

GRAND CANYON

NATIONAL PARK TRIP PLANNER

Essential
Tips to
Plan Your
Vacation

A Park
Map



National Park Trips



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4 Road Trips

Here are four of our all-time favorite road trips to the park — each with its own scenic wonders, cultural sites and one-of-a-kind attractions.



Map by Peter Sucheski

ON THE COVER: Hikers on South Kaibab Trail in Grand Canyon National Park (Grant Ordelheide)

EXPLORE THE BEST ROAD-TRIP ITINERARIES TO THE GRAND CANYON.

Scan this code to access detailed itineraries filled with where to stay and what to do along the way to the Grand Canyon. →



Park Map

Check out where everything is along Grand Canyon National Park's South Rim.

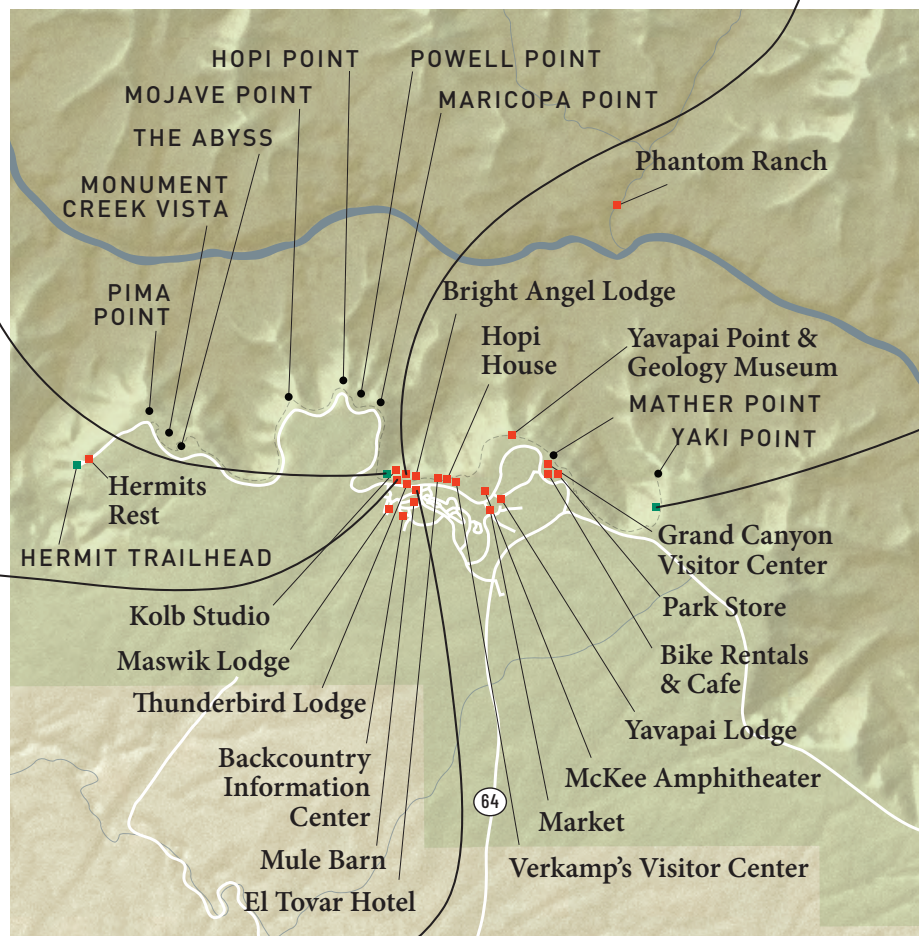
BRIGHT ANGEL TRAILHEAD

Built by native people who lived in the canyon, this beautiful trail has some shade and water at Indian Garden with seasonal water available along the way. It's 9.3 miles to the Colorado River.



BRIGHT ANGEL LODGE

Bright Angel Lodge is home to two restaurants, a coffee shop, gift shop and exhibits on the Harvey girls who worked in Harvey hotels. Architect Mary Colter designed Bright Angel Lodge in 1935, along with Hopi House, Lookout Studio and numerous Harvey hotels.



