



Backcountry Trip Planner

Introduction to Hiking Grand Canyon



Each year Grand Canyon National Park receives approximately 30,000 requests for backcountry permits. The park issues 13,000 permits, and close to 40,000 people camp overnight in the backcountry at Grand Canyon. The majority of Grand Canyon hikers are here for the first time, and although many are avid hikers, they find that hiking the Grand Canyon is very different from most other backpacking experiences. They tend to react to the experience in one of two ways: either they can't wait to get back, or they swear they will never do it again. Depending upon how prepared you are and what the canyon serves up at any particular time, your trip can be a vacation or a challenge, a revelation or an ordeal.

You will be hiking in a desert climate, where water and protection from the elements make the difference between life and death. (See climate

information in the *Trip Planner* on page C1.) Your trip begins at a high elevation (7,000-8,000 feet) and requires a bone-jarring descent at the beginning of your trip, when your pack is heaviest. You will face a long climb out when you are already tired.

Changes in elevation mean surprising changes in temperatures. A hike starting on the rim leads to the extreme heat of the inner canyon. Rain along the river maybe snow on the rim.

Grand Canyon National Park encompasses more than 1.2 million acres. The vast majority of the park is inaccessible due to the predominance of cliffs and the inhospitability to all but desert plants and animals. The Colorado River bisects the canyon; hikers can cross the river only at Phantom Ranch. If you choose to hike from rim to river to rim, you will have to deal with an

elevation differential of more than 10,000 feet from start to finish.

If you wish to camp anywhere in the park other than in the developed campgrounds on the rims, you must obtain a permit from the Backcountry Information Center



(see procedures outlined on pages A6-A7).

Rangers recommend that you plan your trip well in advance of your arrival at the park and, when possible, indicate flexibility as to the dates and routes you request. Permit requests for popular hiking seasons—March to May and October through November—generally must be made as early as possible (see page A6 for more information). Summer is definitely not the ideal time to hike in the canyon.

The earlier you plan your hike and apply for permits, the more likely you will be to get the dates and itinerary of your choice.

Despite the fact that canyon hiking is extremely demanding, requests for backcountry permits far exceed the use that the canyon's fragile desert environment can sustain without serious resource damage. Therefore, overnight camping in the canyon and in undeveloped areas along the rim is carefully monitored and controlled, and demand usually exceeds availability.

Backcountry Information Center

Open daily:
8:00 a.m.– noon,
1:00–5:00 p.m.

Phone:
(928) 638-7875
1:00–5:00 p.m.

Website:
www.nps.gov/grca/

Email:
grca_bic@nps.gov

Address:
Backcountry Information Center
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

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For the latest backcountry information updates, visit Grand Canyon National Park's website at: www.nps.gov/grca/

Backcountry News

Return of the Condor

Like any other visitor, condors return each year.



The story of condors in the Southwest is an old one with new chapters. Bones found in caves at Grand Canyon show that ancestors of condors have been in this area for at least the last 50,000 years. Originally condors, including some species even larger than the California condor, existed throughout much of temperate North America. They were scavengers that fed on the carcasses of large mammals such as mastodons and ground sloths. As these species became extinct, the population and variety of species of condors declined. When Europeans arrived, only a small population of California condors was found along the Pacific coast, perhaps surviving on the carcasses of marine mammals that had washed ashore. Condor numbers continued to decline over the next several hundred years. The last sighting in Arizona occurred in 1924 near Williams, just south of the Grand Canyon.

By 1982 the entire population of California condors consisted of twenty-two birds, only six of which were surviving in the wild. The decision was made to trap these last free-flying birds and raise them in captivity. Fortunately, the condors reproduced well in captivity, and in 1992 a few were reintroduced to the wild in California.

It was deemed desirable to establish a second wild population to further protect this nearly extinct bird. Arizona's Vermilion Cliffs, north of Grand Canyon, were selected as the best release site. Since December 1996 a number of birds have been released at this site. Today there are approximately 55–65 condors in northern Arizona.

Many of the birds have adapted well, but the program has not been without its setbacks. Some birds exhibited a lack of wariness around people and were captured to be retrained about the dangers of the human species. Several deaths were human related—two or three were shot. Some succumbed to natural predators such as coyotes and golden eagles. Lead, ingested from carcasses, is a severe problem.

California condors live up to 70 years. They are very communal, traveling together in loose-knit flocks. This gives young birds the chance to learn appropriate behavior from older birds. Most of the birds released so far have been young birds. In a way it is surprising that so few have died following reintroduction.

The continued existence of free-flying California condors is dependent upon the establishment of a self-sustaining population in northern Arizona. Over the next few years we will find out if these young birds can learn to survive and reproduce. Your help in achieving this goal is greatly appreciated.

If You See a California Condor

If you should be fortunate enough to see a California condor, a large black bird with a featherless head and a prominent wing tag, please remember the following guidelines:

- Do not approach the birds or allow them to approach you. A minimum safe distance of at least 50 feet (15 m) must be maintained at all times.
- Do not feed them or leave food out for them.
- If you are backpacking in an area frequented by condors, do not leave your campsite unattended. Condors have been known to destroy tents, packs, sleeping bags, and other equipment while investigating a site.
- Report all sightings to a ranger as soon as possible.

Backcountry Information in the Park

The information in this newspaper assists you in obtaining a backcountry use permit by mail. You may have questions once you get to the park. To talk to a ranger for the latest trail information or to get the most recent weather report, visit one of the Backcountry Information Centers.

North Rim

The North Rim Backcountry Office is located in the North Rim Unit Office, west of the main road, 0.75 mile south of the North Kaibab Trailhead (north of the campground entrance). Hours are 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The North Rim office is open from mid-May to mid-October depending on the weather and snowfall.

South Rim

The Backcountry Information Center is located on the west side of Parking Lot E, near Maswik Lodge. Nearby parking is usually available, or ride the free shuttle that makes a stop at the Backcountry Information Center. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. year-round.

