



Hiking Into Grand Canyon



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.

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.

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.

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**

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.



Trail Courtesy

- Travel with a friend and stick together.
- Use toilets along the trails.
- Mules have the right of way.
- Uphill hikers have the right of way.
- To pass someone in front of you: slow down and let them know you want to pass.
- Do not store or abandon gear along the trail; it attracts wildlife.
- Pack out your trash.
- Be quiet and respect those who seek serenity.



Overnight Camping Inside Grand Canyon



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.

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 box 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.

For park ranger programs at Phantom Ranch and Indian Garden, see go.nps.gov/gc_programs

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 box and place the box on the picnic table. This prevents animals from getting trapped inside.
- Attach your permit to your backpack for your hike out.
- Check the campground bulletin boards for weather, trail, and water updates.

The Hikers' Express Shuttle Bus

This early morning shuttle bus provides service to South Kaibab Trailhead. Bus departs from Bright Angel Lodge bus stop; second stop at Backcountry Information Center; third stop at Grand Canyon Visitor Center; last stop at South Kaibab Trailhead.

Bus leaves Bright Angel Lodge at:
7 am, 8 am, 9 am in March, November
6 am, 7 am, 8 am in April, October
5 am, 6 am, 7 am in May, September
4 am, 5 am, 6 am in June, July, August
8 am, 9 am in December, January, February



What to Expect



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°F) 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.



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.



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.



Protect the Park; Protect Yourself

- Hikers and wildlife can be injured by rocks, coins, and trash tossed over the edge and rocks dislodged by walking off trail.
- The walls of Grand Canyon tell an amazing story. You alter that story when you leave graffiti.
- Keep a safe distance of at least 75 feet (23 m) from all wildlife. Do not feed the squirrels. They will bite and can carry disease.
- Leave rocks, plants, wood, and artifacts where you find them.
- Launching, landing, or operating unmanned aircraft is prohibited.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Do not back up without looking around you.
- Pets are not allowed on the trail. To hike with a service animal, please check in at the Backcountry Information Center.

Plan your Hike

Hiking into Grand Canyon—how far should you go?

- Have fun
- Be careful
- Seek advice

Use the charts below to plan a safe hike below the canyon rims. Remember that every exhilarating step you take downhill means twice as much work to hike back up. Day-hiking from the rims to the "red zone" destinations shown in the charts below is for experienced hikers only. 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-meter) elevation change each way. If you think you have the fitness and expertise to attempt this extremely strenuous hike, please seek advice from a park ranger at the Backcountry Information Center.

North Kaibab Trail: Trailhead elevation 8240 ft (2511 m)
Good shade and cover from wind and lightning; seasonal water.

