



## Keet Seel Hiking Information – Summer 2019

Keet Seel is a strenuous 17 mile (27.4 km) roundtrip backcountry hike which requires a permit that can be obtained by attending a hiking orientation at the visitor center the day before scheduled hike. Reservations are required for this hike. Hikers have the options of completing the Keet Seel hike in one day or staying overnight at the designated campground.

**Reservations:** The park will begin to take reservations in **February 2019** for the 2019 season. Keet Seel will open for the 2019 season on **May 27, 2019** and close for the season on **September 8, 2019**. Permit reservations are made by calling the park at **928-672-2725 or 2727**. The park's main line **928-672-2700 IS NOT WORKING** so please call the other two numbers provided. Reservations can also be made in person at the Navajo National Monument Visitor Center. Keet Seel hikes are limited to 20 people per day and are made on a first come, first served basis. Organized groups (tour groups, scouts, etc.) are limited to 10 people per day. We do not accept reservations via fax or email.

### **Tentative schedule changes for 2019 Keet Seel reservations:**

1. Keet Seel is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays - no reservations are accepted for those days.
2. Mondays are reserved to day hikers only. (No overnight hikers due to campground closure on Monday night).
3. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays – Day hiking and overnight hiking reservations are allowed.

**Permits:** There is a **mandatory Keet Seel trail/permit orientation held at the visitor center at 3:00pm MDT** the day before scheduled tour. The orientation is **required for ALL hikers** in order to obtain a permit and trail map so please plan accordingly. We **no longer offer the 8am orientation** on the day of hike so **please do not call us requesting the 8am orientation** even if you have done the hike in the past. The permit allows you to travel across Navajo Nation land to Keet Seel on a designated trail. Please respect the homes, property, and privacy of canyon residents.

**The Route:** Keet Seel, the ranger station, and Keet Seel campground are located 8.5 miles from the visitor center. There is an elevation loss of up to 1000 feet (305 m) from the canyon rim to the canyon floor where the descending trail consists of rocky switchbacks and steep sand dunes. Once in the canyon, the route follows shallow streams and gradually rises 400 feet (125 m) over the last 5.5 miles (9 km). The trail crosses through Keet Seel creek many times so walking through water is unavoidable and your shoes will get wet. The final two miles of the route cross several deep sandy gullies leading up into the Keet Seel area. The trail is marked by white posts approximately every 1/2 to 1 mile along the route.

**Time:** *Navajo National Monument observes Mountain Daylight Time so the park is on the same time as Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico and is one hour ahead of the state of Arizona.* Plan to allow at least 4-6 hours hiking time one way which includes time to take breaks and have lunch along the route. Keet Seel tours normally begin to be offered by backcountry rangers around 9:30am MDT and are conducted throughout the day as hikers arrive. A tour of Keet Seel can range between an hour to four hours depending on group interest. We recommend that all hikers start on the trail before 8am MDT and can begin hiking on the trail as soon as there is daylight. For your safety, please do not hike during the night.

**Keet Seel Site:** Upon arrival at Keet Seel, make contact with the backcountry ranger to arrange a tour of Keet Seel. Please wait at the picnic table area near the ranger station if the ranger is giving a tour or on patrol when you arrive. **Do not enter Keet Seel without a ranger.** To limit impact and prevent overcrowding in the village site, group sizes are limited to 5 people per tour. Large groups exceeding 5 people will be split up into smaller tour groups. As one group tours the site, the rest of the group can relax, eat, or take photographs at the picnic table area. Day hikers have first priority for tours so that they may have time to hike back to the visitor center before nightfall. We recommend wearing shoes with non-aggressive tread such as sandals or tennis shoes while touring Keet Seel because it will lessen impacts to the fragile site. **Wandering and exploring beyond the national monument boundaries onto Navajo Nation land is prohibited. Be aware that local families monitor the area and there may be consequences to trespassing.**

*Keet Seel reservations are subject to **CANCELLATION** during if heavy rain and flooding occurs in the canyons. Please call the visitor center before scheduled hike to check for updates and conditions. Check the weather at the following website: <http://www.noaa.gov/> and type in Betatakin Overlook, Arizona in the city and state box.*

**Camping:** Hikers are welcome to stay at the Keet Seel campground and hike out the following day. The designated primitive campground is located approximately a ¼ mile from the Keet Seel site and ranger station. Visitors should camp only in designated areas and away from canyon walls to avoid injury from rock fall. Composting toilets and metal containers to store packs/food are available at the campground and at the ranger station. Wood fires are not permitted and please pack out all trash.

**Water:** Drinking from the canyon stream is **not recommended** even with filter use. Hikers are required to carry in all water. Day hikers should plan to bring a minimum of one gallon of water per person. Overnight hikers should carry a minimum of two gallons of water per person.

**Recommendations:** Appropriate hiking gear items include the following:

- \* 1 gallon of water per person per day (minimum)
- \* Weather appropriate gear
- \* Lightweight long sleeve shirt
- \* Long pants
- \* Trash bag
- \* Wool/extra socks
- \* Insect Repellant
- \* Sturdy Hiking Boots (Waterproof due to crossing shallow stream multiple times)
- \* Sport Sandals or Tennis Shoes (Non-aggressive treads for village tour)
- \* High energy food
- \* Ground tarp, hammock, or lightweight tent
- \* Fleece/waterproof jacket
- \* Flashlight
- \* First-Aid kit
- \* Personal prescription medications

### **Safety Precautions:**

- **PLEASE DO NOT DRINK FROM THE STREAM:** Livestock and wildlife feces contaminate surface water. Water filters may not completely remove microscopic organisms that transmit viruses or other illnesses.
- **West Nile Virus:** Present in region; please bring insect repellent to keep mosquitos/gnats away.
- **Watch out for flash floods:** Violent thunderstorms are common from July to September. Wait on higher ground for water to subside. Do not attempt to cross creeks during flash floods.
- **Be cautious of quicksand:** Quicksand may be present in stream after heavy rain. Be cautious of where you walk.
- **Avoid overheating:** Midday temperatures in the canyon bottom range 10° F higher than surrounding mesa tops and can approach 100° F. To avoid excessive exposure, hike early in the morning, wear a hat, seek shade, and drench your clothing with water.
- **Avoid hypothermia:** Body temperature can drop to fatal levels during exposure to cold weather, wind or wet clothing. Temperature at midday can drop as much as 25° (12 C) during thunder storms. Wearing a waterproof shell or proper rain gear will help prevent hypothermia during sudden rain storms.
- **Be alert for rock falls:** The soft sandstone is constantly eroding from canyon walls and inside alcoves. Set up camp and picnic in designated areas away from cliff. Watch out for collapsing dirt banks along creeks and gullies. Stay back from the edge of embankments due to them being unstable and can collapse without warning.
- **Search & Rescue:** This is a remote and sparsely populated area. The nearest medical facility is located in Kayenta, AZ so help may take hours to reach an injured person. Do not approach wild animals and domestic livestock. Night emergencies may have to wait until morning for assistance. Cell phones rarely work in the canyons. Stay safe.
- **Time Difference:** From March 10 to November 3, the Navajo Nation including Navajo National Monument observes Mountain Daylight Savings Time (MDST) making our park on the same time as Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico during this period. This is one hour ahead of Arizona locations that are not located on the Navajo reservation including Page, Flagstaff, Grand Canyon, Hopi Nation, and Phoenix.

**Keet Seel Reservation Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Confirmation Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Keet Seel (# of hikers):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Day or Overnight:** \_\_\_\_\_