To reach the Backcountry Information Center by telephone, call (928) 638-7875 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Your Backcountry Fees at Work

Grand Canyon National Park's backcountry fees fund many projects for the canyon and its visitors. It is through these projects that the park is able to improve services and mitigate hiker impacts on trails and campsites. Current projects include the rehabilitation of 71 miles of backcountry trails, the replacement and servicing of backcountry restrooms, the stabilization of a hiker-frequented archeological site, and the revegetation and restoration of heavily impacted areas.

Other fee-funded improvements have already been accomplished. Backcountry Information Center hours, phone lines, staffing, training, equipment, and services have been upgraded to provide significantly quicker response to visitor requests for information and permits. Hiker education videos are sent out with advance permits to first-time Grand Canyon trip leaders to prepare hikers for the inner canyon's desert conditions. The Preventative Search and Rescue Program has helped reduce the number of visitor-related injuries on canyon trails.

Grand Canyon's backcountry fees have helped to maintain the quality of hikers' backcountry experiences at Grand Canyon National Park. Enjoy your canyon—hike safely and tread softly.

Preventing Injury & Illness



Use caution near the edge. Footing can be dangerous.

Hiking in Grand Canyon can be fun if you are prepared and hike intelligently! You are responsible for your own safety and the safety of your companions.

Don't suffer

Dangerously alluring, Grand Canyon hiking trails rapidly descend from the cool shade of the forested rim to the steep, rugged, hot desert below. Your descent into the canyon marks your entry into a world in which planning and preparation, self-reliance and good choices are crucial. Your safety is your responsibility! Experienced desert hikers avoid the inner canyon trails during the summer. Hiking in the early morning or late afternoon shade will greatly enhance your enjoyment of your hike and dramatically reduce the danger of hiking in direct sunlight.

Realize when you are in the danger zone

The "Danger Zone" is the combination of distance traveled, elevation, temperature, and direct sunlight that can easily overwhelm your body's ability to keep itself cool, fueled, and hydrated. Due to changing environmental conditions, the Danger Zone generally starts to develop between 1.5 and 3.0 miles down inner canyon trails. IT IS HOT!

Avoid trouble by hiking smart

- Plan your hike before you start.
- Hike during the cooler, shadier times of the day.
- Eat salty foods. Drink water or sport drinks.
- Go slowly. Rest often in the shade. Stay cool.

Double your calories and double your fun

Salty snacks and water or sport drinks should be consumed on any hike longer than 30 minutes. Food is your body's primary source of fuel and salts (electrolytes) while hiking in the canyon. If you do not balance your food intake with your fluid consumption, you run the risk of getting sick. With exertion, you lose salt and may develop a serious heat illness. For every hour hiking in the canyon, you should drink 1/2 to 1 quart of water or sport drink. Your best defense against heat illness and exhaustion is to eat a large breakfast, a full lunch, a snack every time you take a drink, and a rewarding full dinner at the end of the day. This is not a time to diet.

Heat Emergencies

All hikers feel the effects of heat stress while hiking in desert sun. You may feel the initial symptoms of heat illness as fatigue, a mild headache, or nausea. Help yourself! Find shade, stop hiking, and rest. Cool yourself with water. Start to eat and drink—slowly. You should begin to feel better. If you don't, send for help.

Extreme heat illness can result in life-threatening emergencies. Confusion, unconsciousness, and/or seizures require immediate action. You should:

- Cool the victim with water
- Shade the victim
- Insulate the victim from the hot ground
- Stay with the victim and send for help

Helpful Forethoughts

- Bring a small, lightweight flashlight or headlamp for after-dark returns
- Bring a small spray bottle for self-cooling
- During the summer, cotton clothing is preferable. Wet your shirt whenever possible for cooler hiking.

Knowing these four hazards could save your life

Emergency situations can be avoided by knowing how to avoid the following four hazards.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the result of dehydration due to intense sweating. Hikers can lose one to two liters of water per hour. Rangers at both Phantom Ranch and Indian Garden treat as many as 20 cases of heat exhaustion a day.

Symptoms: pale face, nausea, cool and moist skin, headache, and cramps.

Treatment: drink water, eat high-energy foods, rest in the shade, cool the body.

Hyponatremia

Hyponatremia is an illness that mimics the early symptoms of heat exhaustion. It is the result of low sodium in the blood, which is caused by drinking too much water and losing salt through sweating.

Symptoms: nausea, vomiting, altered mental states, and frequent urination.

Treatment: have the victim eat salty foods. If mental alertness decreases, seek help!

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency where the body's heat-regulating mechanisms become overwhelmed by a combination of internal heat production and environmental demands. Grand Canyon has two to three cases of heatstroke a year.

Symptoms: flushed face, dry skin, weak and rapid pulse, high body temperature, poor judgment or inability to cope, unconsciousness. Victim is in danger!

Treatment: find shade, cool victim with water, send for help!

Hypothermia

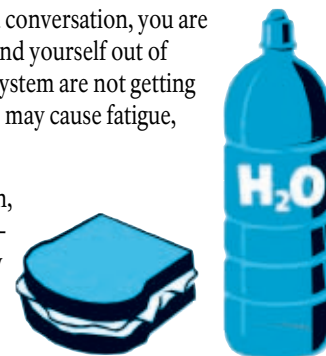
Hypothermia is a life-threatening emergency where the body cannot keep itself warm, due to exhaustion and exposure to cold, wet, windy weather.

Symptoms: uncontrolled shivering, poor muscle control, and careless attitude.

Treatment: put on dry clothing, drink warm liquids, warm victim by body contact with another person, protect from wind, rain, and cold.

Hiking Tips

- 1 Be Cool. Soak down your hat and shirt at every water source that you walk past. If you hike in the sun, try to keep yourself soaking wet to stay cool.
- 2 Go Slowly. If you can carry on a conversation, you are hiking at the right pace. If you find yourself out of breath, your legs and digestive system are not getting enough oxygen. Lack of oxygen may cause fatigue, heavy legs, and exhaustion.
- 3 Rest Often. Find shade, sit down, prop your legs up, and take a 10-minute break at least once every hour.
- 4 Eat and drink frequently.



First Time Backpacking

Know Your Abilities

The following recommendations address concerns for hiker safety and a desire that you enjoy your backpacking trip. There are an average of 400 search-and-rescue incidents in the Grand Canyon backcountry every year; the majority involve people on their first hike in the canyon. Remember, there are no easy trails into or out of the Grand Canyon.

