Convento Complex

The convento—an open square of buildings with a central courtyard—was a focus of community life. To your right, an earthen berm protects the foundations of work rooms including a kitchen, ironworking, carpentry, weaving, leather, and grain grinding.

Lime Kiln

Here, limestone rocks were heated then pounded into a fine powder used to make lime mortar and plaster. Though laborious, it was (and remains) the best protection possible for sun-dried adobe.

Jesuit Church Footprint

The outline here marks the footprint of a church that was in use in 1757. Jesuit priests used this small church until their expulsion in July 1767. A year later, Franciscans arrived to care for the mission. They used this church until the new one was ready for use in 1822.

Convento Fragment

This remaining fragment of the convento complex includes the rooms in which the priest likely resided. After the mission residents left, it was used as a house and even as a school in the 1930s.

Vats

These features contain hydraulic lime surfaces, suggesting they were meant to be water tight. Archeologists continue to disagree about their original function. They may be cisterns, rudimentary "indoor plumbing," or limestone working features.

Melhok Ki (moo-ro kee)

This is a modern construction of a traditional O'odham dwelling, made of mesquite timbers, saguaro ribs, ocotillo sticks, and mud. It was built in 1997 by O'odham from the San Xavier community using traditional hand tools. A home would also include a *wa:ato* (WAH-ah-tow), or shade ramada, and a brush enclosure for cooking.

Acequia and Compuerta

Water was diverted from the Santa Cruz River nearly a mile upstream via an *acequia*, or irrigation ditch. The burnt adobe structure here was most likely a compuerta, a weir or diversion box, for turning water from the main irrigation ditch into the orchard.

Orchard

The mission complex included a walled garden and orchard. The treelines here follow the the foundations of adobe walls which originally protected a 4.6 acre enclosure. The orchard would have contained favorite fruit trees brought to the mission from Europe. The trees you see here today were grown from seeds and cuttings of old cultivars found in historic orchards and yards in southern Arizona.

Mesquite Bosque

This rich woodland plant community supports a tremendous biodiversity of insects, birds, and mammals. Today, the mesquite bosque protects the threatened yellow-billed cuckoo and other rare species. It provided the O'odham, and later the Spanish, with wood, medicine, and food.

Anza Trail

In 1775, an expedition of approximately 240 people and nearly a thousand head of livestock followed this river on the first part of a journey that would establish the first European settlement on the San Francisco Bay.

Santa Cruz River

The river creates essential habitat and a wildlife corridor for threatened and endangered species.Where underlying bedrock slopes up, the water is forced to the surface. The O'odham situated their villages in these locations, known as "gaining reaches," to take advantage of the reliable water source.

Fiesta Grounds

Each year, the Tumacácori Fiesta brings together people from all the cultures of the Santa Cruz Valley for two days of celebration. Each culture traditional to Tumacácori is represented in music and dance.

Cooking Ramada

Flavors like chiles, carne asada, and tortillas reflect the *mestizaje* of Mexico and mixing of origins. Sharing traditional foods—made fresh in kitchens such as this one—connects us to each other and to our shared heritage.

Courtyard Garden

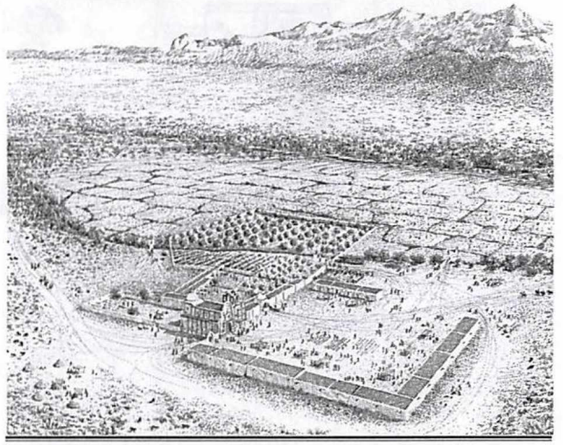
Missions took their garden design from Spanish tradition. They featured mostly plants imported from Europe for their cultural, religious, medicinal, or aesthetic value. This garden was built in 1939 as part of the visitor center's "New Deal" era construction.

