



# DAY TRIP TO PARADISE

From Willcox · Cochise County, Arizona



COPPER MINING



Photo: gailhampshire from Cradley, Malvern, U.K, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

## FEW RESIDENTS

Small private settlement on a Forest Service scenic loop. Last resident count 5 (2011). Lodging taking bookings, October 2026.

Paradise is about an hour and a half from Willcox, much of it on dirt, so give it a full day. Add the Forest Service's Cave Creek loop and lunch in Portal, which has the only café and store nearby. There's no gas in Portal or Paradise, so fill up before you leave I-10.

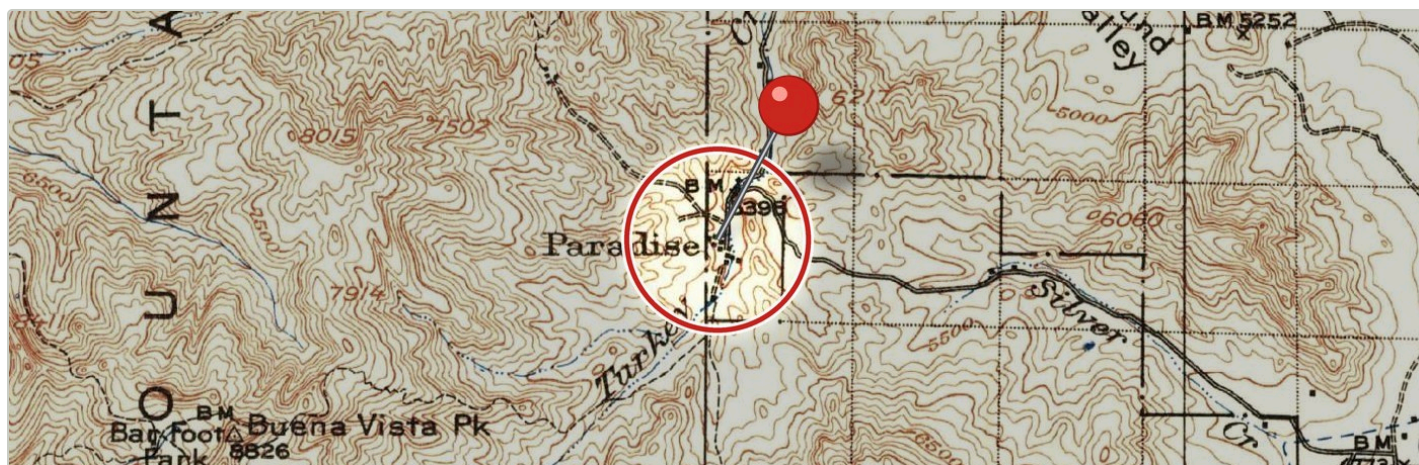
## A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 8 a.m. Leave Willcox east on I-10.
- ☐ 8:45 a.m. Leave the interstate at San Simon and head south on Noland Road. The pavement ends after about 6.5 miles.
- ☐ 9:30 a.m. South Turkey Creek Road passes the [Galeyville](#) site about a mile before Paradise. It's private land with nothing confirmed standing, so keep driving.
- ☐ 9:35 a.m. Arrive in Paradise. Drive slowly past the old buildings along the creek, then stop at the cemetery on the road east toward Portal.
- ☐ 10:30 a.m. Follow FR 42B east down to Portal, about 15 minutes, and turn up FR 42 into Cave Creek Canyon to the visitor information center.
- ☐ 12:30 p.m. Lunch at the Portal Cafe. Pick up drinks for the drive home.
- ☐ 1:30 p.m. Head back to Willcox, about 1 h 45 min.

From Tucson the drive is about 3 hours each way. If that's too long for one day, the George Walker House in Paradise and the lodge in Portal both rent rooms.

## WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The cemetery gate.** An iron arch over the gate frames the oaks and the mountains behind. The fenced graves inside reward a quiet look.
- **Mine foundations.** Concrete footings from the mining years stand in the woods near town. Shoot from the ground, not from on top of the walls.
- **Old trucks and houses.** Rusting vehicles under the oaks and the older houses make good subjects from the road. Keep homes and yards out of close-ups.
- **Birds.** The George Walker House yard is an eBird hotspot. Bring a long lens, and ask before you walk in.
- **The loop.** The Forest Service's 17-mile loop around Silver Peak runs through Paradise and Cave Creek Canyon. Pull fully off the road before you film.



USGS topographic map, 1917 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

## DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DRIVE               | 66 mi, about 1 h 36 min each way from downtown Willcox. From Tucson: 149 mi, about 2 h 58 min.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| OPEN                | Paradise is a small private settlement on Forest Road 42B, a public road. There's nothing to enter, and the homes are private.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| ADMISSION           | None for Paradise or the scenic drive. Forest Service picnic areas in Cave Creek Canyon, such as Sunny Flat, charge \$8 per vehicle per day.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| RESTROOMS AND WATER | None listed in Paradise. The Cave Creek Visitor Information Center, open daily 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. except holidays, has flush toilets but no drinking water. Sunny Flat Campground has water all year.                                                                                                                                       |
| FOOD                | None in Paradise. The Portal Cafe Country Store & Lodge, about 15 minutes away in Portal, is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with a café, groceries, snacks and drinks.                                                                                                                                                             |
| FUEL                | None in Portal or Paradise. The Forest Service names San Simon, on I-10, as the nearest station in Arizona.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| ROAD                | From I-10, Noland Road is paved for its first 6.5 miles, then dirt. The George Walker House calls the roads to Paradise dirt and not well kept, and recommends a vehicle with clearance but not four-wheel drive. The Forest Service closes FR 42 and 42B for snow, floods or fire danger; the Douglas Ranger Station is at 520-364-3468. |
| BIRDING             | The George Walker House says day visitors drop by its yard to watch birds. It posts no terms for them, so call 520-558-2287 or ask first.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

**Coordinates** 31.93470, -109.21890 • 31°56'05"N  
109°13'08"W

**Full guide** [abandonedtowns.com/arizona/paradise/](https://abandonedtowns.com/arizona/paradise/)

**Directions** [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.