Planning Your Trip

When planning your trip, remember that the most enjoyable and safest seasons for hiking are spring and fall (see climate chart on page 9). It is desirable to schedule at least two nights in the canyon. This allows a rest and recovery day before the hike out and reduces the distance to be covered each day. You should consider elevation gain and loss, not just mileage, when researching possible itineraries.

Fifteen trails and numerous obscure routes provide access to the inner canyon. Access to the bottom (2400 ft/730 m above sea level) is possible from both the South Rim (7000 ft/2130 m above sea level) and the North Rim (8200 ft/2500 m above sea level). None of these trails is easy, and since most people live at elevations near sea level, they find that hiking at high elevations greatly contributes to their fatigue.

Only the South Kaibab, Bright Angel, and North Kaibab Trails are maintained and patrolled on a regular basis. These three trails meet at the bottom near the only bridges that span the Colorado River. Together, they create a popular cross-canyon “corridor.” These wider Corridor Trails offer expansive views, reliable water sources, great camping, and the opportunity for hiking in and out on different trails. Backcountry rangers highly recommend this area, especially for a first Grand Canyon adventure. Most visitors begin and end their hikes on the South Rim.

Suggested South Rim Itineraries

	Night 1	Night 2	Night 3
Trip A:	Bright Angel Camp	Indian Garden Camp	Hike Out
Trip B:	Bright Angel Camp	Bright Angel Camp	Hike Out
Trip C:	Indian Garden Camp	Indian Garden Camp	Hike Out

Suggested North Rim Itineraries

	Night 1	Night 2	Night 3	Night 4	Night 5
Trip A:	Cottonwood Camp	Bright Angel Camp	Bright Angel Camp	Cottonwood Camp	Hike Out
Trip B:	Cottonwood Camp	Bright Angel Camp	Cottonwood Camp	Hike Out	
Trip C:	Cottonwood Camp	Cottonwood Camp	Hike Out		

Roads leading to the North Rim are closed during winter months due to heavy snowfall. Depending upon weather conditions, these roads are open from mid-May to mid-October. The hiking distance from the North Rim to the Colorado River is twice as far as from the South Rim to the river. The minimum time recommended for a round-trip hike from the North Rim is three nights.

Consider Day Hikes

Day hiking is a rewarding alternative if you are unable to obtain an overnight permit. Day hiking can be a safer and more enjoyable choice than an overnight trip into a difficult area that is beyond the capabilities of any single member of your group. Be sure to prepare for your day hike as carefully as you would an overnight trip, and do not attempt excessive mileages. Permits are not required for non-commercial day hikes.

Corridor Trails

	Distance from Trailhead mi/km	Elevation above Sea Level ft/m	Drinking Water	Toilet Facilities	Emergency Phone	Ranger Station	Campground	Additional Information
Distance from Bright Angel Trailhead (elevation: 6860/2091) to:								
Mile-and-a-Half Resthouse	1.5/2.4	5720/1743	●	●	●			Water available May–Sept. only.
Three-Mile Resthouse	3.0/4.8	4920/1450	●		●			Water available May–Sept. only.
Indian Garden	4.6/7.4	3800/1158	●	●	●	●	●	Picnic tables.
Plateau Point	6.1/9.9	3740/1140	●					
River Trail Junction	7.7/12.5	2446/746		●	●			
Bright Angel Campground	9.3/14.9	2480/756	●	●	●	●	●	Picnic tables.
Phantom Ranch	9.6/15.4	2546/776	●	●	●			Reservations required for food service and lodging. Pay phone.

Distance from South Kaibab Trailhead (elevation: 7260/2213) to:								
Cedar Ridge	1.5/2.4	6320/1926		●				
Tonto Trail Junction	4.4/7.1	4000/1219		●	●			Distance to Indian Garden via Tonto Trail 4.1 mi./6.6 km.
River Trail Junction	6.0/9.7	2640/805						
Bright Angel Campground	6.8/10.9	2480/756	●	●	●	●	●	Picnic tables.
Phantom Ranch	7.2/11.6	2546/776	●	●	●			Reservations required for food service and lodging. Pay phone.

Distance from North Kaibab Trailhead (elevation: 8250/2515) to:								
Supai Tunnel	2.0/3.2	6800/2073	●	●				Occasional seasonal water.
Roaring Springs Trail Junction	4.7/7.6	5200/1585	●					Water available May–Sept. only.
Cottonwood Campground	6.8/10.9	4080/1244	●	●	●	●	●	Water available May–Sept. only. Picnic tables.
Ribbon Falls Trail - South Junction	8.3/13.4	3720/1134						Waterfalls, day use only.
Phantom Ranch	13.7/22.0	2546/776	●	●				Reservations required for food service and lodging. Pay phone.
Bright Angel Campground	14.1/22.7	2480/756	●	●	●	●	●	Picnic tables.
Colorado River	14.2/22.9	2400/732						

Water available at the trailheads during the summer months.

South Kaibab Trail

The trail begins on the South Rim near Yaki Point and descends to the Colorado River. Elevation change from rim to river is 4860 ft (1480 m), along a 6.3-mile (10.1 km) trail. Because of the unavailability of water and steepness of this trail, rangers recommend hiking down this trail only—and recommend using the Bright Angel Trail for the hike out on the next day.

River Trail

The trail has little elevation variation and follows the south side of the Colorado River for 1.7 miles (2.7 km) between the Bright Angel and South Kaibab Trails. Two footbridges permit access to the north side of the Colorado River.

Bright Angel Trail

The trail begins on the South Rim just west of Kolb Studio and descends to the Colorado River. Elevation change from rim to river is 4460 ft (1360 m), along a 7.8-mile (12.6 km) trail.