TRAIN DEPOT

Take the train from Williams, Ariz., to the park for a lively ride and a car-free day.





LOOKOUT STUDIO

Designed by architect Mary Colter in 1914 with inspiration from Ancestral Puebloan ruins, this spot allows you to photograph the canyon safely from a precipice.



SOUTH KAIBAB TRAILHEAD

Built by the park service in the 1920s, this steep trail with no shade or water descends 6.3 miles to the Colorado River.



Map by Dolly Holmes

PHOTOS: Bright Angel Trailhead (NPS/Michael Quinn), Lookout Studio, South Kaibab Trail, Desert View Watchtower, train, Bright Angel Lodge (Grant Ordelheide)

DESERT VIEW WATCHTOWER

Designed by architect Mary Colter in 1932, this special spot is closest to the East Entrance and offers incredible views. Check for closures on the park website.



THE **FOUR** SIDES OF GRAND CANYON

Stretching across 1.2 million acres, Grand Canyon National Park is located in northern Arizona. While people often refer to the park as one place, there are actually four distinct areas you can visit.

1 **NORTH RIM**

Perched between 8,000 and 9,000 feet, Grand Canyon's North Rim is located in northern Arizona 45 miles south of Jacob Lake via Hwy. 67. It's composed of a mixed conifer forest and stands of aspen trees. Because it sits about 1,500 feet higher than the South Rim, it gets blanketed by snow and closes for winter. Open mid-May through mid-October, it's less developed and less visited than its twin to the south, with only one lodge, the Grand Canyon Lodge.

2 **SOUTH RIM**

Open all year, the South Rim is the most popular area of Grand Canyon National Park. It is 212 miles from the North Rim, and you can access it from two entrances. The closest town to the South Entrance is Tusayan, Ariz., and the closest to the East/Desert View Entrance is Cameron, Ariz. Filled with diverse lodging, camping and restaurant options, the South Rim is home to a variety of historic buildings that you can explore.

3 **HAVASU FALLS**

These breathtaking falls are not technically within Grand Canyon National Park's boundaries. The falls are located on the Havasupai [meaning people of the blue-green waters] Indian Reservation and are not accessible by road. It's a long 10-mile hike or saddle ride down to the falls, eight of which are to the village of Supai and two more to the falls. You must have a permit and pay entrance fees and environmental use fees.

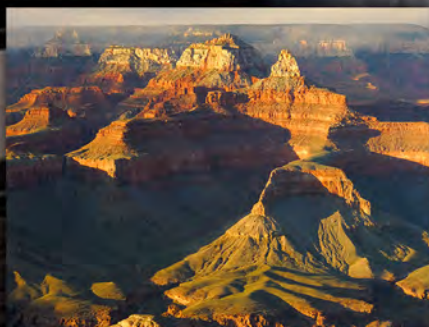
4 **GRAND CANYON WEST**

Located 250 miles west of the South Rim, Grand Canyon West is managed by the Hualapai tribe, not by the National Park Service. This means you cannot use your national park pass here. It's home to the Skywalk, a glass-bottom, horseshoe-shaped bridge hanging over the Grand Canyon. The Hualapai offer Colorado River rafting trips and helicopter tours, as well as cultural experiences.

Learn more at [MyGrandCanyonPark.com](https://www.grandcanyonpark.com).



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The SOUTH RIM'S TOP SIX

Here are some of our favorite things to do from biking to exploring the South Rim's most historic treasures.



1

CLIMB A TOWER

Head to the east side and climb Desert View Watchtower. As you walk up four flights of stairs to the top of the 70-foot tower, check out the Hopi murals decorating the walls.



2

FIND SOLITUDE ON A BIKE

Rent a bike at Bright Angel Bicycles and ride Hermit Road, which is closed to all traffic, except shuttles and official park vehicles, March 1-Nov. 30.

