

# Grand Canyon

## *Sherpa Guide*

Your one-stop companion  
to discover the Grand Canyon



Checklists, maps, tips, coupons and more inside!



# Grand Canyon

## Sherpa Guide

### ICON INDEX

Identify these icons easily and quickly throughout the guide.

- Name
- Location
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- Difficulty
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### *Welcome to Grand Canyon Sherpa,*

a one-stop-shop for all you need to know about planning a trip to the Grand Canyon. Thank you for purchasing the Sherpa Guide! Sherpa Sam and his team of Sherpa members have been working hard to put together a guide with everything you need to know to plan, prepare and enjoy your next trip to the Grand Canyon. We hope you find the information you need and much, much more in these pages.

### **What is the GC Sherpa Guide?**

The GC Sherpa Guide is an all-you-need-to-know guide to the Grand Canyon to help the traveler plan, discover and enjoy the Grand Canyon.

This is suitable for busy professionals with little time to source the required information and adventurous people seeking a one-of-a-kind experience that will leave a lasting impression. Take-aways from the guide include recommended trails and maps, advice and recommendations on preparation, accommodation and activities in and around the Canyon, the opportunity to purchase a memory album, obtain a completion certificate, engage with a community via a forum (online) and enter a monthly photographic competition (online).

### **How will the Grand Canyon Sherpa Guide serve you? What will you get out of it?**

In these pages you will find everything you need to know from one source: maps, tips, warnings, recommendations, coupons, and a memory album of photographs to serve as a souvenir with recognition of achievement certificate.

# Welcome to the Grand Canyon Sherpa Guide!



The idea for Grand Canyon Sherpa arose from an encounter I had with a couple while camping at Indian Gardens for the night. I was just about to turn in when I heard a young woman crying near me at our small campsite.



On enquiring what the matter was, I discovered she had hiked into the canyon with her boyfriend totally unprepared for the rigors that faced them; and, would you believe it, she was wearing shorts, a t-shirt and flip flops?!

Her feet hurt, she was cold they had no food or water, no sleeping bag, no blanket or tent but had to stay there for the night as they had struck out too far and got stranded as night fell. I shared some of my provisions and helped as much as I was able and in the morning they trekked their long and painful way back to the canyon's rim.

I contemplated this incredulous situation for some time and the possible unwelcome and potentially dangerous outcomes of this scenario, had we not met. The upshot was my resolve to provide a one-stop-shop for travelers new to the Grand Canyon with all the information they would need to know to keep them safe and maximize their enjoyment. As with all good Sherpas, I want to lessen your load and help you plan your trip of a lifetime.

Sherpa Sam

## Introduction

This Grand Canyon Sherpa Guide will help you plan, discover and enjoy the Grand Canyon. It will provide information on the best trails to choose with route maps, campgrounds and amenities but also the best vantage points to watch the sunrise or the sunset.

It will advise on how to prepare, not only in terms of physical fitness but what to take with you, for short day hikes to longer overnight trips. You will find a little about the history of the Grand Canyon and its formation, the geology and the wildlife.

You will also find sections on what to do in and around the Grand Canyon, recommendations on where to stay and where to eat with coupons for discounts at certain venues.

Finally, to help you remember your adventure, you can find a link to our Grand Canyon Sherpa memory album where you can upload your photographs and we will send you (for a small fee) a hardcopy as a memento of your unforgettable trip along with your achievement certificate '*I've hiked the Grand Canyon*'.

We sincerely hope the Grand Canyon Sherpa guide answers questions you've been asking yourself and that you have an experience to reflect on for many years to come. Please send any feedback to [info@grandcanyonsherpa.com](mailto:info@grandcanyonsherpa.com) and suggestions you feel will help other Grand Canyon visitors. Don't forget to submit your best photo and caption for our photo of the month competition, 'you have to be in it to win it!' If your photo is selected it will be showcased on our website and you will receive a GCS t-shirt.

Thank you and safe hiking,

Grand Canyon Sherpa Team

## About Grand Canyon Sherpa

For most people, viewing the Grand Canyon for the first time stuns you into silence. It is a feeling of reverential respect, mixed with trepidation and certainly wonder. Whether your motivation for this adventure stems from your love of exploration, trekking, nature, geology, art or poetry you will want to plan your trip to maximise your enjoyment and minimise potential problems. You can be assured that all your questions will be answered in the Grand Canyon Sherpa Guide.

The traditional Sherpa is an ethnic Tibetan local who is highly skilled and experienced with the terrain of their birth. They use this knowledge to prepare routes for foreign visitors and ease their burden. 'Grand Canyon Sherpa' has taken this concept and adapted it to help you personalise your unforgettable experience.

## Discover the Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon is an all embracing experience, a treat for the senses. From breathtaking panoramic vistas, the sounds of the shale crunching underfoot, the low buzz of insects or the call of the condors. The wide open spaces and the Milky Way at night. It even has a unique smell! The smell of the cactus and the rushing of the Colorado River at Phantom ranch not to mention the welcoming food at El Tovar's Restaurant.

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## Who is Sherpa Sam?

Meet Grand Canyon local Sherpa Sam, a born storyteller with a lifetime of knowledge and experience hiking from rim to rim, exploring every trail and sleeping under the stars come rain, shine or shooting stars.

*"There is no bad day to go to the Grand Canyon."*  
Sherpa Sam

### Q: WHAT'S YOUR OCCUPATION?

A: I was a US marine and served in combat. I was also a certified Public Accountant (retired) and Financial Wealth Manager. Now I'm a full-time Grand Canyon adventurer.

### Q: WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

A: Hiking, music and traveling.

### Q: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HIKE?

A: They are all unique and wonderful but I really like starting with the South Kaibab trail and coming out the Bright Angel trail.

### Q: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT HIKING?

A: Pushing myself and seeing nature in the wild.

### Q: HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR FRIENDS WOULD DESCRIBE YOU?

A: Fun, charismatic, full of life and generally a good person.

### Q: WHAT'S ONE ITEM YOU SHOULDN'T FORGET TO BRING WITH YOU?

A: Water!!!

### Q: HOW SHOULD I PACK FOR A HIKE DOWN THE GRAND CANYON?

A: Think in terms of ounces and not pounds. Don't forget to pack an extra pair of high quality hiking socks - or alternatively you can also wear two pairs of socks - because you will want to change them on your way back.

### Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE GRAND CANYON?

A: WOW! Amazing creation of God. I'm out there every chance I get.

## Q: IF YOU COULD GIVE A TIP TO SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO HIKE THE GRAND CANYON, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

A: If you're in good shape, get in better shape. If you are in poor shape, know your limits, don't lose heart and try an easier hike such as the Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden. Of course walking along the rim is a sight to see and it isn't too strenuous except for the elevation. It can be snowing on top of the canyon and 't-shirt' weather at the bottom. If you hike down and back just know it is about 52,000 steps or 19 miles to the bottom and back out.

## How to use this guide

This guide has 3 main sections to help you plan, discover and enjoy your trip to the Grand Canyon.



### Plan

*Fail to prepare and prepare to fail* - we want to ensure that doesn't happen to you! In this section you will find information on how to prepare for the Grand Canyon including the Ultimate Grand Canyon Packing Guide, what permits and passes you will need, where to get them, where to find water while hiking and more. There's even advice on how to prepare your feet and a 6-week fitness plan that will get you ready for hiking the trails.



### Discover

There are many different ways to discover the Grand Canyon. Consider a mule ride to the bottom or whitewater rafting down the Colorado river. Discover a meteor crater, spot the wildlife, marvel at the geological features of the Canyon or take a ride on the Grand Canyon Railway. In this section you have access to our recommended hikes and trails including the popular Bright Angel and South Kaibab Trails with trail maps, advice on where to stay overnight in the canyon.



### Enjoy

After a hard day's trekking you'll feel like a little rest and recreation. This section includes where to stay, relax and enjoy a meal and a drink in and around the Canyon with coupons and vouchers for discounts in a variety of venues. Fancy yourself as a keen photographer? You can enter our monthly photographic competition or send us your treasured snaps and we can incorporate them into our Grand Canyon Scrapbook as a permanent reminder of your wonderful trip.

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### PLAN

How to prepare for a hike, what to pack, what permits and passes to buy, where to find water, tips, warnings and more...



### DISCOVER

Discover a meteor crater, go whitewater rafting, see the wildlife, hike down to the Colorado river, camp at Phantom Ranch and more...



### ENJOY

Where to stay, relax and enjoy a meal in and around Flagstaff, and more...



### MAPS

Have a look at our maps of the main Grand Canyon trails.



# Plan

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# 1. Permits and Passes



Whether you want to explore the Grand Canyon National Park for a day or camp in the canyon, you have to pay an entrance fee. In addition to that, every overnight stay in the canyon requires a permit. How much does it cost? Where can I buy my permit? How long is it valid for? We answer all your questions and throw in a couple extra tips and goodies.

## PASSES

The Grand Canyon is situated in one of the United States national parks. All those wishing to enter need to purchase a day pass which can be bought in advance. There are many types of passes to cater for every type of visitor:

- America the beautiful **Annual Pass**: this gives you access to over 2000 recreation areas throughout the States. The proceeds from which are used to improve facilities and enhance the experience.
- America the beautiful **Lifetime Senior Pass**: if you are over 62 and a US citizen or permanent resident
- **Annual senior pass**
- **An access pass**: if you have been medically determined to have a permanent disability. This pass is free except for a small handling charge.
- **Military pass**: for current military personnel and their dependants. This will allow free access to federally operated recreation sites across the country for the pass holder, car and accompanying passengers or the pass holder and up to 3 adults. For more details see <https://store.usgs.gov>

Ⓐ **Name:** Day passes

📍 **Location:** You can buy your passes and permits online on Recreation.gov, in various locations in and around Flagstaff such as Williams Visitor Center, Valle AZ, National Geographic Visitor Center (IMAX theater), Grand Canyon Chamber of Commerce, and more. Full list available on GCS website. You can also purchase your pass upon arrival at the NPS entrance stations: South Rim, North Rim and Desert View.

💰 **Price:** Between US\$20 and US\$35 for standard passes.

🕒 **Duration:** Entrance fees to the Grand Canyon National Park is for 7 days (North and South Rim)

**OPEN** **Opening hours:** The South Rim entrance is open 24h/day.

✓ **Why is it for you:** All visitors must buy a pass to enter the Grand Canyon National Park, whether they're on foot, bicycle, park shuttle or private transportation.

✚ **Note:** Access to the Grand Canyon National Park is free of charge 5 days a year. To find out what those days are for 2020 check [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

⚠️ **Warning:** Access to some entrances of the park may be restricted or closed due to Covid-19 or extreme weather conditions. For up-to-date information check [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

Sherpas Sam says ... Submit early! Apply for your permit way in advance, obviously the earlier the better and the more likely it will be that you are successful.

Consider flexibility! Be willing to adjust your date range and choice of campsite to suit availability.

# 1. Permits and Passes



## OVERNIGHT STAYS IN THE GRAND CANYON

If you intend to camp in the Grand Canyon, you will need a **backcountry permit** from the Grand Canyon National Park which is available for up to 4 months in advance of your trip. Select your preferred route, calculate your daily distances (miles/km) and your preferred nightly campsite. Have alternatives in mind if your desired permit is not available. You will need to reference the 'use area' for your requested camping location each night. Each area has a 3 letter or digit reference and these can be found on the National Park's map.

Warning! The Park receives over 30,000 requests for these permits every year but only issues around 13,000 so get planning early!

There are two ways to get a backcountry permit:

1. Complete the backcountry request form and mail or email it to the backcountry office if you have 4 months to spare
2. Visit the backcountry office and get a permit in person if it is 1-3 months before your intended trip.

## CORRIDOR USE AREA, DESIGNATED SITES AND AT-LARGE CAMPING

**Corridor Use Area:** this is made up of three trails (Bright Angel Trail, South Kaibab Trail, North Kaibab Trail) and three campgrounds (Indian Garden Campground, Bright Angel Campground, and Cottonwood Campground). These have the usual facilities, like toilets, drinking water and ranger stations. They are the most used in the park, and are the most difficult places to get permits to camp overnight.

**Designated Sites:** these use areas are more remote but still well-traveled. They have pit toilets and marked campsites.

**At-Large Camping:** some use areas have "at-large camping." These have no campsites or facilities. You choose where you camp, within the boundaries of the zone. Remember to use the 'leave no trace behind' principles.

## WHAT IF I'M NOT A PLANNER, I JUST LIKE TO DO THINGS SPONTANEOUSLY?

If you are not a planner or have a spare weekend you could always:

1. Turn up at the Backcountry Office. Cancellations do happen. Occasionally, permits are still available. It's always worth checking with the backcountry office.
2. Get on the waiting list. The park reserves a small number of walk-in permits for the corridor campgrounds (Indian Garden, Bright Angel, and Cottonwood). These are issued daily to people who show up at the office and can be for one or two consecutive nights but can only be purchased the day prior to starting your hike. You get a number for the wait list and on returning next day at 8.00 am the ranger issues permits until they are all gone.

Sherpas Sam says ... Be realistic about your abilities and fitness. 10 miles on paper may not seem too much but the terrain and the temperature may feel a lot further.

## 2. How to prepare for the Grand Canyon?



Whether you are an experienced, hardcore and fearless hiker, a beginner hiker or an amateur hiker with a bit of experience, the Grand Canyon presents many real challenges and is not to be taken lightly. The unforgiving heat, the lack of shade, the enormous elevation change, the very steep and strenuous trails can be true obstacles to the fittest of us. Fortunately, Sherpa Sam tells us how to prepare physically and mentally for the adventure!

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HIKE IN THE GRAND CANYON?

Generally speaking it's never a bad idea to seriously prepare for any hike or adventure but it is even more true when it comes to the Grand Canyon. Are you interested in a 1-day hike, in a longer overnight hike or in backpacking/camping in the Grand Canyon? Here's a few much needed tips from Sherpa Sam.

"The canyon is not easy!" says Sherpa Sam. "Even though I have hiked through the canyon many times, I still always followed a few simple rules":

- If you are fit, get fitter!
- Don't go alone! Even on a day hike, if you fall and are injured you may need help and not be able to get it.
- Do a few strenuous hikes beforehand with heavier backpacks than you intend to take into the canyon just to get used to the weight, say 50 lbs/22 Kg with the idea of reducing this by half for your longer trip.
- Think in terms of ounces/grams and not pounds/kilograms
- Mule trains have the right of way, you need to stick to the inside or the wall side while mules are passing.
- Apply for your overnight permit well in advance of your trip.
- Consider staying overnight at Phantom Ranch in the Bunkhouses, they have a great meal and it reduces what you need to carry. Sam recommends a three day event, one day hiking down, one day for muscle recovery in and around the river at Phantom Ranch and one day for the rigorous hike back to the rim.
- If you plan to camp in the campgrounds at Phantom Ranch you will need to prepare accordingly.
- Don't rush, just like life, it's about the journey - take your sweet time and enjoy it.
- Only go half as far as you know you can go, because you've got to get back out.

The National Park Service has to approve overnight camping in the Canyon and can discourage groups of more than 8 on certain trails. Your backpack is tagged and you need to be where you are supposed to be or they can usher you out of the canyon. The more people in your party, inevitably, the slower the pace and it may be that you risk not getting to where you should be at the right time. They may therefore suggest a different trail which they consider is more do-able (see permits and reservations).

Sherpa Sam says ... The top 3 causes of mortality in the Grand Canyon are heart-attack, stupidity and falling so know your limits and prepare yourself.

## 3. How to prepare your feet for a hike?



One thing that will completely ruin your walk is damaged feet. Ever gone on a hike and had your big toe nail pressing against the top of your boot at the end? Something that you could easily overlook but a judicious trim 2 or 3 days beforehand could save you miles of pain if your feet become hot at the end of the hike and swell a little.

Prepare your feet! There are other aspects of foot preparation to consider:

### Top 5 Considerations

- Pedicure: Prepare your toenails in advance.
- Footwear: Wear boots or shoes suitable for hiking. It should go without saying but needs to be said...no flip-flops!!
- Blisters: Take something with you to anticipate blisters. Some people use duct tape other use Vaseline or proprietary products specifically for blisters.
- Massage your feet: To release tight muscles before or after your hike, a foot massage of the balls of your feet will help release tight muscles in your feet and don't forget your hamstrings.

### BOOTS

Foot volume, by this we mean top to bottom. Wide feet with high arches mean a high foot volume and you may need more room in your boot. Try different lacing techniques or miss a crossover to increase the foot volume of your boot.

### SOCKS

Your feet are bound to sweat and this can cause blisters, so prepare for them. Proper hiking socks that wick away water. Take at least a second pair, when half way you can stop, air your feet and put on a fresh pair.

### TIP



Always buy half a size bigger than your normal size when you buy a new pair of hiking shoes. Your feet will swell and the extra weight you carry will put pressure on your feet.

## 4. The ultimate Grand Canyon packing guide



Hiking in the Grand Canyon is as exciting as it is challenging. Packing the right items, just like choosing the right backpack can be the difference between an unforgettable experience or a dangerous and painful adventure you will remember for many years. Here's Sherpa Sam's backpacking list of things to pack along with a few insider's tips for an amazing time!

### WHAT TO PACK FOR A DAY HIKE?

For a day hike to Indian Garden, Sherpa Sam's must haves are:

- The holy trekkity: sunscreen/lip balm, a hat and water, plenty of water in a reusable water bottle - there will be free filling stations along the way
- A fanny pack or a small day backpack
- Hard candy/high calorie energy bars/salty snacks/beef jerky
- Medication if necessary such as blister care, bandaid and small first aid kit
- Although a regular pocket knife should be enough, what Sherpa Sam suggests is a Swiss army knife in case you have an unfortunate encounter with a cactus
- An app such as NPS Grand Canyon and a backup map as there may not be any reception in the canyon
- A whistle, a signal mirror, a cellphone and portable power bank - an extensive use of GPS can drain your battery
- A scarf or multi-purpose neck warmer and sunglasses
- Broken-in hiking shoes with good, solid soles - don't hike the Grand Canyon in flip-flops!
- A flashlight or headlamp with spare batteries - even for a day hike, it might be dark earlier than you think!
- If you need additional stability we recommend using hiking poles
- Toilet roll or wet wipes and a plastic bag for personal waste - leave no trace and don't litter!

