



Welcome to Grand Canyon's Backcountry

This brochure will introduce you to Grand Canyon National Parks's most popular overnight hiking destinations. Hiking in the Grand Canyon is a truly unique experience. Moments after leaving the comfort of your vehicle or hotel room you are thrust into a beautiful and rough terrain full of challenges, discoveries and wonder.

The Grand Canyon is a land of contrasts: at once harsh yet verdant, merciless yet beautiful, unrelenting yet awe-inspiring. Done right, a hike into the Grand Canyon can be a life-changing excursion that you will remember fondly for the rest of your life; done wrong, you may find yourself at the bottom of the canyon dreading your climb back up. Remember, if you hike in you must hike out.

The Grand Canyon National Park Backcountry Information Center developed this brochure with the first time Grand Canyon hiker in mind. Our aim is to assist you in Hiking Smart, to help you take responsibility for your safety and to aid you in planning and preparing successfully for your hike in any season. Let us help you make your Grand Canyon hike a success.



Leave No Trace

Plan Ahead and Prepare

All hikers must obtain a backcountry permit before starting their hike. Be prepared to remain on itinerary at all times.

Know your route. Take note of elevation loss and gain, mileages, water sources and campsites.

Be prepared to carry up to 4 liters of water, depending on the trail and time of year.

Keep your pack light but bring gear that suits the weather conditions. Pack weight should not be more than 15-20% of your body weight.

Watch and review the Hiking Grand Canyon, Prepare for Backpacking video, available at www.nps.gov/grca and upon request.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack out all trash. Trash includes nut shells, fruit peels, dropped food, cigarette butts and bandages.

Use toilets where available. If you are not near a toilet, walk 75 steps off the trail and dig a 4-6 inch hole. Bury your waste and pack out your toilet paper. Do not bury or burn toilet paper.

Everything you pack in you must pack out. Do not leave any gear, food, or trash behind.

Leave What You Find

Leave the wildflowers. Leave the rocks. Leave everything for the next hiker to enjoy.

Respect Wildlife

Keep your distance and do not leave your food or pack unattended.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Cutting switchbacks causes erosion and sends rocks down on hikers below.

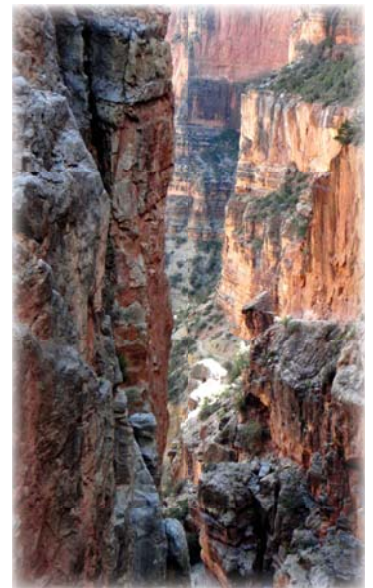
Camp only in designated sites. Do not camp at-large or along the trail.

No campfires allowed. Pack a stove for hot food and bring gear to keep you warm.

Be Considerate of Others

Preserve the natural quiet. Keep your voice low while on the trail and at camp.

Yield to uphill hikers and always yield to mules.



Hike Smart

Timing is Everything

During hot weather, start your hike well before dawn or after 4:00 p.m. During colder weather, remember that daylight hours are short. Plan accordingly.

Keep Cool: Summer Hiking

Start your hike before sunrise and rest in the shade between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Hike wet to stay cool and wear a wide brimmed hat and sunscreen.

Keep Warm: Winter Hiking

Dress in layers. Hiking will raise your body temperature, but you will feel the chill when you stop to rest.

Cover your extremities. Wear a warm hat, gloves and wool socks. Keep extra dry clothes on hand.

Eat often to keep your body warm and fueled.

Balance Food and Water Intake

Eat twice as much as normal, particularly salty foods.

Drink throughout the day. Do not wait until you feel thirsty before you drink.

