

TEMPE, ARIZ.



The rooftop at the Graduate Hotel opened in March and is now the only rooftop bar in Tempe with food service.

CHRISTIAN HORAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tempe: baseball and quiriness in a desert paradise

Spring training, recreational opportunities, dining options add to college town's appeal

Lindsay Taub
For The Tennessean

TEMPE, Ariz. — Every spring, the offbeat college town of Tempe becomes one of two epicenters in the U.S. for baseball fans and players alike. As students wrap up their midterms, heading out of town, baseball fans arrive in droves. Everywhere you look, someone is wearing one of two jerseys — Anaheim Angels or Chicago Cubs.

As spring training kicked off here in mid-March, so, too, did the party at the city's first full-service rooftop bar and restaurant atop the new hotel The Graduate.

Located directly across from Arizona State University, the 140-room boutique hotel (formerly the Twin Palms Hotel), opened in late 2014, offering visitors to Tempe an approachable yet quirky, affordable yet classy new accommodation option.

Baseball fans have flocked to Arizona since the 1950s, when the Chicago Cubs began training in Yuma. Since 1993, when the Angels moved their facilities and operations to Tempe, pre-season baseball has been a huge part of Tempe's seasonal culture.

Today Cactus League spring training

brings 15 Major League Vaseball teams to 10 stadiums around Tempe to play more than 200 games over the month-long camp. The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim are the home team, playing teams such as the Cubs, the Brewers, the Rockies and the Giants.

The city of Tempe and ASU

Although spring training has wrapped up for the season, Tempe remains an attractive place to visit this time of year. The desert paradise boasts 330 days of sunshine annually and an average temperature of 85.3 degrees.

There is no shortage of recreational opportunities, with 50 parks, including 13 miles of hiking and biking trails at Papago Park and 25 acres of recreational space at Tempe Beach Park. The city also has more than 175 miles of dedicated bike paths.

The city's entrepreneurial characteristics have been defined since prehistoric times, when the resourceful Hohokam people settled in the area. Their farming and engineering skills helped develop the foundation for today's irrigation systems.

» TEMPE, 11E



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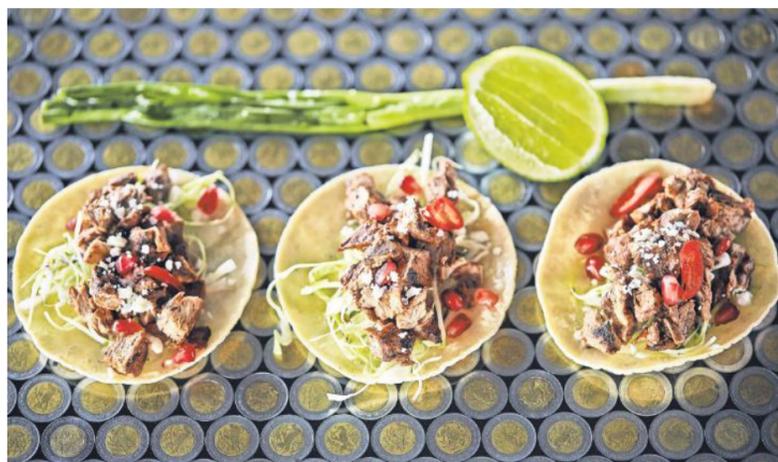
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CHRISTIAN HORAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Tapacubo, the Graduate Hotel's Mexican street food outpost, features an authentic Mexican menu with organic and locally sourced ingredients, including craft tacos.

IF YOU GO

The Graduate Hotel:
www.graduatehotels.com
Tapacubo:
tapacubotempe.com
Tempe Tourism:
www.tempetourism.com
Desert Botanical Garden:
www.dbg.org
Downtown Tempe:
www.downtowntempe.com
Papago Park:
papagosalado.org
Arizona State University:
www.asu.edu
Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter:
www.lroc.asu.edu
Cactus League spring training:
www.tempebaseball.com



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