### WHAT TO PACK FOR AN OVERNIGHT HIKE?

For an overnight stay in the canyon, whether you want to camp at Indian Garden or at the Bright Angel Campground, we have put together a list of useful items we recommend adding to the 1-day packing list (see above).

If you leave at first light, and you carry on past Indian Gardens, you will always get to the river by sunset and you will need a backpack because you are going to stay the night. Just pack the essentials to ensure your backpack isn't too heavy. From experience, Sherpa Sam always packs the following:

- A good sized canteen, some utensils, a knife in case you need to cut something, a mini stove and a metal cup to put on the stove
- A well-padded, lightweight frame backpack with a ventilated back, a strong and comfortable hip belt (as your hips will be taking a lot of the weight) and plenty of options to adjust like a chest strap and side straps
- A water filter is recommended for longer hikes (to filter water from the river), for extended days at a time or if you're planning to go off piste. However if you're staying on high traffic trails there will be plenty of free filling stations in the canyon
- Food: don't take cans, you will only have to carry them all out of the canyon

# 4. The Ultimate Grand Canyon Packing Guide



- Dried meals such as instant oatmeal packets/hot chocolate/cup of soup/noodle - just add water. Do not bring canned goods and soda cans.
- Tent or a lightweight tarp (tarpaulin) 6 x 10' Personal toiletries and prescription medication
- Sleeping bag
- Matches or a lighter
- Socks: 2 pairs on the hike and 2 pairs to come back up. A change of clothes for each day isn't necessary. Pack one change if you like but it just adds weight.
- Flashlight or headlamp with spare batteries


## WHAT TO PACK FOR AN OVERNIGHT STAY AT PHANTOM RANCH?

If you're planning on using the Phantom Ranch facilities for an overnight stay you don't need a mini stove. Phantom Ranch offers 2 types of accommodation: bunkhouses (5-bed dormitories) and cabins (based on double occupancy). The dormitories offer basic bunk beds, a shower and a shared bathroom while the cabins are a bit more equipped with liquid soap, hot water sinks and other toiletries. These 2 types of accommodation are heated in the winter and come with bedding and a towel, so you will not need a sleeping bag.

Food is also available at the Phantom Ranch facilities and you will have the option to choose between breakfast, lunch and dinner. Your backpack (duffel) can be transported to you by mule (in-bound) or from Phantom Ranch out of the canyon (out-bound).

For more information on dorm/cabin bookings, prices, meals, duffel procedures, recent updates and general inquiries, check out [www.grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging](http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging)

### TIP

 Even if you don't need a tent, a sleeping bag and other camping equipment, Sherpa Sam recommends bringing an emergency tarp in case you get caught in bad weather.

 Find a detachable copy of your Ultimate Grand Canyon Packing Guide on page 59 for an unforgettable hike in the Grand Canyon National Park.

Sherpa Sam says ... Most people like a tent because they are afraid of critters and mountain lions, or waking up face-to-face with an elk. That's never happened to me, they are in more remote areas. 'I prefer to just put my tarp down, lay my sleeping bag on it and look straight up. Best way to do it!

Sherpa Sam says ... "Share the load!" There is no need for multiple stoves, tents, flashlights etc. And remember... whatever you take you have to haul back out of the canyon!



## 5. Sleep in the Canyon














### *South Rim, Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground*

When it comes to accommodation when you're hiking, do you prefer to rough-it a little in a campsite, upgrade your comfort and stay in lodge/ranch or lie under the stars cowboy style? All options are available in the Grand Canyon.

There are 33 campsites in the Grand Canyon National Park, 31 small group sites (1-6 people) and 2 large group sites (7-11 people). For camping anywhere in the Inner Canyon including Bright Angel, Indian Garden and Cottonwood campgrounds, a backcountry permit is required. The Canyon is divided into "Use Areas" (see Permits & Passes), and these use areas must be specified when filling out the permit which is available from the backcountry office. To actually sleep in the Canyon should be on your 'to-do' list. There are 3 campsites and 1 ranch to choose from.

#### INDIAN GARDEN CAMPSITE (IGC)

To get to IGC, you have to hike two-thirds of the way into the Grand Canyon with all your gear. Canyon views of the multicoloured rock layers, verdant grasses and cottonwood trees provide the perfect setting for relaxing and spending the night here before you trip down to the river and beyond, or even just back up to the rim. A creek runs through the campground so this oasis stands out as a perfect contrast to the surrounding arid desert. The name derives from the fact that native Americans inhabited this land for thousands of years before its discovery by hikers and backpackers. It is located just off Bright Angel trail, and a convenient stop-off for both hikers and mule trains because of its water and shade breaks. At night, foot traffic subsides and you're left with the milky way to gaze up at. It's almost magical. From here you might consider the 3 mile roundtrip to Plateau Point to see views of the Colorado River before hiking back to the rim or continuing down to the river.

-  **Name:** Indian Garden Campground
-  **Location:** Grand Canyon National Park, 65 miles northwest of Flagstaff, Arizona
-  **Elevation:** 3,800 ft (1,160 m)
-  **Distance:** 4.8 miles from the South Rim on the Bright Angel Trail
-  **Number of sites:** 15
-  **Facilities:** Drinking water, pit toilets, picnic tables, pack pole and food storage cans, shade cover, no trash collection, phones
-  **Water stations:** available seasonally (1.5 mile resthouse/3 mile resthouse) and year-round in Indian Garden
-  **When to go:** Open all year round
-  **How to get there:** See Bright Angel trail
-  **Permit required:** Back Country office permit required
-  **Price:** Fee required to camp in addition to permit (around \$20 per campsite)
-  **Pets:** Not allowed
-  **Opening hours:** April 1st to October 30













# 5. Sleep in the Canyon



## South Rim, Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground

### BRIGHT ANGEL CAMPGROUND (BAC)

The BAC is the only established campground at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. It is located over the silver suspension bridge and about 1.5 miles (2.5 km) further on, half a mile north of the Colorado River on the banks of the Bright Angel Creek, one of the Colorado's tributaries. The campsites either sit at the base of the imposing cliff walls or line the creek. The campground is shaded by Cottonwood trees which create a lush oasis. It is a very popular campsite so get your permit early. A few walk-in permits are available daily at the backcountry permit office, but don't rely on this.

-  **Name:** Bright Angel Campground
-  **Location:** Bottom of the Grand Canyon National Park
-  **Elevation:** 2,480 ft. / 756 m
-  **Distance:** .9 m miles from the South Rim and 14 miles from the North Rim. The elevation is 3,800 ft (1,160 m)
-  **Number of sites:** 33
-  **Facilities:** 2 ammo boxes to store food, area to pitch tent, ranger station, flush toilets, camp stores, campsite tables, café, shade, snack bar. No showers
-  **Water stations:** no potable water at River Resthouse but you will find free filling stations at the Bright Angel Campground
-  **When to go:** Open all year round
-  **How to get there:** Via the North Kaibab, South Kaibab and Bright Angel Trails. From September 2020 the Silver suspension bridge is closed undergoing repairs. Hikers need to take the Black suspension bridge over the river.
-  **Permit required:** Back Country office permit required
-  **Price:** Fee required to camp in addition to permit (around \$20 per campsite, but double check beforehand)
-  **Pets:** Not allowed

### PHANTOM RANCH

The hike to Phantom Ranch is approximately 7.5 miles down the South Kaibab trail (average hiking time is 4-5h down) and 10 miles on the Bright Angel trail (average hiking time down is 4-6h, double that back out). From the BAC, about a half mile upstream of the Bright Angel Creek is Phantom Ranch which can only be reached by mule, on foot, or by rafting the Colorado River. It is a historic oasis at the bottom of Grand Canyon on the North side of the Colorado River and the only lodging below the canyon rim.

At Phantom Ranch, there's a canteen where you could treat yourself to a cold soda or beer after your gruelling hike but this will not be accessible to hikers in the near future (written Sept 2020). Instead, alcohol sales will be limited to 2 drinks per person and only available to purchase during reserved dinner service if you are staying in the cabins. Alcohol can be consumed in your cabin but not the picnic tables outside the canteen. To-go breakfasts, sack lunches, snacks and drinks will be available for purchase from the side window of the canteen from 8 am to 4 pm.



## 5. Sleep in the Canyon



### *South Rim, Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground*

#### History of Phantom Ranch

In the 1920's, Mary Colter was commissioned to draw up plans for a tourist facility for the Fred Harvey company, which was selected by the National Park Service to build it. Sketches for a series of rustic wood and rustic stone cabins to blend with the natural beauty of the setting were drawn up which gained approval and were to be named Roosevelt's Chalets. On hearing this, Colter gathered her blueprints and declared, "Not if you are going to be using my work". She had already chosen the name: Phantom Ranch.

#### Accommodations

Space is extremely limited so all Phantom Ranch bookings must be made in advance. Rules are strict, additional guests cannot stay under your reservation, and are prohibited from doubling-up in the bunks or sleeping on the floors. Accommodation consists of dormitory spaces and cabins which are heated in winter and cooled during the summer months. Cabins and dorms don't have phones or televisions, but a pay phone is available roughly ½ mile from Phantom Ranch, at the south end of the Bright Angel Campground (payment by credit card or phone card only). Children are welcome at Phantom Ranch however; young children are discouraged from hiking to Phantom Ranch due to extreme temperatures in the summer and winter, and the remoteness of the location. Credits cards are accepted at Phantom Ranch.

#### Dormitories – currently unavailable

Dormitories are available to hikers only. There are 2 male and 2 female dorms. Each dorm has 5 bunk beds, a shower, and a shared restroom. Bedding and towels are provided for each guest. Children must be at least 6 years old to stay in a dormitory.

#### Cabins

Cabins vary in size and accommodate from 2 to 10 guests. They are equipped with bedding, cold water sink, toilet, liquid soap, and hand towels. Showers, bath towels, hot water sinks, and liquid soap-shampoo are provided at a central location. Cabin prices are based on double occupancy; additional guests may stay with an additional charge.

If you are hiking the canyon or meeting/departing on a white-water rafting trip, and wish to stay at Phantom Ranch in a cabin or a dorm, you must call the Central Reservations Office:

- Daily – 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Mountain Time
- Toll-free within the U.S. 888-29-PARKS (888-297-2757)
- Outside the U.S. 303-29-PARKS (303-297-2757)

NB: The reservations office is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Each caller is limited to making one new reservation per phone call. Additionally, each reservation may include up to a maximum of nine guests for up to a maximum of four consecutive nights. Additionally, if a caller/guest has reserved multiple reservations via multiple phone calls, the maximum consecutive nights cannot be exceeded for that guest. Phantom Ranch requests will be processed using an online lottery system.

#### Groups

For overnight stays at Phantom Ranch, a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 20 Hikers is designated as a Group. For overnight mule rides, parties of 10 may book their reservation by calling the Central Reservations office at 888-297-2757, or by entering the lottery online.

# 6. Sleep in the Canyon












## North Rim



When it comes to accommodation when you're hiking, do you prefer to rough-it a little in a campsite, upgrade your comfort and stay in lodge/ranch or lie under the stars cowboy style? All options are available in the Grand Canyon.

### COTTONWOOD CAMPGROUND (CC)

Located on the North Kaibab trail halfway between the North Rim and the Colorado River, the Cottonwood Campground receives fewer visitors than the campgrounds below the South Rim. The North Rim only gets about 10% of the visitors of the South Rim. It's more basic than the Bright Angel and Indian Garden campgrounds and campers tend to be more 'backpacker types' and well prepared. Cottonwood is usually not manned full time but there is an emergency phone located outside the ranger station. Water is not guaranteed so take water treatment tablets as the water in Bright Angel Creek flows all year round. Oh and one more thing... don't forget to take an extra toilet roll.

-  Name: Cottonwood Campground
-  Location: halfway between the North Rim and the Colorado River.
-  Distance: 6.8 miles/10.9 km from the North Kaibab trailhead
-  Elevation: 4080 ft/1244 m
-  Number of sites: 11 small group site accommodating 1 – 6 people and 1 large site for a group of 7 – 11 people.
-  Facilities: Bulletin board and water faucet with treated water is located near the composting toilets, treated water is only available during the non-freezing season.
-  Water stations:
-  How to get there: From North Kaibab trailhead
-  Permit required: Back Country office permit required
-  Price: from \$3.50 (standard campsite winter rate) to \$14.00 (standard campsite summer rate)
-  Pets: dogs are allowed if they are kept on a leash

### NORTH RIM CAMPGROUND













The North Rim campground is located on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. It is less populated than the South Rim and is home to abundant wildlife, hiking trails, and unparalleled views of the Canyon. The North Rim lies on the Kaibab Plateau, an area that has been uplifted by geologic movements, making it higher in elevation. Although there is no view of the Colorado River from here, you can see layers of rock displaying millions of years of geologic history. Many species of wildlife live here, including the tassel-eared Kaibab squirrel which is unique to this habitat.

There may still be snow on the ground when the campground opens in mid-May; likewise, it may snow before the last reservation day in mid-October. Because of this variability, you should come prepared for any weather.

# 6. Sleep in the Canyon

## North Rim



-  **Name:** North Rim Campground
-  **Location:** One mile North of the Grand Canyon Lodge
-  **Elevation:** 8,200 ft (2499 m)
-  **Distance:** The campground is located about 11.5 miles from the entrance station
-  **Number of sites:** 90
-  **Facilities:** picnic table and campfire rings with cooking grills at each campsite, drinking water throughout campsite. Coin-operated showers and laundry will not be available this season 2020 due to the Covid19 pandemic. Due to fire restrictions campfires are currently prohibited.
-  **Water stations:**
-  **How to get there:** Highway 67 is the only road into and out of the North Rim. From State Highway 89A, take Highway 67 south for 30 miles to the park entrance.
-  **When to go:** Open all year round but best from May 15 to October 15
-  **Permit required:** No
-  **Price:** from \$18 (tent only nonelectric) to \$14.00 (group tent only nonelectric)
-  **Pets:** Pets are only allowed on the Bridle Path and are allowed at North Rim Campground if they are kept on a leash

Is there anywhere to camp for free in the Grand Canyon?

If you like camping freestyle or want to save on your budget, The Kaibab National Forest surrounds the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and you can camp there for free.

# 7. Best time to visit

You have all year to plan your trip to the Grand Canyon but you may be wondering just when is the best time of year? If you want to make the best of your trip and avoid the extreme weather in the Grand Canyon as much as you can, this article is for you.

## WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO VISIT THE GRAND CANYON?

To optimize your time in the canyon, you should consider March through to May and September through to November when daytime temperatures are cooler and there are less crowds. If visiting during the summer months, the park's peak season, be prepared for tourists en masse and very limited accommodation availability as 6 million people visit the Grand Canyon each year.

If you want to go to the North Rim, it's best to avoid winter because overnight stays are not allowed from October 16th until May 15th as the North Rim goes on its winter schedule. After October 15, the North Rim remains open for day use only until December 1 unless the weather conditions close Highway 67 earlier than December 1.

During the open season, the entrance station is open 24 hours per day; however the Visitor Center is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. During winter season, the North Rim is only open from sunrise to sunset.

## 7. Best time to visit



The temperature at the Grand Canyon varies between the months and seasons of the year. On any given day, the canyon itself will be a different temperature to the rim.

### WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE IN THE GRAND CANYON?

#### South Rim

At the South Rim summer temperatures are relatively pleasant (50s-80s F; low teens to high 20s C).

#### North Rim

The increased elevation at the North Rim means that summer temperatures are cooler than at the South Rim.

#### In the canyon

At Phantom Ranch in the inner canyon, average temperature ranges from 55 °F to 82 °F. However, Inner canyon temperatures can be extreme; at the river (5000 feet below the rim), day time highs can often exceed 100 F.

## 8. Handicap Accessibility

Since the Grand Canyon National Park was opened and considering many facilities are historic, the National Park Service has gone to great lengths to ensure that the site is accessible to all.

The Grand Canyon visitors' center and many other sites are handicap accessible, as is the Grand Canyon Railroad. Whilst the terrain of the Canyon is rugged and rocky and hence not suitable for wheelchairs, the trek along the rim is (see accessibility guide). Shuttlebuses in the park are also wheelchair accessible and have the following:

- Ramps and space to carry passengers in wheelchairs. NB: wheelchairs larger than 30 " wide x 48 " long (76 by 122 mm) will not fit on shuttle buses. Most motorized scooters cannot be accommodated on buses due to size but strollers are generally accepted.
- A Scenic Drive Accessibility Permit is available at entrance gates to allow entry for visitors with mobility issues to some areas otherwise closed to public traffic. Designated handicap parking spaces can only be used with a state-issued parking pass\*, not just the Accessibility Permit.

**Parking information:** A Scenic Drive Accessibility Permit is available at entrance gates to allow entry for visitors with mobility issues to some areas otherwise closed to public traffic. Designated handicap parking spaces can only be used with a state-issued parking pass, not the Accessibility Permit.



You will find the full Grand Canyon Park Service Accessibility Guide on the Handicap Accessibility page of our website. It contains lots of useful info on the Grand Canyon Village services and facilities including the shuttle bus itineraries and wheelchair-accessible itineraries.

# 9. Where to find drinkable water in the Grand Canyon?




Since the single use plastic bottle ban in 2012, visitors won't be able to buy disposable water bottles in the Grand Canyon National Park. So where can I find free filling stations while hiking in the Grand Canyon, you ask? Where are they located on the rim and down in the canyon? And when is it available throughout the year? You will find all these answers here.