Check your urine. You should be urinating regularly, and the color should be pale yellow, not clear or dark.

Restore Your Energy

Hike at a pace that allows conversation.

If you start to feel nauseated, dizzy, or disoriented, immediately rest, eat and drink until you feel 100% better.

Take Care of Your Body

Check for beginning blisters and hotspots and immediately treat with moleskin and fresh socks.

Use trekking poles to lessen the impact on knees and ankles.

Wash your hands to prevent illnesses. If water is not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



For more Leave No Trace, Hike Smart, seasonal hiking tips, closures, road and trail information and podcasts, visit www.nps.gov/grca



Advance Preparation - Season by Season

Spring and Autumn - March and April, October and November

What to Expect

Average temperatures at the river: high 75° F/22° C, low 50° F/10° C.

Average temperature at the rim: high 52° F/11° C, low 27° F/-3° C.

High winds in March and April.

Spring and Autumn Hiking Tips

Spring and autumn weather can be unpredictable. Be prepared for all weather conditions.

Be prepared for lingering ice in the spring and early snows in autumn.

Check conditions and wear crampons if necessary.

Check on seasonal water availability along the Bright Angel and North Kaibab Trails.

Seasonal water is generally available May-September.

Windy days can leave you quickly dehydrated. Drink plenty of water even in cooler temperatures.

Remember that hypothermia can occur in 50° F/10° C weather and heat illness in 80° F / 27° C weather. Listen to your body, check weather forecasts, and plan appropriately.

Summer - May through September

What to Expect

Average temperatures at the river: high 106° F/38° C, low 82° F/26° C.

Average temperatures at the rim: high 75° F/24° C, low 44° F/7° C.

Hot and mostly dry in May and September.

Very hot and dry in June.

Hot with rain and thunderstorms in July and August.

Summer Hiking Tips

The inner canyon can be dangerously hot. Start before dawn, after 4:00 p.m., or hike at night to beat the heat.

Remember that on-trail and in-sun temperatures are 15-20° degrees F warmer than the forecasted temperatures. Some summer days can reach up to 130° F/54° C in the full sun.

Wear light colored, loose fitting cotton clothing. Cotton retains moisture and keeps you cooler.

Hike wet. Soak down at every opportunity. Carry a wet shirt in a plastic bag for a refreshing change mid-hike.

Cut weight. Forgo a sleeping bag for a light blanket or sheet; pack ready-to-eat foods and leave the stove behind.

Beware of lightning and flash floods during summer thunderstorms.

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat illness. Watch for headaches, dizziness, nausea, irritability, cramping and decreased urine output.

Winter - December through February

What to Expect

Average temperatures at the river: high 55° F/12° C, low 35° F/2° C.

Average temperatures at the rim: high 41° F/5° C, low 19° F/-7° C

Cold and wet with snow storms on the rim and rain in the canyon.

Short days; long, cold nights.

Winter Hiking Tips

Wear crampons or other ice traction devices on your boots to hike down icy trails.

Wear synthetic or wool layers to wick moisture away from your skin and keep you warm, even when wet.

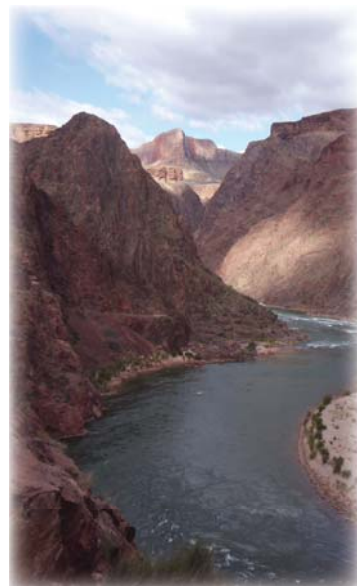
Keep a set of dry clothes and socks handy in case you get wet and chilled.

Your body needs fuel to keep you warm. Eat nourishing foods often. Bring warming foods like soups, tea, cocoa and oatmeal.

