



Keet Seel Hiking Information – Summer 2015

The Route: Keet Seel is one of the best preserved ancestral pueblo villages in the Southwest. The site is located 8.5 miles from the Visitor Center. The hike is rugged and strenuous. Allow at least 4-6 hours hiking time each way, an hour to rest and have lunch, and about one hour to tour Keet Seel. The trail is marked by white posts approximately every one half to one mile along the route to the site. The trail drops sharply 1000 feet (305 m) from the canyon rim to the canyon floor on rocky switchbacks and 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) of the trail. The trail crosses Keet Seel creek several times. Walking through water is unavoidable and your shoes will get wet. The final 2 miles of the route cross several deep sandy gullies leading up into the Keet Seel area. Site tours normally start 9:30am and are conducted throughout the day as people arrive. Plan your departure accordingly. We recommend that slow hikers start on the trail early.

Keet Seel Site: Upon arrival at Keet Seel, make contact with the Ranger and give them the perforated portion of your permit. The Ranger may be giving a tour or on patrol when you arrive, please wait at the picnic table area for their return. Do not enter Keet Seel without the Ranger. No more than five people can tour Keet Seel at one time; this is to minimize the impact to the fragile site. Wear shoes with non-aggressive tread while visiting Keet Seel will greatly lessen impacts to the fragile ancestral pueblo village. Larger groups will be split up into smaller parties. As one group tours the site the rest of the group can relax at the picnic table area, eat, or take photographs. Day hikers have first priority for tours so they have time to hike back to the Visitor Center before dark. Such wandering and exploring beyond monument boundary onto Navajo Nation lands is prohibited. Remember local families monitor the area as well and there may be consequences to such behavior upon your return.

Reservations: Keet Seel will open from **May 24, 2015 – September 12, 2015**. Reservations for back country permits should be made by telephone by calling **928-672-2700** or in person at Navajo National Monument Visitor Center. Reservations may be made starting in early February. Reservations 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 persons per day. We do not accept reservations via fax; please call to confirm your permit no later than one week (seven calendar days) before your visit or your reservation will be cancelled. Please notify us if you or your entire group cancels, so we can accommodate other requests. If the date you want is already filled, you may call back six days prior to the desired date. By then, openings may be available due to cancellations or unconfirmed reservations. We do not maintain a waiting list. Occasionally Keet Seel permits can be obtained on the day of the tour if openings are still available, or if those with confirmed reservations fail to arrive by 9:00am.

Keet Seel Reservations are subject to cancellation during the summer season if heavy rain and flooding occurs in the canyons. Call ahead and check for updates and conditions or check the website at <http://www.nps.gov/nava/index.htm> and click on Park News. Check the weather at the following website: <http://www.noaa.gov/> and type in Betatakin, Arizona in the city and state box.

Permits: *There is a mandatory Keet Seel trail/permit orientation held at the Visitor Center*, at 3:00 PM the day before your scheduled tour, or at 8:15am on the day of your hike (requesting hiker be on the trail no later than 9:00 a.m.). The orientation is required to obtain a permit. The permit allows you to travel across Navajo Nation land to Keet Seel; you must carry the permit with you at all times when hiking to and from Keet Seel. Stay on designated trail. No off-trail travel is authorized. Please respect the homes, property, and privacy of canyon residents.

Camping: The 17 mile (27.4 km) round trip distance to and from Keet Seel can be completed in one day only by those in very good physical condition. Overnight hikers can camp at the designated primitive campground located ¼ mile before Keet Seel. Visitors should camp only in designated areas and away from canyon walls to avoid injury from rock fall. Composting toilets are available at the camp ground and at the ranger station. Wood fires are not permitted. Please pack out all trash. Safe drinking water is not available. You must carry in all your water. Day hikers should plan to bring a minimum of one gallon of water. Overnight hikers should carry a minimum of two gallons.

Recommendations: Appropriate hiking gear items include the following:

- * 1 gallon of water per person per day
- * Hat, rain gear
- * Fleece jacket/Waterproof
- * Flashlight
- * Wool socks and extra socks
- * Sport sandals or tennis shoes (Non-aggressive tread you will cross the stream many times)
- * Sturdy hiking boots
- * Ground tarp or lightweight tent
- * Long pants
- * Trash bag
- * Personal prescription medications
- * High energy food
- * Lightweight long sleeve shirt
- * Cooking Stove
- * First-Aid kit
- * Insect Repellant

Safety Precautions:

Please do not drink, from the stream: Cattle and other animal feces contaminate surface water. Water filters do not remove microscopic organisms that transmit viruses or other illness.

West Nile Virus: We do have West Nile Virus here; please bring insect repellent spray to keep mosquitoes or gnats away from person.

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 develops around large stream boulders after high water, and around springs.

Avoid overheating: Midday temperatures in the canyon bottom range 10° 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 rainy 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 rain.

Be alert for rock falls: The soft sandstone is constantly eroding and falling from canyon walls and inside alcoves. Set up camp and picnic in designated areas away from cliff. Watch out for collapsing dirt banks along creek and gullies: Stay back from the edge of embankments. Embankments are unstable and can give away without warning.

Search & Rescue: This is a remote and sparsely populated area. Help may take hours or most of a day to reach someone. 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 to November, Navajo National Monument and the Navajo Nation Observe Mountain Daylight Savings Time (MDST). This is one hour ahead of other Arizona locations including Flagstaff, Grand Canyon, Hopi Nation, and Phoenix. Navajo National Monument and the Navajo Nation are on the same time as Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico during this Period.

Keet Seel Reservation Date: _____ **Confirmation Date:** _____

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