



Aster Aging wishes you a warm and joyful holiday season filled with laughter, kindness, and memories for years to come!

Thank you for being a part of our community - we are stronger together. In this season of celebration, we are grateful for you, our participants.



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DECEMBER MENU



For next day reservations (lunch is served at 11:30 am), call [480-962-5612](tel:480-962-5612) (Mesa Downtown) or [480-218-2221](tel:480-218-2221) (Red Mt).
 The Suggested Contribution for participants age 60+ is \$3.50.
 Items with ** contain pork or pork products. Menu items subject to change due to availability.

MONDAY

1 Chicken parmesan with roasted red potatoes, green peas, a whole wheat dinner roll, and diced peaches.

TUESDAY

2 Beef tacos on a whole wheat tortilla, Chuck Wagon corn, pinto beans, and strawberries with cream.

WEDNESDAY

3 Barbeque pork** sandwich on a whole wheat bun, baked beans, yellow squash, and watermelon slices.

THURSDAY

4 Beef lasagna, 4-way-vegetables, zucchini, whole wheat bread sticks, and a banana.

FRIDAY

5 Cod fillet, Brussels sprouts, corn, brown rice, and apricot slices.

8

Shepard's pie with beef, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, a whole wheat dinner roll, and strawberries.

9

Honey garlic chicken with Asian vegetable mix, edamame, brown rice, and tropical fruit.

10

Shrimp Alfredo on linguine noodles with broccoli and cauliflower, 5-way-vegetable mix, and an orange.

11

Chili con carne, sauteed yellow squash, green side salad, cornbread, and mixed berries.

12

Chicken pot pie with celery and carrots over a whole wheat biscuit, 4-way-vegetable mix, and pineapple chunks.

15

Salisbury steak with gravy, cubed roasted potatoes, spinach, a whole wheat biscuit, and an apple.

16

Chicken tacos on a whole wheat tortilla, refried beans, roasted corn, and Mandarin orange slices.

17

Beef Strogano over egg noodles, green beans, a garden side salad, and mango cubes.

18

Chicken stuffed with broccoli and cheese, cauliflower, baby carrots, a whole wheat dinner roll, Fig Newtons, and a pear.

19

Tri Tip roast with gravy, baked potato, cauliflower, a whole wheat roll, apple crisp with oatmeal, and cake.

Join us for our Holiday Luncheon!

22

Chicken Kiev with grilled vegetables, wax beans, brown rice, and an orange.

23

Pot roast with gravy, potatoes with carrots and celery, sweet corn, a whole wheat biscuit, and a banana.

24

Ham** and cheese hoagie with lettuce, tomatoes, and onion slices on a whole wheat roll, chopped veggie salad, and a pear.

25

CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY DECEMBER 25, 2025

26

Tuna salad sandwich on whole wheat bread with baby carrots, 3-bean salad, and Mandarin orange slices.

29

Cheeseburger on a whole wheat bun with tater tots, baked beans, and a fruit cocktail.

30

Teriyaki Chicken bowl with stir fry veggie mix and brown rice, edamame, sliced apples, and a fortune cookie.

31

Corned beef, cabbage, red potatoes, whole wheat rye bread, and mixed berries.

1

CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY JANUARY 1, 2026

Items with ** contain pork or pork products.

Menu subject to change due to availability.

ASTER AGING

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014



SUSTAINING OUR MISSION

Aster's mission endures because of a shared belief: that every older adult deserves the chance to age with independence, purpose, and community. Together, we make that possible.

Every day, Aster enriches the lives of older adults in countless ways. For some, it's through our Senior Centers, a vibrant place for shared meals, activities, and friendship. For others, it's the reassurance of a daily visit and wellness check through Meals on Wheels. Many rely on our Outreach team for guidance to vital community resources that help them live safely and affordably. Sometimes, Aster is as simple and meaningful as a friendly phone call, a Neighbors volunteer visit, or supplemental pet food that keeps a cherished four-legged companion close.

Now more than ever, sustaining these programs is essential. Across the country, organizations like ours are facing waitlists and reduced capacity due to funding cuts and rising demand. Here in Mesa, we cannot allow that to happen. The need in our community is growing, and it is imperative that Aster's programs not only remain available to all who depend on them, but continue to expand their reach to those who need them most.

Your support makes that possible. A donation to Aster directly sustains and strengthens the programs that preserve independence, promote wellness, and foster connection among thousands of older adults every year. It ensures that Aster can continue to meet the growing needs of our community today while building the foundation for tomorrow.

