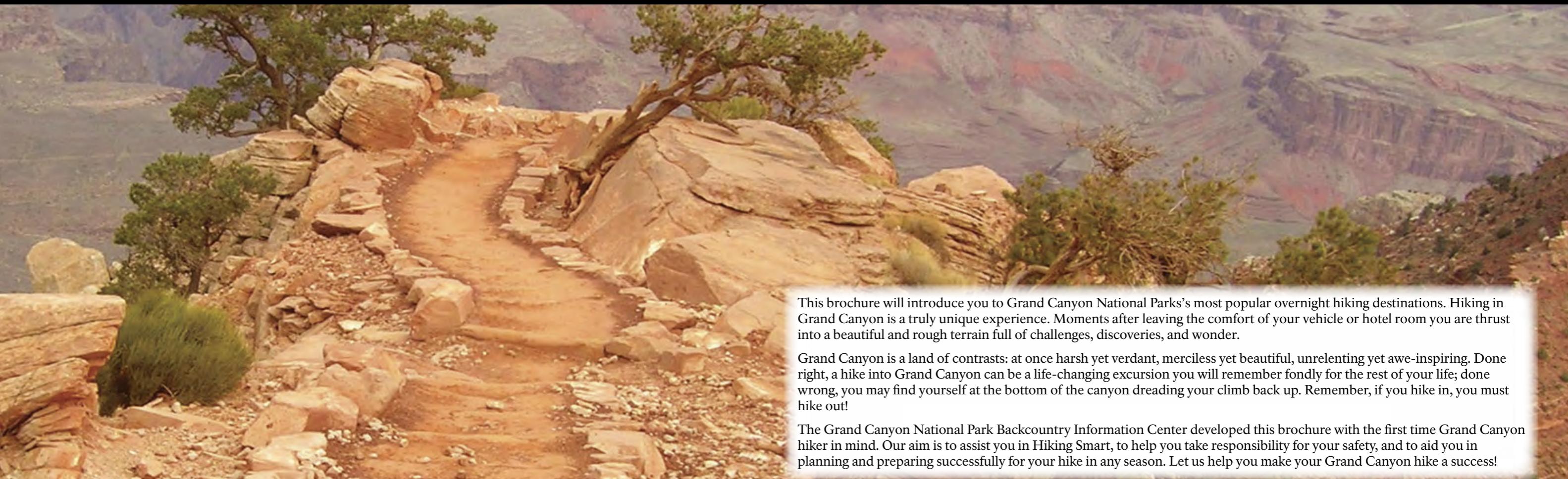


Welcome to Grand Canyon's Backcountry

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



This brochure will introduce you to Grand Canyon National Park's most popular overnight hiking destinations. Hiking in 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.

Grand Canyon is a land of contrasts: at once harsh yet verdant, merciless yet beautiful, unrelenting yet awe-inspiring. Done right, a hike into Grand Canyon can be a life-changing excursion 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.

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

Be prepared to carry up to four quarts/liters of water and sports drink, depending on the trail and time of year.

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

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 go.nps.gov/grca-backcountry-video and upon request.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack out all trash. Trash includes cigarette butts and bandages, as well as organic materials such as nut shells and fruit peels.

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. Extra food and excess gear must be carried out.

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 campgrounds. Do not camp along the trail.

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 pm. During colder weather, remember daylight hours are short. Plan accordingly.

Keep Cool: Summer Hiking

Start your hike before sunrise and rest in the shade between 10 am and 4 pm.

Hike wet to stay cool (soak your cotton shirt, bandana, or hat in creeks and at water stations), wear a wide-brimmed hat, and use 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.

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

Balance Food and Water Intake

Eat plenty of 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

Eat twice as much as normal. Calories play an important role in regulating body temperature.

If you start to feel nauseated, dizzy, or disoriented, immediately find or create shade, get wet, rest, eat, and drink until you feel better (this can take an hour or longer).

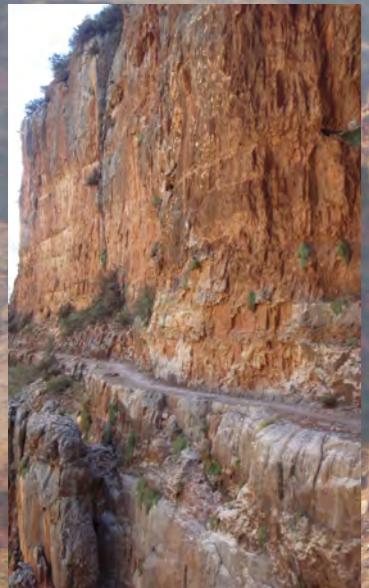
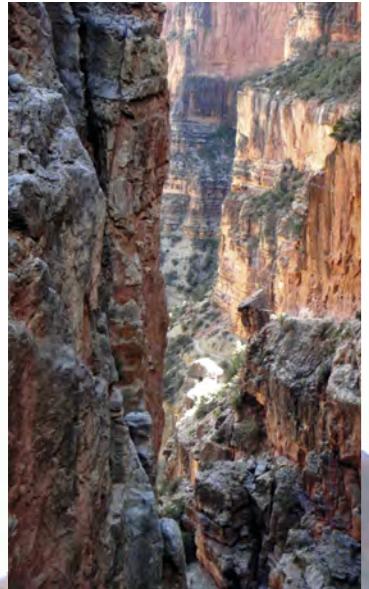
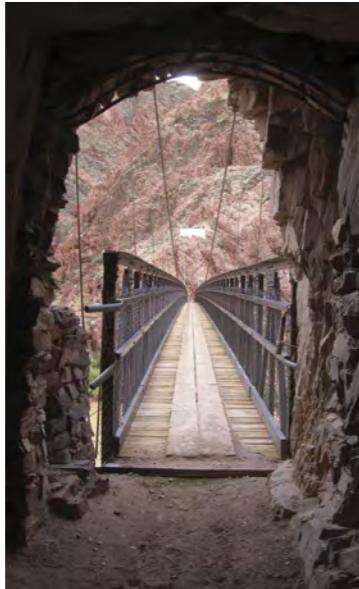
Take Care of Your Body