Tonto Trail

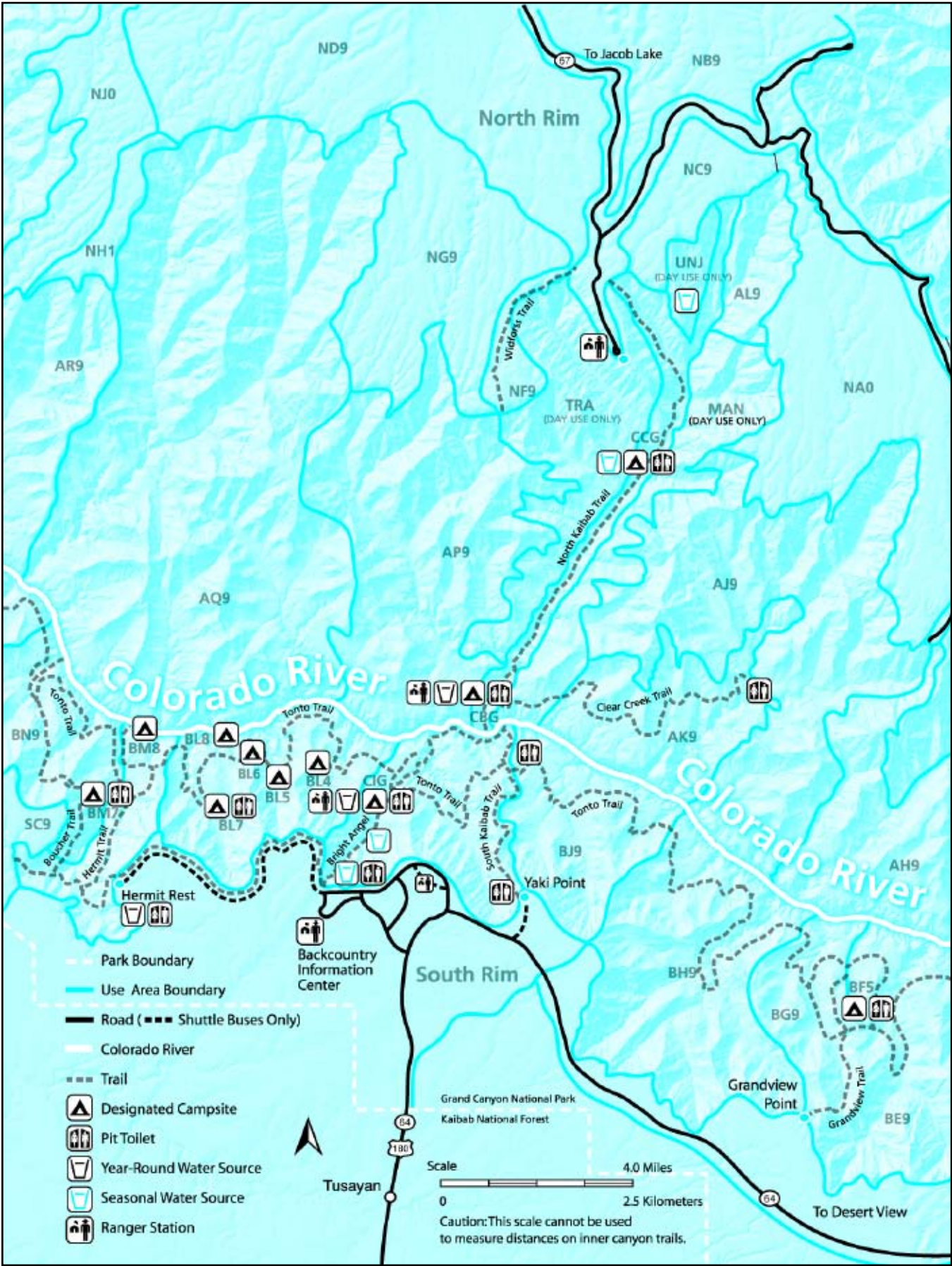
This trail crosses the Tonto Platform approximately 3900 ft (1200 m) below the South Rim, intersecting both the Bright Angel and South Kaibab Trails.

North Kaibab Trail

The trail begins on the North Rim at the head of Roaring Springs Canyon and descends to the Colorado River. Elevation change from rim to river is 5850 ft (1780 m), along a 14.2-mile (22.9 km) trail.

Map & Camping Information

Boundaries and Camping: This map portrays the portion of the park where 77% of backcountry use occurs. It is provided solely to indicate use area boundaries and designated campsites. Maps for planning and route-finding are available by mail order (see page 16) or at the park.



Code	Use Area Name	Mgmt. Zone	Camping Type
AH9	Vishnu	Wild	At Large Camping
AJ9	Cheyava	Wild	At Large Camping
AK9	Clear Creek	Threshold	At Large Camping
AL9	Greenland Springs	Wild	At Large Camping
AP9	Phantom Creek	Wild	At Large Camping
AQ9	Trinity Creek	Wild	At Large Camping
AR9	Scorpion Ridge	Wild	At Large Camping
BE9	Hance Creek	Primitive	At Large Camping
BF5	Horseshoe Mesa	Threshold	Designated Sites
BG9	Cottonwood Creek	Primitive	At Large Camping
BH9	Grapevine	Primitive	At Large Camping
BJ9	Cremation	Primitive	At Large Camping
BL4	Horn Creek	Threshold	Designated Sites
BL5	Salt Creek	Threshold	Designated Sites
BL6	Cedar Spring	Threshold	Designated Sites
BL7	Monument Creek	Threshold	Designated Sites
BL8	Granite Rapids	Threshold	Designated Sites
BM7	Hermit Creek	Threshold	Designated Sites
BM8	Hermit Rapids	Threshold	Designated Sites
BN9	Boucher	Primitive	At Large Camping
CBG	Bright Angel	Corridor	Campground
CCG	Cottonwood	Corridor	Campground
CIG	Indian Garden	Corridor	Campground
NA0	Walhalla Plateau	Primitive	At Large Camping
NB9	Thompson Canyon	Wild	At Large Camping
NC9	Ken Patrick	Primitive	At Large Camping
ND9	Robbers Roost	Primitive	At Large Camping
NF9	Widforss	Threshold	At Large Camping
NG9	Outlet	Primitive	At Large Camping
NH1	Point Sublime	Threshold	Designated Sites
NJ0	Swamp Ridge	Primitive	At Large Camping
SC9	Eremita Mesa	Threshold	At Large Camping

Corridor Zone: Recommended for hikers without previous experience at Grand Canyon. Maintained trails. Purified water stations. Paved roads to trailheads. Toilets, signs, emergency phones, and ranger stations. Use of private livestock (horses and mules only) allowed only when specified on permit.