Aster's work touches every corner of our community. By giving today, you help sustain that work and extend its reach so that no older adult is left without the support, community, and dignity they deserve.

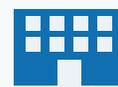
On behalf of all those we serve, thank you for making our work possible, and for helping us sustain Aster Aging so that its programs may continue impacting older adults for generations to come.



Deborah B. Schaus, MSW
Chief Executive Officer

PROGRAMS FOR YOU

We support and empower East Valley older adults and their families to remain independent and engaged in our communities through:



CENTER-BASED SERVICES

Our Centers are social hubs, with lunchtime meals, education programs, and social activities.



MEALS ON WHEELS

Providing nutritious meals and essential wellness checks, with both short and long-term plans, to meet your unique needs.



IN-HOME SUPPORT

Supporting isolated adults with transportation, grocery shopping, well visits, respite, personal care, and housekeeping.



SOCIAL SERVICES

Helping navigate and access services and health resources, as well as being the NCOA Benefits Enrollment Center for the East Valley.



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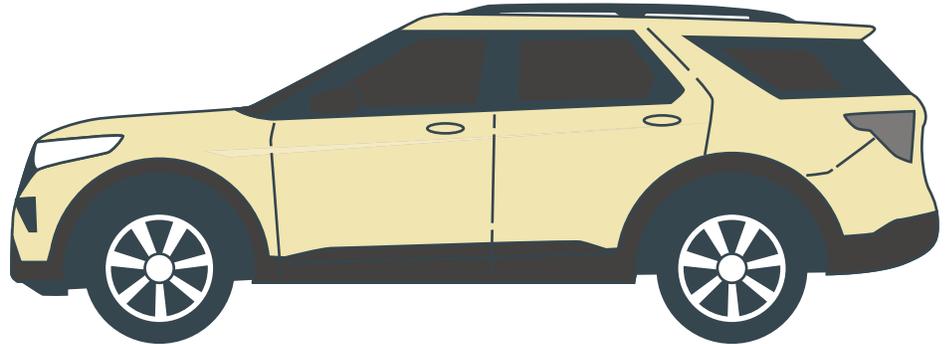


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SUBARU SEASON FOR SHARING

For the 18th year running, the Meals on Wheels America network is participating in the Subaru Share the Love Event.

Through this partnership, Subaru and its retailers have helped Meals on Wheels providers like Aster



deliver more than 4.6 million meals and friendly visits to seniors in need nationwide.

One in four seniors lives alone, and one in seven might not know from where their next meal is coming. Aster's Meals on Wheels program provides the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to local seniors who depend on these vital services to remain healthy and independent at home.

From November 20, 2025 through January 2, 2026, for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, the company will donate \$300 to the customer's choice of participating charities. One available option is Meals on Wheels. Since the Subaru Share the Love Event began in 2008, Subaru and its retailers have donated nearly 5 million meals and friendly visits to seniors served by local Meals on Wheels programs across the country.

Aster's Meals on Wheels program will receive a portion of these national proceeds, helping us continue to reach seniors throughout our community who need us most.

If you're considering a new car this season, think Subaru. Your purchase helps sustain Meals on Wheels for those who need it in our community. To learn more about the Subaru Share the Love Event and how your purchase supports Meals on Wheels, visit the official campaign website at www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove.



VISIT ASTER AT COMMUNITY EXPOS THIS MONTH

We invite you to visit us at the **Lovin' Life Mesa Expo on Wednesday, January 21, 2026** to meet our Outreach Team and learn about the programs and services that Aster has to offer.

What: Lovin' Life Expo Mesa

When: Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 9:00 am -1:00 pm

Where: Mesa Convention Center - 293 N Lewis, Mesa, AZ, 85201

Cost: FREE





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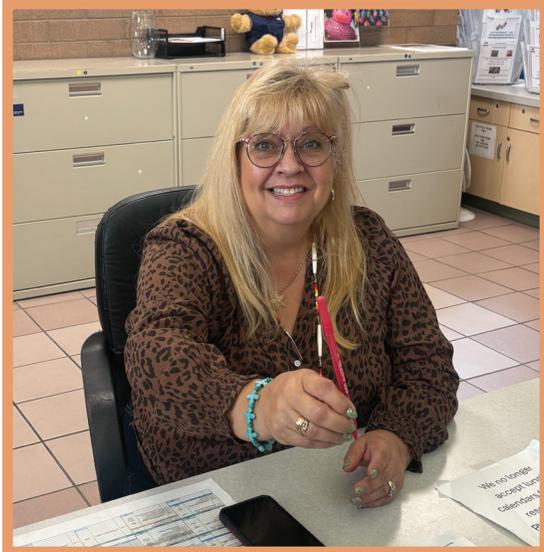
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ASTER ACTIVITIES

STAY IN TOUCH WITH ASTER TO READ MORE NEWS

Website: AsterAZ.org | Social Media: @AsterArizona
Email Development@asteraz.org for a chance to have your photo featured in the newsletter!