As you have maybe heard, disposable plastic water bottles are no longer sold in supermarkets or convenience stores within the park. A ban on individual water bottles came into place in 2012 as an effort to reduce waste all around the Grand Canyon National Park.

However, you will easily find free filling stations all over the park and along the rim. If you plan on hiking along the South Rim, we have good news for you: the water all over the South Rim is treated spring water collected in the canyon itself. It comes from Roaring Springs (located on the North Rim) and is piped all the way across the Grand Canyon to the South Rim through Indian Garden. In other words, tap water is absolutely safe to drink in the Grand Canyon National Park, so fill up your reusable water bottles in your room or at a water fountain in the Grand Canyon Village before you start your hike and then again at the various free water stations that have been installed along the most popular trails in the park.

Some filling stations only run seasonally from May to October (usually between the 10th and 30th), so if you're planning a hike outside the peak season, check with the Backcountry Office to find out if piped water is available at the different spots in the canyon. Water is available year-round at the Backcountry Information Center in the lobby and at Hermits Rest (on the South Rim).

Please note that the pipeline may sometimes be undergoing some repairs and that water may occasionally be off temporarily. For more recent updates on the filling stations' status please check out the National Park Service website: <https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit>

 **TIP:** Dehydration caused by the heat is the number one enemy in the Grand Canyon so plan accordingly.

## Free water filling stations in the Grand Canyon:

- Hermits Rest (near the other public amenities)
- Bright Angel Trailhead
- South Kaibab Trailhead
- North Kaibab Trailhead
- Supai Tunnel
- Manzanita Day Use Area
- Cottonwood Campground
- Phantom Ranch
- Bright Angel Campground
- Plateau Point (seasonally available)
- Indian Garden
- Bright Angel Trail: 3-mile Resthouse (seasonally)
- Bright Angel Trail: 1.5-mile Resthouse (seasonally)

## South Rim filling stations (along the rim):

- Canyon Village Marketplace
- Desert View Marketplace
- Desert View Visitor Center
- Yavapai Geology Museum
- Grand Canyon Visitor Center
- Verkamp's Visitor Center
- Maswik Lodge (in the cafeteria)

## North Rim filling stations (along the rim):

- North Kaibab Trailhead
- North Rim Visitor Center
- North Rim Backcountry Office



# Discover

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# Hikes and Trails

Taking in the Grand Canyon at sunrise, hiking down the steep path along the cliff walls to the pristine Colorado river, camping under the incredible Arizona starry sky or making it back up to the top of the rim for one of the best sunsets in the entire world, the Grand Canyon has everything to satisfy all hikers, beginners or hardcore trekkers. With 54 hard trails spreading from a couple miles to a strenuous 72 miles and offering some of the most spectacular views on the planet, hiking and camping in the Grand Canyon National Park is on many people's bucket list.

But where to start? How long will it take, how much will it cost, am I fit enough and what's the perfect hike for me? Where to spend the night and how to get a permit? What to pack and what kind of facilities can I find in the canyon? Sherpa Sam has the answer to all your questions!

First time in the Grand Canyon National Park? Then you're probably wondering if you should you do a day hike, a hike with an overnight stay in the Grand Canyon or a longer hike, maybe camping for 2-3 days? For your first time trekking into the Grand Canyon, we think the hike from the top rim to Indian Gardens and back up to the rim in a day is probably the best option to get used to the harsh terrain and test your fitness.

Sherpa Sam recommends the Bright Angel trail which runs through Indian Gardens out to Plateau Point as it is slightly easier than the other trails. But remember, all trails are difficult in the Grand Canyon. We can safely say, as a rule of thumb, that it will take you twice as long to hike back out as it took you to get down so get ready for the Grand Canyon, it's no picnic!

## 1. Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden (1-day hike)

The Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden (9.3 miles / 14.9 km return) is one of the most popular day-hikes for you to begin your adventures in the Grand Canyon and get a taste for what it has to offer. By doing the day hike from the top of the rim to Indian Garden, the halfway point to the Colorado River, you'll get some truly amazing views of the Grand Canyon, access to clean drinking water stations and it should give you enough time to hike back to the top of the rim in a day.

Indian Garden is about half way along the Bright Angel Trail. From the South rim to the Garden it is about 4.5 miles / 7.2km and represents a vertical descent of 3,050ft / 930m.

# 1. Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden (1-day hike)





















If you start walking at 7 am you can make it to Indian Garden in 2-3 hours depending on your walking speed. The hike has stupendous views all the way down and it's great for seeing the canyon from below.

At the Garden there is shade, restroom facilities and water, if you need to replenish your supply, and a small stream to cool your feet in. If you are new to hiking, we would break the Bright Angel Trail and turn back at Indian Garden. Don't forget it will usually take you twice as long to hike up to the rim as it did to hike down.

You really don't need much, except for a few necessary items, and a heavy backpack will spoil your enjoyment of the hike. If you are just going to Indian Garden, Sherpa Sam proposes that you only need a light backpack/belly pack with water bottle, snacks, hard candy/boiled sweets, a camera and, of course, sturdy hiking shoes. However, for the uninitiated, sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat and your cell phone may also be your 'must haves'. You will find a complete packing list at the end of this guide.

## Sherpa Sam says...

*Even though this hike is considered an easy one-day hike, don't underestimate it because it will not be a stroll in the park. The unforgiving heat combined to the misleading easiness of the descent and the difficulty of the hike back out will be challenging, so prepare yourself accordingly, know your limits and don't forget to take plenty of water.*

-  **Name:** Bright Angel trail to Indian Garden
-  **Location:** from the top of the South Rim to Indian Garden.  
Latitude: 36° 03' 26.75" N Longitude: -112° 08' 34.22" W
-  **Duration:** between 5 and 6 hours
-  **Difficulty:** strenuous
-  **Distance:** 4.5 miles / 7.2 km
-  **Elevation change:** 3.050 ft / 930 m from the top of the rim to Indian Garden
-  **What to take:** a light backpack/belly pack with water bottle, snacks, hard candy/boiled sweets, and good hiking shoes
-  **Water stations:** available seasonally (1.5 mile Resthouse/3 mile Resthouse) and year-round in Indian Garden
-  **Facilities:** toilets are available at 1.5 mile Resthouse and Indian Garden
-  **When to go:** between April and September/October is the best time
-  **How to get there:** from the trailhead at Bright Angel Lodge
-  **Parking information:** the closest parking lot is Parking Lot D near the Backcountry Information Center just a short walk from the beginning of the trail or 2 stops in free shuttle bus
-  **Permit required:** not for a day hike
-  **Price:** entrance Fee to the Grand Canyon National Park
-  **Note:** it takes twice as long to hike out as it takes to get down
-  **Warning:** steep, strenuous hike
-  **Why is it for you:** this day hike is great for beginner hikers, families and travelers who have a limited amount of time to hike the Grand Canyon
-  **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** carry enough water and food, you'll need both. Leave no trace, don't litter and be respectful of the beautiful scenery that surrounds you. Share the trail with hikers and mules and be kind.



# 1. Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden (1-day hike)



"I was hiking in the Grand Canyon [at] the Bright Angel Trail [and] ran across these canyon dwellers about a half-mile or so into the journey. As I was dropping down the trail and rounding a switchback... on a ledge was this herd of bighorns. I was thrilled and excited, so I started shooting pictures. It's amazing how sure-footed these creatures are, and to see how they maneuver is an awesome lesson in nature by itself."

GREG WOLFE

## BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL TO PLATEAU POINT

The Bright Angel Trail to Plateau Point (12.2 miles / 19.6km return) offers the same truly amazing views as the hike to Indian Garden (elevation 3,800ft / 1,158m) but you'll be hiking an extra 1.5 miles / 2.4km to Plateau Point (elevation 3,740ft / 1,139m). From Plateau Point you'll get a rewarding panoramic view of the Colorado River.

The hike from Indian Garden to Plateau Point is mostly flat and doesn't actually feel like a very difficult hike. Should you want to go a little further, you can turn left out of Indian Garden and head out into the Canyon for another 1.5 miles / 2.4km to Plateau Point.

At the Point, there is a spectacular overlook with views of the Colorado River, and the depths of the inner canyon which is well worth the extra effort. Although once near to extinction, you may now see condors circling overhead here. If this is your limit for the day, you can make a u-turn and hike back up to the South Rim and treat yourself to ice cream at the Bright Angel Lodge. The all round trip is 12.2 miles / 19.6km and should take you between 8 and 12 hours depending on your hiking pace.

- Ⓐ **Name:** Bright Angel Trail to Plateau Point
- 📍 **Location:** from the top of the South Rim to Plateau Point. Latitude: 36° 05' 9.49" N  
Longitude: -112° 07' 25.61" W
- 🕒 **Duration:** between 8 and 12 hours
- ★ **Difficulty:** strenuous
- ➡ **Distance:** 6 miles / 9.6km from the trailhead to Plateau Point
- 📏 **Elevation change:** 3,110ft / 947m from the trailhead to Plateau Point
- 💧 **Water stations:** available seasonally (1.5 mile Resthouse/3 mile Resthouse / Plateau Point) and year-round in Indian Garden
- 📄 **Permit required:** not for a day-hike
- ⊕ **Note:** don't let the pristine waters of the Colorado river lure you all the way down!
- ⚠️ **Warning:** steep, strenuous hike. Do not try to go down to the river from the top of the rim and back out in a day. If you can afford to spend a night in the canyon, choose to camp at Indian Garden, it is well worth it.
- 🗨️ **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** if you prefer to stay here for the night and maybe go on to Plateau Point in the morning, you can camp at Indian Garden but all overnight stays in the canyon require a permit in advance (see permits section).

Check out the Bright Angel Trail map and elevation charts in the Maps section page 54

## 2. Overnight Nike from Indian Garden to the Colorado river



If you have already done a day hike to Indian Garden, why not consider hiking the entire canyon down to the river and back or, if you are extremely brave, from one side to the other (Rim to Rim as it is fondly referred to). Anyone who is in good physical shape should backpack and spend an overnight or two at least once in their lifetime. It's almost a pilgrimage!

### OVERNIGHT HIKE FROM INDIAN GARDEN TO BRIGHT ANGEL CAMPSITE/PHANTOM RANCH

If you plan on an overnight hike, from Indian Garden you can continue 3.5 miles / 5.6km down to the Colorado river and either stay at the Bright Angel Campground or Phantom Ranch. From the river, the Bright Angel Trail leads to the Bright Angel Campground and Phantom Ranch via the silver suspension bridge at the Western end of the river trail. The Bright Angel Campground is 1.5 miles / 2.5km from the bridge and Phantom Ranch just 0.3 miles further.

This hike is a segment of the Rim to Rim Trail and only recommended for seasoned hikers. The descent to the river features a series of switchbacks close to the canyon walls rather than panoramic vistas but at the bottom there is a beach at the side of the river where you can enjoy a short rest and replenish your water supplies (if you have a water filter).

A mile (1.6 km) further on from the bridge at the Eastern end of the River trail is its junction with the South Kaibab Trail. Heading North on the South Kaibab Trail will take you to the black suspension bridge and across the river to the junction of the North Kaibab Trail. Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground can be accessed from either of the suspension bridges.

Ⓐ **Name:** Indian Garden to Bright Angel Campsite

📍 **Location:** from Indian Garden to the Bright Angel Campground. Latitude: 36.0788717  
Longitude: -112.1207246

🕒 **Duration:** between 2 and 3 hours

★ **Difficulty:** strenuous

➔ **Distance:** 5 miles / 8km

🏔️ **Elevation change:** 395 m/1300 ft from Indian Garden

💧 **Water stations:** no potable water at River Resthouse but you will find free filling stations at the Bright Angel Campground and Phantom Ranch

👜 **What to take:** see the Ultimate Grand Canyon Packing guide

🚻 **Facilities:** toilets are available at the River Resthouse, Bright Angel Campground and Phantom Ranch

📅 **When to go:** between April and September/October is the best time

🚗 **How to get there:** from Indian Garden, just hike down

📄 **Permit required:** for an overnight stay yes. See Permits and passes.

🏠 **Lodgings:** Phantom Ranch or Bright Angel Campground (reservations required)

⚙️ **Note:** you can hire a mule to either carry your pack or to ride down

✓ **Why is it for you:** to experience a night in the Canyon

⚠️ **Warning:** depending on the time of the year, there may be active colonies of fire ants, so be careful where you sit!

🗨️ **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** more than 250 people are rescued in the canyon every year because they are either overconfident about their ability or underestimate the terrain and the distances they can cover in the heat. Do not be tempted to hike from the rim to the river and back in one day.

Check out the Bright Angel Trail map and elevation charts in the Maps section p54

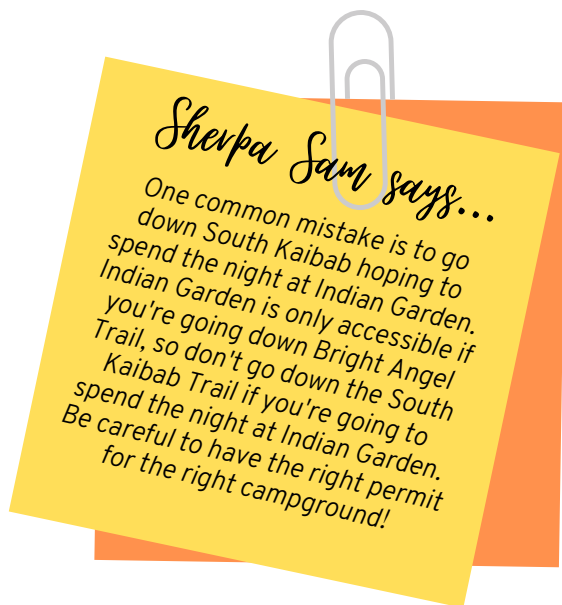
## 3. South Kaibab Trail



Should you hike the Bright Angel or the South Kaibab Trail? The South Kaibab trail is 6.5 miles / 10.1km and located off the Yaki Point Road. It has extensive views along both sides of the Grand Canyon as it follows the top of a ridge and is considered by many to be the more scenic of the two Rim-to-River hikes but the more strenuous of the two.

It should be stressed that both trails are very strenuous, but while the Bright Angel is roughly 2 miles longer it does have more shade and the rest area at Indian Garden with water, toilets and a ranger station. There is no parking so you must access it by the free Grand Canyon National Park Shuttle bus or by the Rim Trail.

South Kaibab is much steeper, has relatively little shade and no water or facilities. If you intend to hike from the South Rim to the Bright Angel Campground or Phantom Ranch, one option is to take the South Kaibab trail down and return via the Bright Angel trail. You may be more tired on the return journey and be glad of the respite at Indian Garden.



*Sherpa Sam says...*

*One common mistake is to go down South Kaibab hoping to spend the night at Indian Garden. Indian Garden is only accessible if you're going down Bright Angel Trail, so don't go down the South Kaibab Trail if you're going to spend the night at Indian Garden. Be careful to have the right permit for the right campground!*

- Ⓐ Name: South Kaibab Trail
- 📍 Location: from South of Yaki Point on Yaki Point Road. Latitude: 36.0529 Longitude: -112.0830
- 🕒 Duration: between 4 and 6 hours
- ★ Difficulty: strenuous
- ➔ Distance: 7 miles / 11.3km
- 🏔️ Elevation gain: 1463m / 4860ft from the South Rim to Bright Angel Campground
- 💧 Water stations: no potable water between the top of the rim and the Colorado River
- 👕 What to take: see the Ultimate Grand Canyon Packing guide
- 🚻 Facilities: toilets are available at Bright Angel Campground and Phantom Ranch
- 📅 When to go: between April and September/October is the best time
- 🚗 How to get there: from Indian Garden, just hike down
- 📄 Permit required: for an overnight stay yes. See Permits and passes
- 🏠 Lodgings: Phantom Ranch or Bright Angel Campground (reservations required)
- ⛶ Note: you can hire a mule to either carry your pack or to ride down
- ⚠️ Warning: do not attempt to hike down the South Kaibab trail to Indian Garden because, although they may look very close on the map, they are a very long distance apart
- ✓ Why is it for you: to experience a night in the canyon
- 💬 Sherpa Sam's recommendation: one way to hike the Grand Canyon is to take the South Kaibab trail down to the river, spend the night at Phantom Ranch or Bright Angel Campground, and hike back through the Bright Angel Trail. South Kaibab is steeper and faster, which makes it the preferred route down. Bright Angel Trail offers a lot of switchbacks and is the easier trail back up to the rim.

Check out the South Kaibab Trail map and elevation charts in the Maps section p55



## 4. North Kaibab Trail

So, you've hiked the Bright Angel Trails and the South Kaibab trails, what's next to check off your Grand Canyon trail hit list? The North Kaibab Trail on the North Rim is one of the most difficult trails out there and is not for the faint-hearted. However, it offers amazing views of fir, aspen trees and wildflowers, and desert vegetation and two refreshing waterfalls, Roaring Springs and Ribbon Falls. Are you up for a new challenge? Let's go!

The North Kaibab Trail is considered to be the most difficult of the previously mentioned maintained canyon trails and maybe that's why it's the least visited. It takes backpackers an average of 3-4 days to hike the trail spending a night at Cottonwood Campground, half way down the trail and a night at Bright Angel Campground near the Colorado River.

The trail is said to pass through every ecosystem found between Canada and Mexico. At the rim, you will see fir and aspen trees, ferns and wildflowers whilst further down, when you look back up at the canyon walls, you will see both wetland vegetation, typical of rivers and streams, and desert vegetation. The trail itself is blasted directly into the Redwall limestone rock in half-tunnel sections. As oases in the desert, 2 side trips on this trail offering respite from the sun are Roaring Springs and Ribbon Falls.