Tumacácori National Historical Park

Explore Tumacácori

Map and Key

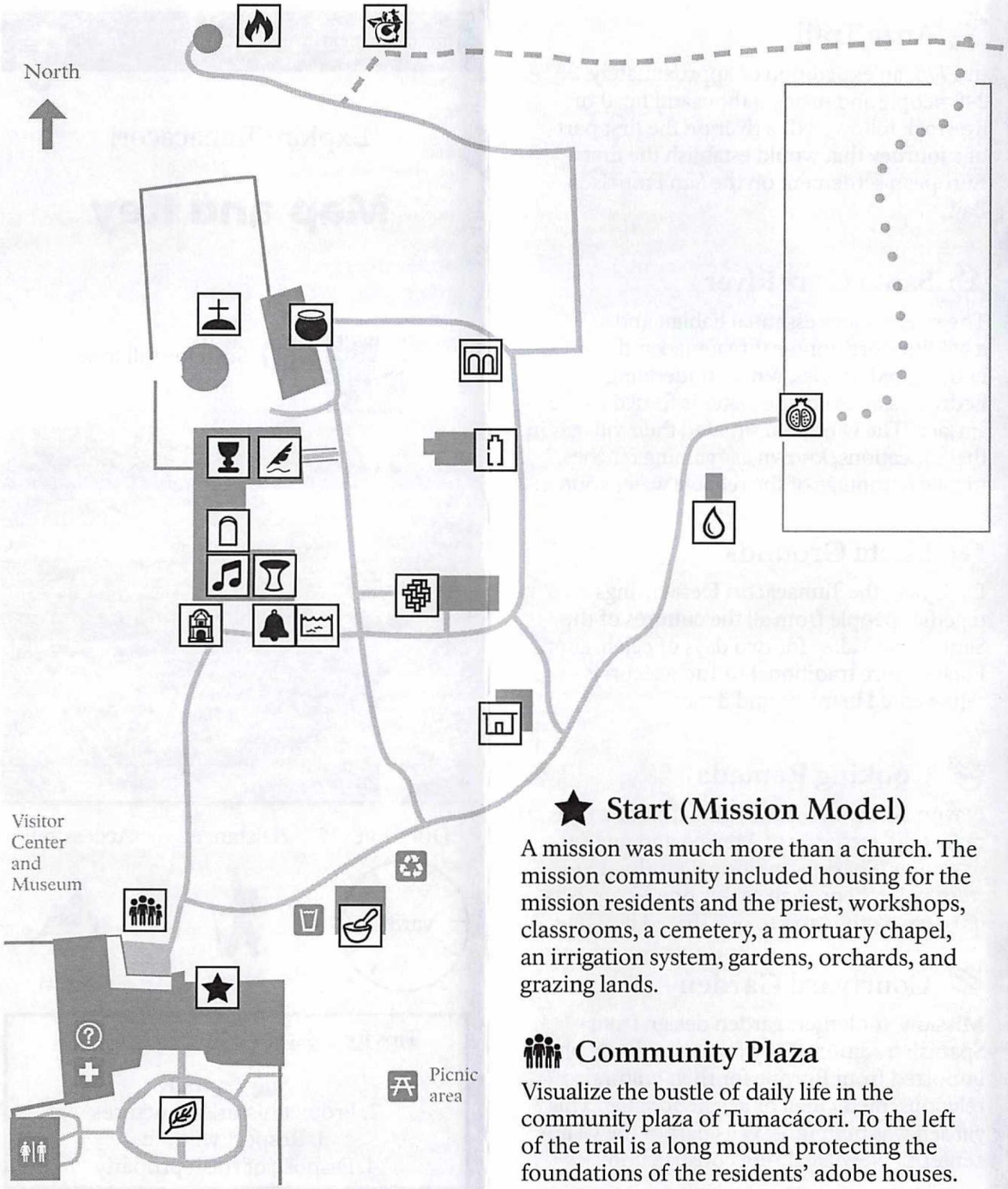
Scan for full tour



Duration	Distance	Accessibility
varies	varies	varies

Tips for a Safe and Responsible Visit

1. Stay on trails
2. Protect historic structures
3. Respect wildlife
4. Dispose of trash properly



Start (Mission Model)

A mission was much more than a church. The mission community included housing for the mission residents and the priest, workshops, classrooms, a cemetery, a mortuary chapel, an irrigation system, gardens, orchards, and grazing lands.

Community Plaza

Visualize the bustle of daily life in the community plaza of Tumacácori. To the left of the trail is a long mound protecting the foundations of the residents' adobe houses.

Church Façade

The front of the church was brightly painted. The columns were red and the Egyptian-style capitals yellow with black markings. The statue niches were blue. You can still see holes in the bell tower where scaffolding was built into the walls during construction.

Bell Tower

Bells were rung daily by pulling on ropes that reached to the ground. The scallop shell niches harken to Saint James, *Santiago de Compostela*, the patron saint of Spain.

Nave

There were no pews or side chapels; the church is in the form of a long hall. Lining the walls are four side altars where devotional candles could be placed. Statues of saints stood in the niches above. After its abandonment in 1848, the roof was removed and local settlers re-used the timbers.

Choir Loft

The mission might have supported a dozen singers and musicians playing instruments such as trumpet, oboe, bassoon, flute, and zither (guitar). Choir members memorized songs in Latin, Spanish, and O'odham for Masses, processions, and other ceremonies.

Baptistry

Baptisms were performed for babies, children, and adults in this room. Adobe walls, nine feet thick with an inner rock core, support the massive bell tower above. The stairway leads up to the robing room, choir loft, and on up to the roof and the bells.

Sanctuary

Protected by a domed ceiling made of fired adobes, this room is still adorned with remnants of original paint, picture frames, and stenciling. During the Mass, a priest sang the words facing toward the altar, his back to the congregation. Scriptures were read from the pulpit, reconstructed on the nearby wall.

Sacristy

The sacristy served as the priest's office. It housed the holy vestments and objects needed for the Mass. Here, priests would record baptisms, marriages, and burials. After the mission was abandoned, travelers, soldiers, and cowboys spent nights here.

Cemetery

While records show nearly 600 burials between 1755 and 1825, the first took place here in 1822. The fourteen niches in the walls would have held paintings or sculptures of the Catholic "stations of the cross." Family might spend time with their deceased loved one inside the round mortuary chapel.

Storeroom

The mission had a communal system of growing and distributing food. In addition to the O'odham diet, the Spanish introduced horses, sheep, goats, cattle, wheat, and fruit trees from Europe. This two-story building was used for storage and distribution.