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 go.nps.gov/grca-backcountry



Photographs (clockwise from top left): Switchbacks Below Tip Off, South Kaibab Trail ROBINS BAKER; Black Bridge, South Kaibab Trail MICHAEL SCHRAMM; Devil's Corkscrew, Bright Angel Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Jacob's Ladder, Bright Angel Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Colorado River, River Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Hikers in Snow, Bright Angel Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Redwall Descent, North Kaibab Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Below Eye of the Needle, North Kaibab Trail ROBIN ROGERS; Top Photograph: Windy Ridge, South Kaibab Trail MICHAEL SCHRAMM; Main Photo: Hikers Above Panorama Point, South Kaibab Trail ROBIN ROGERS



Advance Preparation - Season by Season

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Spring and Autumn March, April, October, and November

What to Expect

Average temperatures at the river: high 75°F/24°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 snow in autumn. Check conditions and wear over-the-shoe traction devices if necessary. Check on seasonal water availability along the Bright Angel and North Kaibab trails. Seasonal water is generally available May to 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/41°C, low 82°F/28°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 pm, or hike at night to beat the heat. Remember that on-trail and in-sun temperatures are several degrees 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 keeps you cooler. Hike wet. Soak down at every opportunity. Cut weight. For example, when staying at Bright Angel Campground replace your sleeping bag with a liner or sheet; also pack ready-to-eat foods and leave the stove behind. Beware of lightning, rockfall, and flash floods during summer thunderstorms. Know 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/13°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 and long, cold nights.

Winter Hiking Tips

Wear over-the-shoe traction devices on your boots to hike icy trails. Wear synthetic or wool-blend 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.

Taking Care of the Canyon

Before You Hit the Trail...

Check a 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, a 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-served (permit required). Group sites are reserved for parties of seven to eleven 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. Do not cook on the picnic tables. Boiling water and spills can lead to painful burns. Place your stove on the ground.

When You Leave Camp...

Clean up your site. Do not leave any trash, gear, or extra food. Check your site for microtrash. Look for 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 inside. 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 permit to your backpack for your hike out.

Winter Storm and Zoroaster Temple MICHAEL SCHRAMM

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

North Kaibab Trail

North Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 8,241 feet (2,512 m)

Trailhead to Supai Tunnel
Supai Tunnel to Roaring Springs
Roaring Springs to Pumphouse Ranger Station
Pumphouse Ranger Station to Cottonwood Campground
Cottonwood Campground to Ribbon Falls
Cottonwood Campground to Bright Angel Campground
Trailhead to Cottonwood Campground
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground

Elevation Change	Mileage Change
1,441 feet (439 m)	1.7 miles (2.5 km)
1,580 feet (482 m)	3.0 miles (4.8 km)
620 feet (189 m)	0.7 miles (1.1 km)
520 feet (158 m)	1.4 miles (2.3 km)
360 feet (110 m)	1.6 miles (2.6 km)
1,600 feet (488 m)	7.2 miles (11.6 km)
4,161 feet (1268 m)	6.8 miles (10.9 km)
5,761 feet (1756 m)	14 miles (22.5 km)

Be Prepared: Highway 67 to North Rim closed in winter.

South Kaibab Trail

South Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 7,260 feet (2,213 m)

Trailhead to Cedar Ridge
Cedar Ridge to Skeleton Point
Skeleton Point to Tip Off
Tip Off to Bright Angel Campground
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground

Elevation Change	Mileage Change
1,140 feet (347 m)	1.5 miles (2.4 km)
900 feet (274 m)	1.5 miles (2.4 km)
1,220 feet (372 m)	1.4 miles (2.3 km)
1,520 feet (463 m)	2.6 miles (4.2 km)
4,780 feet (1457 m)	7.0 miles (11.3 km)

Be Prepared: No water on South Kaibab Trail.

Bright Angel Trail

Bright Angel Trailhead: elevation 6,860 feet (2,093 m)

Trailhead to 1½-Mile Resthouse
1½-Mile Resthouse to 3-Mile Resthouse
3-Mile Resthouse to Indian Garden Campground
Trailhead to Indian Garden Campground
Indian Garden Campground to River Resthouse
River Resthouse to Bright Angel Campground
Trailhead to Bright Angel Campground

Elevation Change	Mileage Change
1,131 feet (345 m)	1.6 miles (2.6 km)
981 feet (299 m)	1.5 miles (2.4 km)
948 feet (289 m)	1.7 miles (2.7 km)
3,060 feet (933 m)	4.9 miles (7.9 km)
1,320 feet (402 m)	3.2 miles (5.2 km)
0 feet (0 m)	1.5 miles (2.4 km)
4,380 feet (1335 m)	9.5 miles (15.3 km)

Be Prepared: 1½-Mile and 3-Mile resthouses are seasonal water sources. Check availability.

Map Key

- Toilets
- Drinking Water: Year-Round
- Drinking Water: Seasonal
- Emergency Phone
- Campground: Camp in designated sites only
- Ranger Station: Year-Round
- Ranger Station: Seasonal
- First Aid
- Information
- Restaurants
- Lodging
- General Store

Always carry backup water purification.