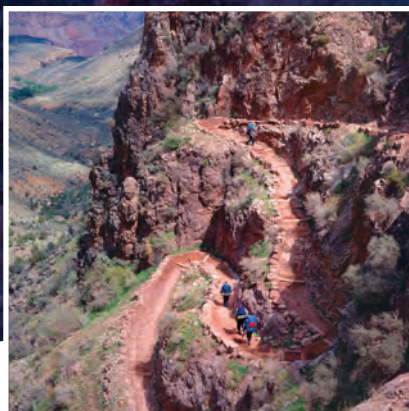


3

DINE IN STYLE

Stroll to El Tovar Hotel, built in 1905, to eat an incredible breakfast in a rustic but elegant setting.

Breakfast is first-come, first-served, but reservations are recommended for dinner.



4 HIKE AN ICONIC TRAIL

Hike down a portion of Bright Angel Trail before it gets hot. This spectacular trail stretches 9.3 miles down the canyon, eventually reaching the Colorado River.



5 TOUR THE VILLAGE

Take a self-guided architectural tour of the South Rim's incredible historic buildings. Start with Kolb Studio and end at the Hopi House.



6 SEE A SPECTACULAR SUNSET

Watch the walls of the Grand Canyon change colors as the sun begins to set.

PHOTOS: Sunrise view from Hopi Point on the South Rim (courtesy NPS/Michael Quinn), Desert View Watchtower (Depositphotos), biking (courtesy Bright Angel Bicycles), El Tovar breakfast (courtesy of Xanterra), Bright Angel Trail (courtesy NPS/Michael Quinn), Hopi House (Depositphotos), South Rim sunset (Grant Ordelheide)

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for details.



On the Rim



Near the
Colorado River



Historic
Property



Away from
Crowds



Pet-Friendly



AC



TV

PHOTO: El Tovar Hotel (NPS / Michael Quinn)



EL TOVAR HOTEL



If El Tovar Hotel's walls could speak, they would tell stories of guests like President Teddy Roosevelt and President Clinton, as well as some of the greatest thinkers in history like Albert Einstein. Settle into one of the 78 rooms in this elegant hotel right on the rim of the Grand Canyon.

BRIGHT ANGEL LODGE



Located just feet from the rim of the Grand Canyon and the South Rim's famed Bright Angel trailhead, the Bright Angel Lodge is full of character. Architect Mary Jane Colter was hired to refresh the structure to provide travelers with a more affordable alternative to El Tovar Hotel. Choose from 90 lodging units, ranging from standard rooms to historic cabins. Not many rooms have canyon views, which may be a subtle reminder to guests to spend more time outside.

MASWIK LODGE



Located a quarter of a mile from the edge of the Grand Canyon, Maswik Lodge is nestled in a ponderosa pine forest. Maswik South is undergoing a \$30 million renovation. It is the first major lodging improvement to take place in decades at the South Rim.

PHANTOM RANCH



If you want a unique experience powered by your own feet (or of those of a mule you are riding), look no further. At the bottom of the canyon, the ranch has four

dormitories: two for men and two for women. Each dorm has five bunk beds, a restroom and a shower. The ranch provides towels and bedding for each guest. There are cabins you can stay in, as well. While the cabins are variable in size, they can fit between two to 10 people.

YAVAPAI LODGE



If you are looking for convenience and a reasonably priced room, consider Yavapai Lodge located a short walk from the South Rim. The lodge also stands out in that it has one building with 16 pet-friendly rooms. Yavapai Lodge West is motel-style where you can pull up to your door and walk into your room.

KACHINA LODGE



Next to the Hopi House, Kachina Lodge does not have deep-rooted histories like its neighbors down the path. But what it lacks in historic depth and charm, it makes up for in location. Built in the late 1960s, it sits right on the canyon rim, making it easy to explore some of the South Rim's best attractions by foot. Each room has an evaporative cooler.