Threshold Zone: Recommended for experienced Grand Canyon hikers. Non-maintained trails. Scarce water sources. Most roads to trailheads are dirt roads. Pit toilets. Use of private livestock (horses and mules only) allowed with permit only on Whitmore Trail and on designated roads and trails on the rim.

Primitive Zone: * Recommended for highly experienced Grand Canyon hikers with proven route-finding ability. Non-maintained trails and routes. Four-wheel-drive roads to trailheads. Occasional signs. No other developments. Use of private livestock (horses and mules only) allowed with permit only on the Ken Patrick Trail to Uncle Jim Trail to Uncle Jim Point and on designated roads on the rim.

Wild Zone: * Recommended for highly experienced Grand Canyon hikers with extensive route-finding ability. Indistinct to non-existent routes require advanced route-finding ability. Water sources scarce to non-existent. No other development. Use of private livestock is not allowed.

* Primitive and Wild Zones are not recommended for use during summer months due to extreme high temperatures and the lack of reliable water sources.

Backcountry Permit Procedures

Do I Need a Permit?

A backcountry permit is required for all overnight use of the backcountry including overnight hiking, overnight horseback riding, overnight cross-country ski trips, off-river overnight hikes by river trip members, and overnight camping at rim sites other than developed campgrounds. A backcountry permit is not required for overnight stays at the dormitories or cabins at Phantom Ranch.

Backcountry travelers must have their permit in their possession while in the backcountry. Once a camp is established, the permit must be attached to a pack, tent, or other equipment in plain view so it can be easily checked by rangers.

Permits are valid only for the trip leader, itinerary, number of people, and dates specified on the permit. Permits for all overnight backcountry use must be obtained through the Backcountry Information Center at Grand Canyon National Park.

A permit is not required for day hiking or day horseback riding in the canyon. Livestock use is limited to Corridor Trails only. Entry and/or exploration of any caves and mines must be approved in advance through Grand Canyon National Park.

Reservations for overnight tent or RV camping in developed campgrounds on the canyon rims (Mather, Desert View, North Rim) are not obtained through the Backcountry Information Center. The Backcountry Information Center does not make reservations for river trips, mule trips, Phantom Ranch lodging, or trips into the canyon on the Havasupai Indian Reservation. Information on these activities is presented elsewhere in this publication.

How to Apply

There are three ways to apply:

Use the internet to obtain a form and instructions for submitting requests: www.nps.gov/grca/.

1. **Fax your request to:**
Backcountry Information Center
(928) 638-2125.
2. **Mail your request to:**
Backcountry Information Center
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Faxes must not be received before or mail postmarked prior to the dates below. The National Park Service fills all written requests on a first-come, first-served basis—except requests received by 5:00 p.m. on the first allowable date which are processed randomly.
3. **Bring your request in person to:**
the Backcountry Information Center. Walk-in visitors receive immediate assistance, essentially moving them ahead of unprocessed requests.

When to Apply

To improve chances of obtaining an overnight backcountry use permit, requests should be made on the first of the month, four months prior to the proposed start date. This is the earliest allowable time.

For dates through:	Apply on or after the preceding:
January	September 1
February	October 1
March	November 1
April	December 1
May	January 1
June	February 1
July	March 1
August	April 1
September	May 1
October	June 1
November	July 1
December	August 1

Replies

You should hear back from the Backcountry Information Center within three weeks. Basic corridor trail hikes are faster to process than trips into more remote areas.

Fees

There is a non-refundable fee of \$10 per permit plus \$5 per person per night camped below the rim and \$5 per group per night camped above the rim. Frequent users may wish to purchase a one-year frequent hiker membership for \$25 that waives the initial \$10 fee for each permit obtained by the trip leader for twelve months from the date of purchase.

When sending in a permit request, the preferred method of payment is with a credit card. Please be sure to indicate the maximum amount you authorize the Backcountry Information Center to charge so that your longest trip alternative can be considered.

Permit holders will be responsible for paying park entrance fees upon arrival. South Bass Trail and Pasture Wash Trail visitors may be charged an additional fee by the tribe for crossing the Havasupai Indian Reservation.

Permit Responses

All written requests are responded to via the U.S. Postal Service—never by fax. Please allow at least three weeks for processing. Due to the volume of requests received, the park cannot confirm receipt of requests until they have been fully processed. When space is available and all fee requirements are met, a permit will be issued and mailed to the trip leader. The permit is valid only for the trip leader named on the permit. Overnight hikers are not permitted to enter the canyon without a valid permit in the trip leader's possession.

If you have been denied a permit through the mail, you may want to consider day hikes or attempt to obtain a last minute, walk-in permit.

Refunds

Once you have made your payment, the National Park Service cannot refund your money. If you cancel three days or more prior to the start of your trip, you can receive a credit towards a future trip. This credit must be used within one year.

Don't Forget to Include with Your Request

You must include with your request:

- 1) Trip leader's name, address, and telephone number.
- 2) Credit card number, expiration date, signature, date signed, and largest amount you authorize the NPS to charge.
- 3) Number of people and/or stock in the group (see STOCK USE on adjacent page).
- 4) License plate numbers of any cars to be left at the trailhead.
- 5) Proposed night-by-night itinerary showing use area codes and dates for each night (see suggested itineraries on page 4).
- 6) Organization name if applicable (see Group Size and Commercial Use).
- 7) Alternative proposed itineraries.

Use Areas

The backcountry is divided into "use areas" as delineated on the map on page 5. Each use area has an overnight capacity based upon the size of the area, the number of suitable and available campsites, its ecological sensitivity, its management zoning, and its use history. Use areas range in size from several hundred acres to several thousand acres.

Length of Stay

During spring, summer, and fall, camping in designated campsites or campgrounds is limited to two nights (consecutive or non-consecutive) per hike. From November 15–February 28, up to four nights will be allowed at Indian Garden, Bright Angel, and Cottonwood campgrounds.