Bring appropriate gear. Pack waterproof layers, a tent, stove and cold weather sleeping bag.

Remember that wind chill can make a cool day bitterly cold. Wear windproof layers on windy days.

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of hypothermia. Symptoms include uncontrolled shivering, confusion and exhaustion, even after rest.



Taking Care of the Canyon

Before You Hit the Trail...

Check last minute weather forecast and adjust plans accordingly.

Everyone should feel well and ready for the hike. Anyone not feeling well should postpone their hike.

Recheck that you packed all prescription medications, first aid kit, and backup water purification.

Leave your itinerary with a family member or friend who will notice if you are overdue.

Hydrate, eat a good meal and get a good night's sleep.

While You are at Camp...

Choose your campsite. Sites are first-come, first-serve. Group sites are reserved for parties of 7 or more hikers.

Immediately place all food, toiletries and plastics in the food storage cans located at each campsite.

Keep the lids locked any time you cannot closely monitor and guard your food.

Hang your backcountry permit in a visible location. Attach the permit to your tent, picnic table, or backpack. Leave your permit at your site during your entire stay at the campground.

When You Leave Camp...

Clean up your site. Do not leave any trash, gear, or extra food. Check your site for microtrash. Look for dropped crumbs, bandages, twist ties, fruit peels, etc.

Remove everything from the food storage cans and place them upside down on the picnic table. This prevents small animals from getting trapped in the food storage cans.

If you are getting an early start, remember to maintain a quiet camp and let your fellow campers continue to sleep.

Check the campground bulletin boards for any trail and water updates.

Attach your backcountry permit to your backpack for your hike out.

Do not cook on the picnic tables. Boiling water and spills can lead to painful burns.



North Kaibab Trail

North Kaibab Trailhead: EL. 8241 ft / 2512 m

	Elevation Change	Mileage Change
Trailhead to Supai Tunnel:	1441 ft / 439 m	1.7 mi / 2.5 km
Supai Tunnel to Roaring Springs:	1580 ft / 482 m	3.0 mi / 4.8 km
Roaring Springs to Pumphouse Residence:	620 ft / 189 m	0.7 mi / 1.1 km
Pumphouse Residence to Cottonwood Campground:	520 ft / 158 m	1.4 mi / 2.3 km
Cottonwood Campground to Ribbon Falls:	360 ft / 110 m	1.6 mi / 2.6 km
Cottonwood Campground to Bright Angel Campground:	1600 ft / 488 m	7.2 mi / 11.6 km
Trailhead to Cottonwood Campground:	4161 ft / 1268 m	6.8 mi / 10.9 km
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground:	5761 ft / 1756 m	14 mi / 22.5 km

Be Prepared: Highway 67 to North Rim open from May 15 to first heavy snow.

South Kaibab Trail

South Kaibab Trailhead: EL. 7260 ft / 2213 m

	Elevation Change	Mileage Change
Trailhead to Cedar Ridge:	1140 ft / 347 m	1.5 mi / 2.4 km
Cedar Ridge to Skeleton Point:	900 ft / 274 m	1.5 mi / 2.4 km
Skeleton Point to Tip Off:	1220 ft / 372 m	1.4 mi / 2.3 km
Tip Off to Bright Angel Campground:	1520 ft / 463 m	2.6 mi / 4.2 km
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground:	4780 ft / 1457 m	7.0 mi / 11.3 km