The North Kaibab begins with a steep descent down the valley head via a series of switchbacks. From the lush green and breathtaking views below the trailhead, the trail reaches the Supai Tunnel. Here hikers will find potable water (mid-May to mid-October) and pit toilets, but no emergency phone. The route has numerous switchbacks which continue to the towering cliffs of Redwall Limestone, where the trail has been blasted out of the cliff for long stretches in a half tunnel. The exposure of this Redwall section is awe-inspiring in the true sense of the word.

Where most of the trail's descent meets the flatter bottom of Bright Angel Canyon, Roaring Springs is a worthwhile mini diversion. Water gushes directly out of the cliffs here and cascades into Bright Angel Creek which runs with you all the way to the Colorado River. Roaring Springs provides drinking water for every visitor and resident within Grand Canyon National Park and is delivered to the South Rim via a pipeline buried beneath the North Kaibab Trail since 1970. The pipeline is visible stretching across the Colorado River underneath the Bright Angel Trail's Silver Bridge. At about 5.4 miles along the trail, a house once known as the Pumphouse Residence or the Aiken Residence comes into view. For decades, artist and park employee Bruce Aiken lived, painted and worked here.

The Pumphouse is now automated and serves as a ranger station. Nearby, hikers also have access to the Manzanita Rest Area which affords access to Bright Angel Creek, a toilet, drinking water and shaded benches. Passing the old Pumphouse is a welcome sign for the descending backpacker signalling the approaching Cottonwood Campground. If you are fortunate to camp overnight here, you will have time to explore a beautiful oasis, Ribbon Falls located 1.6 miles down-creek from the campground.

### *Fun Facts*

*Today the trail crosses the Bright Angel Creek only 6 times but on the older route, built in the 1920's to match the quality of the South Kaibab trail, you would have crossed it 94 times!*

*In past years, lucky hikers could get a refreshing cup of lemonade from one of Aiken's children who were raised at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.*



## 4. North Kaibab Trail

The waterfall is located in a grotto on the west side of Bright Angel Creek, so reaching it is a short but extremely rewarding detour. If you arrive here in the heat of the day (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) you should seriously consider having a siesta or recharging your batteries.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Success and enjoyment rely heavily on proper planning and preparation. Just keeping out of the sun between 10 am and 4 pm may be the most critically important decision you could make. For this reason, hiking the North Kaibab trail in a single day is not recommended as it's almost impossible to avoid hiking in the heat of the day.

- Ⓐ **Name:** North Kaibab Trail
- 📍 **Location:** the trailhead is 0.5 mile from the North Rim Campground. Latitude: 36° 13' 1.42" N  
Longitude: -112° 03' 21.28" W
- 🕒 **Duration:** 3 or 4 days
- ★ **Difficulty:** strenuous
- ➡ **Length:** 14 miles / 23km
- 🏔️ **Elevation change:** 5,660ft (1,730 m). The highest point on the North rim is 8,060ft (2,460 m)
- 💧 **Water stations:** potable water is available at the trailhead, Supai Tunnel, Roaring Springs, the Manzanita Rest Area, Cottonwood Campground and Bright Angel Campground. Except for Bright Angel campground, all water sources are seasonal and are turned off in Autumn
- 🎒 **What to take:** see Ultimate Packing Guide
- 🏠 **Facilities:** North Rim park facilities (lodge, store and gas station) close on October 15
- 📅 **When to go:** Spring to Autumn
- 🚗 **How to get there:** by car it is 41 miles South of Jacob Lake on HW 67 and 1.5 miles North of Grand Canyon Lodge (GCL). Transportation can be arranged from GCL twice per morning. Check GCL for times and fares. On foot, it's half a mile from North Rim Campground.
- P **Parking information:** there is a small parking area with limited parking at the trailhead.
- 🏠 **Permit required:** you need a permit in advance to camp in the Canyon
- 🏠 **Lodgings:** no at-large camping - you must camp in a designated campground. Cottonwood Campground is 7 miles (halfway) from the trailhead and Bright Angel Campground is at the bottom of the Canyon 14 miles from the trailhead and adjacent to the Colorado River.
- ⊕ **Note:** trail conditions vary according to the seasons. The upper section of the North Kaibab Trail at Roaring Springs Canyon can be perpetually ice-covered and snowbound during the winter months. Hikers need to be well prepared for extreme winter conditions. Likewise, in the summer months (May-September), hikers must have the discipline to begin hiking well before dawn or after 3pm.
- ⚠️ **Warning:** Between Cottonwood Campground and Bright Angel Campground the trail enters the Inner Gorge which can be a particularly dangerous stretch of trail during summer months. This is because the entire 7.2 mile stretch is at low elevation and becomes extremely hot from early morning to late afternoon. The gorge of black rock through which the trail passes can be likened to an oven. Always plan on reaching Bright Angel Campground before 10 am. The North is 1000 feet higher in elevation than the South Rim.
- ✓ **Why is it for you:** You are super fit and need a challenge after doing other trails
- 🗨️ **Sherpa Sam's recommendations:** Random acts by erosion may cause these pipelines to break periodically. Don't rely on the potable water sources, consider them a bonus! Always bring a lightweight form or water treatment with you so you always have a backup supply from natural sources.

Check out the North Kaibab Trail map and elevation charts in the Maps section p56



## 5. Hermit Trail

It should go without saying that all trails are fairly strenuous in the Grand Canyon. If you have hiked the Bright Angel Trail or South Kaibab, this 18-mile (approx.) out and back Hermit Trail might be next on your list?! It is accessible all year-round, has a range of activity options and is rated intermediate-difficult.

One of six “rim-to-river” routes along the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, the Hermit Trail is less trafficked, and in places, more arduous than the others. The terrain is good underfoot and there is a developed trailhead but it’s not normally attempted as a day hike, unless you turn around at Santa Maria Springs (5 miles round trip). You will probably wish to spend at least one night at the Hermit Creek or Hermit Rapids campgrounds.

The Hermit Trail has an interesting history. In 1910, in order to compete with the Bright Angel Trail which operated a toll, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad further improved the trail. Until the 1930s, the railroad ran the Hermit Camp about 7 trail miles below the rim but from then on, the National Park Service took over control of the Bright Angel Trail and abolished tolls.

A great deal of the pioneering period of Northern Arizona history centres on the development of projects and schemes to promote and capitalize on the unique aura of the Grand Canyon. One of the biggest improvement projects was at the Hermit Creek basin and initiated by the Santa Fe Railroad in 1911. This project included considerable development of the rim and a progressive and modern rim-to-river trail. The Hermit Trail was constructed to serve a luxury campsite, Hermit Camp, near Hermit Creek, predating Phantom Ranch by 10 years. Such was the luxury of the day, it had a tramway from the rim, a car for transport within the camp and a Fred Harvey chef (one of the first restaurant chains in the US). The camp ceased to be in 1930 but for 20 years, Hermit Camp was the ultimate in luxury tourism below the rim.

Time and erosion have taken a heavy toll on the Hermit Trail and it is a shadow of what it was in its heyday. However for experienced and knowledgeable canyon backpackers the trail still offers a direct link to the heady early days of the Grand Canyon. A gravel path from the trailhead leads to a steep and steady descent through various layers of limestone and sandstone rock. After a series of switchbacks, at 1.3 miles, you will reach the junction with the Waldron Trail coming in from the left. Half a mile further on you reach another junction with the Dripping Spring Trail where you must veer right to continue on the Hermit trail. The path offers varied scenery from the cliff-bound Hermit Basin along the canyon of Hermit Creek to the Tonto Bench then on through the narrower enclosed section to its end at Hermit Rapids.

### Fun Facts


















*This trail was built by horse thieves in the last decade of the 19th century and later improved by prospectors of that era.*

*The “hermit” of the Hermit Creek basin was Louis D. Boucher who lived in the area for 20 years. Boucher was described as a hermit because he lived alone, but was in fact socially active within the South Rim community*

Check out the Hermit Trail map and elevation charts in the Maps section p56



## 5. Hermit Trail

-  **Name:** Hermit Trail
-  **Location:** the trailhead is 500ft from a point on West Rim Drive called Hermits Rest. It is at a point of 6640 ft elevation and finishes at Hermit rapids near the Colorado at the bottom of the canyon. Latitude: 36° 03' 37.66" N Longitude: -112° 12' 43.92" W
-  **Duration:** 2-3 days from the trailhead to Hermit Rapid
-  **Difficulty:** intermediate - difficult/strenuous
-  **Distance:** 9.7 miles (9 miles to the Colorado River) - 18.6 miles return (approx)
-  **Elevation change:** 4240ft / 1292m
-  **Water stations:** no drinking water along the trail. You need to take enough water for entire hike; water at springs must be treated. Drinking water available at Hermits Rest
-  **What to take:** see Ultimate Packing Guide
-  **Facilities:** no restrooms
-  **When to go:** Spring
-  **How to get there:** from March 1 – November 30 Hermit Road is only open to shuttle buses. The road may also close, at short notice due to bad weather conditions
-  **Parking information:** you can park at the Back Country Office (BCO) in the village or with a permit for the trail, you can drive your car to the trailhead but you need to get the entry code from the BCO. Check the park website for more information
-  **Shuttle bus:** March 1- November 30, Hermits Rest Route shuttle bus provides transportation between the Village Route Transfer and Hermits Rest. For schedules and stops visit: [go.nps.gov/gc\\_shuttle](http://go.nps.gov/gc_shuttle)
-  **Permit required:** yes if you intend to camp at Hermit Campground, you will need to get a permit some months in advance to camp here
-  **Lodgings:** camp at Hermit Creek or Hermit Rapids Campground. This area is heavily shaded.
-  **Why is it for you:** it's less trafficked and a nostalgic reminder of America's pioneering days
-  **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** there is a lot of noise on the Hermit Trail from sightseeing helicopters

## 6. Rim to Rim Trail

Hiking the rim-to-rim is on many a bucket-list of adventures. As an alternative to the rim-to-river hikes, you may prefer one of the “rim-to-rim” hikes, but, again they are all extremely strenuous and you need to prepare well physically, if not mentally, for the challenge. On average this hike will take 12-15 hours so it's wise to tackle it over 2-3 days rather than a one day hike, unless you are super-fit and an experienced hiker.

Everyone should do the rim-to-rim once in their life. To fully absorb the beauty of the Canyon, you should plan on a 2-day hike for this trail and therefore, you will need a permit to spend a night or two in the Canyon. You could camp at Bright Angel Campground or have a more relaxing stay at Phantom Ranch but plan on arriving there at around 10 am. Sherpa Sam recommends that you stay 2 nights at the bottom in Phantom Ranch and especially during the summer you will be glad to have air conditioning and a real bed to sleep on.

**When should I start the hike?**

Sherpa Sam recommends to start before or no later than sunrise to beat the heat. The narrow canyon section called ‘the box’ is a notoriously hot 4-mile stretch so aim on getting through this before 10.am.



## 6. Rim to Rim Trail

### Rim-to-Rim-to-Rim (R2R2R)

This extreme R2R2R challenge is a punishing 40-plus-mile out-and-back route. The South Kaibab trail to the North Rim and back up the Bright Angel trail, has more than 10,000 vertical feet of gain and loss along its path. This experience challenges your mind as much as your body but truly rewards the soul. Some people have even been known to run this!!

### Which way should I do it?

There are various ways to hike rim-to-rim. The most trafficked route is the North to South Rim Trail via the North Kaibab Trail and Bright Angel Trail. You could rest for an hour at Phantom Ranch before continuing up the Bright Angel Trail, buy some ice to help cool down, fill your water bottles and start your way up the South Rim. You're likely to pass mules and a ranger or two along the Bright Angel Trail as you approach Indian Gardens where you can get plenty of cold water to replenish your supplies. Some hikers like to constantly soak their shirts and hats to help stay cool under the blistering sun.

However some prefer to use the North Kaibab down into the canyon and the South Kaibab trail up to the South rim (elevation 7260 ft), the drawback being no water and no shade on the South Kaibab Trail. It's a little shorter (7 miles versus 9.6 miles on the Bright Angel Trail) and considerably steeper.

When temperatures are cooler (Spring, Fall or early morning in the Summer), the South Kaibab trail is a good option for the descent. It's wise to be super-aware of your limits if you hike South to North rim via the Bright Angel and North Kaibab Trails. The elevation gain and the distance of the North Kaibab trail could catch you unawares and give you muscle fatigue.

- Ⓐ **Name:** Rim to Rim Trail
- 🕒 **Duration:** 12-15 hours
- ★ **Difficulty:** extremely strenuous
- ➡ **Distance:** 23.5 miles / 37 km or 40+ miles / 64 km out and back
- 👉 **Elevation change:** 5761ft / 1755m elevation loss (North Kaibab to Bright Angel Campground), 4380ft / 1335m elevation gain (Bright Angel Campground to South Rim on the Bright Angel Trail)
- 🎒 **What to take:** see Ultimate Packing Guide
- 💧 **Water stations:** none on South Kaibab. On North Kaibab, potable water is available at the trailhead, Supai Tunnel, Roaring Springs, the Manzanita Rest Area, Cottonwood Campground and Bright Angel Campground. Except for Bright Angel Campground, all water sources are seasonal and are turned off in Autumn. Available seasonally on Bright Angel Trail (1.5 mile Resthouse/3 mile Resthouse) and year-round at Indian Garden
- 📅 **When to go:** May to October (the North Rim closes 15 October)
- 🚗 **How to get there:** various trailhead options. There is a shuttle service from the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim  
**Parking information:** depends which route you choose
- 📄 **Permit required:** Yes for staying overnight in the Canyon. Apply well in advance
- 🏠 **Lodgings:** Bright Angel Campground, Phantom Ranch in the canyon
- ⚠️ **Warning:** control your pace, particularly downhill to reduce the pressure on your legs, drink lots of water, eat energy bars and stretch and roll your foot from heel to toe when connecting with the ground to avoid or minimise muscle failure. If your legs are giving out, take an extended break!
- ✓ **Why is it for you:** as a serious hiker, you have to do it once in your life!
- 🗨️ **Sherpa Sam's recommendations:** if it's your first time, the best direction is to hike from the North Rim to the South Rim via the North Kaibab Trail and the Bright Angel Trail



# 7. Mule Rides



Riding a mule down to the bottom of the breathtaking Grand Canyon is a fantastic one-of-a-kind experience to discover the truly spectacular views of the Grand Canyon National Park in a different way. If you are feeling a bit adventurous, this activity is for you!

Take your pick between a multitude of 2 or 3-hour mule trips, day trips with an overnight stop at Phantom Ranch, or deep into the canyon following the South or North Kaibab Trail, the options are endless! Horses can also be used instead of mules and other activities such as the twilight campfire and wagon rides can be included to make it an unforgettable experience.

**Sherpa Sam says:** "I should warn you, riding a mule down the Grand Canyon is not that easy! The ride down and up is hard on the body, jostling it back and forth so if you are thinking of riding the mule, work hard to get in shape before your trip. Riding a mule along the ridge of the canyon can also be scary, but the mules are very sure-footed and safe. If you'd rather hike down, mules can easily be arranged to carry your pack from the mule barn or from Phantom Ranch. The price can vary but it is usually less than \$100".

## Fun Facts

Did you know that the first known use of an expert mule guide, called a mule skinner, dates back to 1870 and was used to describe a muleteer? The origins of the word came from the fact that those professional mule riders spent so much time with their mules pulling barges and hauling mining materials that they became extremely skilled at picking flies off the mule's skin with their long whip without hitting the mule. Of course the mule skinner's job was to keep the mules moving but the latter usually knew the route and needed little coaxing.

- Ⓐ **Name:** Mule Rides
- 📍 **Location:** from the mule barn down the canyon to Phantom Ranch and/or back up the rim
- 🕒 **Duration:** from a couple hours to a couple days with an overnight stay
- ★ **Difficulty:** medium to difficult
- 🎒 **What to take:** a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and a hat are recommended
- ✓ **Why is it for you:** if you're interested in the cultural aspect of the Grand Canyon, you will enjoy learning about the area's native people, the flora and fauna, the geologic formations and the evolution of the landscape during your trip
- 💰 **Price:** varies from \$45 (for 1 hour) to \$152 (for 2 or more hours)
- 🗨️ **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** prepare yourself and get fit(ter) before the ride. Because the terrain is very precipitous in parts, the ride can sometimes be a little scary as the mule picks its way over the rocks. However, the mules have done this every day of their lives so just trust them and enjoy the ride!

Most companies offer group trips with a number of riders varying between 10 and 20 riders and always accompanied by an experienced guide, but all of them have similar restrictions and rules, such as:

- Children must usually be 7 to 9 years or older, to ride a mule
- Riders must usually weigh less than 220 lbs (or 100kg)
- Riders must be in good physical condition, all-levels welcome - so beginners rest easy
- Riders must be able to understand and speak English fluently

Here's a few companies that will take you on a fun and exciting mule ride. Saddle up!

Apache Stables      Grand Canyon Lodges      Canyon Rides      Grand Canyon

## 8. Whitewater Rafting



If you are more of a water-happy kind of adventurer, don't miss whitewater rafting in the Grand Canyon! Hop in a motorized or oar-powered raft and enjoy the thrill of going downstream on the Colorado River between exciting whitewater rapids and calm waters, surrounded by the scenic beauty of the canyon and filled with a serene feeling of communion with nature.

From peaceful waters to exhilarating rapids, rafting down the Colorado River is a truly unique way of discovering the Grand Canyon. It is a fantastic activity for families, groups or solo travelers, adventure-seekers and history buffs alike who are looking for a fun-packed water escapade offering a mix of rafting, camping, cooking, relaxing, snapping amazing pictures and taking in the spectacular surroundings in the Grand Canyon.

Each night you will set up camp and get ready to sleep under the endless starry sky while your guides prepare dinner. And for those who haven't had their fill of excitement, astrophotography, hiking, horseback-riding and fishing are but a few activities to do throughout the trip. Keep in mind that you will need a fishing license that costs around 55\$ for non-residents.

