


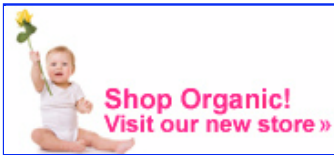
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by *Bekah Wright*

A sense of wonder occurs when arriving at Sedona's Enchantment Resort. Though thermometers are reading 72 degrees, it's "snowing" outside as the cottonwood trees release their fluffy bounty into the bluest of Arizona skies. Blending into the landscape are casitas outside of which deer graze as if they've just checked in for a weekend stay. Racing across the path – a quick-paced rabbit and lizard. Indeed, delightful surprises await at every turn, making it easy to see how Enchantment earned its name.

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Tucked into the hillside are Southwestern-style casitas that look as if they, too, are made of the area's signature red rocks. Ideal for families are the two-bedroom Casa or Hacienda Suites with their full kitchens and dining areas. Large living room areas have beehive fireplaces and open onto private viewing decks, many of which feature gas grills. Two- to three-bathrooms are in each suite, the main one with a deep soaking tub and separate shower. Another good option for families are the two-bedroom Casita Suites with similar attributes and kitchenettes.

On the horizon are new, two-bedroom Casa Suites with idyllic features such as private plunge pools, barbecues and outdoor, kiva fireplaces on the terraces, which stun in and of themselves with views of Boynton Canyon's red rocks.

Cribs are available for families with little ones. And if a favorite toy was forgotten, the resort's Camp Coyote program is happy to lend a replacement during a stay. Other family-friendly amenities include high-speed Internet, Nintendo games and the morning delivery via a wicker fishing basket of orange juice and a newspaper.

DINING

Kitchens and kitchenettes in the suites make it easy for families with young ones to stow groceries they've brought in. An extensive in-room dining menu is available between the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., too.

For meals out, there are two restaurants at Enchantment – the casual Tii Gavo and the more sophisticated Yavapai Restaurant (Southwestern and American fare). Both are helmed by Chef Ted Cizma. Tii Gavo, which is open for lunch and dinner, is the spot for Fish Tacos and Grilled Portabella Sandwiches. Breakfast, Sunday brunch, lunch and dinner are available at Yavapai. The AAA four diamond rated venue has items on the dinner menu that speak to the region such as Buffalo Tenderloin with Quail Sausage, Sweet Potato Risotto and Blackberry Chipotle Demi-Glace.

Though the children's menu is fairly standard both in the restaurants and for in-room dining, the resort will readily accommodate young palates with other items or work with special dietary needs.

A treat for young and old is Enchantment's "In the Raw" menu. Families can order up the fixing for a barbecue on their deck. Said menus range from tofu and turkey burgers to shrimp and filet mignon. A variety of vegetables can be thrown on the grill as well. Salads, baked potatoes and, of course, s'mores round out the perfect dinner under the stars.

KID FUN

The natural surrounds of Boynton Canyon call for spending the majority of a stay in the great outdoors. Most days, kids will want to wave goodbye to parents and head off to Camp Coyote, available for children ages four to 12. Younger, potty-trained toddlers are also welcome to attend. There are several sessions throughout the day at the daily-themed camp. Older kids have the opportunity to enroll in the Camp Coyote Junior Counselor Program where they receive a training manual and learn how to lead activities, later receiving a certificate for their participation.

Full day sessions go from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and include lunch and craft materials for a fee of \$70. Half morning sessions run from 9 a.m. to noon and include a snack and craft materials for \$35. Half afternoon sessions start at noon and last until 3:30 p.m. for \$40. Evening sessions, which are held on Fridays and Saturdays, last from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and include dinner and craft materials for \$45. No more than six kids per counselor. Parents are welcome to come in and play with kids.

On the schedule at Camp Coyote – plenty of games, special activities and Southwestern arts and crafts (like dream catchers and rain sticks) that will bring back memories of times at Enchantment. Sedona’s Native American and Southwest culture comes into play, too, through activities led by Apache Elder Bob Bear, many of which take place at an on site tipi designed by Laura Briggs. The program makes great use of the property’s 70 acres with hikes into the hills. There’s also time at the main pool (one of five pools on property) and activities such as shaving cream wiffle ball and water balloon baseball on the Golf Pitch and Putt Course.

