



# Hiking Into Grand Canyon

## Plan Ahead

Whether a day or overnight trip, hiking into Grand Canyon on the Bright Angel, North Kaibab, or South Kaibab trails gives an unparalleled experience that changes your perspective.

Knowledge, preparation, and a good plan are your keys to success. Be honest about your health and fitness, know your

limits, and avoid spontaneity—Grand Canyon is an extreme environment and overexertion affects everybody at some point.

Stay together, follow your plan, and know where you can call 911 with emergencies. Turning around may be your best decision. For information about Leave No Trace strategies, hiking tips, closures, roads, trails, and permits, visit [go.nps.gov/grca-backcountry](https://www.nps.gov/grca-backcountry).



## Warning

Hiking to the river and back in one day is not recommended due to long distance, extreme temperature changes, and an approximately 5,000-foot (1,500 m) elevation change each way.

If you think you have the fitness and expertise to attempt this extremely strenuous hike, please seek the advice of a park ranger at the Backcountry Information Center.

Know how to rescue yourself. YOU are responsible for your safety and the safety of your family and friends. Rescue is not guaranteed, and assistance may take hours or days due to weather or other emergencies.

## Before You Go

- Choose the appropriate trail for your abilities or consider walking the Rim Trail for an easier hike.
- Check the weather and adjust plans; avoid summer heat. Remember the weather can change suddenly.
- Leave your itinerary with someone who will notice if you are overdue and report it to 911.
- Hydrate, but don't force fluids. Eat a good meal, and get a good night's sleep. If you do not feel well, do not hike.
- Prepare yourself for a faster hike down with high impact on your joints and a slow, strenuous hike out that may take twice as long or longer. that may take twice as long or longer.



## While Hiking

### BALANCE FOOD AND WATER

- Do not force fluids. Drink water when you are thirsty, and stop when you are quenched. Over-hydration may lead to a life-threatening electrolyte disorder called hyponatremia.

### RESTORE YOUR ENERGY

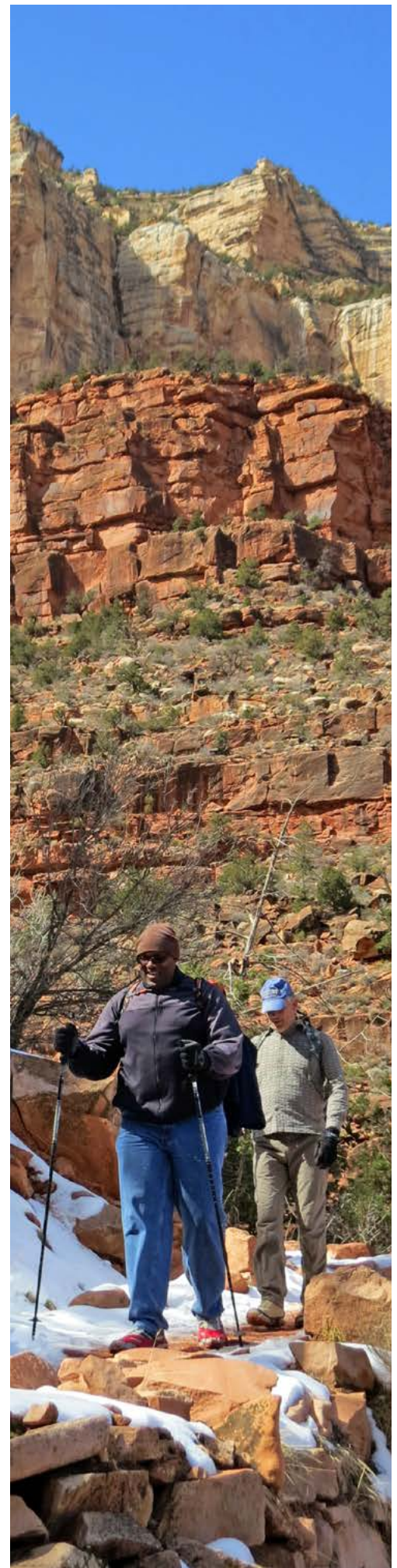
- Eat double your normal intake of carbohydrates and salty foods. Calories play an important role in regulating body temperature, and hiking suppresses your appetite.

### TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

- If you start to feel nauseated, dizzy, or disoriented, rest, eat, and drink until you feel better. This can take an hour or longer.
- If you are hot, cool off by getting wet in creeks and water stations. If you are cold, put on layers and eat food.
- Take plenty of breaks and enjoy the view while resting.

## 10 Essentials for Your Day Pack

1. Water: bring a sufficient amount and extra in case of emergency; always bring a water treatment method
2. Salty snacks and high-calorie meal(s)
3. First aid kit, prescriptions, blister care, duct tape, and pocket knife
4. Map or trail guide
5. Flashlight or headlamp with spare batteries
6. Sunscreen, wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses
7. Whistle, signal mirror, and cell phone
8. Lightweight tarp or emergency shelter
9. Broken-in hiking shoes with good soles and hiking poles
10. Layers of clothing



# What to Expect Each Season



## SUMMER

*Plan for hot, mostly dry weather in May and September; extremely hot, dry weather in June; and hot with monsoon thunderstorms in July and August.*

Average temperatures at the top: 48°F to 83°F (9°C to 28°C)

Average temperatures at the river: 74°F to 104°F (23°C to 40°C); **temperatures can feel like 140°F (60°C) in the sun and reach 115°F (46°C) in the shade.**

### Hiking Tips

- Start hiking before dawn, in the evening, or at night to avoid dangerous heat. Do not hike between 10 am and 4 pm.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting cotton clothing. Soak your shirt, bandana, and hat to stay cool.
- Beware of lightning, falling rocks, and flash floods during storms. Stay away from edges, promontories, and individual trees.
- Know the signs of heat illness: headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, cramping, and decreased urine output. Rest in the shade, get wet, hydrate, and eat high-energy foods.
- Know the signs of hyponatremia, caused by over-hydration: nausea and vomiting, headache, difficulty walking, confusion, and seizures. Balance hydration with salty snacks, eat well-rounded meals, and rest frequently.



## WINTER

*Plan for short days and long, cold nights with potential snow and ice at the top and rain in the canyon. The upper portion of all trails can be icy and dangerous. The South Kaibab Trail receives more sun than the Bright Angel Trail.*

Average temperatures at the top: 19°F to 45°F (-7°C to 7°C)

Average temperatures at the river: 38°F to 59°F (3°C to 15°C)

### Hiking Tips

- Carry over-the-shoe traction devices and use them on icy trails.
- Wear a warm hat, gloves, wool socks, and synthetic or wool-blend layers. Pack waterproof layers, dry clothes, and socks.
- Eat warm foods often, such as soup, tea, cocoa, and oatmeal.
- Know the signs of hypothermia: uncontrolled shivering, confusion, and exhaustion. Put on dry clothing, drink warm liquids, and protect yourself from wind, rain, snow, and cold.



## SPRING AND AUTUMN

*Plan for short days with highly variable weather. While the climate is typically cool, it can snow or be intensely hot. High winds are common.*

Average temperatures at the top: 32°F to 63°F (0°C to 17°C)

Average temperatures at the river: 56°F to 82°F (13°C to 28°C)

### Hiking Tips

- If the weather is hot, follow summer hiking tips at left.
- Prepare for lingering ice in spring and early snow in autumn. Bring over-the-shoe traction devices.
- Check water availability along the Bright Angel and North Kaibab trails. Seasonal water is usually available May through September.
- Wear windproof layers on windy days.
- Stay aware—hypothermia can occur in 50°F (10°C) weather and heat illness in 80°F (27°C) weather.



# Hiking and Camping Information



The Bright Angel Trail follows Bright Angel Fault down Garden Creek Canyon on a well-maintained trail; "easiest" trail, but still incredibly steep.