Many options are available to satisfy every adventurer, every wallet and every agenda. For example, would you rather go on a motorised raft (fast, thrilling and very popular) or an oar-powered raft (slower, more relaxing)? When your rafting trip is over, you can choose to hike out back to your hotel or vehicle or take a private shuttle, a helicopter or a plane. Alternatively, you could hike in from the South Rim to the Colorado River at Phantom Ranch and raft the river to Diamond Creek. Feel like continuing West? Hop in a helicopter to the Skywalk after rafting on the Colorado River from the Hualapai Indian Reservation.

Rafting down the Colorado River typically starts in Lees Ferry near Lake Powell and ends in Whitmore Wash (188 miles/302 km) or in Diamond Creek (225 miles/362 km) but many options are available depending on your budget and timeframe. Most rafting journeys take between 3 and 13 days for a full excitement packed experience. Other rafting trips are possible in Horseshoe Bend, AZ and Cataract Canyon, UT.

The main companies organising whitewater rafting trips down the Grand Canyon are Grand Canyon Whitewater, River Adventure and Western River out of Flagstaff, Hualapai River Runners out of Peach Springs, and Arizona River Runners out of Las Vegas or Marble Canyon (Lees Ferry).

### What will you see?

You will see some waterfalls, Indian ruins, unique geological formations, impressive cliff walls and if you're lucky, you might spot some wildlife like elks, condors, bighorn sheep or mule deer.

This is also a great way to meet fellow-minded travellers and bond over the same experience. Needless to say, the guides all have years of experience rafting in the Grand Canyon and will share their knowledge of the area, its geology, history and astronomy with you.

### Fun Facts

*Did you know that the waters of the Colorado River are between 45° and 52° Fahrenheit / 7° and 11° Celsius year round?*

*Whitewater rapids around the world are classified into 6 difficulty levels, from 1 being easy to 6 being extreme. The Grand Canyon however uses another type of rating scale from 1-10 that already existed when the international scale was introduced. One thing to note is that the intensity of the rapids often depends on 3 factors, namely the water flow, speed and level and the Grand Canyon waters are dam-controlled and released year-round.*

# 8. Whitewater Rafting



Hualapai River Runners is based in Peach Springs, just over 100 miles West of Flagstaff, and is the only company offering 1-day and 2-day trips on the Colorado River. They also have a 5-day rafting trip. In addition to the whitewater rafting trips, you have the option to add transportation by helicopter to the Skywalk (\$58), to rent your own private paddle raft (\$700) or a private motorized boat (\$1,500). A permit from the National Park System and Hualapai Game & Fish Department is necessary for self-guided tours.

All their trips start in Bridge Canyon on the Hualapai Indian Reservation and include whitewater rafting on the Colorado River, a short hike to Travertine Falls and additional activities depending on the length of your trip such as camping in Spencer Canyon or a relaxing pontoon boat ride.

## Fun Facts

*Did you know that the Hualapai people have been living along the walls of the Grand Canyon making this rugged terrain their home for hundreds of years? Hualapai River Runners also offers a unique insight into the Hualapai people sharing with you fascinating facts about the homes of the Hualapai people along the Grand Canyon, their relocation in 1874, the myth of the Spirit Mountain, the geology, plant and animal life of the Grand Canyon. If you are interested in the culture and history of the Grand Canyon people, Hualapai River Runners is for you.*

### Standard itinerary options:

- Upper Canyon: from Lees Ferry to Phantom Ranch (88 miles/141 km) 3 to 6 days
- Lower Canyon: from Phantom Ranch to Whitmore Wash (102 miles/164 km) 4 to 8 days
- Full Canyon: from Lees Ferry to Whitmore Wash (188 miles/302 km) - from 6 to 13 days

- Ⓐ **Name:** Whitewater rafting down the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon
- 📍 **Location:** adaptable from Lees Ferry to Whitmore Wash or Diamond Creek and from Hualapai Lodge to Pearce Ferry near Lake Mead
- 🕒 **Duration:** from 1 to 13 days
- ★ **Difficulty:** medium to difficult
- 📅 **When to go:** from April to October
- 🚗 **How to get there:** transportation is usually provided back to Flagstaff or to your vehicle and can be arranged if you do not have a vehicle
- 🎒 **What to take:** clothes, toiletry, personal items such as photography equipment, head torch, sunscreen, hiking shoes, etc.
- 🧺 **What is included:** the company provides food, snacks and drinks, tents, camping gear, waterproof containers and bags, life jackets, kitchen utensils and plates etc. Some companies include the entrance fee to the Grand Canyon National Park, some do not
- 🏠 **Lodgings:** camping with camping equipment provided by the company
- 💰 **Price:** varies from \$325 to \$5000
- 👤 **Age limit:** children are allowed from 8 years old (motorized rafting) and 12 years old (oar-powered trips)
- ✓ **Why is it for you:** great for adventure-seekers and history buffs, adapted for families, groups or solo travellers who are looking for a fun-packed water escapade offering a mix of rafting, camping, cooking, relaxing in nature
- 💬 **Sherpa Sam's recommendation:** "Don't just come down to the Grand Canyon for a weekend if you can afford a longer trip. You have to spend a couple weeks here to really enjoy everything this beautiful area has to offer. Rafting on the Colorado River is one of those amazing activities you can't rush."
- 🏕️ **Tips:** join Rafting Grand Canyon and Green and Colorado River Rafter Paddlers Sups and Swimmers Facebook groups to discuss information on the rapids in the Colorado River. Leave no trace, use reusable water bottles when possible, and bring Quick Dry types of clothing and towels

# 9. Grand Canyon Railway and Motel



The Grand Canyon Railway has been operating since 1901. Departing daily at 9.30 am from Williams, this train ride will enhance your Grand Canyon experience. It will drop you in the center of the historic village at the South Rim at 11.45 am and you will be able to enjoy 3 hours at the canyon until the train brings you back to Williams at 5.45 pm. As you travel, from the window you will see the ever-changing terrain go through high desert to prairie and finally pine each with vistas to take your breath away.

A strenuous hike may not be your thing? Or even if it is, you may appreciate a more relaxing and scenic view of the canyon as seen from the historic Grand Canyon Railway. Enjoy a wild-west shoot-out reenactment before you board the train from Williams to the Grand Canyon historic village. The views from the train alone are well worth saving a few hours of your trip for this unique activity!

## All aboard!

A wild-west shoot-out is enacted before you board the train to help you get in the mood of a by-gone era. Inside the sympathetically restored rail cars, Western musicians and cowboy characters entertain you as you take in the scenery at a leisurely pace. A Passenger Service Attendant will also tell you facts about the era and the canyon and share information about what you'll find at the South Rim.

There are 6 classes of service to choose from the Pullman class to the luxury dome with private bar service and exclusive cocktails. You can even privately charter your car for those special birthdays, weddings or anniversaries with the Rail Baron Charter tour. This departs either 30 minutes before or after the normally scheduled train and you can even customize the tour to your own schedule, with a completely private charter.

**Note:** Guests are required to wear face coverings while in interior public spaces and while on the train.

## The Grand Canyon Railway Hotel

This 298 room hotel is next door to the Williams train depot and just a block away from downtown Williams and Route 66. They have a variety of packages to help you plan your activities in and around the Grand Canyon and it would be a perfect place to stay before your railway experience. The Hotel has the Fred Harvey Restaurant and Spencer's pub.

## The Fred Harvey Restaurant

The buffet-only serves tastes from all ages. Breakfast, lunch and dinner is served for Grand Canyon Railway passengers and patrons alike. In the evening it has a pasta bar and carvery.

## Spencer's Pub

Spencer's pub offers a wide selection of pub-style food and beverages. A 32 foot wide oil painting depicting the Grand Canyon Railway, called 'The Trip', hangs above the room. In summer months, Spencer's doors are opened to the patio area and in winter it provides a welcome retreat from the weather. It opens at 4.00 pm each day and features an eclectic selection of entrees and appetizers, wine and local brews on tap and hand-crafted cocktails.

# 9. History of the Grand Canyon Railway and Hotel



In 1893, the Grand Canyon, by presidential proclamation was established as a forest reserve. Eight years later in 1901, the first passengers arrived from Williams at the South Rim on the Santa Fe railway. To accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors, architect Francis W Wilson designed the Fray Marcos hotel in Williams and it opened in 1908. In 1919, the Grand Canyon National Park was established by an act of congress and a year later, a good road was built making travel to the rim easier. Fifteen years later in 1940, diesel locomotives began travelling the line and in 1953, they replaced the classic steam trains as the more economical alternative.

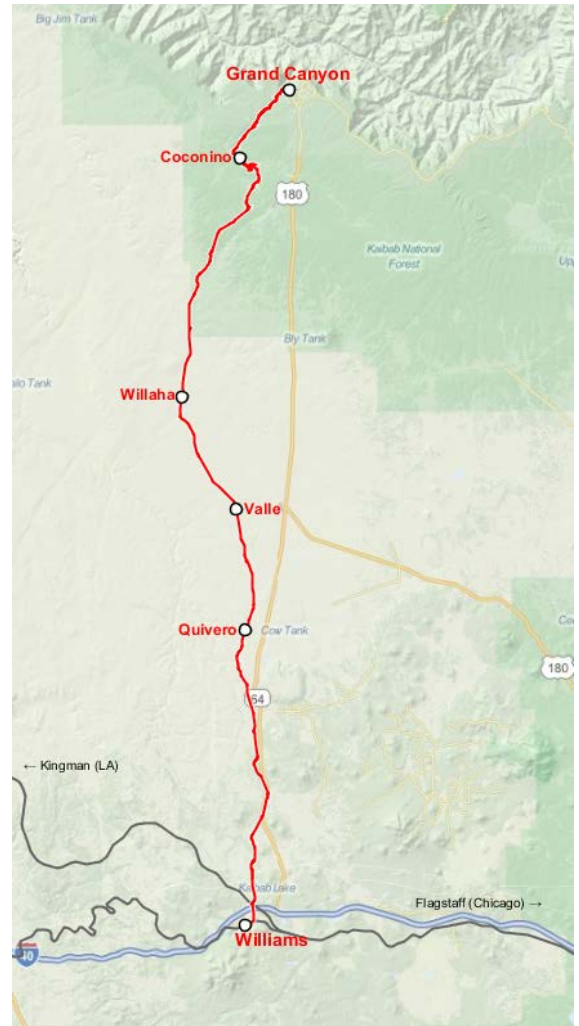
The hotel was also closed in 1953 by Santa Fe and in 1968, the regularly scheduled train service to the Grand Canyon saw its last 3 customers. In 1969, the Grand Canyon depot that had continued to service the East-West main line and the Williams to Grand Canyon traffic, closed. Some 9 years later, congress passed another act to expand the Grand Canyon National Park and in 1984, downtown Williams was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1988, the Williams railway station closed for good but one year later, in 1989, Max and Thelma Biegart announced the re-development of the railway route to the Grand Canyon and rehabilitation of the Fray Marcos Hotel and the Williams depot, which then re-opened under new management.

In 1990 two vintage steam trains from 1906 and 1910 were restored taking up to 10,000 hours and \$1.5m each to rebuild. From 1993, the railway took over 105,000 passengers per year which reduced automobile traffic to the South Rim by approx. 40,000 cars – a remarkable contribution to saving the environment, although perhaps not considered as such at the time.

In 1995 the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel opened and vintage steam locomotives were reintroduced however, in 2008, the railway was converted to an all diesel fleet of locomotives by the new owners as part of their commitment to the environment. However, limited steam trains were reinstated the following year due to popular demand.

For more information, timetables, prices and bookings, check out the Grand Canyon Railway website on [www.thetrain.com](http://www.thetrain.com)



# 10. Trail of Time

## A geological time walk



Have you ever wanted to walk back in time or space? The Trail of Time is a fantastic path along the Grand Canyon South Rim that allows visitors to take a trip back into the history and geology of the canyon, with spectacular views of the canyon from the top of the rim. Perfect for families and for anyone who's unable to hike down into the canyon. Read more to travel through time!

Of the 6 million or so visitors per year to the Grand Canyon, the majority are not able to hike down into the canyon. The trail was therefore built as an accessible way to view the Grand Canyon and stop people at a time when already inspired by the grandeur of the canyon and feeling they want to learn more about the geological events that shaped the landscape.

### Location

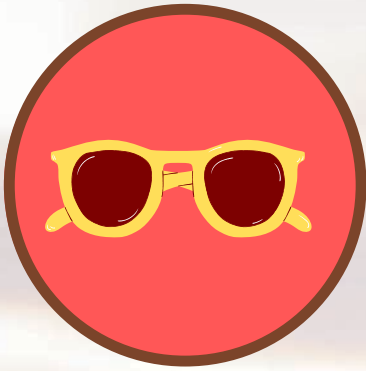
The trail starts at the Yavapai Geology Museum, a half hour walk from Mather Point and the Canyon View Visitor Center. The trail continues on to Grand Canyon Village and beyond towards Hermits Rest.

### Walking forward or backwards in time

The Trail of Time is a walk depicting a geological timeline of one million years of the Grand Canyon's history every metre of the walk. It is a relatively flat, paved walk 2.83 miles long (4.56 km). The trail evokes deep inward feelings of time, space and the enormity of this natural phenomenon. Bronze markers separate your location in time, every 10th marker represents a million years. Rocks and exhibits along the trail explain how the Grand Canyon and its rock were formed and invite the visitor to think about the magnitude of time and the events that have occurred in each period.

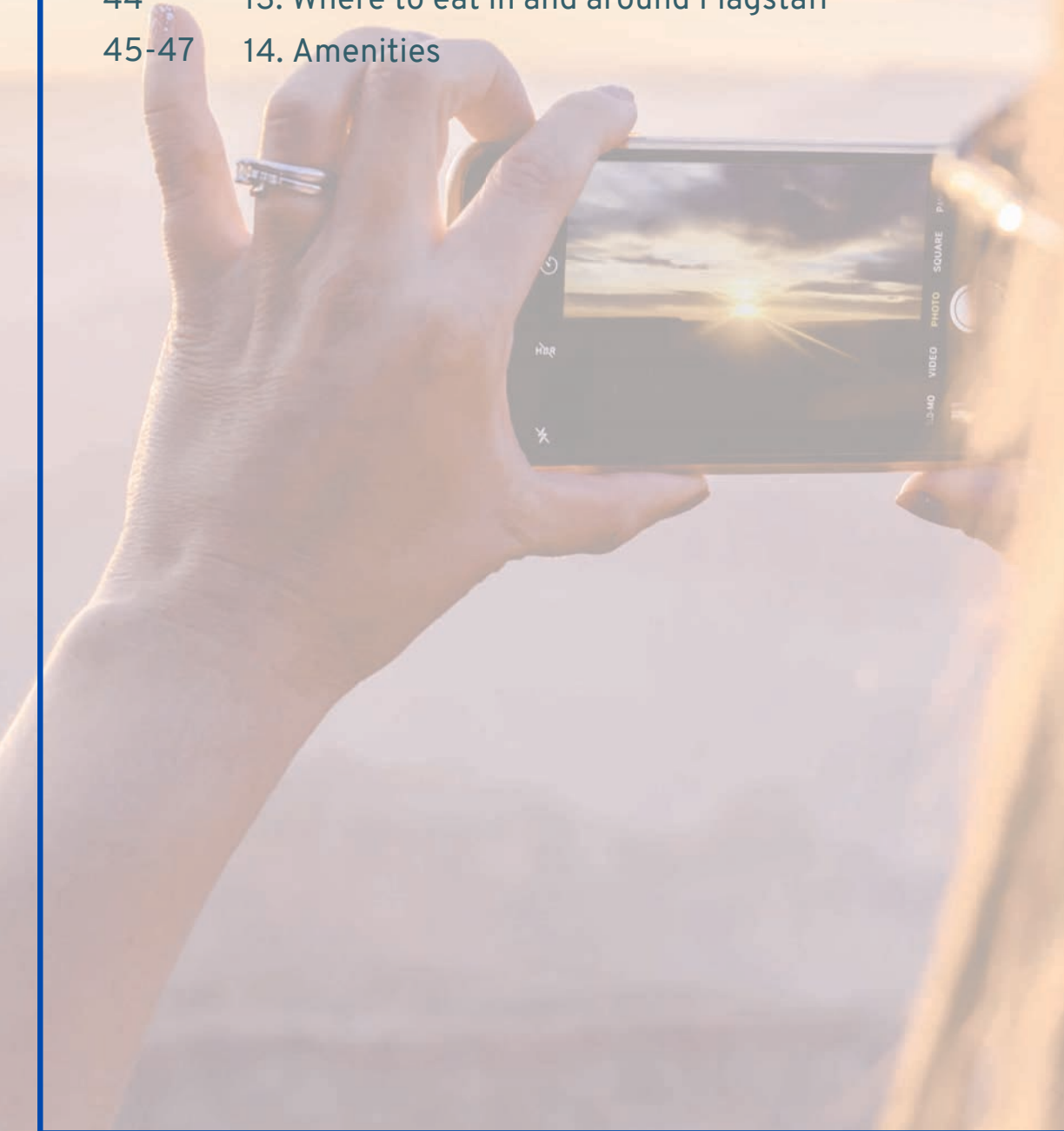
Walking east from Grand Canyon Village takes you forward in time, from Grand Canyon's oldest rocks to canyon carving and Grand Canyon's human history. Between Yavapai Geology Museum and Grand Canyon Village (2.1 km or 1.3 miles), walk (west), backwards in time and experience Grand Canyon's entire geologic history. Start by walking the "Million Year Trail", transitioning from human time scales to geologic ones. The "Million Year Trail" is immediately followed by the main Trail of Time where each meter equals one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history. This one hour walking trip is fully accessible and provides breathtaking vistas of the Grand Canyon while allowing you to ponder and try to comprehend the depths of geologic space and time.