Not to be left out when it comes to offerings from the resort’s sister spa, Mii amo a destination spa at Enchantment, campers can undertake Hatha yoga lessons inside the tipi and classes in things such as creating vision boards and gourd painting through Mii amo instructors.

The year-round camp hosts special monthly activities that can range from Tropical Luau’s combined with Dive-In Movies in the summer to horsedrawn carriage rides during the winter holiday season. Other special events include dance performances by groups such as the Apache Crown Dancers, Sunday brunch with a local cartoonist or creatures great and small, visiting animals from the Out of Africa Wildlife Park.

And for those nights the grown-ups plan for a romantic candlelit dinner, the concierge can arrange for a babysitter. This can often be a counselor they recognize from their time at Camp Coyote.



The entrance

GROWN-UP FUN

While the younger set is making the most of Camp Coyote, their parents can head to the adult-only (ages 16 and up) Mii amo, a destination spa at Enchantment. Intentions for a stay can be set forth in the spa’s Crystal Grotto, where a daily morning meditation is held. Rotating and seasonal menus are on tap at Mii amo Café, where Chef Steve Sicinski serves up healthy fare, much of which contains ingredients from the spa’s organic garden. Private tables or a 16-seat, elevated community table with a view of the kitchen are available for seating. In addition to the café, there’s a dedicated bar that serves juice, smoothies and cocktails.

Three swimming pools allow for floating away day-to-day stressors. There are two hot spots for soaking in the desert sun, one by the outdoor pool, the other tucked away on a second-floor deck, where guests can feel even closer to the red rock canyons and watch hikers trekking up area trails.

Beyond spa treatments, classes are on tap throughout the day and into the evening. Some to take advantage of – Bosu, vortex walks, Tai Chi, organic gardening and composting and, not to be left out, wine tasting. Providing creative outlets are vision collages and gourd pottery. Tips for continuing healthy eating at home can be garnered during two daily cooking demonstrations at Mii amo Café.

Then again, submitting to the skillful touch of a therapist during a treatment like the Vibrational Massage will educate about the bodies chakras and elicit sighs from the massage table. Not to be missed when planning spa treatments is a Watsu, a form of in-water massage and movement that takes place in one of the Native American, Wikiup, outdoor treatment rooms.

FAMILY TIME

Bringing generations together are numerous activities at Enchantment targeted to all ages. Boynton Canyon, which is surrounded by national forest and ancient Native American cliff dwelling ruins calls for hikes. Families can take a guided hike or obtain maps of trails right for their skill levels. What can one expect to discover along the trails? Ruins of ancient cliff dwelling, among other things. The area is considered sacred ground to the Navajo, Hopi, Yavapai-Apache and other Native Americans.

Pink Jeep Tours, which has an on site program through Enchantment, provide another way to experience Red Rock Country with tours such as The Backpack Breakfast Tour and The Naanatim Honanki Adventure.

Another great way to explore Enchantment is with rented bicycles through the concierge. Fun, too, is golf, croquet and swimming. A complimentary, Cliff Lawson golf clinic is offered once a week on the putting course. Tennis is also prime focus at Enchantment. Complimentary tennis clinics open to the entire family are held Monday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. Family lessons on one of the seven courts definitely help build teamwork skills.

Special to the resort is their Native American Program. Guests can partake in weekly activities such as drumming, a guided walk to archaeological ruins and talking circle ceremonies. Guest performances are also on the roster from the likes of Hopi Corn Dancers and Apache guitarists. Grammy-nominated, Native American flutist Aaron White is a frequent performer and lecturer as well.

Perhaps most fitting, as a day at Enchantment comes to an end, is taking in a night of stargazing under the tutelage of Dennis Young. Which leads one to wonder — is it possible the stars shine brighter above Enchantment? They just might.

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