Pictured above: A friendly front desk volunteer at the Red Mountain Senior Center.



Pictured above: The Oregon Trail Experience, a unique class summarizing the history of the famed trail, with added context from the famed computer game.



Pictured above: Enjoying seasonal crafts at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center.



Pictured left: Volunteers from Mesa High School and Westwood High School form a 'spirit tunnel', celebrating participants and welcoming them to lunch at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center.



ASTER SENIOR CENTERS

Activities with an * have fees and require pre-registration.



MESA DOWNTOWN EVENTS

December 3 | 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

HEARING SCREENINGS

Presented by A.T. Still University of Health Sciences

Free hearing screenings - sign up for an appointment by contacting the center. Early detection is important, and these screenings provide a convenient, professional way to ensure your hearing is at its best.

Thursdays | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

VETERAN'S ART

Presented by the Mesa Art League

Join us every Thursday to make art with fellow Veterans.

Wednesdays | 9:00 - 11:00 am

HALL OF FAME

Join us every Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 am to discuss all things baseball. This unique club is led by Downtown Senior Center participant Art.

December 31 | 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

NOON YEAR CELEBRATION

Join us to ring in the New Year a little early! Enjoy music, dancing, and fun games as we celebrate together and toast to new beginnings.



Tuesdays, Wednesdays | 8:15 - 9:15 am | Mesa Downtown
MORNING MOVEMENT*

Get your day moving with indoor exercise! **\$2/person.**



Wednesdays | 1:00 - 3:00 pm | Red Mountain
RED MOUNTAIN DANCES!*

Join us for live music and lots of fun every week! **\$5/person.**



Thursdays | 1:00 - 3:00 pm | Red Mountain
LINE DANCING*

A lively, coreographed dance with live music. **\$5/person.**



Monday, Thursday | 8:30 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown
ADVANCED & BEGINNERS TAI CHI CLASSES*

Beginner (10:00 am) Advanced (8:30 am). **Cost varies.**



Mondays | 12:30 - 1:30 pm | Mesa Downtown
KARAOKE MONDAY

Have fun singing golden-oldies in this judgement-free zone



Thursdays | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
SENIOR PLAYERS

No experience needed for this fun-loving theater group!



Monday, Thursday | 12:30 - 3:00 pm | Red Mountain
Mondays | 9:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown
DIAMOND ART*

Create amazing and dazzling art pieces. **Cost: Supplies**



Mondays | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
VIRTUAL TRAVEL

Learn about the cultures and people around the world.



Tuesdays | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm | Red Mountain
Tuesdays | 9:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown
STITCH & CHAT

Enjoy good company while crafting creative pieces.



Tuesday & Friday | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
GERI FIT Facilitated by Area Agency on Aging

Enjoy a great workout using bands, weights, and more!

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



Visit our online calendar at asteraz.org for more details.



1st & 3rd Wednesday | 9:30 - 10:30 am | Red Mountain **THE GOLDEN GALS**

Our female participants come together for friendship & fun.



Thursdays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown Wednesdays | 9:00 - 10:00 am | Red Mountain

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Learn your numbers to better manage your health!



Wednesdays | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Mesa Downtown Fridays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain

GRIEF & LOSS SUPPORT Facilitated by EMPACT

A bereavement support group for seniors.



Thursdays | 9:45 - 10:45 am | Mesa Downtown **CHAIR YOGA***

Calm your mind with chair yoga. \$3/person



Fridays | 8:30 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain **PORTRAIT PAINTING WORKSHOP***

Have fun drawing portraits from live models. \$5/person



Fridays | 9:30 - 10:30 am | Mesa Downtown **WRITER'S GUILD**

Come to share, learn and spark your creative juices.



1st Monday | 8:30 am | Mesa Downtown 2nd Friday | 9:00 am | Red Mountain **VETERANS' SOCIAL**

Enjoy coffee & donuts each month with fellow veterans.



Tuesdays | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Mesa Downtown **WORLD HISTORY CLASS**

Learn about remarkable events through history.