# Enjoy

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# 11. Wildlife

There are many species of animals living in the Grand Canyon, of which, the most notable are the mountain lion, California condor, Grand Canyon rattlesnake, Arizona Bark scorpion, big-horn sheep and over 20 species of bats.

The following animals do live there and you may be lucky to catch a glimpse. Sherpa Sam says: "don't be too disappointed if you don't see many animals on your trip. It may be because they have already seen you and are keeping a low profile".

## Mule deer (*Odocoileus Hemionus*) and Elk (*Cervus Elaphus*)

Mule deer are the most commonly sighted mammals in the Grand Canyon especially in the South Rim. Elk are related to the deer family but much larger than most species. They can often be seen grazing near the forested areas of Grandview Point at the South Rim and the entrance of the North Rim.

**Warning:** You are advised to drive at low speeds to avoid potential confrontations with these beautiful animals as they often dart in front of cars.

**Fun fact:** Mule deer are indigenous to western North America and get their name because their ears are large like a mule's.

## Mountain Lion (*Puma concolor*)

The Mountain Lion is often referred to as the cougar and is the second heaviest cat in the Americas after the jaguar. They are rarely seen in the canyon as they are solitary and secretive and hunt at night.

## Ringtail cats (*Bassariscus astutus*)

The Ringtail cat belongs to the racoon family and is mainly found in America's arid regions including the Grand Canyon. Again, these cats are nocturnal so you may not see one.

**Warning:** they can forage for food in campgrounds so if you are camping, keep your food well packed up and out of reach!

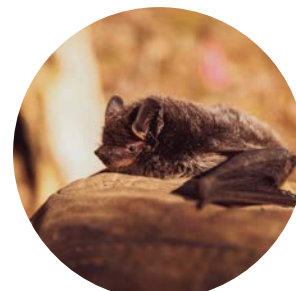
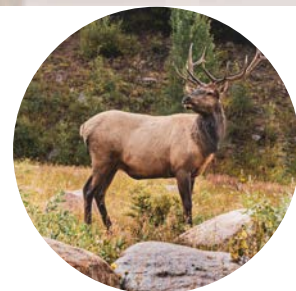
## Coyotes (*Canis latrans*)

Coyotes are widely distributed throughout America. They are a common sight at the Grand Canyon and can be seen both in the canyon and on the tops of the rims. They mainly eat rodents and carrion but are also not averse to sneaking into campsites and rummaging in garbage bins in search of food. They can quickly adapt to human-modified environments.

## Canyon Bats

The Grand Canyon is home to 22 species of bats and provides much needed sheltered habitat as more and more bat habitats are destroyed across much of the world. There are several species of bats found on the Kaibab Plateau – big brown bats, silver-haired bats and Mexican free-tailed bats all live in the area. They all have one thing in common: they are voracious insect eaters. A small bat can eat up to 5,000 insects a night! They can live up to 35 years.

In North America, bats are also under massive threat from a fungal disease which enjoys cold temperatures with high humidity called White-Nose Syndrome.







# 11. Wildlife

*"I was hiking in the Grand Canyon [at] the Bright Angel Trail [and] ran across these canyon dwellers about a half-mile or so into the journey. As I was dropping down the trail and rounding a switchback... on a ledge was this herd of bighorns. I was thrilled and excited, so I started shooting pictures. It's amazing how sure-footed these creatures are, and to see how they maneuver is an awesome lesson in nature by itself."*

GREG WOLFE

## Big Horn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*)

It is thought the ancestors of this native of North America travelled through the Bering land bridge from Siberia to North America. Their numbers proliferated over the years until European colonisation of the New World which saw a dramatic reduction in populations due to overhunting, competition for grazing and lack of immunity to new diseases.



Conservation efforts in the last few decades have seen numbers recovering and they can now be seen along the canyon walls, climbing, walking and jumping among the precipitous terrain.

**Fun Fact:** Due to their ability to survive in some of the West's most inhospitable environments, Bighorn sheep have a significant position in native American mythology, associated with the sky they are considered sacred guardian spirits rather than a food source.

## The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

Within the Grand Canyon, you can see a large number of birds of prey. The Californian condor is the most noticeable despite being on the endangered list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. They almost became extinct in the 20th century until a captive breeding programme began in 1983.



In 1996, six young condors were released back into the wild at Vermilion Cliffs, just north of the Grand Canyon. This re-introduction program has been a great success with over 70 condors now living in the area of the Grand Canyon.

## The Grand Canyon Rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus abyssus*)

The rattle on the end of the snake's tail is made of modified scales which make a rattling sound. This scares away any would-be predator. By dispensing with an enemy without a fight, the rattlesnake preserves itself and reserves its venom for hunting.



**Warning:** There are 7 highly venomous reptile species in the Grand Canyon - 6 species of rattlesnake and the Gila Monster (lizard). Only view them from a distance!



# 11. Wildlife

## The Chuckwalla Lizard (*Sauromalus ater*)

The Chuckwalla lizard is the second largest lizard in the U.S. and can measure up to 18 inches. They can be seen soaking up the sun on the banks of the Colorado river at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, They are harmless creatures and if disturbed, gulp air to inflate their bodies and wedge themselves in a tight rock.



**Fun fact:** The Chuckwalla lizard needs to raise its body temperature to 100-105 degrees F before it can forage for food.

## The Arizona Bark Scorpion (*Centruroides sculpturatus*)

North America's most venomous scorpion is the Arizona Bark scorpion and it lives in the Grand Canyon. During winter months they travel in packs of between 20-30.



**Fun fact:** Females are pregnant for 9 months and babies are glued to their mothers' backs for 3 weeks until they can fend for themselves.

**Warning:** Its bite can cause excruciating pain for 24-72 hours with temporary loss of breath and convulsions.

Bark scorpions love to climb and can climb blankets and sheets looking for shelter - so keep your bedding off the floor!

## Bird species from the Grand Canyon

Thanks to the rich and diverse ecosystems present in the Grand canyon, some 447 bird species can be found in the Grand Canyon National Park including some raptors such as eagles (bald eagle, golden eagle), hawks, falcons, ospreys, owls, condors and vultures to name but a few. Their sizes can go from quite small, like the Northern pygmy owl, to enormous such as the California condor.

You might be lucky enough to spot one of those birds of prey flying in the sky or perched on a tree but it's much rarer to spot a hunt in progress. Most of these raptors feed almost exclusively on other animals such as smaller birds (falcons), reptiles and small mammals (hawks and Golden eagle) which they can spot from far away thanks to their sharp vision. Bald eagles and ospreys, on the other hand, offer a unique and extremely rare show when they dive and pull fish from the Colorado River.



Finally keep an eye out for the California condor or the turkey vulture who don't often hunt and prefer feeding off carrion. These raptors are often less sought after because of their reputation as scavengers. However, by eating dead animals, condors help clean up the fields and thanks to their strong immune system, they can also help stop the spread of diseases from sick animals.



Find a detachable copy of your Grand Canyon Animal Checklist on page to keep a record of the animals you see on your hike on page 60.



## 12. Geology

When you stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon and look at the stratification lines, you are looking back millions of years with each layer. The Colorado River and the weather have exposed millions of years of the Earth's history layer upon layer. The Grand Canyon, as with most canyons, is the result of erosion and not ice aged glaciers. In other words, it has been shaped by water over the last million years.

*"With time and water, everything changes."*  
Gerry Paulus

What happens to the Colorado River once it exits the Grand Canyon? The Colorado River runs out of the Grand Canyon on the Western edge of the National Park as it flows through the Grand Wash Cliffs. It flows into the Hoover Dam which was completed in 1935 and which, in turn, created Lake Meade. Lake Meade is the home of one of the largest hydroelectric generating plants in the US and it is sure to put you in awe. It is well worth a visit! The water in the lake is used for recreation first and once released, it generates 2.080 Gigawatts of power before it is released for irrigation of crops on its onward trip to Mexico. The Colorado river is the outflow of high mountain streams from the Rocky mountains, can one river meet the needs of the human demands?

### Geology of the Canyon

The history of the Grand Canyon is much older than six million years and it keeps evolving as scientists continue to unravel the mysteries of the Canyon and the Colorado River. For 65 million years the Rocky Mountains and the Colorado Plateau have been rising while the Colorado and other sheet flow events have been carving the Grand Canyon deeper into the Earth's past. It has cut so deep that as we look at the lowest layers in the Grand Canyon we are looking back a billion years at the Vishnu Basement Rock (1.84 to 1.66 billion years). As your eyes move up from the lowest layers you pass through the Chuar Group (0.78 to 0.73 billion years) up to the Paleozoic Strata (541 to 252 million years). From top to bottom each layer describes an era from the Kaibab Formation, the Toroweap, Coconino Sandstone, Hermit Formation, Supai group, Redwall Limestone, Muav Limestone, Bright Angel Shale, Tapeats Sandstone and sixty mile formation. Each layer is a defined period in the history of the canyon but all are sedimentary rock structures which clearly show the evolution of the planet. Below this era, we see additional Shinumo sandstones and the transition to Vishnu Schist, Cardenas Basalt, gneiss and Zoroaster Granite. When you look out into and over the Grand Canyon, you might not even notice the prehistoric life right beneath your feet in the Kaibab limestone along the rim. When you stand on the rim of the canyon, you're on top of a 270-million-year-old sea floor.

All around Arizona, rocks hold remains of life that lived hundreds of millions of years ago. When people think of fossils, dinosaurs typically come to mind – but that's only one part of our history. Scientists have discovered fossils of microbes, sea sponges, insects, sharks, early amphibians and mammals in the rocks around the state of Arizona, representing over 1 billion years of life on Earth.

Water in and around the Grand Canyon in this semi-arid environment is sparse and even when it rains on the plateau the runoff percolates and seeps through porous, faulted and broken rock as it makes its way into the Grand Canyon. The Canyon has over 700 seasonal and perennial springs that emerge from limestone and caves over 3500 feet below the rim in the Eastern Grand Canyon. The Colorado River is a great source of water and it is used to supply communities in Arizona, Nevada and California for domestic, agriculture and recreation. The canyon does have a pipeline that was constructed in the 1960's that supplies water to Phantom Ranch and the rim communities.



## 12. Geology

### Petrified Forest in Arizona outside of Holbrook, Arizona

Some fossils can be observed in the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona such as the skull of a phytosaur, an extinct creature that lived during the Late Triassic. Rock analysis is being conducted by scientists from the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics to identify more accurately which geological period the reptile lived.

### Can I find dinosaur fossils in the Grand Canyon?

With over 1 billion years of the planet's history preserved in the Grand Canyon, many kinds of lifeforms are represented in the rocks there – but no dinosaurs. The youngest rock layer in the canyon, the Kaibab Limestone on the rim, is about 270 million years old, which is older than the dinosaurs.

### What happens if I find a fossil in the Grand Canyon National Park?

The Grand Canyon Visitor center often displays fossils, but with COVID-19 closures limiting access to indoor spaces, the best place to easily see fossils outdoors is the Grand Canyon National Park as you walk and search along the rim. The locations of fossils can rarely be found on maps to protect them from being damaged.



Keep in mind that fossils and trace fossils such as footprints are irreplaceable resources, so be careful not to take petrified wood or fossils from the National Park, as it is illegal.

If you find a fossil while hiking in the Grand Canyon, park palaeontologists advise you to take a picture of it, record the coordinates and let a ranger know so a palaeontologist can analyze the specimen.

### Weather on the South Rim of the Canyon

The rim gets less than 15" (38 cm) of precipitation annually and only Pinyon, Juniper trees and low vegetation can survive. Both of these trees have small leaves that minimize the surface area and evapotranspiration from the plant. Yucca cactus with their shinny, waxy stalks hold moisture and their strong roots pull from the dry soil on the rim. Further from the rim, the soil gains in quality and the moisture content is improved to sustain Ponderosa pine and other flora.

A short rim walk of a mile or two will take you from the Yavipai lodge to Mather point and beyond. At Mather Point you can get a glimpse of the Colorado River and Phantom Ranch Campgrounds.



# 13. Where to eat in and around Flagstaff



Whether you've hiked the R2R, to Indian Garden and back or you've camped for the night and eaten al fresco, you're likely to be thinking of treating yourself to your favourite cuisine and relaxing after your visit to the Canyon. You can find almost all preferences in and around Flagstaff from a quick burger to a more leisurely dining out experience. Take a look at our coupons page for discounts on a range of restaurants, pubs and cafes.

For more options to eat out in and around Flagstaff, check out the Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce DINING GUIDE on our website. You'll find all the latest trendy spots.

**Sherpa Sam's top 10 recommendations:**

## 1. Beaver Street Brewery

Microbrewery offering creative wood-fired pizzas & salads, plus an adjacent billiards hall.11 Beaver St #1, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Tel:+1 928-779-0079

## 2. Bun Huggers

Casual roadside haunt dispensing hand-formed burgers & brews amid vintage signs & wood booths.901 S Milton Rd A, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Tel:+1 928-779-3743

## 3. Oregano's

Family-friendly Italian chain specializing in Chicago-style pizzas & sandwiches with a mix of old-world classics and cool new recipes served up in big portions.1061 South Plaza Way Flagstaff, AZ 8600. Tel:+1 928-779-8600

## 4. Habit Burger Grill

Charbroiled burgers star at this fast-food chain also offering deli-type sandwiches, salads & fries.1400 S Milton Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Tel:+1 928-226-6479

## 5. Mike and Ronda's The Place

American comfort eats such as hot breakfasts, burgers & chops served in a simple setting.518 W Historic Rte 66 #107, Flagstaff, AZ 86004. Tel:+1 928-526-8138

## 6. Olive Garden

Lively, family-friendly chain featuring Italian standards such as pastas & salads, with a full bar.2550 S Beulah Blvd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Tel:+1 928-779-3000

## 7. Brandy's Cafe

Popular eatery with a cozy feel. Features hearty, traditional breakfasts, lunches & espresso.18 S Beaver St, Flagstaff, AZ 86004. Tel:+1 928-774-8301

## 8. Texas Roadhouse

Lively chain steakhouse serving American fare with a Southwestern spin amid Texas-themed decor.2201 E Rte 66, Flagstaff, AZ 86004. Tel:+1 928-522-9247

## 9. Jersey Mike's Subs

New Jersey-based counter-serve sandwich chain serving jumbo subs filled with cold cuts & toppings.2080 S Milton Rd #400, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. Tel:+1 928-266-0651

## 10. Black Bart's Steak House

Wild West-style space staging musical revues performed by waiters & serving classic steakhouse fare. 2760 E Butler Ave, Flagstaff, AZ 86004. Tel:+1 928-779-3142

# 14. Amenities



Where can you find an ATM in the Grand Canyon Village? Is there a post office nearby? Can you go into the canyon with your pet? Is there a Lost & Found area? What kind of transportation can you find on the rim and in the Grand Canyon Village? We have all the answers and more here!

Below is a list of services and amenities that are available within the Park.

## Lodges

Grand Canyon National Park Lodges provides in-room amenities to help personalize your special day or event.

### In room amenities

#### ADA Compliant Accommodation

Rooms designed for guests with physical disabilities are available at El Tovar, Kachina, Thunderbird, Maswik North, and Maswik South. To see available ADA-compliant rooms check the “ADA/Accessible Rooms” box in the online reservations application or call Central Reservations at 888-297-2757 (7am-7pm MT)

#### Bank & ATM

Chase Bank and 24-hour ATM are located at Market Plaza. Open year-round. Call 928-638-2437. An ATM is also available in the Maswik Lodge and El Tovar lobbies.

#### Bell Staff Service

Luggage service is provided by Bell Staff and is available at all lodges. Check with the Front Desk for assistance.

#### Emergency Services

For 24-hour emergency response, dial 911 from any guest room or house phone.

#### Fuel

Gasoline and diesel fuel are available in the community of Tusayan just outside of the Park via the South Entrance, approximately 7 miles/11km from the Historic Village at the Texaco Gas Station/Express Mini Mart. Call 928-638-2608 for additional information.

#### Garage Services

Mechanical services for your car, truck, RV, etc. may be obtained at the Xanterra Garage, located on the main park loop road, near the Grand Canyon Railway Depot and just east of the Xanterra General Office Building. The Xanterra Garage provides basic mechanical repairs such as tires, belts, batteries, fuses, hoses, etc. Tow service is provided to Williams or Flagstaff for more advanced repairs. The Garage is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call the central switchboard at 928-638-2631.

#### General Store – Canyon Village Market

Located at Market Plaza, the General Store carries a full line of groceries as well as hiking equipment and gift items. For additional information including hours of operation, please call 928-638-2262.

#### Information and Visitor Centers

Grand Canyon Visitor Center – Plan your visit, see the park film, and view the exhibits located near Mather Point and within walking distance to the canyon rim. Ample parking is available.

# 14. Amenities



## **National Park Service shuttle bus.**

This is free and available from any of the in-park lodges. The facility also includes the Desert Dog Food Truck, bike rentals, a coffee shop, bookstore, restrooms, pay phones, and shuttle bus stops. Open daily year-round: Winter 8:00-5:00pm. Summer 8:00 -6:00pm.

## **Backcountry Information Center**

If you wish to camp anywhere in the park, other than developed campgrounds on the North Rim, South Rim or Tuweep, you must obtain a permit from the backcountry information center. It is located across the train tracks from Maswik Lodge. Visit [www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry-permit.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry-permit.htm) for additional information.

## **Verkamp's Visitor Center**

Located within the Historic District on the canyon rim, just east of the Hopi House, is one of the oldest buildings in the park. National Park Service rangers and Grand Canyon Conservancy staff will answer any questions you may have regarding the park and its natural and cultural resources. Hours vary seasonally; check the National Park Service's South Rim Pocket Map and Services Guide for current schedule.

## **Yavapai Geology Museum**

This unique and historic building is located just a short walk or free shuttle ride from Grand Canyon Visitor Center. It features expansive canyon views from panoramic windows. Exhibits help park visitors to see and understand the complex geologic story of the area. Open year-round; check the National Park Service's South Rim Pocket Map and Services Guide for current schedule.

