

Glen Canyon Rainbow Bridge

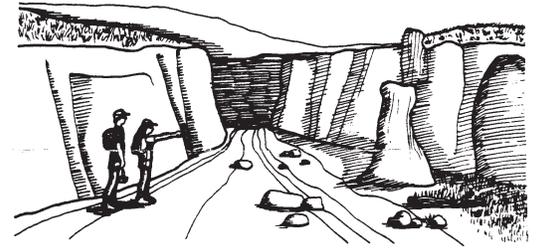
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Rainbow Bridge National Monument



Hiking Opportunities

Numerous opportunities exist for hiking in the Glen Canyon region. Use the following trail descriptions and directions to plan your excursions. All directions and driving distances are given from the Carl Hayden Visitor Center, located on Hwy 89 just north of Page, AZ.



Protect Desert Environments

Desert environments are fragile and take many years to recover when damaged. Millions of visitors each year help keep Glen Canyon alive and beautiful by staying on main path, minimizing impacts to delicate soils and plant life. Resist the urge to take shortcuts. Carry your trash out with you, but leave rocks, plants, and animals behind for the next person to enjoy. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.

Your Safety

Hiking in the high desert environment of Glen Canyon can be challenging for even the most experienced hikers. Extreme heat and little shade can be expected during the summer months. Carry more water than you think you will need. One gallon per person per day is recommended. Be prepared for changing weather and road conditions. Check both prior to setting out. Do not hike when storms are pending. Flash flooding occurs when runoff accumulates in narrow canyons and can prove deadly for hikers trapped inside. Be prepared, be informed, be safe.

Hikes in Glen Canyon

1. Horseshoe Bend

1.5 mile round-trip hike to a stunning view of the Glen Canyon and Colorado River, 1,000 feet below.

Directions: Located 5 miles south of the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Hwy 89, just past mile marker 545, on right hand side of the highway. There is a large parking area available at the trailhead, marked with a sign.

Considerations: Trail traverses loose sand and uneven terrain, up and back down a large hill to the overlook. A shade shelter with limited seating is located at the top of the hill. No guardrails exist. Use extreme caution when approaching the cliff edge. Keep children and pets under control at all times.

2. Hanging Garden

1 mile round-trip walk to a shaded alcove where a natural spring feeds a lush “garden” of ferns and orchids.

Directions: Turn left at the first public road, marked with a hiking symbol, approximately 1.2 mile south of the Carl Hayden Visitor Center off of Hwy 89. There is a sign marking the trailhead and a small parking area.

Considerations: Trail traverses loose sand, gravel, and smooth rock. There is one short uphill section to reach the hanging garden, which may require some large steps up. The trail is lined with rocks.

3. Wiregrass Canyon

6 mile round-trip hike through a sandy wash. View excellent examples of erosional processes including a slot canyon, hoodoos, and two natural bridges.

Directions: Drive 14.5 miles north of the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Hwy 89 to the town of Big Water, UT. Turn right on Ethan Allen Road, just past milepost 7. Drive several hundred yards then turn right onto Glen Canyon National Recreation Area State Highway 12, marked with a sign. There is a small pull-out and sign marking the beginning of the hike on the right side of the road, approximately 4.5 miles down State Hwy 12.

Considerations: Hwy 12 is partially paved, partially dirt. While hiking, some scrambling up and over rocks is required. Sections of this canyon are very exposed. Avoid the hottest part of the day by hiking early in the morning during summer months. There is always a potential for flash flooding. Do not enter narrow canyons when thunderstorms are forecast.

Regional Hikes Outside of Glen Canyon, Hwy 89 North

4. Bucktank Draw and Birthday Arch

4 mile round-trip hike up a sandy wash to a sandstone arch and slot canyon.

Directions: There are no signs or markers for this hike. Drive approximately 17 miles north from the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Hwy 89. Park at west end of metal railing on south side of road, between mileposts 9 and 10. Pass through a small metal gate to reach the wash. The arch is approximately 1.5 miles up the wash, high up on the western cliff edge. The slot canyon is on the other side of the wash, well concealed within the canyon wall.

Considerations: There are several steep “pour-offs” in the wash that must be bypassed by traversing the adjacent sandy slopes. A steep climb up a sandy slope is required to actually reach the arch, however it can still be viewed from Bucktank Draw.

5. The Toadstools

1.5 mile round-trip hike to a series of balanced rocks, called hoodoos.

Directions: Drive approximately 27 miles north from the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Hwy 89. Look for a sign and a small parking area on right side of the highway, just past milepost 19.

Considerations: Trail traverses sections of a sandy wash as well as harder surfaces with several short inclines. Stay on the trail to avoid damaging fragile desert soils and plant communities.

6. Wirepass and Buckskin Gulch

Exceptional examples of slot canyons. Hike lengths will vary. Wirepass is approximately 1.5 miles, one way. Buckskin Gulch is over 13 miles, one way.

Suggested Route: Hike through Wirepass to reach Buckskin Gulch. Continue down Buckskin Gulch as long as you would like. Overnight stays require a permit from the Bureau of Land Management.

Directions: Drive approximately 33 miles north from the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Hwy 89. Turn left onto House Rock Valley Road, between mileposts 25 and 26. Drive 8.5 miles down House Rock Valley Road. Wirepass trailhead parking is on the right.

Considerations: House Rock Valley Road is a dirt road. High-clearance vehicles are suggested. Do not attempt to drive if the road is wet. Check road conditions before you go. The Bureau of Land Management charges a small day-use fee for this area. Self-pay envelopes are provided at the trailhead. Slot canyons are extremely dangerous. Do not enter either of these canyons if rain is present in the forecast.

