



DAY TRIP TO PEARCE

From Willcox · Cochise County, Arizona



GOLD MINING



Photo: GJHochmuth, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

LIVING COMMUNITY

Old townsite inside Pearce–Sunsites. Jail open first Saturdays, October to May, per the preservation association (2026).

Pearce is the north end of the Ghost Town Trail, so it makes a good start to a loop of three old camps. Go on the first Saturday of a month between October and May, when the preservation association opens the 1915 jail. Pearce has no gas station or large grocery store, so fill up and pack lunch in Willcox.

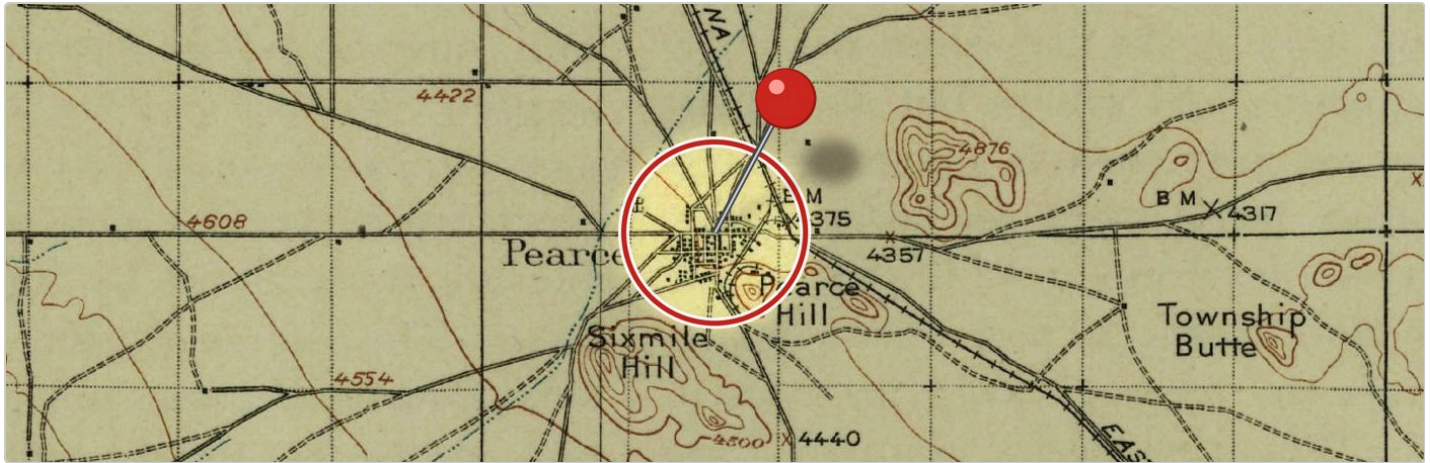
A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 9 a.m. Leave Willcox southeast on AZ 186, then turn south on Kansas Settlement Road.
- ☐ 9:45 a.m. Reach old Pearce. Park near the general store at the Pearce Road corner and walk past the 1916 church, the old post office and the 1899 pottery shop.
- ☐ 10:30 a.m. On a first Saturday from October to May, look inside the 1915 jail. Any other day, see it from the street.
- ☐ 11:15 a.m. Drive south on the unpaved Ghost Town Trail to [Courtland](#), about 40 minutes. Its concrete jail and ruins stand on private land, so look from the road.
- ☐ 12:30 p.m. Continue about 15 minutes to [Gleeson](#) for your packed lunch. Its restored 1910 jail is a small museum; see the Gleeson guide for what we know about its hours.
- ☐ 2 p.m. Head back to Willcox on paved roads, about 1 h 15 min.
- ☐ Dinner The City of Willcox's dining list includes Big Tex BBQ on Maley Street.

From Tucson, Pearce is about 1 h 40 min by I-10 and Dragoon Road. Leave by 8 a.m. to keep the same day.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The general store.** The two-story false front of the Soto Bros. & Renaud store is the town's landmark. Shoot it square-on from across the road to keep the lines straight.
- **The 1915 jail.** Small, concrete and fenced. It photographs well at sunset, when the sky does the work.
- **Our Lady of Victory.** The white 1916 church with its small belfry stands out cleanly against a blue sky.
- **Pottery shop and bridge.** Weathered wood and hand-painted signs at the 1899 pottery shop, and the 1900 wooden bridge over Middle March Creek, make good detail shots.
- **Pearce Hill.** The mine dumps rise behind town. Photograph them from the road, not from the hill.
- **The Ghost Town Trail.** The dirt road south to Courtland makes good driving footage. Pull fully off the road before you film.



USGS topographic map, 1916 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	31 mi, about 46 min each way from downtown Willcox. From Tucson: 84 mi, about 1 h 42 min.
JAIL	Open the first Saturday of each month, October to May, or by appointment. For that, call Willy at 760-443-6062 and leave a message. The association doesn't post opening times or an admission price.
GENERAL STORE	The Soto Bros. & Renaud store opens only now and then, for events.
SERVICES	None listed for the old townsite: no public restrooms, food or water. No gas station or large grocery store in Pearce, per Bisbee101. Plan to stop in Willcox.
ROAD	Paved all the way from Willcox. South of town the Ghost Town Trail to Courtland and Gleeson is gravel and dirt; check conditions after heavy rain.
ON FOOT	The old buildings cluster at the corner of the Ghost Town Trail and Pearce Road, a short walk apart. Most are private, so look from the street unless one is open.
MINE WORKINGS	Pearce Hill, south of town, is covered in old shafts and prospects. Stay off it.
WEBSITE	historicpearce.com

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 31.90500, -109.82060 · 31°54'18"N
109°49'14"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/arizona/pearce/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

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