



To reach the **North (Navajo Mountain Trading Post) Trailhead** from Page, AZ:

Driving Instructions

- At the intersection of Hwy 98 and Coppermine Rd (Big Lake Trading Post), take Hwy 98 East 51.1 miles to the Inscription House Trading Post turnoff (Indian Rd 16).
- Take Indian Rd 16 25.1 miles on pavement and 5.4 miles on dirt to the Navajo Mountain Trading Post fork - bear right and drive about 8.5 miles **past** the Navajo Mountain Trading Post.
- Along the main road, it is 3.7 miles past the trading post to a 4-way intersection with several structures including a stone warehouse.
- Go straight through the intersection for 2.8 miles, road forks here.
- Take the straight fork (across earthen dam), road forks again after 0.4 miles.
- Take left fork 1.6 miles until road ends at Cha Canyon.
- Fork right by corral and park at base of cliff. Trailhead (no sign) starts at end of road.

Trail Description

The following information has been compiled from an archival NPS trail guide and a hike completed in January 2004. This is the slightly longer and more scenic of the two trails to Rainbow Bridge. The trail follows the north slope of Navajo Mountain and exhibits extremes in temperature. Water is generally available, but drought can dry these sources. The trail is not marked, and in some places is difficult to follow. The first half of the trail is criss-crossed with various livestock and wildlife

trails and paths to summer hogans, and can confuse the unwary hiker – be alert. This is a minimum two day round trip – three days recommended. Mileages are approximate:

Mile Trail Notes

0 The road to the Trailhead is rough and rocky, high center or 4W drive vehicles are recommended. Know where you are going prior to driving out there.

Trailhead - No water available, good camping areas. Beware – no trailhead sign. Trail enters canyon and continues on the other side. Close gate behind you as you start down Cha Canyon.

1 **Cha Canyon** - Creek is usually running.

3.5 **Bald Rock Canyon** – Deep, good campsite, water (intermittent as in all following streams). Interesting trail construction. Nice scenic view from the top. Cave on right wall ¼ mile below stream crossing.

5 Pass an old hogan, go up sandy hill behind small Navajo sweat house. Hill is crisscrossed with many small animal trails. The main trail becomes more apparent on top of hill. As you go down into the canyon, notice the bedrock was notched out like stairs. This was done so that pack mules and horses wouldn't slip and fall on the slick rock.

6.5 **N'asja Creek** – Good campsite, picnic table, water available – You will pass an old sweat lodge ½ mile further, then you'll see **Owl Bridge** on your left side.

Do not climb or walk on top of the bridge. Awesome views as you climb out of the canyon. You'll pass another old hogan on the left on the way to Oak Canyon.

10 **10 Oak Canyon** – Water is available. Poor campsites except further downstream. Take the trail heading up the hill, south, "not downstream". No water available for approx. 3 miles from Oak Canyon.

11.5 11.5 Trail enters **Bridge Canyon**, via long, narrow, downhill trek. Water & campsites available further down the canyon. Can become *VERY HOT* with the heat reflecting off canyon walls.

15 **Bridge Creek** joins **Redbud Creek**. This is where the North Trail meets the South Trail. Go to your right, downstream to **Rainbow Bridge**. Water and campsites are available.

Echo Camp – Nearest campsite to Rainbow Bridge National Monument. Please close the last gate behind you.

17.5 **Rainbow Bridge** – Rainbow Bridge is considered sacred to local Indian tribes. The NPS requests that hikers do not walk or sit under the bridge in respect of these beliefs.

Trail Notes compiled by Kirk W. Robinson, Summer 2004