on God to aid him, he cut many pines and brought many timbers for the roof of the house. When this Bitter Man came, there were no trees in the country, nor any plants, but he brought seeds of all kinds and reaped very large harvests, with the aid of his two servants, the Wind and the Clouds, who served him." About the first of the expedition's four *fandangos* Font writes, "...This being the feast of San Carlos and the saint's day of our monarch, we chanted Mass with all the ceremony possible. It was sung by Father Garcés, and I assisted with my instrument [psaltery]... After Mass in honor of the feast day, the commander decided to give some refreshments to the people of the expedition. This consisted in giving to each one a pint of *aguardiente*, as a result of which there was more than moderate drunkenness amongst the soldiers, and more than one man remained drunk until the next day" (*Laguna de Hospital*, November 4, 1775).

### Additional Resources

Picacho Peak State Park –  
 P.O. Box 275,  
 Picacho, AZ 85241;  
 tel.: 520-466-3183,  
 web: [azstateparks.com/Parks/PIPE](http://azstateparks.com/Parks/PIPE)

Table Top Wilderness,  
 Bureau of Land  
 Management (BLM) –  
 222 North Central Ave.,  
 Phoenix, AZ 85004-2203;  
 tel.: 602-417 9200,  
 web: [blm.gov/az/](http://blm.gov/az/)

Casa Grande Ruins  
 National Monument –  
 1100 Ruins Dr., Coolidge,  
 AZ 85228-3200;  
 tel.: 520-723-3172,  
 web: [nps.gov/cagr](http://nps.gov/cagr)

Casa Grande Valley  
 Historical Society Museum  
 – 110 West Florence Blvd.,  
 Casa Grande, AZ 85222;  
 tel.: 520-836-2223,  
 web: [cgvhs.org](http://cgvhs.org)

The AK-Chin Indian  
 Community – 42507 West  
 Peters and Nall Rd.,  
 Maricopa, Arizona 85239;  
 tel.: 520-568-2227,  
 web: [itcaonline.com/tribes\\_akchin.html](http://itcaonline.com/tribes_akchin.html)

The Gila River Indian  
 Community – P.O. Box 97,  
 Pima St. and Main St.  
 Sacaton, AZ 85247;  
 tel.: 520-562-3311,  
 web: [itcaonline.com/tribes\\_gila.html](http://itcaonline.com/tribes_gila.html)