

PHOENIX

# Get in the SWIM

Metro Phoenix community pools are a cheap and fun way to beat the heat.

BY REBECCA RHOADES



# Get in the SWIM

**F**rom the city parks of Phoenix and the sunbaked foothills of north Scottsdale to the suburban streets of Chandler, locales throughout the Valley share a common summertime obsession: the public swimming pool.

There are more than 70 public pools, splash pads and aquatic centers across greater Phoenix, and they're open to anyone with a few bucks and a towel — and in a few cases, an ID showing local residency. For some, these municipal watering holes are affordable spots to bring the family for a day of fun. For others, they offer an opportunity to learn a new — and potentially life-saving — sport or partake in a low-impact, full-body workout. But for everyone, public pools are great places to enjoy the outdoors during summer's scorching heat.

And with temperatures already topping 110 degrees this year, being able to cool off is vital.

"I think people don't realize during the winter how important our pools are, but come summer, they're like, 'What can I do to get out of the house?'" says Adam Waltz, spokesperson for Phoenix's Parks and Recreation Department. "Being indoors all day is rough, and kids need to get their energy out. So having a respite that's affordable — and free at a lot of locations — for kids is an incredible asset to the community."

Phoenix alone has opened 18 pools this summer. These range from large regional pools with multiple water features, zero-depth entries, water slides and a slew of amenities, to smaller neighborhood pools with not much more than a diving board and some lounge chairs. And as the Valley continues to grow, large aquatic centers also have popped up in other cities, featuring everything from water slides, lazy rivers, wave pools and multilane competition pools to expansive locker rooms, fitness centers and even concessions.

"It's an experience that gets you out of your home," says Evelyn McNiell,



Mesquite Groves Aquatic Center (Photo courtesy of Chandler Parks & Recreation)

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community services manager for Tempe Parks and Recreation. "You can enjoy all the amenities. Most people don't have a 17-foot slide in their backyard. And if they do, I'm going to their house."

Of course, public pools aren't just for splashing in the water. They all offer swimming lessons for everyone from infants to seniors — starting as low as \$15 for the entire season, depending on the location. Lifeguard training programs, competition swim leagues and aquatic exercise classes

also are offered. Of course, these programs are incredibly popular and fill up quickly, so check with your local pool now for availability throughout the summer.

"A pool, just like a library, is something that's incredibly valuable for a community," says Mark Foote, aquatics manager for Avondale, which debuted its Avondale Aquatic Center in May. "Yes, per capita in the Valley, more people have pools than do not have pools. But for some families, that's just not an option. So to have a place where

they can come and cool down and bring the entire family for less than 20 bucks is huge. Plus, swimming is a lifelong skill that can save your life."

So if you're ready to dive into summer fun, head to your local public pool where you can relax and beat the heat. Not sure where to go? We've rounded up some of the Valley's best community swimming destinations. For a complete list of public pools near you, check out your city's Parks and Recreation website. >> p 14

## Avondale Aquatic Center

11275 Civic Center Drive, Avondale  
623-333-2405

It's been two years since city officials broke ground on Avondale's first community pool, but the wait was worth it. On Memorial Day weekend, the Valley's newest water park opened. Designed by Gabor Lorant Architects, the same firm that designed Mesquite Groves Aquatic Center in Chandler, this massive state-of-the-art facility offers a plethora of amenities for all ages.

The littlest family members will enjoy the zero-depth-entry kiddie play pool, complete with a play structure with slides, water sprays and a tumble bucket, while older kids and kids at heart will thrill to a trio of 26-foot-tall slides — two looping tube slides and one rapid plunge drop slide. A 350-foot lazy river winds between the two areas and connects to a water walk, while a 10-lane competition pool with two diving boards dominates the north side of the complex. And the amenities don't stop when you're on dry land. There are expansive locker and shower rooms, two outdoor snack areas as well as food truck bays and more than 13,000 square feet of shaded decking with dozens of lounge chairs. Currently, the center is open only to Avondale residents (and their guests), who must show proof of residency for entrance.