## North Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 8240ft (2511m)

Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Coconino Overlook	790ft (240m)	0.7mi (1.1km)	1–2 hours
Supai Tunnel	1400ft (425m)	2.0mi (3.2km)	2–4 hours
Redwall Bridge	2200ft (670m)	2.6mi (4.2km)	4–6 hours
Roaring Springs Day Use Area	3280ft (1000m)	4.7mi (7.6km)	6–9 hours
Manzanita Rest Area	3840ft (1170m)	5.1mi (8.2km)	7–10 hours
Cottonwood Campground	4200ft (1280m)	6.5mi (10.5km)	2 days
Ribbon Falls	4480ft (1365m)	7.9mi (12.7km)	2 days
Phantom Ranch Ranger Station	5740ft (1750m)	13.6mi (21.9km)	3–4 days
Bright Angel Campground	5740ft (1750m)	13.7mi (22.0km)	3–4 days

## South Kaibab Trailhead: elevation 7200ft (2195m)

Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Ooh Aah Point	790ft (230m)	0.9mi (1.4km)	1–2 hours
Cedar Ridge	1120ft (340m)	1.5mi (2.4km)	2–4 hours
Skeleton Point	2040ft (620m)	3.0mi (4.8km)	4–6 hours
The Tip Off	3280ft (1100m)	4.4mi (7.1km)	6–9 hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4700ft (1430m)	6.8mi (10.9km)	2 Days
Bright Angel Campground	4700ft (1430m)	7.0mi (11.3km)	2 Days

## Bright Angel Trailhead: elevation 6840ft (2085m)

Destination	Elevation Change from Top	Distance one-way	Time Roundtrip
Lower Tunnel	590ft (180m)	0.9mi (1.4km)	1–2 hours
1½-Mile Resthouse	1120ft (340m)	1.5mi (2.4km)	2–4 hours
3-Mile Resthouse	2120ft (645m)	3.0mi (4.8km)	4–6 hours
Havasupai Gardens Campground	3040ft (925m)	4.5mi (7.2km)	6–9 hours
Plateau Point	3080ft (940m)	6.1mi (9.8km)	9–12 hours
River Resthouse	4340ft (1320m)	7.7mi (12.4km)	12+ hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4340ft (1320m)	9.3mi (15.0km)	2 days
Bright Angel Campground	4340ft (1320m)	9.5mi (15.3km)	2 Days





# Overnight Camping on the Bright Angel, North Kaibab, and South Kaibab Trails

## Prepare: Plan Ahead

- Backpackers planning to camp overnight must obtain a backcountry permit before starting their hike. Attach the permit visibly to your backpack. Camp only in campgrounds, not along the trail. No campfires allowed.
- In addition to the 10 essentials listed above, bring a stove, fuel, and matches; blanket or sleeping bag with ground pad; and ground cloth, tarp, or tent.
- Pack weight should not be more than 15–20% of your body weight. In summer, pack light—replace your sleeping bag with a liner or sheet; bring ready-to-eat foods and leave the stove behind.
- Watch and review the Hiking Grand Canyon, Prepare for Backpacking video, available at [go.nps.gov/grca-backcountry-video](http://go.nps.gov/grca-backcountry-video).

## While at Camp

- Choose your campsite. Sites are first-come, first-served with the required permit. Large group sites are reserved for parties of 7–11 hikers.
- Immediately place all food, toiletries, and plastic bags in the food storage cans at each campsite. Keep the lids closed and fastened shut at all times. Hang your backpack with the zippers open to prevent animals from chewing through your pack.
- Place your backcountry permit in the box provided. Leave your permit at your site during your entire stay.
- Use headlamps with red lights to preserve your night vision, minimize light pollution, and avoid disturbing other campers.

## When Leaving Camp

- If you start early, remember to maintain a quiet camp and let fellow campers sleep.
- Do not leave any trash, gear, or extra food behind. Check your site for microtrash—look for bandages, twist ties, fruit peels, etc.
- Remove everything from the food storage cans.
- Attach your permit to your backpack for your hike out.
- Check the campground bulletin boards for weather, trail, and water updates.

