

Chiricahua Hiking Guide

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chiricahua National Monument



EASY HIKES - Short, smooth walks with little change in elevation.

BONITA CREEK LOOP

LENGTH: 0.2 mile/0.3 km **Pets Permitted**

ACCESS: Bonita Creek Parking Area

TRAIL: This loop around the picnic area takes you along the intermittent Bonita Creek. Watch for Apache plume and prickly poppy flowers in spring and early summer. Arizona whitetail deer are frequently seen in the lower portion of Bonita Canyon. This is a good trail for grassland birds.

BONITA CREEK TRAIL

LENGTH: 0.5 mile/0.8 km **Pets Permitted**

ACCESS: Bonita Creek or Faraway Ranch Parking Areas.

TRAIL: Winding along Bonita Creek, usually dry, this trail connects the Bonita Creek and Faraway Ranch Picnic Areas. Look for migrating birds, deer, coatimundi and javelina.

SILVER SPUR MEADOW TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.2 miles/1.9km **Pets Permitted**

ACCESS: Faraway Ranch, Visitor Center or Campground

TRAIL: Beginning at the Faraway Ranch Picnic Area, this leisurely walk leads you through the Faraway Ranch Historic District to Stafford cabin, built in the 1880s. Next is Silver Spur Meadow, home for Civilian Conservation Camp NM-2-A, Company 828 during the 1930s. The fireplaces are remnants from the lodge of the Silver Spur Guest Ranch in business from 1948 to 1968. Stream crossings can be hazardous during spring snowmelt or the summer rains.

VISITOR CENTER TO CAMPGROUND

LENGTH: 0.4 mile/0.6 km **Pets Permitted**

ACCESS: Visitor Center or near the campground groupsite

TRAIL: Offering a safer alternative to walking along the road, look and listen for birds: dark-eyed juncos in winter, hummingbirds in summer and acorn woodpeckers year round. Stream crossings can be hazardous during spring snow melt or the summer rains.

MASSAI POINT NATURE TRAIL

LENGTH: 0.5 mile/0.8 km

No Pets

Watch for uneven footing, steps, and remember the higher elevation – 6,870 ft/2,094 m

ACCESS: Massai Point

TRAIL: This trail features grand vistas of the surrounding valleys and mountain ranges, a huge balanced rock and trail signs highlighting the natural history of the monument. The paved portion from the parking area to the exhibit building is wheelchair accessible.

ECHO CANYON GROTTOS

LENGTH: 1.0 mile/1.6 km round trip

No Pets

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL: If you don't have time to hike the full Echo Canyon Loop, consider this shorter option. It provides a great introduction to the wilderness area of the monument and the opportunity to walk among the rock formations.

MODERATE HIKES – One to four hour hikes with elevation changes of 500 feet or less. Gravel trail surfaces.

NATURAL BRIDGE TRAIL

LENGTH: 4.8 miles/7.8 km round trip

No Pets

ACCESS: Small parking area along the Bonita Canyon Scenic Drive, 0.5 mile/ 0.8 km beyond the campground

TRAIL: The least used trail in the monument climbs to a ridge then drops into Picket Park. The area was burned during the 2011 Horseshoe 2 Fire and is more open with less shade. It ends at an overlook for the small water-carved bridge located across the canyon. Return the same way.

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.8 miles/2.8 km round trip

No Pets

ACCESS: Sugarloaf Mountain Trailhead

TRAIL: Rising above the surrounding canyons, the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain at 7,310 ft/2,228 m is one of the highest points in the monument. The dark rock is dacite, evidence of a lava flow. Lightning activity is monitored from the CCC constructed fire lookout during summer. Return the same way.

MODERATE HIKES CONTINUED

ECHO CANYON LOOP

No Pets

LENGTH: 3.3 miles/5.5 km

The loop consists of Echo Canyon, Hailstone and Ed Riggs Trails.