Trips are limited to a maximum of seven nights per use area; however, overall trip lengths are not limited.

Last Minute Permit Availability

People without a permit may be able to obtain one upon their arrival, in person, at the Backcountry Information Center. However, permits are very difficult to obtain during popular seasons.

When demand for campsites exceeds supply, a waiting list procedure is implemented. Participation in this procedure is limited to walk-in visitors only. Obtaining a same-day permit is unlikely; anticipate a 1 to 3 day (or longer) wait.

People may participate in the waiting list for as many consecutive days as are necessary to obtain a permit. However, those on the waiting list must be present at the Backcountry Information Center at 8 a.m. Mountain Standard Time each day in order to maintain their position on the waiting list.

Leave No Trace

All Grand Canyon backcountry users are asked to follow Leave No Trace principles. The goal is to have minimum human impact on the canyon as a result of your trip. Important Leave No Trace principles at Grand Canyon include:

- 1) Be well prepared. Know the route and area in which you plan to hike.
- 2) Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is prohibited.
- 3) Stay on main trails; do not shortcut switchbacks.
- 4) Pack out what you bring in. This includes used toilet paper and all trash.
- 5) Fires are prohibited below the rim. Do not burn toilet paper—pack it out!
- 6) Bury solid human waste at least 200' from water in a shallow cat hole 4-6" deep and 4-6" in diameter.
- 7) To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200' away from creeks and potholes. Scatter strained dish-water.
- 8) Let nature's sounds prevail. Keep loud voices and noises to a minimum.
- 9) Leave what you find. This is particularly important when it comes to cultural resources of any kind, including artifacts and archeological remains. Leave them as you find them.

More information about Leave No Trace is available on their website: www.LNT.org.

Group Size

More permits are available for small groups (one to six people) than for large groups (seven to eleven people). Because there are only a few large group sites, limiting the size of your group will increase your chances of obtaining a permit.

Larger groups tend to cause a disproportionately higher amount of damage to the canyon, largely due to the effects of “social” trailing. For this reason, the park’s Backcountry Management Plan does not allow groups larger than eleven people to camp in the same campground or use area.

Regulations stipulate that all permits are void when a group obtains multiple permits for the same campground or use area for the same night. The alternative for these larger groups is to obtain permits for smaller groups and ensure the itineraries for these permits never bring more than one of the permits into the same campground or use area on the same night. No more than four large groups or eight small groups that are affiliated with each other may camp within the backcountry on the same night.

Stock Use

Use of private livestock in the backcountry is limited to horses and mules only. Livestock use is limited to the Corridor Trails in the inner canyon and selected trails on the rim.

Only Bright Angel and Cottonwood Campgrounds accommodate private livestock. Grazing is not permitted; stock handlers must bring enough feed for the duration of the trip.

A backcountry permit is required for overnight private livestock trips. Application procedures are the same as for backpackers. Trip leaders will be charged \$5 per stock animal per night.

Other requirements are in the Stock Use Handout available from the Backcountry Information Center.

When entering the park, each rider accepts responsibility for their personal safety and for the removal of injured or dead livestock from the park.

Commercial Use

In addition to following all normal backcountry permit requirements, commercial organizations must obtain a Commercial Use Authorization. Contact the park’s Concession Management Office at (928) 638-7707 for further information.

North Rim Winter Use

During the winter season (approximately mid-November through mid-May), a backcountry permit is required for overnight use of the North Rim from the park’s northern boundary to Bright Angel Point on the canyon rim. Winter access is by hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing.

Permittees are allowed to camp at-large between the park’s north boundary and the North Kaibab trailhead but not at the trailhead itself. Between the North Kaibab trailhead and the Bright Angel Point area, camping is permitted only at the North Rim Campground group campsite.

Human waste may not be buried in the snow in areas that will be in view of summer users.

Remote Sites

With a valid credit card, last-minute permits may sometimes be obtained from rangers on duty at the Tuweep, Meadview, and Lees Ferry ranger stations for a limited number of use areas in their vicinities. However, these rangers have other patrol responsibilities and may not be available to provide assistance. It is recommended that all trips be planned well in advance.

Pipe Spring National Monument near Fredonia and the BLM offices in St. George, Utah, have similar arrangements for issuing remote site permits.

Havasupai Indian Reservation Permits

Most hikes into Havasu Canyon start at Hualapai Hilltop. Hiking is by tribal permit only. Lodging and a small cafe are available in the village of Supai, 8 miles (13 km) down the trail. The backpacking campground is 2 miles (3.2 km) farther. Inquiries and permit requests should be directed to Havasupai Tourist Enterprises, Supai, AZ 86435. The Tourist Office can be reached at (928) 448-2141, (928) 448-2111 for lodging, or visited at www.havasupai-nsn.gov.

Further Information

The Backcountry Information Center is open daily for walk-in visitors from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

Backcountry Information Center staff answer information telephone lines at (928) 638-7875 between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. This telephone number is for information only.

Permit requests can be faxed to (928) 638-2125.

Phantom Ranch Reservations

Phantom Ranch, in the bottom of Grand Canyon, is a popular destination for both hikers and mule riders. Reservations, which can be made up to 13 months in advance, may be difficult to obtain. Reservations are made through Xanterra, call toll-free: (888) 297-2757, fax: (303) 297-3175, or write to Xanterra Parks and Resorts, 6312 So. Fiddlers Green Circle, Suite 600N, Greenwood Village, CO 80111 or visit www.xanterra.com

Scissors icon

Backcountry Permit Request Form

Backcountry Information Center/GCNP P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023; Fax: (928) 638-2125

Name: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

Work Phone: (____) _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Organization: _____

Vehicle 1 (State/Lic. Plate): _____

No. of People: _____

Vehicle 2 (State/Lic. Plate): _____

No. of Stock: _____

Beginning Trailhead: _____

Ending Trailhead: _____

First Choice: (see sample itineraries on page 4)

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Second Choice:

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Third Choice:

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

I am willing to accept variations to: ☐ Start Date (between _____ and _____); ☐ Campsites; ☐ Trip Length (_____ minimum, _____ maximum) This will affect cost.
☐ I already have the *Hiking Grand Canyon* video. Please do not send another.