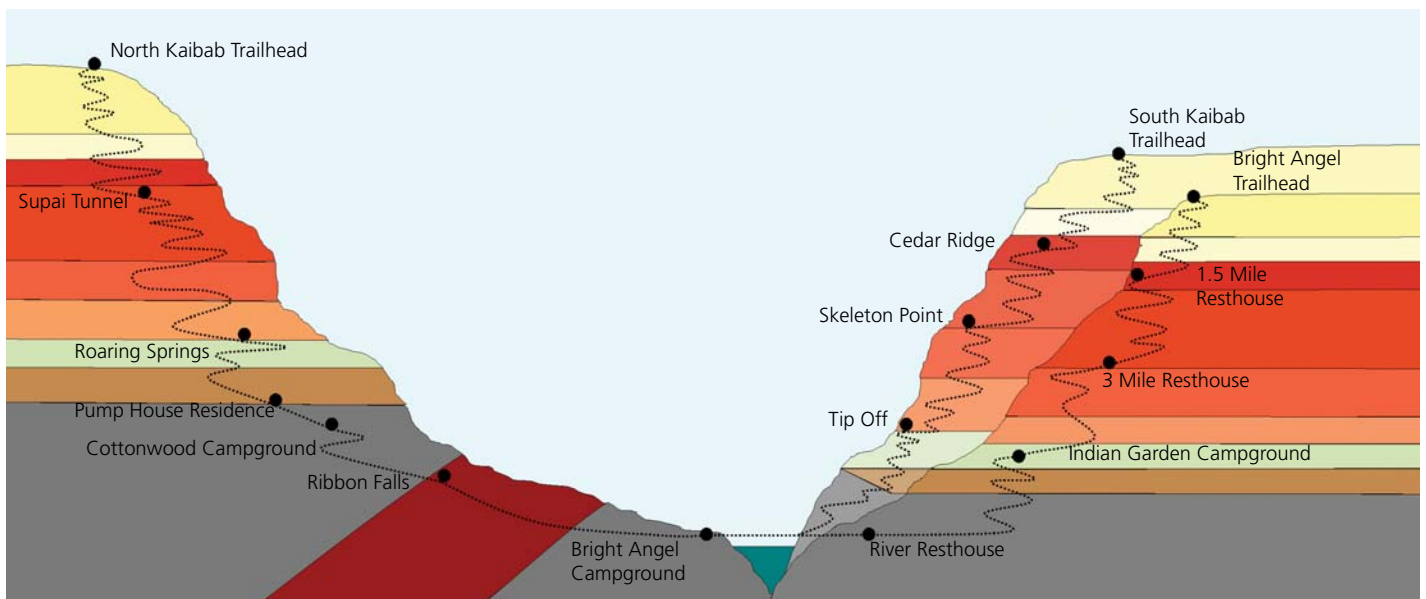
Be Prepared: No Water on South Kaibab Trail.

Bright Angel Trail

Bright Angel Trailhead: EL. 6860 ft / 2093 m

	Elevation Change	Mileage Change
Trailhead to 1 ½ Mile Resthouse:	1131 ft / 345 m	1.6 mi / 2.6 km
1 ½ Mile Resthouse to 3 Mile Resthouse:	981 ft / 299 m	1.5 mi / 2.4 km
3 Mile Resthouse to Indian Garden Campground:	948 ft / 289 m	1.7 mi / 2.7 km
Trailhead to Indian Garden Campground:	3060 ft / 933 m	4.9 mi / 7.9 km
Indian Garden Campground to River Resthouse:	1320 ft / 402 m	3.2 mi / 5.2 km
River Resthouse to Bright Angel Campground:	0 ft / 0 m	1.5 mi / 2.4 km
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground:	4380 ft / 1335 m	9.5 mi / 15.3 km







Be Prepared: 1 ½ Mile and 3 Mile Resthouses are seasonal water sources. Check availability.