THUNDERBIRD LODGE



Conveniently located between Kachina Lodge and Bright Angel Lodge, Thunderbird Lodge was built in 1968 and its facade reflects the era. Its location is fantastic as it sits on the canyon rim in the heart of the South Rim's historic district. Each room has an evaporative cooler.



CHOOSE YOUR HIKE

MILE-AND-A-HALF RESTHOUSE



This popular 3-mile roundtrip Bright Angel Trail hike enables you to see the inside of the Grand Canyon without committing to more intense distances. Pack a picnic and eat lunch at the halfway point, finding shade in the shelter. There are pit toilet restrooms here. Keep your eyes peeled for condors riding the thermals. You'll catch great views of Indian Garden.

THE RIM TRAIL



The Rim Trail on the South Rim is a good option for novice hikers and families as the path stays fairly level as it follows the rim's edge for about 13 miles from South Kaibab Trailhead west to Hermits Rest. Most of the trail is paved. The three-mile section from Powell Point to Monument Creek is dirt, but the Greenway Trail from Monument Creek to Hermits Rest is a 2.8-mile paved, multi-use trail that is handicap

accessible and bike friendly. When you get tired, hop on the park shuttle at any of the many stops along the way.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS



If you are more interested in architecture than exercise, stroll a section of the South Rim's historic district along the Rim Trail to uncover some of the park's early landmarks. Start with the Kolb Studio, built in 1904, where early canyon explorers Ellsworth and Emery Kolb developed and sold photographs to tourists. Continue to Lookout Studio, a 1914 building designed by visionary architect Mary Colter to blend into its surroundings. To get the story on Colter, head to the Bright Angel Lodge, designed by Colter. Inside see the Fred Harvey History Room, a free exhibit detailing the rise of the Fred Harvey Co., Colter's employer, and its famous "Harvey Girls," 100,000 of whom served as waitresses in Harvey restaurants across the Southwest. Outside, don't miss the oldest structure in the South Rim, Red

Horse Cabin, that serves as one of the lodge's guest suites. Continue east to El Tovar Hotel built in 1905 by architect Charles Whittlesey whose vision was to create a hotel that was a cross between a Swiss chalet and Norwegian villa, with a nod to the Southwest. Lastly, walk to the Hopi House, designed by Colter who drew inspiration from typical adobe pueblos found in Old Oraibi, Ariz. A large number of Native American arts and crafts are sold here.

HORSESHOE MESA



To start this 6-mile roundtrip hike, you'll head to Grandview Point and then down the steep Grandview Trail, arriving first at the Coconino Saddle at mile 1.1, a scenic gully with wonderful views of the Hance Creek Valley to the east. Continue descending to the top of Horseshoe Mesa for rooftop views into the canyon. Explore Cave of the Domes (ask a ranger for its location), scout around for old tools from the canyon's mining days (but don't touch—they're protected



South Rim Views

Picnic Spot

Away from Crowds

Deep Inside the Canyon

Historic Landmarks

Difficulty:
● Easy
■ Moderate
◆ Difficult

as archaeological resources) or relax on the slickrock with a picnic. This trail is dangerous in winter with hard ice forming on potentially hazardous sections. Crampons are mandatory.

SOUTH KAIBAB TO CEDAR RIDGE



Looking for a 3-mile, moderate day hike on a maintained trail but would rather skip the traffic on Bright Angel? Head down the South Kaibab Trail to the scenic precipice of Cedar Ridge. The sprawling view here includes the twisting path of the Bright Angel Trail as it descends into the canyon's inner gorge through a section called the Devil's Corkscrew. There is no water or shade on South Kaibab.

INDIAN GARDEN



Get a dawn start for an overnight trip or a long, 9-mile roundtrip day hike (don't do this in the summer) to Indian Garden, a beautiful riparian

area populated by cottonwood trees that you reach via the Bright Angel Trail. If you are planning a backcountry camping trip, you need to get permits in advance. You'll find a ranger station, seasonal water, toilets and an emergency phone here.