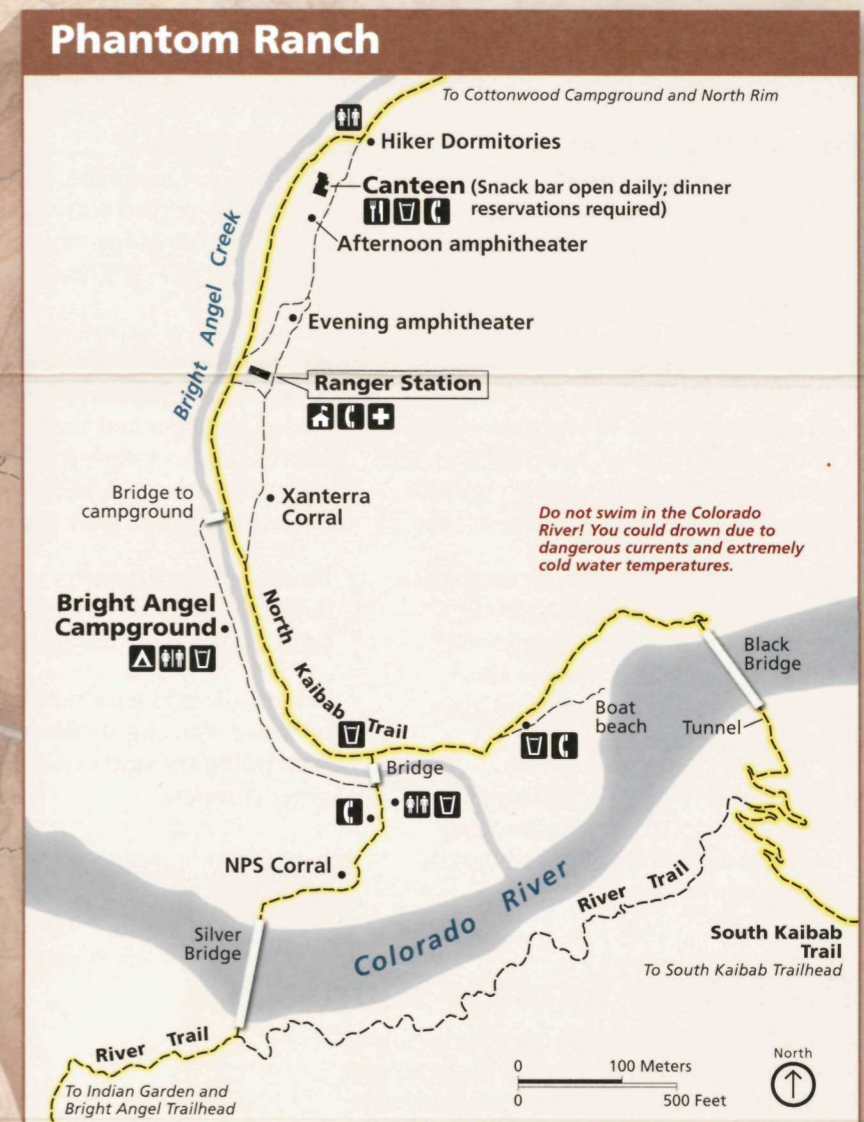
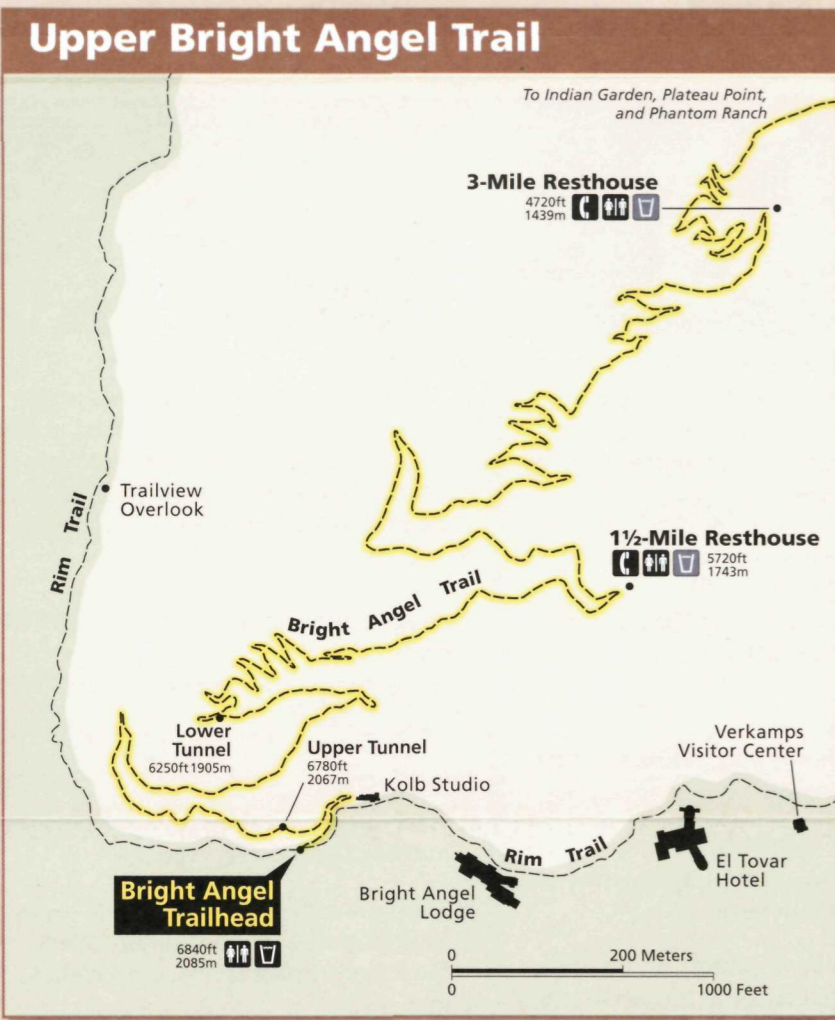
Destination	Elevation change from top	Distance one-way	Time round-trip
Coconino Overlook	790 ft 240m	0.7 mi 1.1 km	1-2 hours
Supai Tunnel	1400 ft 425m	2.0 mi 3.2 km	2-4 hours
Redwall Bridge	2200 ft 670m	2.6 mi 4.2 km	4-6 hours
Manzanita Rest Area	3840 ft 1170m	5.1 mi 8.2 km	7-10 hours
Cottonwood Campground	4200 ft 1280m	6.5 mi 10.5 km	2 days
Ribbon Falls	4480 ft 1365m	7.9 mi 12.7 km	2 days
Phantom Ranch Ranger Station	5740 ft 1750m	13.6 mi 21.9 km	3-4 days
Bright Angel Campground	5740 ft 1750m	13.7 mi 22.0 km	3-4 days

South Kaibab Trail: Trailhead elevation 7200 ft (2195 m)
Follows an exposed ridgeline with no shade; no water.