Wednesdays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown 1st Friday | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain

BOOK CLUB Facilitated by New Frontiers of MCC

Join us & discuss a shared love of reading.



1st & 3rd Tuesday | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown 2nd & 4th Tuesday | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain

MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY @ ASTER

The Mesa Public Library visits both Senior Centers twice a month to loan books, help you sign up for a library card, and more.

RED MOUNTAIN EVENTS



December 1 | 1:30 - 3:30 pm

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

Presented by the Muhammad Ali Parkinson's Center & DUET. For people living with Parkinson's Disease.

December 3 | 9:30 am - 11:00 am

ORNAMENT MAKING CLASS

Make fun and festive ornaments with us in celebration of the holidays! Take an ornament home, or leave it at the Center to help decorate for our Holiday Luncheon.

December 8 | 12:30 - 2:00 pm

WEATHER SYSTEMS

Come and learn about the different weather systems and make a tornado in a bottle.

December 15 | 9:30 - 11:00 am

HOLIDAY COOKIE DECORATING

Bring in the holiday spirit by decorating themed cookies at the Red Mountain Senior Center! Make your own cookies and take them home to enjoy with friends and family.

The Red Mountain Senior Center will be closed on Wednesday, December 24th.



EXCURSIONS

Must be a registered participant and RSVP in advance to join.



Mesa Downtown HOLIDAY LIGHT TOUR

December 8 & 15 | 6:00 - 10:00 pm

Enjoy a festive East Valley holiday light tour.

Cost: Free

Space Limited, 10 seats per trip
RSVP: In-Person at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center



Red Mountain CERAMICS CRAFT EXCURSION

December 10 | 8:45 am - 12:00 pm

Visit a local ceramics store and make an item of your choice.

Cost: \$10/person

Bus Pickup: 8:45 am
Space Limited, 10 seats per trip
RSVP: In-Person at the Red Mountain Senior Center



Pictured above: Participants visit the Penske Racing Museum in Phoenix on an Aster excursion.



CENTER GAMES

Drop by or email CBS@asteraz.org to save your spot.

MESA DOWNTOWN



WII SPORTS (GOLF & BOWLING)
Mon - Fri | 8:00 - 11:00 am



FUN & GAMES
Tues & Thurs | 9:30 - 10:30 am



FITNESS TRAINER
Tues & Thurs | 10:30 am - 2:00 pm



PINOCHLE
Tues & Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



BINGO!
PRIZES: Weds | 12:30 - 3:00 pm
MONEY: Fri | 1:00 - 3:30 pm

RED MOUNTAIN



MAHJONG
Mon | 9:30 - 12:00 pm | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



PINOCHLE
Tues & Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



WHATEVER GAMES WE PLAY
Weds | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



CANASTA
Weds & Fri | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES
Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



CHESS
Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm



BINGO! FOR FUN
Tues & Fri | 12:30 - 2:30 pm



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NOW SHOWING

Aster's Senior Centers each host FREE weekly movies starting at 12:30 pm.

Downtown Senior Center movies are on Thursday, and Red Mountain Senior Center movies are on Tuesday.

RSVP online, by phone/email or in person to secure your seat!



MESA DOWNTOWN (Thursdays)

December 4

White Christmas | 1954 | G

December 11

Elf | 2003 | PG

December 18

A Christmas Story | 1983 | PG

December 25

CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY



RED MOUNTAIN (Tuesdays)

December 2

A Holiday to Remember | 1995 | Not Rated

December 9

Scrooge | 1935 | Not Rated

December 16

A Christmas Without Snow | 1980 | Not Rated

December 23

The Great Rupert | 1950 | Not Rated

December 30

All About Steve | 2009 | PG-13



JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCH

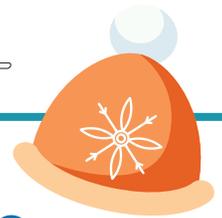
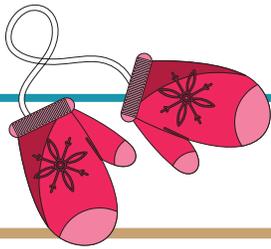
Dec 19 | 11:30 - 1:00 pm

Enjoy a delicious holiday meal as we celebrate the joys of the season. Fun and festive activities will help make the season bright.

RSVP TODAY

Mesa Downtown at 480-962-5612

Red Mountain at 480-218-2221



HOLIDAY HEALTH TIPS

Adapted from Nutrition.gov's "Healthy Holidays: Tips for Older Adults"

The holidays are a time for celebration, but large meals, sweets, and alcohol can challenge your health. Older adults can maintain wellness by focusing on nutrient-rich foods and mindful habits.