Backcountry Permit Request Form

Backcountry Information Center/GCNP P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023; Fax: (928) 638-2125

Name: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

Work Phone: (____) _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Organization: _____

Vehicle 1 (State/Lic. Plate): _____

No. of People: _____

Vehicle 2 (State/Lic. Plate): _____

No. of Stock: _____

Beginning Trailhead: _____

Ending Trailhead: _____

First Choice: (see sample itineraries on page 4)

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Second Choice:

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Third Choice:

Date	Use Area or Campsite (Campsites must be listed)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

I am willing to accept variations to: ☐ Start Date (between _____ and _____); ☐ Campsites; ☐ Trip Length (_____ minimum, _____ maximum) This will affect cost.
☐ I already have the *Hiking Grand Canyon* video. Please do not send another.

Method of Payment: ☐ Credit card ☐ Check

Credit Card Number

Exp. Date _____ Cardholder _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Total Authorized Permit Cost \$ _____ (\$10 plus \$5 per person per night)

☐ Please enroll me in the Grand Canyon Frequent Hiker program for \$25 annually. I understand that membership in this program allows me to waive the \$10 permit fee for twelve months and that I am still responsible for the \$5 per person per night charge and for park entrance fees upon arrival. All payment is non-refundable.

copy and add to this form as needed

Questions and Answers

Q: How long will my hike take?

A: Most first-time Grand Canyon hikers walk uphill at an average speed of one mile per hour. Monitor the amount of time it takes you to get down to any location; it can take twice that amount of time to cover the same distance going out. This “rule of thumb” seems to work well regardless of individual fitness, age, and/or length of stride.

Q: How much water do I need?

A: In warm months each hiker should carry and drink about a gallon (4 liters) of water per day. Watch your “ins and outs.” Drink enough so that urine frequency, clarity, and volume are normal. You are not drinking enough water if your urine is dark, small in quantity, or non-existent in the course of a day’s hiking.

Q: Where can I find water?

A: Purified drinking water is available at only a few locations in the canyon. See chart on page 4. NOTE: During winter months the pipelines to all rest houses and Cottonwood Campground are shut off; all pipelines in the canyon are subject to breaks at any time of year thus cutting off water supplies. Always carry water with you.

Water may be obtained directly from the Colorado River and Bright Angel Creek, but must be treated before drinking. Most other water sources in the canyon are intermittent and unreliable.

Q: How do I treat my water?

A: There are three common methods for treating water: boiling, iodine tablets, and filters. Because of occasional pipeline failures, it is a good idea to be prepared with one of these methods even when hiking Corridor Trails.

Q: How much food should I take?

A: Plenty. Eating is equally important to both day hikers and overnight backpackers. Carry high-energy, salty snacks as well as meals. The hike out is much easier when you provide your body with enough calories to support the extreme physical activity you are engaged in.

When you make camp, or any time you leave your pack unattended, be sure to hang your food and trash in nylon stuff sacks or place in food storage containers (ammo boxes) when provided.

There are many small animals that will damage your pack and eat your supplies if not secured properly. **Do not feed wildlife!** Improper food storage and feeding harms wildlife. Violators will be cited.

Q: In case of emergency, how do I contact a ranger?

A: Ranger stations are located at Indian Garden, Phantom Ranch, and Cottonwood (Cottonwood is staffed only in the summer season). There are emergency phones at the ranger stations and along Corridor trails at the Bright Angel Trail rest houses, the junction of the South Kaibab and Tonto Trails, and at Roaring Springs on the North Kaibab Trail. These phones are connected to the park’s 24-hour dispatch center and do not require coins. There may be times when these phones do not function: be prepared to send a member of your group up or down the trail to request emergency assistance and consider carrying a signal mirror. Please remember that fatigue is not an emergency. Cell phones are unreliable in the canyon.

“The finest workers in stone are not copper or steel tools, but the gentle touches of air and water working at their leisure with a liberal allowance of time.” Thoreau

Q: If I get into trouble and need to be rescued, who pays for my rescue?

A: You will be charged for rescue expenses.

Q: Should I hike alone?

A: Risks are greater for those who hike alone. There is no one to assist you if you become lost, ill, or injured. Mountain lions do inhabit the Grand Canyon. Hikers traveling alone are at greater risk of attack. Be sure to keep your group together; a good plan is to have your most skilled members at the front and rear of your group with the novices in the middle.

Q: What do I do with my trash?

A: You are required to carry out all of your trash, including toilet paper, to rim disposal facilities. To do otherwise is littering. When in camp, be sure to hang your trash with your food sack to prevent wildlife from getting into it. Enclose all plastic and aluminum in nylon stuff sacks. Wildlife will eat plastic and aluminum that smells of food, and may die as a result.

Q: Are there toilets in the canyon?

A: There are very few. Be prepared to provide your own toilet paper. Where toilets are available, you must use them. Only human waste and toilet paper should be deposited in the toilets. Where toilets are not available, you must carry out your used toilet paper (a plastic ziplock bag works well) and bury feces in a small hole about 6 in/15 cm deep. Be sure you are at least 200 ft/60 m from trails, campsites, and water sources. Along the Colorado River, urinate directly into the wet sand at the river’s edge.

Q: Do I need a map?

A: A map is essential for planning your trip and staying oriented during your hike. Grand Canyon topographic maps are available through the Grand Canyon Association (see ordering information on page B8 of this publication).

Q: Do I need a tent?

A: When hiking the Grand Canyon, it is desirable to travel as light as is reasonable. Even though it is a desert, it does rain occasionally in the canyon. Rain is most likely to occur in July and August or during the winter months. A tent can offer protection from rain, but due to mild nighttime temperatures, cold protection is not a factor during summer. Consider taking a lighter sleeping bag (or even a sheet) to save weight if you decide to carry a tent. Another option is to take only the rain fly or a bivy sack as shelter. During winter, tents are desirable equipment.

Q: Do I need a stove?

A: You need to balance the weight of your stove and fuel against your desire for hot meals. During the heat of summer, cold meals are often more attractive. During cold weather, a stove may be important for survival.

NOTE: Fires are prohibited throughout the backcountry.