## **Desert View Information Center**

This visitor center is located at the park's east entrance, 26 miles from Grand Canyon Village on Highway 64. Open daily 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During the winter months, it is open as staffing permits. Public restrooms are located nearby. Check the National Park Service's South Rim Pocket Map and Services Guide for current schedule.

## **Tusayan Museum and Ruin**

See original artifacts, including split twig figurines and ancestral Puebloan pottery. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## **Lost & Found**

For items lost or found in any of the hotels or restaurants call 928-638-2631. For all other lost items call 928-638-7798. Please take any found items to any Front Desk.

## **Maps**

The National Park Service offers a selection of maps, including a map of parking and shuttle bus routes in the park. To view them, visit Grand Canyon National Park website at [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca).

## **Medical Services**

The North Country Community Health Center (clinic) is open all year. Call 928-638-2551 for additional information. Emergency medical services are provided by National Park Service Rangers and clinic staff – dial 911 from any guest room or house phone.

## **Parking**

Parking is available in lots throughout Grand Canyon Village. There is no charge for parking inside the park. Please avoid parking along the roadside, except where signs or lines on the road indicate that it is permissible. See link to that FAQs.

# 14. Amenities



## **Pets**

*Note: Due to COVID-19 closures and concerns, the kennel at Grand Canyon South Rim is temporarily closed.* If you have a pet that requires boarding, please explore using the Grand Canyon Railway Pet Resort at our sister property, the Grand Canyon Railway & Hotel. The park kennel is located at the South Rim near Maswik Lodge. For reservations and more information call 928-638-2631.

## **Post Office**

Located at Market Plaza, the Post Office is open year-round. Call 928-638-2512

- Monday thru Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

## **Religious Services**

See schedules at Mather Campground, Shrine of the Ages, Grand Canyon Post Office, Grand Canyon Visitor Center, and Park Headquarters.

## **Safety Deposit Boxes**

Contact the Front Desk at your lodge for more information. Safety deposit boxes are available only to overnight lodge guests.

## **Tours of the National Park**

On the South Rim there are a variety of interpretive bus tours available. These tours include Sunrise, Sunset, Desert View and Hermit's Rest. Tours are available throughout the year, and departure times vary seasonally. Please inquire at the Bright Angel or Maswik Transportation and Activities Desk for additional information. Wheelchair-accessible coaches are available by prior arrangement.

## **Transportation and Activities Desks**

Information about Phantom Ranch, mule rides, interpretive bus tours, the Grand Canyon Railway, Colorado River float trips, as well as many other canyon adventures (including wheelchair-accessible activities) is available from our knowledgeable staff at any of the following transportation desks (hours vary seasonally):

- Bright Angel Transportation and Activities Desk
- Maswik Transportation and Activities Desk

## **Transportation – Free bus service within the South Rim Area**

Free shuttle buses run daily within Grand Canyon National Park (tickets not required). They operate on four different routes:

- Village Route
- Kaibab Trail Route
- Hermits Rest Route (except November & December)
- Tusayan Route (March – November only)

NOTE: A National Park Service entry pass required to re-enter the park. For more detailed information refer to National Park Service's South Rim Pocket Map and Services Guide.

## **Transportation – Shuttle Van Service from Phoenix and Flagstaff**

Arizona Shuttle (800-888-2749) offers shuttle service from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport and Flagstaff to the canyon. Times and rates are posted at [www.arizonashuttle.com](http://www.arizonashuttle.com).

## **Transportation – Shuttle Van Service – Rim to Rim (North and South)**

The Trans-Canyon Shuttle runs between the north and south rims once each day, in each direction, and the travel time is approximately 5 hours each way. The shuttle operates from mid-May through mid-October. There is a fee for this service. Call 928-638-2820.





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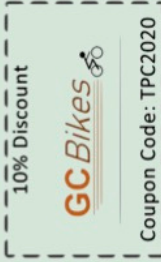
Our electric bike rentals will make your trip to the Grand Canyon National Park accessible and memorable.

Grand Canyon Village is only a 30 minute bike ride, so you'll be exploring one of the seven natural wonders in no time.

### *Terms and Conditions*

Present or mention this discount voucher when booking. Valid for one use only.

**By Phone:** 928-275-5050  
**In Person:** 3551 Airport Road Tusayan AZ 86023



GRAND CANYON PLAZA DINING  
WITH GRAND CANYON SHERPA

GRAND CANYON  
**Plaza**  
HOTEL

**10%**

**DISCOUNT**

Present or mention this discount voucher when booking. Valid for one use only, may not be reused.



WWW.GRANDCANYONPLAZA.COM  
WWW.GRANDCANYONSHERPA.COM



### *About us*

Savor Southwest flavors at our Grand Canyon Restaurants

Part of visiting the American Southwest is enjoying bold foods made from fresh, local ingredients, and Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel offers a setting to satisfy every taste. Share a bottle of wine at the Bourbon Lounge, or small bites in a casual setting at the Wagon Wheel Saloon.

### *Terms and Conditions*

Present or mention this discount voucher when booking. Valid for one use only, may not be reused.

**By Phone:** 928-638-2673  
**In Person:** 406 Canyon Plaza Ln, Grand Canyon Village, AZ 86023



Grand Canyon Scenic Airlines  
and Grand Canyon Sherpa



# 10%

DISCOUNT



[www.grandcanyonairlines.com](http://www.grandcanyonairlines.com)  
[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com)

Save \$10 per person on the Grand Discovery Airplane Tour. This short airplane tour is perfect for those wanting to see the vastness of the Canyon without breaking their budget. Hourly departures from Grand Canyon Airport.

- Aerial views of the Grand Canyon's East Rim, Painted Desert, Zuni Corridor, and Imperial Point
- Additional flight time over the North Rim, Kaibab National Forest, and Kaibab Plateau
- Keep an eye out for wildlife including the California condor, elk, and even bears!
- Flight time is approximately 40 - 50 minutes

## Coupon Redemption



**Book Online:** Discount automatically applied, no promo code needed  
**Book by Phone:** 702-638-3296 Save Coupon Image above and mention code TPC2020 when booking by phone  
**Book in Person:** Grand Canyon Scenic Airlines Terminal 3555 Airport Road  
Tusayan AZ 86023

**Valid on new reservations only.**  
**May not be combined with any other offer.**

GRAND CANYON RENTAL ADVENTURES  
WITH GRAND CANYON SHERPA



# 10%

discount



[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com)  
[www.grandcanyon-rentals.com](http://www.grandcanyon-rentals.com)

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

Welcome to Grand Canyon Rentals Adventures! We are so excited to introduce the newest way to see the Grand Canyon and surrounding areas!

We offer Utility Terrain Vehicles, in which you can take yourself on a Self-Guided Tour! We offer full-day (8 hours), half-day (4 hours) and our minimum rental (2 hours) packages.

Present or mention this discount voucher when booking. Valid on new reservations only.



3551 Airport Road Tusayan AZ 86023

928-220-5907

Plaza Bonita Mexican Restaurant  
with Grand Canyon Sherpa



# 10%

DISCOUNT



[www.myplazabonitatucson.com](http://www.myplazabonitatucson.com)  
[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com)

## About Us

*Family Mexican Restaurant with a large and varied menu. Visit [www.myplazabonitatucson.com](http://www.myplazabonitatucson.com) for hours of operation. Dine in, Take Out.*

## Coupon Redemption

*Save Coupon Image below to phone and show/mention when placing order. Coupon valid for one visit only.*



**Book by Phone:** 928-638-8900 Save Coupon Image above and mention code TPC2020 when booking by phone  
**Book in Person:** 352 State Route 64 Tusayan AZ 86023

GRAND CANYON RENTAL ADVENTURES  
WITH GRAND CANYON SHERPA



# 10%

discount



[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com)  
[www.grandcanyon-rentals.com](http://www.grandcanyon-rentals.com)

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

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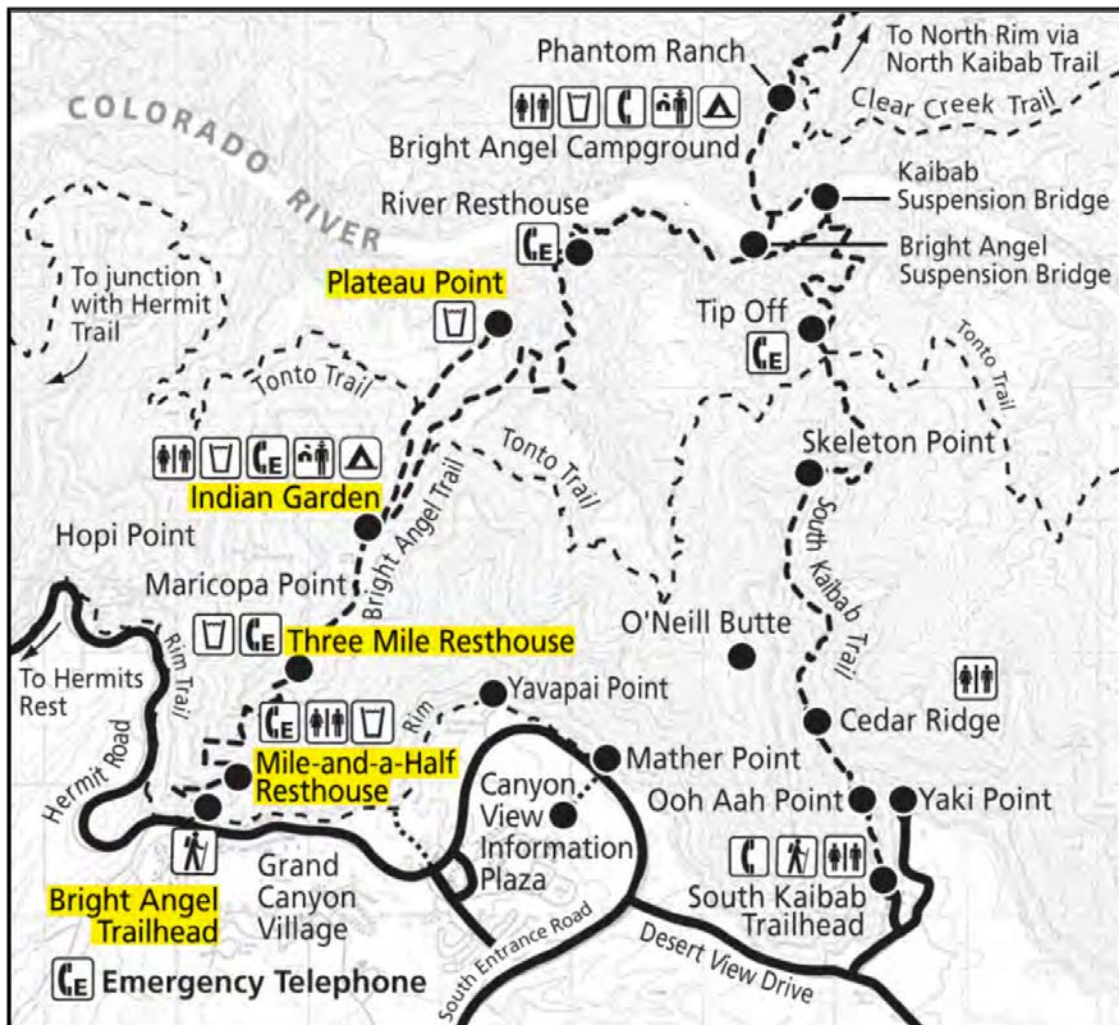
3551 Airport Road Tusayan AZ 86023

928-220-5907

# Maps

## Bright Angel Trail maps

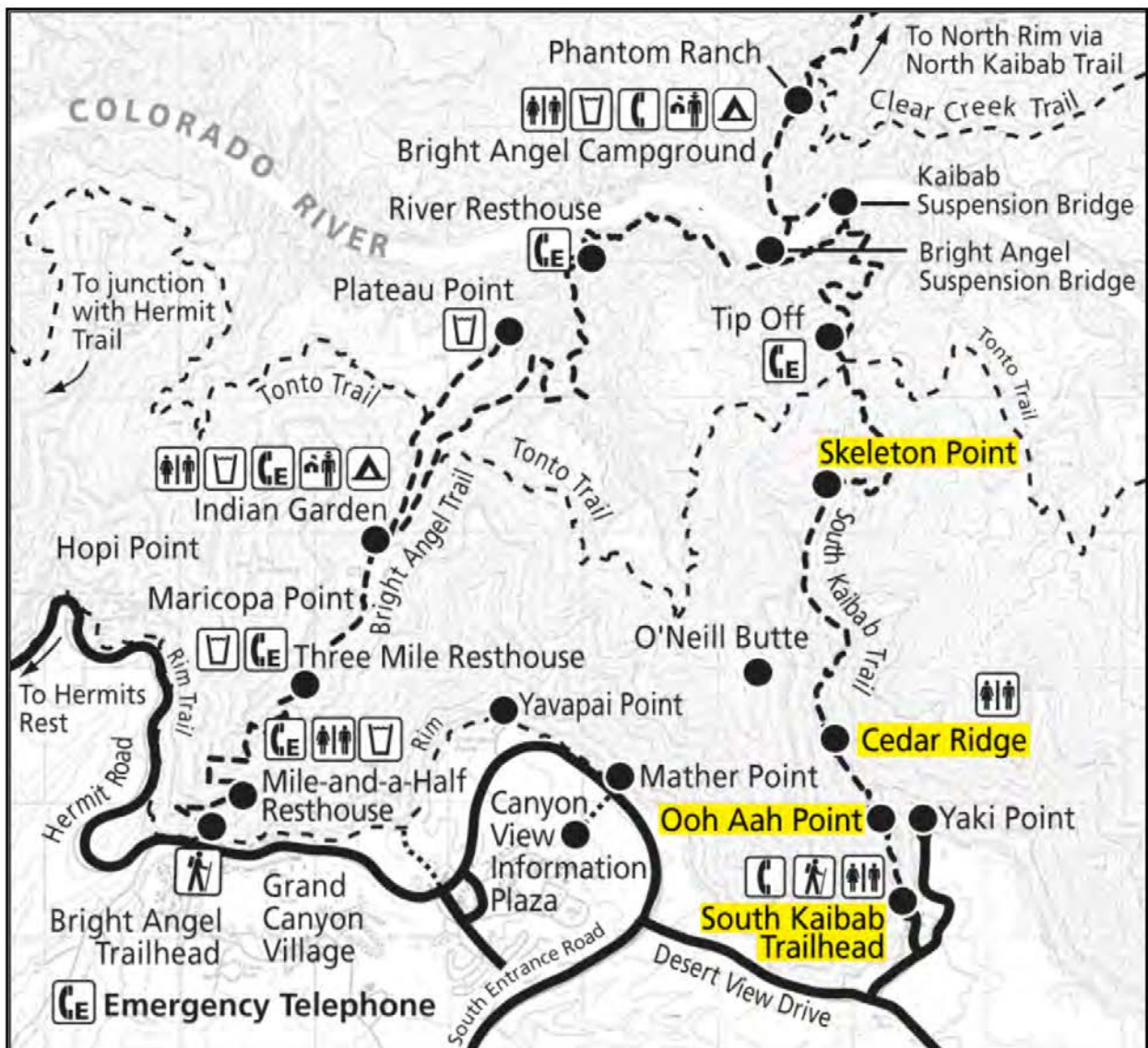
<b>Bright Angel Trailhead: elevation 6840ft (2085m)</b>			
Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Lower Tunnel	590ft (180m)	0.9mi (1.4km)	1–2 hours
1½-Mile Resthouse	1120ft (340m)	1.5mi (2.4km)	2–4 hours
3-Mile Resthouse	2120ft (645m)	3.0mi (4.8km)	4–6 hours
Indian Garden Campground	3040ft (925m)	4.5mi (7.2km)	6–9 hours
Plateau Point	3080ft (940m)	6.1mi (9.8km)	9–12 hours
River Resthouse	4340ft (1320m)	7.7mi (12.4km)	12+ hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4340ft (1320m)	9.3mi (15.0km)	2 days
Bright Angel Campground	4340ft (1320m)	9.5mi (15.3km)	2 Days



# Maps

## South Kaibab Trail maps

<b>South Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 7200ft (2195m)</b>			
Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Ooh Aah Point	790ft (230m)	0.9mi (1.4km)	1–2 hours
Cedar Ridge	1120ft (340m)	1.5mi (2.4km)	2–4 hours
Skeleton Point	2040ft (620m)	3.0mi (4.8km)	4–6 hours
The Tip Off	3280ft (1100m)	4.4mi (7.1km)	6–9 hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4700ft (1430m)	6.8mi (10.9km)	2 Days
Bright Angel Campground	4700ft (1430m)	7.0mi (11.3km)	2 Days



