

# The Rim Country

## Above it all...

If you've never seen Central Arizona, if you've only traveled the "Interstate Corridors" of I-10 and I-40, or if you think Arizona is simply the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon and the Great Sonoran Desert, then prepare yourself for what we believe may prove to be one of the most pleasant surprises of your life.

If you were to drive north from Shea Boulevard for just over an hour on the Beeline Highway (State Hwy 87), you'd find you're 4000 feet higher in elevation than Phoenix in the Valley of the Sun, and fifteen to twenty degrees cooler, no matter what time of year.

You're in Central Arizona's "Rim Country," a four-season vacation getaway that's well off the beaten path, yet so much closer than Prescott or Flagstaff, and much more majestic than the two combined. Before you is a spectacular geological formation known as The Mogollon Rim (pronounced Muggy'-own). Referred to by locals simply as "the Rim," this gargantuan 2000 foot escarpment bisects the state from east to west for almost two hundred miles, and towers above the communities of Payson, Pine, Strawberry, Kohl's Ranch and Christopher Creek

Completely surrounded by National Forest, these picturesque mountain towns and villages exist in a unique temperate zone, one in which the weather evolves through all four seasons, ranging from mediterranean to alpine, and providing a climate hospitable to flora and fauna in an environment found nowhere else in the entire Southwest.

On the drive up from the glitter of metropolitan Phoenix, the traveler marvels as the Sonoran Cottonwood, mesquite, Palo Verde and Saguaro stubbornly give way to grasslands dotted with oak, pinyon and juniper. As the altitude increases and the temperature drops, the edges of a vast, sprawling pine forest come into view. Few know that Central Arizona's National Forests contain the world's largest stand of Ponderosa Pine, the source of what environmentalists worldwide describe as "some of the purest air to be found anywhere on the planet."

The trip up the Beeline Highway to Payson, the vibrant hub of the Rim Country communities, is a scenic and gradual climb to just over 5000 feet. Highway 87 continues north to Pine, and eventually reaches 6000' in the rarefied air of Strawberry Village.



Christopher Mountain peeks through morning mist

Traveling east from Payson, State Highway 260 winds through the pine-clad foothills along the base of the Rim for about 30 miles, through Kohl's Ranch, again reaching 6000' in Christopher Creek and Young. Then, climbing the face of the Rim itself, the highway tops out at 7800 feet near Forest Lakes, where even midsummer nights require a jacket. Here atop the Rim are seven separate lakes, each with its own unique atmosphere, and each worth a trip to explore.

Scattered throughout the Rim Country's countless forested acres are numerous lakes, streams, campgrounds, trails, cabins, homes, ranches, lodges, and myriad business opportunities for those of an entrepreneurial spirit. There is truly something here for everyone, whether that "something" is a remote cabin in the tall pines, a sprawling ranch, or a magnificent contemporary on a mountain top, the Rim Country has it all.

So, just pick a season... here in the Rim Country, we have a spectacular one for any time of the year. Then, come on up and discover one of the last of Arizona's best kept secrets!



Photo: The Onyx Group