**Open swim hours:** Monday, Wednesday 12:30 to 5 p.m. and 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday 12:30 to 5 p.m.; Friday 12:30 to 9 p.m.; Saturday 12:30 to 7 p.m.

**Adult lap swim hours:** Weekdays 5:30-7:30 a.m.; weekends 7-9 a.m.

**Fee:** \$3 residents; \$5 non-resident guests

## Clark Park Swimming Pool

1730 S. Roosevelt St., Tempe  
480-350-5203

After being closed for more than 15 years, the Clark Park Community Center and swimming pool reopened after a renovation. It may not be the biggest community pool or have the most amenities, but it's a welcome addition to the Clark Park neighborhood. The outdoor heated pool features a zero-depth entry, five lap lanes and a 17-foot spiral water slide. Shade structures surround the pool, providing respite from the sun's brutal rays. Currently, there are no swim classes or additional activities offered.

**Open swim hours:** Monday, Wednesday 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday 1-5 p.m.

**Lap swim hours:** Monday, Wednesday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Fee:** \$1.25 adults, \$0.75 kids ages 2-12 years

## Cortez Pool

3434 W. Dunlap Ave.  
602-262-7107

When it's too hot to stand in line at nearby Castles-n-Coasters, the swim facility in Cortez Park is the perfect spot for family fun. Three pools cater to all ages and skill levels. There's a zero-depth-entry kiddie pool with spray features and mini slides, an eight-lane lap pool with a diving well and diving boards, and a play pool with two large twisty slides. Drinking fountains are available, but you'll want to bring your own snacks as well as your own lounge chairs. Swimming lessons and junior lifeguard training also are offered.

**Open swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 9:45 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday noon to 6 p.m.

**Fee:** \$3 adults; \$1 kids and seniors



Foothills Recreation & Aquatic Center (Photo courtesy of Glendale Parks & Recreation)

## Eldorado Aquatic & Fitness Center

2301 N. Miller Road, Scottsdale  
480-312-2484

While it may not be as large as McDowell Mountain Ranch, this aquatic center offers much-needed summer relief to folks in and around Old Town. Like its counterpart to the north, it features a 13-lane, 25-yard lap pool with four diving boards, a zero-depth entry play pool with a water playground and twisting slides. Locker rooms, showers and a snack bar can be found inside the fitness center. And it also offers swim and dive lessons, water aerobics and tai chi, junior lifeguard programs, and recreational swim and dive teams. The aquatic center is located on the northern half of Eldorado Park, one of the biggest municipal parks in Scottsdale with 60 acres of green space, as well as softball and soccer fields playgrounds, basketball and volleyball courts, a skate park and a lake for fishing.

**Open swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 1-5 p.m.; Friday through Sunday 1-5:30 p.m.

**Lap swim hours:** Monday through Friday 6-8 a.m. and 12-8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 1-5:30 p.m.

**Resident fee:** \$4 adults; \$3 children

**Non-resident fee:** \$6 adults; \$4 children

## Foothills Recreation & Aquatic Center

5600 W. Union Hills Drive, Glendale  
623-930-4600

One of two public aquatic centers in Glendale, Foothills is more than a pool. Come for the water park but stay for the indoor fitness center and walking/running track, basketball and pickleball courts, climbing wall, judo, children's activities room, arcade and concessions. The center also is located just minutes from Foothills Park and Foothills Library, so families can spend an affordable fun-filled day in this northwest corner of the Valley. The

outdoor water park offers multiple pools, including a heated six-lane lap pool with a diving well and two diving boards, a zero-depth entry play pool with spray features and jungle gym, a lazy river and two giant slides. Year-round swimming and fitness classes are offered, as are lifeguard and instructor certification programs.

