Saguaro
National Park

Arizona

Exploring the Rincon Mountains

From cactus-covered desert to pine-cloaked mountain heights, the Saguaro Wilderness Area in the Rincon Mountains protects the last roadless 'sky island' mountain range in Southern Arizona. Designated by Congress in 1976 – along with lands in the Tucson Mountains – this Wilderness Area provides another layer of protection to your Saguaro National Park. Together with the adjacent Rincon Mountain Wilderness on the Coronado National Forest, the protected wild acreage totals nearly 100,000 acres within sight of the sprawling city of Tucson. Solitude awaits you on these cool, forested slopes.

Know Before You Go

Permits are required for overnight stays. See contacts below.

Carry at least one gallon of water per person per day – more in low country in summer. Treat all surface water. Water is scarce at all times at most campsites.

Campfires are prohibited at Douglas Spring and Grass Shack camps. Use only dead and downed wood and be sure fires are cold and dead before leaving.

Respect the weather in all seasons; it can change without warning. The high country will be far different from the low!

Do not cross flooded streams. Wait until the flow subsides.

Be cautious of wildlife. Know what to do if you encounter bees, bears, or mountain lions.

Wear appropriate clothing (in layers) and footwear. Pace yourself according to your physical condition.

Cellular phones work in much of the wilderness; if not, try a high point with a view toward Tucson (west) or Bensen (east.)

Do not leave valuables in vehicles, lock securely.

Overnight Camping Registration and Permits: www.recreation.gov 1– 877– 444-6777

Campsites Information

(note: maximum of 6 people per site at all camps.)

Douglas Spring elev. 4,800 ft. minimum 6 mile hike & 2,000 foot climb

Located on a flat area in the desert grasslands under scattered juniper trees, the view is dominated by Mica Mountain. A nearby streambed sometimes has water – search upstream for small pools.

3 sites Nearest trailhead: Douglas Spring (east end of Speedway Boulevard)

Juniper Basin elev. 6,000 ft. minimum 7 mile hike & 3,000 foot climb

In the desert grasslands high on Tanque Verde Ridge the climb into this juniper stand has 360 degree views of the Sonoran Desert. Summit is two miles beyond the campsite.

3 sites Nearest trailhead: Tanque Verde Ridge (off park drive at Javelina Picnic Area) *

Grass Shack elev. 5,300 ft. minimum 10 mile hike & 2,250 foot climb

You'll be near a stream in a lush forest setting of oak, sycamore, and madrone – IF the stream is running. Some fairly reliable pools might be found upstream. Popular Arizona Trail camp!

3 sites Nearest trailhead: Loma Alta (north end of Camino Loma Alta)
Often reached from the Arizona trail entrance on south park boundary. (9.5 mile hike)

Happy Valley Saddle elev. 6,200 ft. minimum 4 mile hike & 2,000 foot climb

Dry site in a pine woodland on the lower flanks of Rincon Peak – peak baggers use this camp overnight. Tough to find water nearby; pack it in. Watch for hazard dead trees in area.

3 sites Nearest trailhead: Miller Creek (on Mescal Road/FS Rte 35, 16 m. from I-10 Exit 297)
a rugged dirt road, deep water crossings possible, high clearance 4WD recommended.

Spud Rock elev. 7,400 ft. minimum 5.5 mile hike & 2,700 foot climb

Note: Without 4WD, high clearance vehicle, add 1.6 miles to hike. Wooded site near a historic potato field, not near Spud Rock. Rugged climb is only stock access from the east slope.

3 sites Nearest trailhead: Turkey Creek (on Mescal Road/FS Rte 35 & FS Rte 4408) rugged dirt roads, deep water crossings possible, high clearance 4WD recommended.

Manning Camp elev. 8,000 ft. minimum 13 mile hike & 5,300 foot climb

In the ponderosa pine forest near the historic Manning Cabin and summer ranger station. Reliable water year-round except in the very driest years. Snow-covered in the winter!

6 sites Nearest trailhead: Douglas Spring (east end of Speedway Boulevard) Alternate is Italian Springs/Arizona Trail north, 9.6 miles up gravel part of Redington Pass Road. (11 mile hike)

** Trailheads open 24 hours except Tanque Verde Ridge, open during park drive hours (vary seasonally)*

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Water!

Water will be your biggest concern in the Saguaro Wilderness. Surface water is scarce most of the year; at times it will not be found. All water for human consumption should be treated by your preferred method.

