



Autumn Equinox Tour to Los Morteros and Picture Rocks Petroglyphs Archaeological Sites

**Tuesday September 22, 2026
8 to 11:30 am**



Los Morteros is named for these bedrock mortars.
(Pima County Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation Office photo)

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's executive director, archaeologist Allen Dart, leads this tour to two of the Tucson area's premier pre-European archaeological sites. The tour will meet at Los Morteros, and after visiting that site will caravan to Picture Rocks.

Los Morteros, an ancient village site of the Hohokam archaeological culture from about 850 to 1300 CE, has been studied by archaeologists and historians for more than a century. During its heyday it was the center of an extended community of related Hohokam sites along the Santa Cruz River. The core of Los Morteros, now preserved in a Pima County natural and cultural resources park, encompasses a large public architectural feature interpreted as a ballcourt used for ritual and other purposes, plus many refuse mounds, room blocks, probably hundreds of pithouses, and thousands of artifacts. Also present are petroglyphs and the bedrock mortars that inspired the site's name – *Los Morteros* is Spanish for "The Mortars."

The Picture Rocks site in the Tucson Mountains foothills contains over 400 ancient rock symbols made mostly by the Hohokam, although some of the rock images may predate 500 CE. Some of the Picture Rocks petroglyphs depict dancing human-like figures and mammals, while others are more abstract. At least some of the glyphs evidently were ritually important because at least one of them is a marker for both the spring and autumn equinoxes and for the summer solstice of each year. This calendar petroglyph exhibits a "sun dagger" (a pointed sunlight image) on the morning of each equinox regardless of the hour and minute of the actual celestial equinox event. Participants in this tour will get to see the equinox sun dagger appear on the calendar glyph if clouds do not block the sunlight on the tour day.



Participants provide their own transportation and are advised to wear sturdy shoes and bring drinking water.

A donation of \$45 per person (\$36 for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center members) is due 10 days after reservation request or by 5 pm Sunday September 20, whichever is earlier.

Tour meeting place is near N Silverbell Rd and W Linda Vista Blvd in Marana, Arizona. Attendance is limited to 24 participants.

Contact Old Pueblo Archaeology Center at info@oldpueblo.org or 520-798-1201 to register and obtain meeting place directions.

Cancelations made 30 days or more before departure will not be charged.

Cancelations 8 to 30 days before departure will be refundable at 50% of the fee paid unless the canceled space can be filled.

Cancelations 0 to 7 days prior to departure date are not refundable.