**Open swim hours:** Tuesday through Saturday 1 to 5 p.m.

**Resident fee:** \$5 adults, \$3 seniors, \$2.50 kids

**Non-resident fee:** \$6 adults, \$5 seniors, \$3.50 kids

## McDowell Mountain Ranch Aquatic & Fitness Center

15525 N. Thompson Peak Parkway, Scottsdale  
480-312-6677

Last year, we named this facility as the Best Public Pool in our Best of Phoenix issue — and for good reason. Located in the shadows of its eponymous mountain range, minutes from the Loop 101 and across Thompson Peak Parkway from WestWorld of Scottsdale, this year-round aquatic center is a watery oasis. Three pools — a 13-lane, 25-yard lap pool, a large play pool with a zero-depth entry and a lazy river — offer enough space for the crowds that flock here from across the Valley. Adding to the fun are four diving boards — two 1-meter and two 3-meter — a large water slide, a spray pad and waterfall features. There's plenty of seating, including lounge chairs, cushioned patio chairs and grassy sections. Locker rooms, showers and concessions are available in the fitness center. Swim and dive lessons, water aerobics and junior lifeguard training also are offered.

**Open swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 1 to 5 p.m.; Friday through Sunday 1 to 5:30 p.m.

**Lap swim hours:** Monday through Friday 6 to 8 a.m. and noon to 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 1 to 5:30 p.m.

**Resident fee:** \$7 adults; \$5 children



Surprise Aquatic Center (Photo courtesy of Courtesy of Surprise Parks & Recreation)

**Non-resident fee:** \$10 adults; \$7 children

### Mesquite Aquatic Center

100 W. Mesquite St., Gilbert  
480-503-6206

Sharing its amenities with Mesquite Junior High School, this facility serves the recreational and competitive needs of East Valley residents. Locker rooms, a concession stand and shaded ramadas surround the large central pool, with eight competition lanes at its core. It also includes a rectangular deep end for diving and a polygonal zero-depth play area complete with mushroom-shaped waterfall structures and a small slide for the littlest ones and an ADA chair lift. Steps away is a second pool with two twisty slides. In addition to open swim sessions, the center offers swim and dive lessons, a junior lifeguard program and aquacise classes, as well as hosts two swim teams. The center is

known to get crowded, so get there early if you want to choose the best lounge chair.

**Public swim hours:** Monday through Friday 1 to 6 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Fee:** \$3 adults, \$1 kids ages 17 and younger

### Mesquite Groves Aquatic Center

5901 S. Hillcrest Drive, Chandler  
480-782-2635

Like its Avondale counterpart, this award-winning sports complex — it was named Outstanding Facility by Arizona Parks and Recreation in 2009 — has all the top amenities. Located adjacent to Basha High School, it features a competition pool with diving boards, a zero-depth-entry pool, a 350-foot-long lazy river, two slides, a spray pad and a 725-gallon tumble bucket. It also offers extensive programs, including year-round swim lessons, a swim team, life-guard training and water safety courses, and aquatic fitness classes. But what really makes it stand out is the fact that it's been designated a Certified Autism Center by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, ensuring that people of all abilities have a safe and welcoming experience. New this summer is a sensory guide, provided by IBCCE, that will help staff members understand how different elements of the facility can affect a person with sensory-processing sensitivities.

**Public swim hours (through July 16):** Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.; Friday through Sunday noon to 6 p.m.

**Lap swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 7 to 9 p.m.

**Fee:** \$2.25 adults; \$1.25 seniors ages 55 and older; \$1 children ages 2-17

### Pecos Pool

17010 S. 48th St.  
602-534-9255

Pecos Park in South Phoenix may be best known for its pickleball courts, but its swimming pool also is worth checking out, especially if you live in or around Ahwatukee. The large outdoor facility

includes two pools: a large lap pool that's connected to a zero-depth-entry play pool, complete with spray features and dual figure-eight slides, and a separate diving pool with two diving boards. A splash pad and playground are located just outside the pool facility. Restrooms, showers and drinking fountains are available, but unlike at Cortez, there are no concessions and limited seating options. Swim lessons for children and adults are offered.