Q: What should I tell family/friends/employer about my trip?

A: Someone should know your hiking itinerary (include name of the trip leader/permit holder if not you), your rim destination after the hike, and the date of your return home. If you indicate you will contact them once you are out of the canyon, **BE SURE YOU DO SO!** You are accountable for costs associated with search and rescue efforts on your behalf, and while the National Park Service has your life and safety as its highest priority, it is irresponsible to initiate such efforts frivolously.

“I envision national parks as models of respect for all land and water and for all of life.” Michael Frome

Q: Can I deviate from my permit itinerary?

A: No. You are required to follow the itinerary authorized on your backcountry permit. Itineraries are controlled by use limits designed to protect the fragile environment of the inner canyon against the damaging effects of overuse.

Q: Are there penalties for backpacking without a permit?

A: Yes. Regulations regarding backcountry use are enforced by park rangers. Violations may result in fines and/or court appearances. Review all regulations listed on your permit and feel free to ask a ranger for clarification, if needed, before beginning your trip. Each individual hiker on your trip is as accountable as the trip leader for abiding by rules and regulations.

Q: Where do I park my vehicle(s)?

A: There are parking lots at the Bright Angel and North Kaibab trailheads. A free shuttle bus system connects trailheads, campground, lodging, the Backcountry Information Center, and viewpoints on the South Rim. Private automobiles are not allowed to access the South Kaibab trailhead. Ride the free park shuttles. Taxi service is also available 24 hours a day. Call (928) 638-2631.

If you have only one vehicle, it is best to park it near the trailhead where you exit the canyon. Be sure not to drive off-road, block another vehicle, or otherwise obstruct traffic when you park.

Valuables should be secured out of sight (in a trunk if possible), glove compartments left open for inspection, and the vehicle locked. The Bright Angel Lodge offers a storage service for valuables for a fee on a space available basis.

Q: Should I be concerned about snakes and scorpions?

A: The canyon is home to a variety of snakes and scorpions; some of which are poisonous. A good rule to follow is to always be aware of where you place your hands and feet. Snakebites are rare and occur mostly when people attempt to handle snakes. Do not attempt to capture or otherwise molest any wildlife. If bitten, contact a ranger by signaling or sending someone for help. Although snakes often do not inject venom when they bite, any animal bite should be examined by a physician and monitored for signs of infection.

Scorpions are common in the canyon and stings occur with regularity. While scorpion stings are painful, they rarely cause serious health problems. The elderly and very young children are most susceptible to their venom. If stung, apply cool compresses to the sting site (for pain relief) and monitor the victim. It is rare for an evacuation to be necessary. Scorpions are small and their tan color makes them difficult to see. Avoid stings by shaking out your boots and clothing before dressing, wear shoes (even in camp), and shake out your bedding before climbing into it.

Preserve and protect the park. It belongs to us all.

Vandalism or theft of park cultural or archeological resources (ruins, projectile points, pottery shards, etc.) is a violation of federal law. If you witness such a violation, please contact the National Park Service Silent Witness program at (928) 638-7767. All information received is confidential.



C8 GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK



Welcome to Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon is more than a great chasm carved over millennia through the rocks of the Colorado Plateau. It is more than an awe-inspiring view. It is more than a pleasuring ground for those who explore the roads, hike the trails, or float the currents of the turbulent Colorado River.

This canyon is a gift that transcends what we experience. Its beauty and size humble us. Its timelessness provokes a comparison to our short existence. In its vast spaces some find solace from their hectic lives.

The Grand Canyon we visit today is a gift from past generations. Take time to enjoy this gift. Sit and watch the changing play of light and shadows. Wander along a trail and feel the sunshine and wind on your face. Attend a ranger program. Follow the antics of ravens soaring above the rim. Listen for the roar of the rapids far below Pima Point. Savor a sunrise or sunset.

As the shadows lengthen across the spires and buttes, time passing into the depths of the canyon, understand what this great chasm passes to us: a sense of humility born in the interconnections of all that is and a willingness to care for this land. We have the responsibility to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to form their own connections with Grand Canyon National Park.

If you are visiting the South Rim . . .

The South Rim offers numerous canyon overlooks, hikes along the rim or into the canyon, more lodging, dining, gift stores, and campsites, and spectacular sunrises and sunsets. It also can seem hectic and crowded. To get the most from your visit:

- * Plan extra time. The South Rim encompasses a large area.
- * Stop by the visitor centers at Canyon View Information Plaza, Yavapai Observation Station, Verkam's, and Tusayan Museum to learn more about the park.
- * Ride the shuttle. Park your car and hop aboard the free shuttle buses. They take you to many locations around the Grand Canyon Village area and the drivers never get lost.
- * Do the unexpected. Visit during the off season. View the canyon from somewhere other than Mather Point. Sunsets are spectacular from any viewpoint. Try a different trail.

On the North Rim . . .

The North Rim is higher, cooler, and more isolated than just across the canyon. The pace is slower, and there is a greater feeling of tranquility.

"It's like parks used to be," as someone commented. Enjoy the view from atop Angels Window, watch a thunderstorm from the safety of Grand Canyon Lodge, or look for deer or turkeys in the alpine meadows. Come for a visit in the fall when the aspen have turned golden. Keep in mind that most facilities close in mid-October and the road closes with the first heavy snowfall in November. The North Rim then rests until mid-May when it is ready to greet visitors again.



Hikers and Backpackers . . .

Grand Canyon National Park hikers experience contrasts. Popular trails may see hundreds of people each day. Some secluded side canyons or isolated buttes may go years without feeling a boot print. On many trails you are heading downhill at the beginning of your trip and struggling uphill when you are most tired. Summertime temperatures in the bottom of the canyon may exceed 110° F., like hiking in downtown Phoenix. Winter treks may call for instep crampons due to the icy trails. Although a major river flows through the canyon, water may be impossible to find.

Even experienced hikers have found themselves in trouble when they headed out unprepared. Please use the information in this publication to ensure that you have a memorable experience—not a life-threatening incident. All overnight hikers must obtain a permit.

For the latest backcountry information updates, visit Grand Canyon National Park's website at: www.nps.gov/grca/