

Chiricahua Hiking Guide

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chiricahua National Monument



When walking your pet, be sure they are **always on a leash** connected to you at all times for their safety.

EASY HIKES: Short, gentle walks with little change in elevation.

BONITA CREEK LOOP

LENGTH: 0.2 mile/0.3 km

ACCESS: Bonita Creek Parking Area

Pets Permitted

TRAIL: This loop around the picnic area takes you along the intermittent Bonita Creek. Watch for Apache plume and prickly poppy flowers in spring and early summer. Arizona whitetail deer are frequently seen in the lower portion of Bonita Canyon. This is a good trail for grassland birds.

BONITA CREEK TRAIL

LENGTH: 0.5 mile/0.8 km

ACCESS: Bonita Creek or Faraway Ranch Parking Areas

Pets Permitted

TRAIL: Winding along Bonita Creek, usually dry, this trail connects the Bonita Creek and Faraway Ranch Picnic Areas. Look for migrating birds, deer, coatimundi and javelina.

SILVER SPUR MEADOW TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.2 miles/1.9 km

ACCESS: Faraway Ranch, Visitor Center, or Campground

Pets Permitted

TRAIL: Beginning at the Faraway Ranch Picnic Area, this leisurely walk leads you through the Faraway Ranch Historic District to Stafford cabin, built in the 1880s. Next is Silver Spur Meadow, home for Civilian Conservation Camp NM-2-A, Company 828 during the 1930s. The fireplaces are remnants from the lodge of the Silver Spur Guest Ranch in business from 1948 to 1968. Stream crossings can be hazardous during spring snowmelt or the summer rains.

VISITOR CENTER TO CAMPGROUND

LENGTH: 0.4 mile/0.6 km

ACCESS: Visitor Center or near campground group site

Pets Permitted

TRAIL: Offering a safer alternative to walking along the road, look and listen for birds: dark-eyed juncos in winter, hummingbirds in summer and acorn woodpeckers year-round. Stream crossings can be hazardous during spring snow melt, or the summer monsoon rains.

MASSAI POINT NATURE TRAIL

LENGTH: 0.5 mile/0.8 km

ACCESS: Massai Point Parking Area

No Pets

Watch for uneven footing, steps, and remember the higher elevation – 6,870 ft/2,094 m

TRAIL: This trail features grand vistas of the surrounding valleys and mountain ranges, a huge balanced rock and trail signs highlighting the natural history of the monument. The paved portion to the exhibit building is wheelchair accessible.

ECHO CANYON GROTTOES

LENGTH: 1.0 mile/1.6 km round trip

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

No Pets

TRAIL: This trail option provides a great introduction to the wilderness area of the monument and the opportunity to walk among the rock formations. Explore the grotto on the right side of the trail.

MODERATE HIKES: 1 to 4-hour hikes with elevation changes of 500 ft/152 m or less.

NATURAL BRIDGE TRAIL

LENGTH: 4.8 miles/7.8 km round trip

ACCESS: Small parking area along the Bonita Canyon Scenic Drive, 0.5 mile/ 0.8 km beyond the campground

No Pets

TRAIL: This least used trail climbs through oak and juniper woodlands to a ridge then drops into the Apache pine forest of Picket Park. It ends at an overlook for the small water-carved bridge located across the canyon. Return the same way.

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.8 miles/2.8 km round trip

ACCESS: Sugarloaf Mountain Trailhead

No Pets

TRAIL: Rising above the surrounding canyons, the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain at 7,310 ft/2,228 m is one of the highest points in the monument. The dark rock is dacite, evidence of a lava flow. The fire lookout is not used. Return the same way.

ECHO CANYON LOOP

No Pets

LENGTH: 3.3 miles/5.5 km

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

ROUTE: Echo Canyon, Hailstone, and Ed Riggs Trails

TRAIL: Most people prefer to hike the loop counterclockwise since walking up the Ed Riggs Trail is less strenuous than the Echo Canyon Trail. The route winds through spectacular rock formations including the Grottoes and Wallstreet to the densely wooded Echo Park. Hailstone Trail is fairly level, and due to its southern exposure, hotter and dryer. Expect to see more desert plants: yuccas, agaves, prickly pear, and hedgehog cactus. Ed Riggs Trail takes you back to the trailhead among large pine trees. Plan at least 2 hours for this hike.