Focus on Nutrient-Rich Foods: Include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats. A variety of fresh foods ensures sufficient vitamins, minerals, and fiber. These foods help maintain energy, immunity, heart health, and digestion while supporting healthy weight.

Plan Ahead: Balance indulgent meals with lighter options. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables at each meal. Limit added sugars, salt, and saturated fat, and watch portion sizes. Drink water throughout the day to prevent dehydration and reduce excess alcohol intake.

Cook at Home: Controlling ingredients allows healthier alternatives for traditional dishes. Simple swaps, like using low-fat dairy, whole grains, or herbs instead of salt, improve nutrition without sacrificing flavor. Preparing meals ahead reduces stress and helps make balanced choices.

Practice Food Safety: Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Follow safe thawing and cooking practices to prevent foodborne illness, which can be more serious for older adults.

Stay Active: Short walks, stretching, or gentle exercises after meals support digestion, manage blood sugar, and maintain mobility. Activity with family or friends adds enjoyment and social connection.

Enjoy Mindfully: Savor flavors, eat slowly, and honor your appetite. Sharing meals with loved ones enhances emotional health and reduces isolation. Thoughtful choices allow older adults to enjoy the season while protecting long-term health and maintaining energy.

VISIT [NUTRITION.GOV](https://www.nutrition.gov) FOR MORE HEALTH TIPS & TRICKS

HEARTY LENTIL SOUP

By Michaela Solimo
Aster Aging Intern

A cozy soup for winter that is simple to make and packed with nutrients.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups dried green or brown lentils
 - 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 bag frozen mirepoix (or fresh)
- Low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2-3 handfuls fresh or frozen spinach
- Italian seasoning to taste

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Optional: Sauté mirepoix in oil until fragrant, 3-5 minutes.
3. Combine lentils, diced tomatoes, mirepoix, broth, and Italian seasoning in a crockpot.
4. Cook on high 3-4 hours or low 6-8 hours.
5. Stir in spinach and let sit 10 minutes.
6. Serve and enjoy.





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PUZZLES



1. DECEMBER CROSSWORD

The words listed below can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forward, and backward.
Disregard spaces between words.

- ARCHER
- BOXING DAY
- CAPRICORN
- CHRISTMAS
- COLD MOON
- COUNTDOWN
- FEAST
- HANUKKAH
- KWANZAA
- NARCISSUS
- NEW YEAR'S EVE
- PRESENTS
- SAGITTARIUS
- SEA GOAT
- SOLSTICE
- TRADITIONS
- TURQUOISE
- VACATION

E	N	O	O	M	D	L	O	C	T	N	Q	E	R	K
V	A	S	M	P	T	H	R	T	R	B	C	D	W	S
E	R	O	A	A	R	X	U	O	N	I	M	A	O	T
S	C	C	M	D	H	R	C	O	T	A	N	T	S	N
R	I	Q	A	I	Q	I	I	S	Y	Z	X	R	A	E
A	S	I	V	U	R	T	L	G	A	N	S	A	G	S
E	S	E	O	P	A	O	L	A	D	W	Y	D	I	E
Y	U	I	A	C	S	M	H	K	G	O	U	I	T	R
W	S	C	A	G	C	I	U	X	N	D	L	T	T	P
E	Q	V	C	H	O	Y	M	J	I	T	I	I	A	C
N	F	C	V	K	T	A	J	E	X	N	F	O	R	Q
S	Z	S	R	U	P	S	T	Q	O	U	N	N	I	X
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	B	O	K	S	U	Y
H	A	K	K	U	N	A	H	E	W	C	P	C	S	K
R	D	A	R	C	H	E	R	K	F	C	O	E	X	P

2. MATCHING

Which two are exactly alike?



Answer: 1 & 3



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CONTACT

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Mesa Downtown Senior Center

247 N Macdonald St,
480-962-5612 p

Red Mountain Senior Center

7550 E Adobe St,
480-218-2221 p

ASTER'S MISSION

Our mission is to empower and support East Valley older adults to remain independent and engaged in our communities.

ASTER'S VISION

Our vision is for Aster Aging to be a leader in providing direct services and mobilizing resources that support the changing needs of our older adult population.



BE THE FIRST TO KNOW

Read the newsletter early every month by receiving it in your email inbox or reading it right on our website!

Email **development@asteraz.org** to learn more.



DONATE ONLINE TODAY

Your gift empowers and supports local seniors!

www.asteraz.org/help/donate.html