

# find your

BY HANNAH LOTT-SCHWARTZ

At specific points around the world, the earth churns with tangible, tingly energy at sites known as vortices, visited by those seeking connection, healing, or a good story to tell. Here's your road map to six such hotspots in the Western United States—and what to do once you get there.

The term “vortex” wasn’t used to describe geographic energy centers until the 1980s, when the metaphysical movement captured the West’s attention. In this sense, a vortex is a cyclonic flow of energy. Think of the sea, how it churns; now remove the water element, with only the force remaining. That’s an energy vortex, and they’ve been documented all over the world. Though there are myriad theories to explain and chart them, in many cases the explanation can be traced back to physics—electromagnetic fields, to be precise.

Thanks to the molten lead at its core, Earth is a giant spinning magnet. In physics, a moving magnetic field produces electricity, and a moving electric charge produces an electromagnetic field—the same type found surrounding humans, due to the nature of DNA, says biophysicist and certified energy medicine practitioner Christina L. Ross, PhD, a research fellow at the Wake Forest School of Medicine’s Institute for Regenerative Medicine. “Energy medicine researchers call the human energy field a biofield, while geophysicists call the earth’s energy field a protection from cosmic debris,” she says. “But it’s obviously more than that.”

Ross explores those implications in a paper published in the February 2019 issue of peer-reviewed journal *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*. “Quantum physics teaches us that there is no difference between energy and matter,” she writes. “If Western medicine applied the principles of modern physics, it would understand human beings are composed of information (energy) interacting with other energy (environment) to profoundly impact our physical and emotional health.” Though we might call human-based energy vortices chakras and land-based ones spiritual sites, they’re virtually indistinguishable.

Of course, long before New Age disciples named the phenomenon, Indigenous cultures, both ancient and contemporary, recognized the geological power. Just look at Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Machu Picchu, Monument Valley and Haleakalā Crater—noted energy centers held sacred first by their respective traditional custodians. It’s with that in mind that a land acknowledgment accompanies the vortex destinations that follow: These places were stolen and renamed, the Indigenous nations pinched into veritable corrals, and in some cases, the culture co-opted. Consider it a reminder to be mindful of your impact as you move through this journey; after all, it’s hard to raise your frequency if it’s at the expense of suppressing others’.

Should you visit these vortices, whether by road trip or armchair travel, go at your own pace. Think of the experience as a sequence your yoga flow might follow: After grounding and moving through some warmups, find your footing and cultivate inner heat, ultimately sitting with discomfort before integrating what you learned in Savasana (Corpse Pose). That flow, and this journey, can be intense at times, in the same way that attending a party may invite both elation and exhaustion. Whenever you need, take Balasana (Child’s Pose, that is, a detour or pause), especially if your itinerary intersects with a full moon, when energies are particularly charged.





## CAREFREE, ARIZONA

Homelands Of: Akimel O'odham (Upper Pima),  
Hohokam, Yavapai-Apache

True to its name, Carefree has a vibe so mellow you could melt into it as though in Savasana, surrounded by massive boulders and towering, hundred-year-old saguaro cacti. There's something in the vitality of the desert—how life thrives here under harsh conditions—that's inspiring, a reminder that we, too, can regenerate the parts of ourselves we thought lost. Take it as an invitation to integrate what you've felt on this journey, to carry that experience along with the full life you've lived, and appreciate how each now informs the other.

Here you can turn off your mind and sink into submission, and **Civana Wellness Resort & Spa** provides a friendly space to do so. Take part in as many (or as few) of the complimentary classes as you like: daily intention settings and gratitude circles, aerial and wall yoga, courses on working with and releasing your myofascia, sound healings under the stars. Developed as a more accessible alternative to some better-known retreats and founded under the guiding principle that wellness is for everyone, Civana isn't about the singular journey, but rather cultivates a group experience. Thoughtfully curated holistic wellness programming, heart-centered spa treatments such as cranial sacral therapy, and creative meals prepared by a decorated vegan chef serve as a reminder that human existence finds harmony in the collective.

You only really need to leave Carefree twice. First, drive to secret gem **Saguaro Lake Ranch**, where kayaks are on offer to paddle down the Lower Salt River, below the magnificent Bulldog Cliffs and past wild horses, river otters, and saguaros that wave from the shoreline. On your way back, detour to **Stratta Kitchen**, where simple whole foods and Mediterranean flavors transform under James Beard award-winner and Michelin-starred chef Alex Stratta, who left fine French dining after a health scare reshaped his thinking about food to move from indulgent, heavy meals to veg-centered dishes.

The second time you leave won't be until your final departure, when you smile at its shrinking shadow in your rearview mirror. 🌵

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