**Open swim hours:** Monday-Thursday, Saturday-Sunday noon-6 p.m.

**Fee:** \$3 adults; \$1 kids and senior

### Rhodes Aquatic Complex

1860 S. Longmore, Mesa  
480-644-2550

It may not be the fanciest in the Valley, but this pool complex that's attached to Rhodes Junior High offers something no other pool does: a FlowRider. Open to both kids and adults, the surfing simulator adds some high-energy fun to an aquatic outing. If extreme sports aren't your thing, there's still plenty to do here. The pool features eight competitive lap lanes, a zero-depth-entry play zone and a diving well with two 1-meter diving boards and one 3-meter diving board, and a splash pad and tumble buckets will keep toddlers and little ones entertained for hours. Set up on the shaded bleachers or bring your own lounge chair, and concession facilities are available onsite. Swimming and diving lessons and water exercise classes are offered, and the facility also hosts swim, dive and artistic swim teams.

**Public swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 1 to 6 p.m.; Friday 1 to 7 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.

**FlowRider hours:** Monday through Thursday 1 to 6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.

**Fee:** \$4 adults, \$2 kids and seniors

### Surprise Aquatic Center

15831 N. Bullard Ave., Surprise  
623-222-2500

Spring training may be over, but residents still flock to Surprise City Center. Instead of going to Surprise Stadium, however, they head across the street to the aquatic center. This popular facility — get there early, as lines form out the door — is a water wonderland for the whole family. It includes a competition lap pool with a diving well and two diving boards, a zero-depth-entry play pool with spray features and two spiraling slides, and a vortex whirlpool. Seating options include bleachers and benches, and outside food is not allowed, but the center does have a snack bar. Swim lessons, water aerobics, lifeguard training and competitive swim teams also are offered.

**Open swim hours:** Monday through Thursday, Saturday and Sunday noon to 6 p.m.; Friday noon to 4 p.m. (through July 31)  
**Lap swim hours:** Monday through Thursday 6 to 7 a.m. and noon to 9 p.m. (through July 31)

**Resident fee:** \$3 adults, \$2 kids ages 6 months to 17 years

**Non-resident fee:** \$5 all ages



### LET'S MOVE SOME STUFF: 2024 FORD MAVERICK XLTW

The good ole boys who love their F-150's and Silverados will laugh the Maverick buyers out of the clubhouse because they don't think compact trucks are real trucks but the Ford Maverick puts a nice boy on a functional vehicle and is something you should consider if you move people, stuff or people and stuff.

The interior of the Maverick is basic, simple and perfect for what Ford is

trying to achieve. Function and affordability. You can fit 4 adults (5 with a squeeze) in the cab. You have limited technology but does come with the Apple car play/Android auto. You get exceptional storage with several large water bottle holders and some storage nooks and crannies strown throughout.

The turbocharged 2.0-liter engine and all wheel drive deliver just the right amount of

performance, towing (4,000 lbs) and payload (1,500 lbs) and a solid 20/24 MPG fuel economy. The Maverick which reminds me of the old Chevy S10 from back in the day is a compact truck with not a lot of competition (Hyundai Santa Cruz) and a lot of value. The XTL Tremor comes in at an amazing \$34,950. Take a look at this bad boy from Ford and let's move some stuff!

#### RATING (out of 5 McFly's)

Looks: 🍌🍌🍌

The Drive: 🍌🍌🍌

Comfort: 🍌🍌🍌

Safety & Security: 🍌🍌🍌

Value: 🍌🍌🍌

Sound System: 🍌🍌🍌

Fuel Economy: 🍌🍌🍌

Bells & Whistles: 🍌🍌🍌

Overall: 🍌🍌🍌



2024 FORD MAVERICK XLTW

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