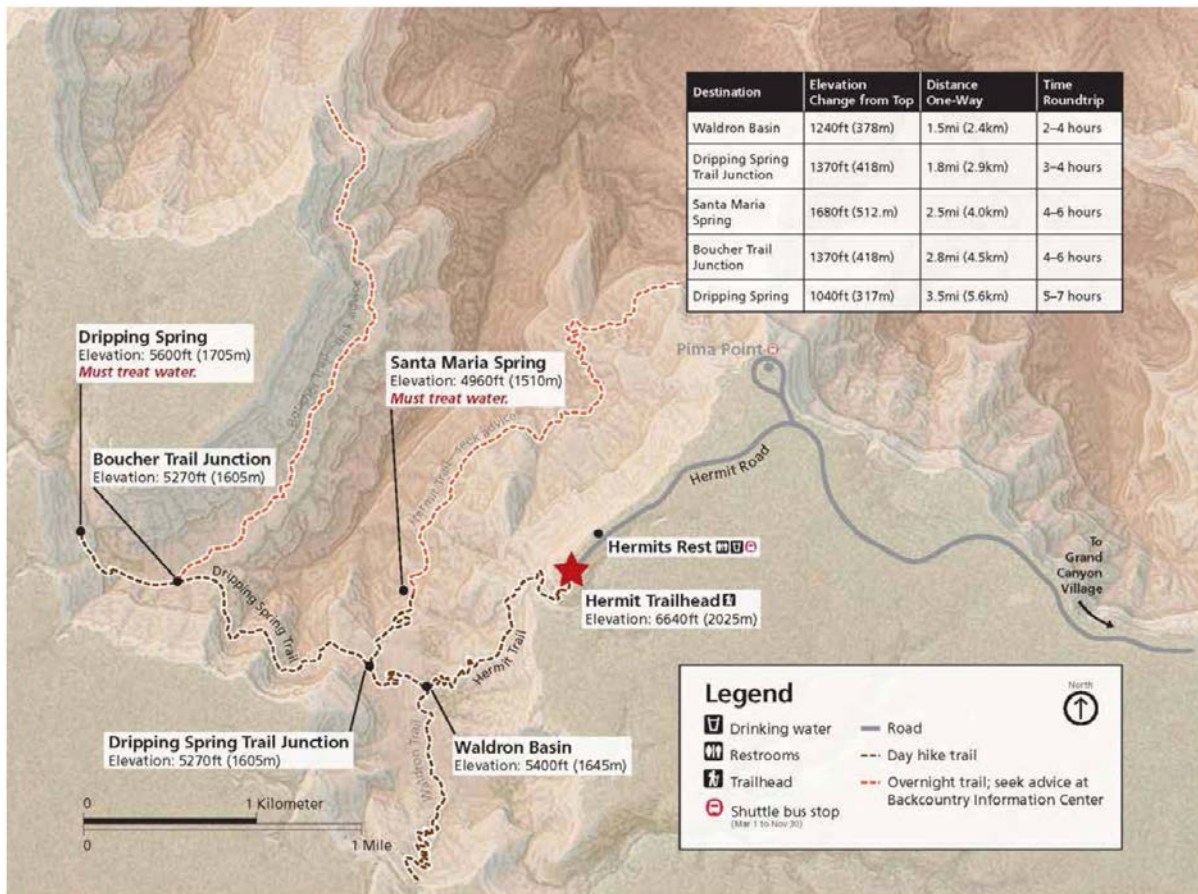


# Maps

## North Kaibab Trail map

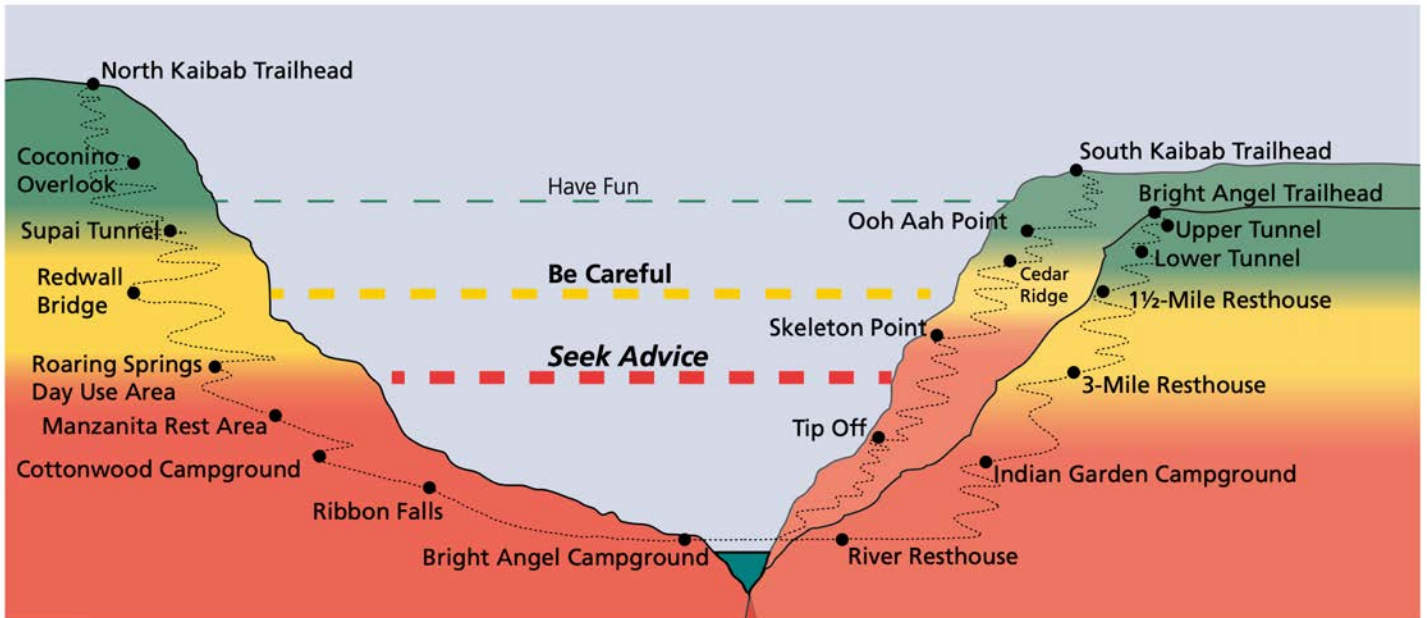
North Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 8240ft (2511m)			
Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Coconino Overlook	790ft (240m)	0.7mi (1.1km)	1–2 hours
Supai Tunnel	1400ft (425m)	2.0mi (3.2km)	2–4 hours
Redwall Bridge	2200ft (670m)	2.6mi (4.2km)	4–6 hours
Roaring Springs Day Use Area	3280ft (1000m)	4.7mi (7.6km)	6–9 hours
Manzanita Rest Area	3840ft (1170m)	5.1mi (8.2km)	7–10 hours
Cottonwood Campground	4200ft (1280m)	6.5mi (10.5km)	2 days
Ribbon Falls	4480ft (1365m)	7.9mi (12.7km)	2 days
Phantom Ranch Ranger Station	5740ft (1750m)	13.6mi (21.9km)	3–4 days
Bright Angel Campground	5740ft (1750m)	13.7mi (22.0km)	3–4 days

## Hermit Trail map

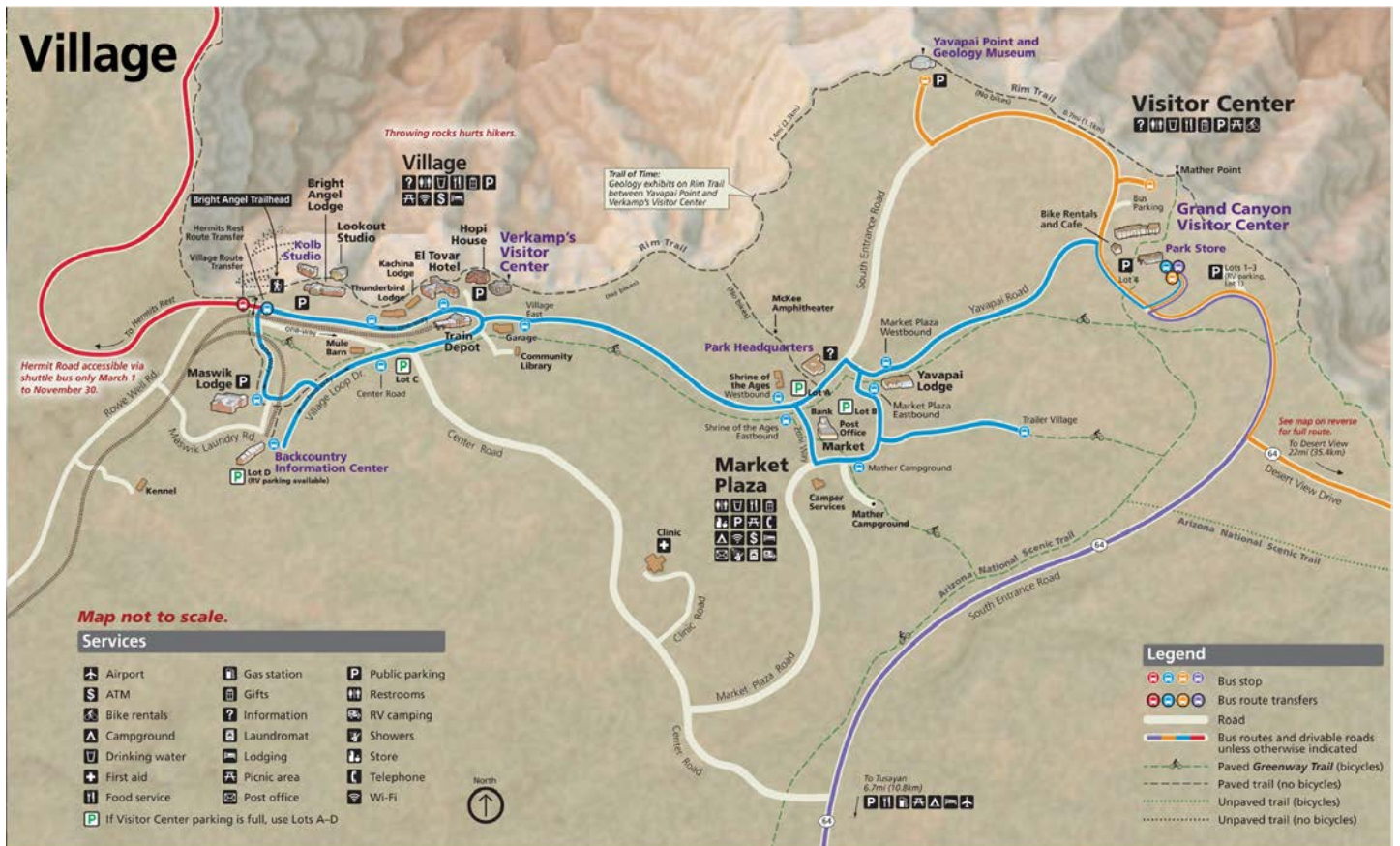


# Maps

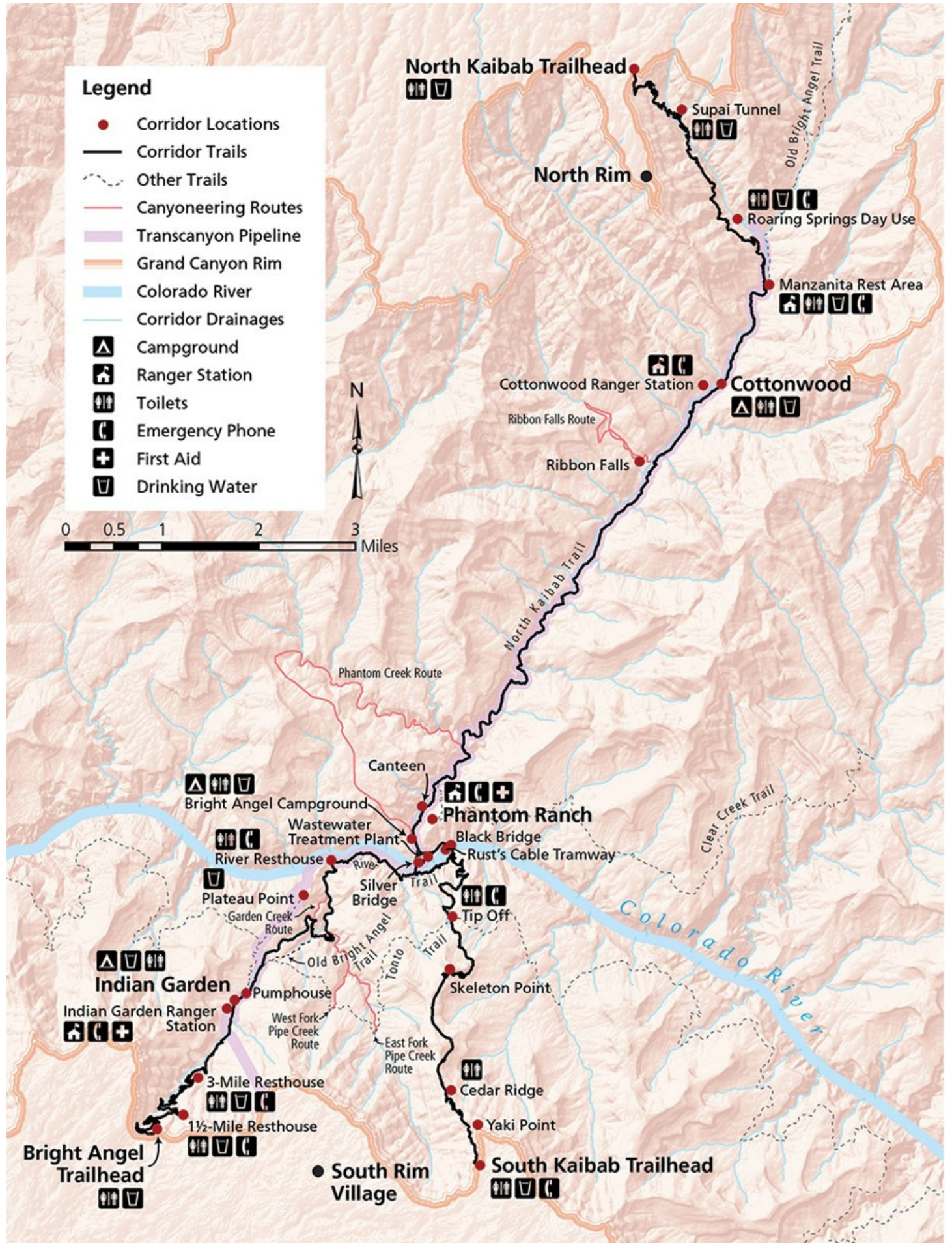
## Grand Canyon transverse map



## Grand Canyon Village map



# Maps





# Grand Canyon *Sherpa* Packing Checklist

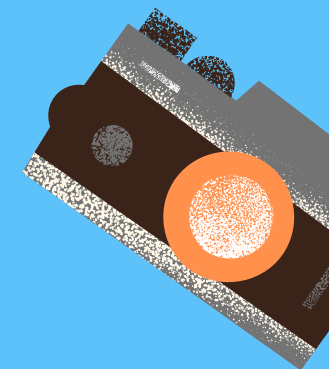
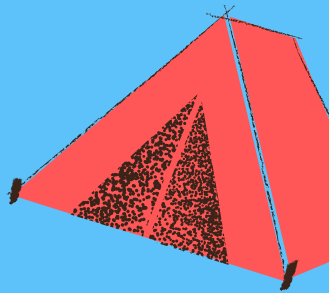
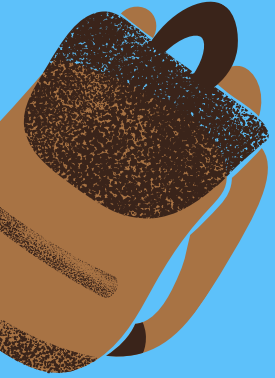
## Sherpa Sam's MUST HAVES for a day-hike

- Sunscreen/lip balm, a hat and water
- A light day pack, a camelbak or a fanny pack
- Hard candy, high calorie energy bars, salty snacks and/or beef jerky
- Blister care, bandaid, small first aid kit
- A Swiss army knife
- A GPS app and a back-up map
- A whistle, a signal mirror, a cellphone and a portable power bank
- A scarf or a multi-purpose snood (neck warmer)
- Sunglasses
- Broken-in hiking shoes with good, solid soles
- A flashlight or a headlamp with spare batteries
- Hiking poles if necessary
- Toilet paper and/or wet wipes (and a plastic bag to collect your used wipes)

## Sherpa Sam's MUST HAVES for an overnight stay

For an overnight stay in the canyon, whether you want to camp at Indian Garden or at the Bright Angel Campground, we have put together a list of useful items we recommend adding to the 1-day packing list (see above)

- A lightweight frame backpack
- A water bottle, some utensils, a knife, a mini stove and a metal cup
- A water filter or purifying tablets
- Food: instant oatmeal packets, cups of soup, hot chocolate and instant noodles. Dont bring canned goods or soda cans
- A tent or a lightweight tarp (tarpaulin) 6 x 10'
- Personal toiletries and prescription medication
- A sleeping bag
- Matches or a lighter
- Socks: 4 pairs for a one-night stay





# GRAND CANYON SHERPA ANIMAL CHECKLIST



## MULE DEER

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## MOUNTAIN LION

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## RINGTAIL CAT

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## COYOTE

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?



# GRAND CANYON SHERPA ANIMAL CHECKLIST



## CANYON BAT

Location:

---

---

How many were there?

---

---

What were they doing?

---

---

## BIG HORN SHEEP

Location:

---

---

How many were there?

---

---

What were they doing?

---

---

## CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Location:

---

---

How many were there?

---

---

What were they doing?

---

---

## GRAND CANYON RATTLESNAKE

Location:

---

---

How many were there?

---

---

What were they doing?

---

---



# GRAND CANYON SHERPA ANIMAL CHECKLIST



## CHUCKWALLA LIZARD

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## ARIZONA BARK SCORPION

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## GRAND CANYON BIRDS OF PREY

Location:

How many were there?

What were they doing?

## NOTES

# Appendix

For those of you considering undertaking a Grand Canyon hike there must be all kinds of questions running through your mind from how to prepare before your trip to what to take and what not to take with you.

From his experience, Sherpa Sam has provided a FAQ sheet which is by no means exhaustive but will be a great aid to your planning and packing.

Have a look at our Frequently Asked Questions on our website to find your answer!

[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com/faq](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com/faq)

Did you know that a collector of trivia is called a spermologer? Are you a keen quizzer or just like to collect interesting facts? Check out our website where you'll find a collection of Grand Canyon Facts that you can impress your friends with. See how many you already know! Did you know that ...

[www.grandcanyonsherpa.com/funfacts](http://www.grandcanyonsherpa.com/funfacts)