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL: Most people prefer to hike the loop counter-clockwise since walking up the Ed Riggs Trail is less strenuous than the Echo Canyon Trail. The route winds through spectacular rock formations including the Grottoes and Wallstreet to the densely wooded Echo Park. Hailstone Trail is fairly level, and due to its southern exposure, hotter and dryer. Expect to see more desert plants: yuccas, agaves, prickly pear and hedgehog cactus. Ed Riggs Trail takes you back to the trailhead among large pine trees. Plan at least 2 hours for this hike.

ECHO CANYON TO VISITOR CENTER

LENGTH: 4.2 miles/6.8 km

No Pets

Echo Canyon, Upper Rhyolite Canyon and Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trails

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL: Mostly downhill through spectacular rock formations in Echo Canyon. White-throated swifts are common in the summer. One stream crossing on the Upper Rhyolite segment can be hazardous if runoff is significant. The last half of the hike is in shaded oak woodlands. Make sure you have transportation back to your vehicle or ride the hikers' shuttle in the morning.

STRENUOUS HIKES

Three to eight hour hikes with elevation changes of 500 to 1,000 feet / meters.

Gravel trail surfaces.

INSPIRATION POINT

No Pets

LENGTH: 5.4 miles/8.6 km round trip from Massai Point or 1 mile/1.6 km round trip from Big Balanced Rock Trail

ACCESS: Massai Point or the junction of Mushroom Rock and Big Balanced Rock Trails

TRAIL: This mostly level trail is a good place to slow down your heart rate after the trek up Mushroom Rock Trail. Excellent views of Cochise Head and Rhyolite Canyon make this a great rest stop.

HEART OF ROCKS

No Pets

1. Visitor Center-Heart of Rocks & Return/ No Pets

This route consists of the Lower Rhyolite Canyon, Sarah Deming and Heart of Rocks Loop Trails.

LENGTH: 7.3 miles/ 11.8 km round trip.

ACCESS: Visitor Center Parking Lot

TRAIL: Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trail begins as an easy level walk in the lower canyon forest, but soon starts climbing up Rhyolite Canyon. Sarah Deming Canyon gains 880 ft/268 m to reach the top of the ridge. Heart of Rocks Loop has many of the most unusual rock formations in the monument. Start the loop to the left and hike clockwise for the best views and easiest walking. Lots of rock steps make this a challenging loop, but it's worth the effort.

2. Echo Canyon - Heart of Rocks & Return/ No Pets

This route consists of the Ed Riggs, Mushroom Rock, Big Balanced Rock and Heart of Rocks Loop Trails.

LENGTH: 7.3 miles/ 11.8 km

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL: An easier route to Heart of Rocks than starting from the Visitor Center with more views of the rock formations. Ed Riggs Trail drops you into the canyon while Mushroom Rock Trail climbs 610 ft/ 186 m up the other side. Big Balanced Rock Trail is along top of the ridge. Complete the Heart of Rocks and return, or continue with the Big Loop.

3. Echo Canyon or Massai Point, Heart of Rocks Loop to Visitor Center

No Pets

LENGTH: 7.3 miles/ 11.8 km Ed Riggs, Mushroom Rock, Big Balanced Rock, Heart of Rocks Loop, Sarah Deming and Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trails.

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Parking Lot or Massai Point

TRAIL: Make sure you have transportation back to your vehicle or ride the hikers' shuttle in the morning. Watch for changes in vegetation from the upper canyon areas to the lower canyon riparian areas.

THE BIG LOOP

No Pets

For folks wanting to do everything, this route consists of the Echo Canyon, Upper Rhyolite Canyon, Sarah Deming, Heart of Rocks, Big Balanced Rock, Inspiration Point, Mushroom Rock and Ed Riggs trails.

LENGTH: 9.5 miles/ 15.4 km

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

TRAIL: Up and down across the canyons, the Big Loop combines the best of the wilderness scenery. Be sure to take snacks and drink plenty of water on this all day hike.