Destination	Elevation change from top	Distance one-way	Time round-trip
Ooh Aah Point	790 ft 230m	0.9 mi 1.4 km	1-2 hours
Cedar Ridge	1120 ft 340m	1.5 mi 2.4 km	2-4 hours
Skeleton Point	2040 ft 620m	3.0 mi 4.8 km	4-6 hours
The Tipoff	3280 ft 1000m	4.5 mi 7.2 km	6-9 hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4700 ft 1430m	6.8 mi 10.9 km	2 days
Bright Angel Campground	4700 ft 1430m	7.0 mi 11.3 km	2 days

Bright Angel Trail: Trailhead elevation 6840 ft (2085 m)
Some shade and cover from wind and lightning; seasonal and year-round water.

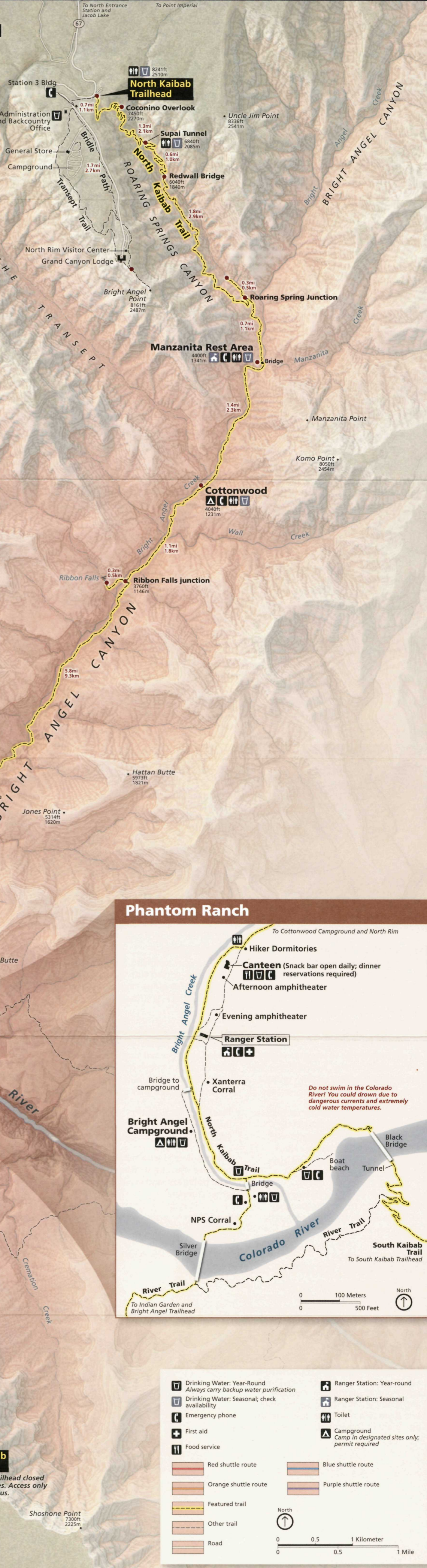
Destination	Elevation change from top	Distance one-way	Time round-trip
Lower Tunnel	590 ft 180m	1.0 mi 1.6 km	1-2 hours
1½-Mile Resthouse	1120 ft 340m	1.5 mi 2.4 km	2-4 hours
3-Mile Resthouse	2120 ft 645m	3.0 mi 4.8 km	4-6 hours
Indian Garden Campground	3040 ft 925m	4.5 mi 7.2 km	6-9 hours
Plateau Point	3080 ft 940m	6.1 mi 9.8 km	9-12 hours
River Resthouse	4340 ft 1320m	7.8 mi 12.6 km	12+ hours
North Kaibab Trail junction	4340 ft 1320m	9.3 mi 15.0 km	2 days
Bright Angel Campground	4340 ft 1320m	9.5 mi 15.3 km	2 days



NORTH RIM

Full services May 15 to October 15; located 1.7 miles (2.7 km) from trailhead.

KAIBAB PLATEAU



Drinking Water: Year-Round (Always carry backup water purification); Seasonal (check availability)

Emergency phone

First aid

Food service

Ranger Station: Year-round; Seasonal

Toilet

Campground: Camp in designated sites only; permit required

Shuttle Routes: Red, Orange, Blue, Purple

Trail Types: Featured trail, Other trail, Road

Scale: 0 to 1 Kilometer / 0 to 1 Mile