ECHO CANYON TO VISITOR CENTER

No Pets

LENGTH: 4.2 miles/6.8 km

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

ROUTE: Echo Canyon, Upper Rhyolite Canyon, and Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trails

TRAIL: Mostly downhill through spectacular rock formations in Echo Canyon. White-throated swifts are common in the summer. Stream crossings on the Upper Rhyolite segment can be hazardous if runoff is significant. The last half of the hike is in shaded oak woodlands. Make sure you have transportation back to your vehicle or ride the hikers' shuttle at 9:00 am.

NOTE: Additional 0.5 mi/0.8km to campground OR 1.5 mi/2.4 km to Faraway Ranch parking when riding the shuttle.

STRENUOUS HIKES: 3 to 8-hour hikes with elevation changes of 500 to 1,000 ft/152 to 305 m.

INSPIRATION POINT

No Pets

ACCESS: Massai Point or the junction of Mushroom Rock and Big Balanced Rock Trails

LENGTH: 5.4 miles/8.6 km round trip from Massai Point or 1 mile/1.6 km round trip from Big Balanced Rock Trail

TRAIL: This mostly level trail is a good place to slow down your heart rate after the trek up Mushroom Rock Trail. Excellent views of Cochise Head and the pinnacles make this a great rest stop.

HEART OF ROCKS

1. Visitor Center, Heart of Rocks Loop, & Return

No Pets

LENGTH: 7.5 miles/12 km total

ACCESS: Visitor Center Parking Lot

ROUTE: Lower Rhyolite Canyon, Sarah Deming, and Heart of Rocks Loop Trails

TRAIL: Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trail begins as an easy level walk in the lower canyon forest, but soon starts climbing up Rhyolite Canyon. Sarah Deming Canyon gains 880 ft/268 m to reach the top of the ridge. Heart of Rocks Loop has many of the most unusual named rock formations. Start the loop to the left and hike clockwise for the best views and easiest walking. Many big rock steps make this a challenging loop, but it is worth the effort.

2. Echo Canyon with Heart of Rocks Loop & Return

No Pets

LENGTH: 7.5 miles/12 km round trip

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Trailhead

ROUTE: Ed Riggs, Mushroom Rock, Big Balanced Rock, and Heart of Rocks Loop Trails

TRAIL: An easier route to Heart of Rocks than starting from the Visitor Center with more views of the rock formations. Ed Riggs Trail drops you into the canyon while Mushroom Rock Trail climbs 610 ft/186 m up the other side. Big Balanced Rock Trail is along top of the ridge. Complete the Heart of Rocks and return or continue with the Big Loop.

3. Echo Canyon or Massai Point with Heart of Rocks Loop to Visitor Center

No Pets

LENGTH: 7.5 miles/12 km total

ACCESS: Echo Canyon Parking Lot or Massai Point

ROUTE: Ed Riggs, Mushroom Rock, Big Balanced Rock, Heart of Rocks Loop, Sarah Deming, Lower Rhyolite Canyon Trails

TRAIL: Watch for changes in vegetation from the upper canyon areas to the lower canyon riparian areas. Make sure you have transportation back to your vehicle or ride the hikers' shuttle at 9:00 am. *NOTE: Additional 0.5 mi/0.8km to campground OR 1.5 mi/2.4 km to Faraway Ranch parking when riding the shuttle.*

THE BIG LOOP

No Pets

LENGTH: 9.5 miles/15.4 km

ACCESS: Massai Point or Echo Canyon Trailhead

ROUTE: Echo Canyon, Upper Rhyolite Canyon, Sarah Deming, Heart of Rocks Loop, Big Balanced Rock, Inspiration Point, Mushroom Rock, and Ed Riggs trails.

TRAIL: For folks wanting to do everything, the Big Loop takes hikers up and down across the canyons and combines the best of the wilderness scenery. Be prepared for an all-day adventure: stay hydrated-drink plenty of water, eat, and watch out for sunset.

HIKE SMART: know your limits, watch the weather & dress appropriately-layers are best, bring and drink plenty of water, eat salty snacks, always have a map (know where you are going), first aid kit, flashlight, whistle or signal mirror, hat, sunscreen, pocketknife-if possible. Remember cell phone service is unreliable and help takes a long time to arrive. Be careful and have fun!