Hiking Map: North Kaibab, South Kaibab, and Bright Angel Trails

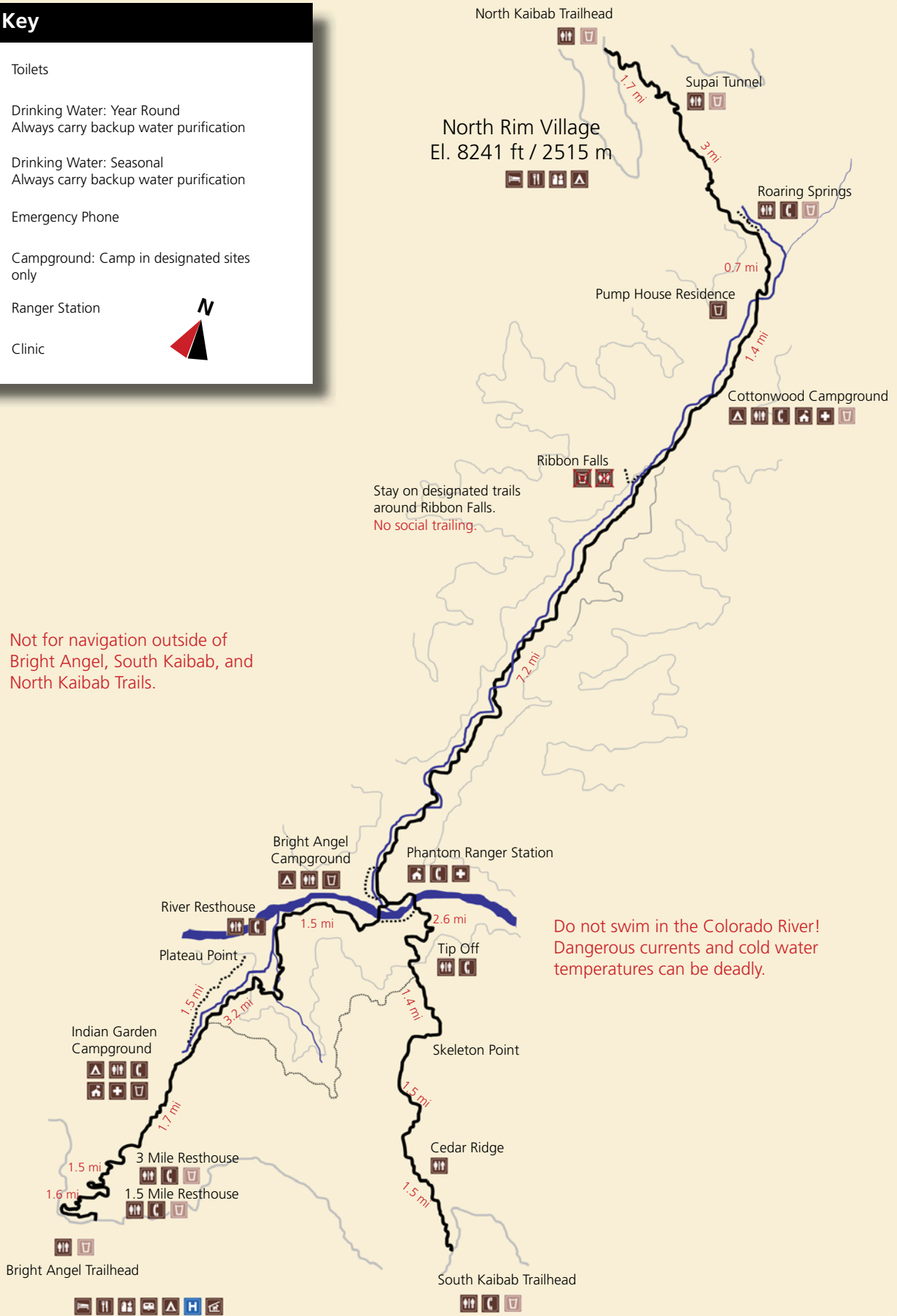
Full services May 15 - October 15. Hwy 67
open May 15 to first heavy snow.

Map Key

-  Toilets
-  Drinking Water: Year Round
Always carry backup water purification
-  Drinking Water: Seasonal
Always carry backup water purification
-  Emergency Phone
-  Campground: Camp in designated sites only
-  Ranger Station
-  Clinic



Not for navigation outside of
Bright Angel, South Kaibab, and
North Kaibab Trails.



South Kaibab Trailhead closed to private
vehicles. Access via free shuttle bus only.