Be aware that all park streams are intermittent and springs may not have water. Do not rely on finding water near campsites. The most reliable water, at Manning camp, is a spring surrounded by chain link fence; obtain water down stream of this enclosure.

If you are exiting the same way you entered, you might consider caching water along the trail for your outbound travel. Use a sealed water container labeled with your name and date. Do not leave caches in the Area.

Maps

DO NOT rely on free park maps for travel in the backcountry. And remember that your smart phone app maps may not be available in all areas of the park.

The National Geographic Trails Illustrated all-weather topographic map of the park is checked by our staff before each printing. Buy it tax-free at our visitor centers.

Wildlife

Africanized Bees: may attack *en masse* if you are near a hive. You should ***run to shelter*** or ***keep running*** until attack stops. ***Cover your head*** to protect eyes, ears, nose & mouth. ***Don't kill bees*** as the scent attracts more attacks, and ***don't flail arms*** since it excites the bees. All hives in the park are dangerous: keep away, report to a ranger, and get medical help if stung.

Mountain Lions: are rare and a thrill to see. If approached by a lion take precautions. ***Stay in a group*** especially keeping children close. ***Make yourself look big*** by extending arms, legs, and clothing. ***Yell loudly*** to let it know you are human. ***Back away slowly*** keeping your eyes on the lion. ***Do not run*** as it may trigger an attack. ***Fight back*** if attacked; target face & nose.

Black Bears: are here in small numbers. Use the ***bear-proof containers*** provided at camps to store all scented items: food, toiletries, garbage, even water bottles. Keep a clean camp. If approached, ***stay in a group***, good advice always. ***Make yourself look big*** by extending arms, legs, and clothing. ***Yell loudly*** to let it know you are human. ***Fight back vigorously*** if attacked.

Report Wildlife Encounters: Unusual behavior by animals should be reported. And, we always want to know about *any* mountain lion or bee colony sightings:

1 – 800 – 637 - 9152 ext. 4 ***for ranger response***
1 – 520 – 733 - 5153 ***for informational reports***

Rabies is deadly. If you have physical contact with any mammal (furred animal) you should seek medical attention and advice. **In case of an animal attack or any emergency call 911.**

Wilderness Regulations

No fires at Douglas Spring & Grass Shack campgrounds.
Use only dead & downed wood for campfires.
Don't leave a campfire until it is fully out.
No bicycles or motorized vehicles are allowed.
Hiking off trail only allowed above 4,500' elevation.
Pets are prohibited; trained, working service dogs allowed.
Users under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.
Firearms may be carried, but not discharged in the park.
Camp only in campsites and only on the dates assigned.
Uses outhouses at campsites; do not put trash in toilets.
Away from camp, bury human waste 150' from trail or water.
Everything else you carry in, you should carry back out.
Length of stay limited to 10 days; only 5 days in any one camp.
The group size limit is 18 for people; 10 for livestock . . .

Livestock At-a-glance

Livestock in Saguaro National Park is defined as mules, horses, and burros **only**. No other riding or pack animals. Grazing is prohibited. Bring in and use weed free pellets. Remove and scatter droppings in camp areas. Be aware of and courteous to other users.

Stock are prohibited on some trails because of steepness or conflicting uses. Consult the park's free hiking map for details. Maximum head at Manning camp is 10; at all other camps 5. Consult our **livestock use brochure** for much more information on stock use.

Weather

Winter rains fall from December to March. Rain is light and gentle, but it may extend for hours and be widely distributed. During this time snow will fall above 6,000' feet. **Summer rains** come in July to September. Rain can be intense and heavy, in concentrated areas. Lightning, hail, and flash flooding are common – keep close watch on local forecasts.

Average desert (3000') temperatures:

Jan 63/38	Feb 66/40	Mar 72/44
Apr 80/50	May 91/57	Jun 98/67
Jul 98/73	Aug 96/72	Sep 93/67
Oct 84/57	Nov 72/45	Dec 65/39

Average summit (8000') temperatures:

Jan 44/25	Feb 46/24	Mar 48/25
Apr 52/27	May 65/38	Jun 77/48
Jul 76/53	Aug 75/52	Sep 73/48
Oct 65/42	Nov 53/32	Dec 48/29

(high/low)

Leave No Trace Principals

Plan ahead and prepare
Pack it in, pack it out
Properly dispose of what you can't pack out
Leave what you find
Minimize use & impact of fires
Camp and travel on durable surfaces
Protect and conserve water resources

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