HERMIT TRAIL TO SANTA MARIA SPRING



This 4.4-mile roundtrip difficult hike leads to Santa Maria Spring, which sits 1,600 feet into the canyon. The unmaintained trail is steeper and rockier than Bright Angel or South Kaibab, so be sure you are an experienced hiker. Enjoy the solitude as you sit on one of the benches by the stone shelter and enjoy lunch before ascending back to the rim. Water at Santa Maria must be treated before you drink it, so bring your water filter or water treatment tablets.

PHOTO: South Kaibab Trail (NPS/Michael Quinn)

Leave No Trace

Before you hit the trail, become familiar with how to recreate responsibly.

✓ PLAN AHEAD & PREPARE

Research trails, campsites and weather ahead of time and plan and pack accordingly. Always carry plenty of water, snacks and layers.

✓ TRAVEL & CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

Stay on trails to help concentrate foot traffic and limit your impact on plants and living soil in the park.

✓ DISPOSE OF YOUR WASTE PROPERLY

Pack out everything you bring in, including fruit peels and toilet paper. Throw all your trash in garbage cans at the end of your hike.

✓ LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Take nothing but pictures. Leave rocks, fossils, flowers and archaeological artifacts for others to enjoy.

✓ MINIMIZE YOUR CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

Check fire restrictions in the area. Only light a fire in a well-built fire ring and make sure the fire is completely out before leaving or going to bed.

✓ RESPECT WILDLIFE

Never feed wildlife and view them from a respectful distance. Stay at least 50 feet away from small animals like squirrels and birds and 100 feet from larger animals like elk and bighorn sheep.

✓ BE CONSIDERATE

Be mindful of how you're impacting other visitors' experiences. Avoid playing loud music or shouting.

INTO THE WILD

You'll see more than incredible views when you visit the Grand Canyon.
Keep an eye out for these animals on the trails and soaring in the park skies.

Compiled by Jade Lang



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK

Introduced to Arizona in the early 1900s, elk made their way to the park and approximately 100 of them live there. Adult bull elk weigh up to 700 pounds, while adult females may weigh up to 500 pounds. They graze near Mather Campground and Grand Canyon Village but should never be approached. Their mating season is from late August through October.



CALIFORNIA CONDOR

The California condor, black with white spots under its wings and a bald head, is the largest bird in North America with a wingspan of 9.5 feet. Populations declined during the 20th century due to hunting, egg collection and lead poisoning, landing them on the endangered species list in 1967. Reintroduction efforts began in 1992. Today Grand Canyon is home to one of several wild condor populations in North America.



RINGTAIL

Although it's the Arizona state mammal, the ringtail is rarely seen by humans because it sleeps during the day and is active only at night. Ringtails have great hearing and eyesight for nighttime hunting. Their black and white-striped tails are used for balancing and distracting predators. They are solitary animals, except during mating season.



ABERT'S SQUIRREL

The Grand Canyon has acted as a genetic barrier between Abert's squirrels on the South Rim and Kaibab squirrels, a subspecies, on the North Rim. Both are recognizable by their gray fur, tufted ears and fluffy tail.



BIGHORN SHEEP

Adapted for the desert climate, bighorn sheep can be seen bounding up steep terrain and cliffs, thanks to their flexible, spongy hooves. They are the park's largest native animal. Rams can weigh up to 250 pounds. Both males and females have horns, but ram horns are larger and more curved.



LITTLE BROWN BAT

One of the 22 bat species at the Grand Canyon, these creatures are nocturnal and most active after dusk and before dawn. Little brown bats can eat up to 1,200 mosquito-sized insects an hour. Unfortunately, their numbers are declining due to white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that can kill hibernating bats.

PHOTOS: Female elk (NPS photo/Michael Quinn), California Condor (Depositphotos), Abert's Squirrel (iStock/E.J. Peiker), Ringtail (Courtesy NPS), Desert Bighorn Sheep (NPS photo/Michael Quinn), Little Brown Bat (Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren / Flickr)