



Destination Guide: Grand Canyon National Park



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AAA Destination Guide: Grand Canyon National Park includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Near the Grand Canyon rim, a chuckwalla lizard basks in the sun atop a rock, unaware its perch overlooks one of the most sublime natural wonders in existence. The reptile scurries away as a much larger, two-legged creature approaches, cautiously peering down at the twisting Colorado River almost 6,000 feet below. Since the Grand Canyon National Park's inception in 1919, gaping tourists have understood why President Theodore Roosevelt called the 277-river-mile-long chasm "one of the great sights that every American should see." While snapping photos of river otters and Gila woodpeckers, more than 5 million people annually traverse the national treasure, encircled by conifer woodlands, desert basins and cascading waterfalls.

Visitors to the region also include geologists, archaeologists, biologists and paleontologists. A backdrop for numerous scientific expeditions, the 1,218,375-acre park—including [Grand Canyon National Park - South Rim](#) and [Grand Canyon National Park - North Rim](#)—features several major ecosystems. Lying on the Colorado Plateau in northwestern Arizona, it encompasses the Lower and Upper Sonoran, Transition, Canadian, and Hudsonian life zones. Rare flora and fauna thrive, with more than 1,500 plant, 355 bird, 89 mammalian and 47 reptile species calling the Grand Canyon home.

From ancient pueblos to Paleozoic-era fossils to western chuckwallas, the park holds an endless magnitude of organic knowledge. Although tourist facilities and modern conveniences have spread through the once

primitive domain, Roosevelt's cautionary words endure: "Leave it as it is. You cannot improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it." With its scenic vistas and countless recreational pursuits, the Grand Canyon has evolved into an ideal vacation retreat; however, the mysterious abyss remains one of Earth's greatest phenomena, transcending the scope of humankind.

Essentials

Appreciate the humbling splendor of one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World walking or biking the Grand Canyon Greenway, a growing network of trails that, once completed, will span 73 miles along both rims. About 4 miles along the South Rim are currently open to the public.

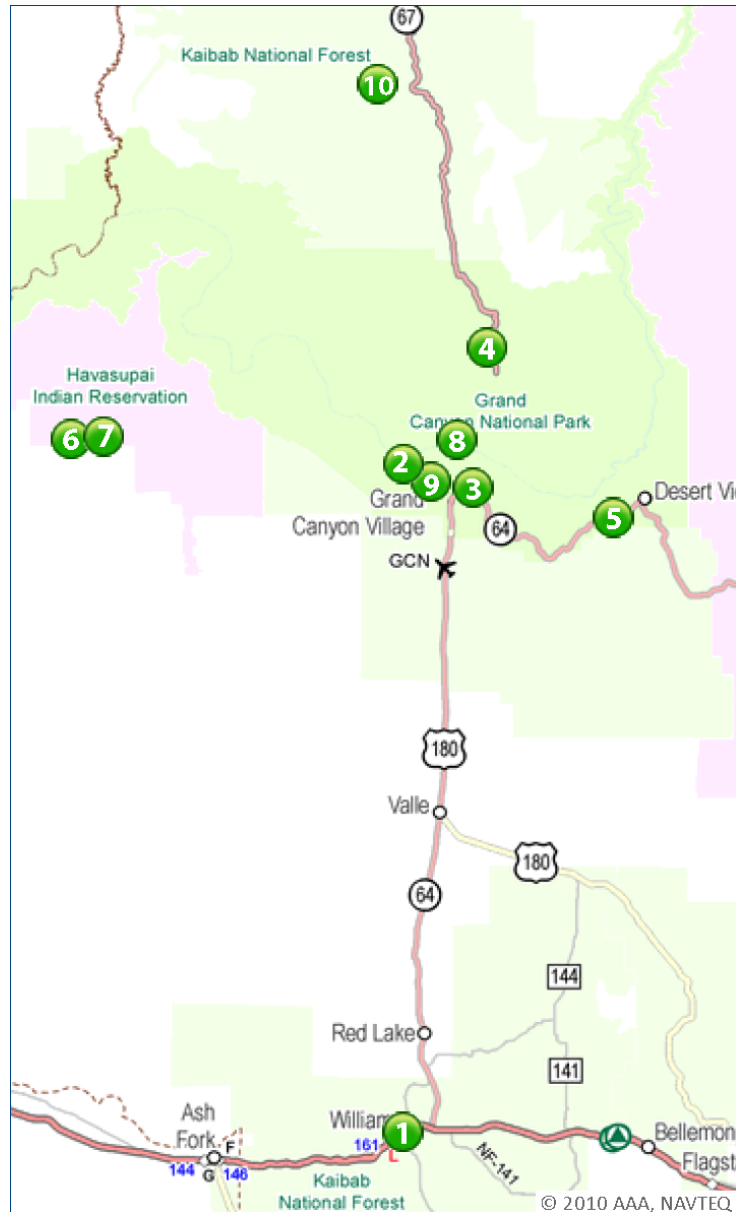
For a bird's-eye view, fly over the 277-river-mile-long chasm on an aerial tour. Helicopter and airplane flights leave from Grand Canyon National Park Airport near Tusayan, Sedona, Scottsdale and other nearby locales.



Gaze out vintage train windows and get lost in the same inspirational landscapes President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Clark Gable and Bill Gates rolled past while traveling from [Williams](#) to Grand Canyon National Park via the [Grand Canyon Railway](#).



Remember muscles you forgot existed rafting some of Colorado River's more than 100 major rapids. Take a breather floating along slower sections of the 300-foot-wide waterway before tackling Granite and Horn Creek's roaring white waters. Experienced guides are recommended.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Essentials Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Grand Canyon Railway

235 N Grand Canyon Blvd
Williams, AZ 86046
Phone: (800) 843-8724



2. Bright Angel Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

3. South Kaibab Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

4. North Kaibab Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

5. Tusayan Ruin and Museum

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7888



6. Supai

7. Havasu Canyon

Supai, AZ 86435
Phone: (928) 448-2141



8. Phantom Ranch

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (303) 297-2757

9. South Rim Muleback Trips

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (888) 297-2757

10. Kaibab National Forest

Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center
US 89A and SR 67
Jacob Lake, AZ 86022
Phone: (928) 643-7298

Drink plenty of water hiking along Bright Angel Trail, South Kaibab Trail and North Kaibab Trail. You can lose 1 to 2 quarts of water per hour just by sweating, making dehydration a common and dangerous Grand Canyon problem.

Tour oak and juniper-lined Desert View Drive past Yaki and Moran points to Tusayan Ruin and Museum, which features Ancestral Puebloan cultural exhibits and an 800-year-old excavated pueblo.

Hoof it to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and settle into one of 11 comfy cabins at rustic Phantom Ranch. South Rim Mule Trips offer an alternative means of transport to the only lodging available below the rim.

Park your horseless carriage at Hualapai Hilltop in Supai and traverse Havasu Canyon astride a steed, flanked by red sandstone cliffs and brilliant blue-green creeks. The Havasupai, the “people of the blue-green waters,” have been residents since about 1300.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Essentials Details - [Get additional information on AAA.com](#)

 - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

11. Williams

12. Painted Desert

I-40 & US 180
Petrified Forest National Park, AZ 86028
Phone: (928) 524-6228



Navigate the 215 miles separating the South and North rims, taking in erosion’s vivid composition, the Painted Desert, along the way. During the 5-hour journey, American elk and white-tailed deer frequent roadside pastures lining Kaibab National Forest.

Help the family connect with nature as your child earns certificates, badges and a junior ranger title through participation in such special learning activities as organized hikes and environmental observation. The park newspaper, *The Guide*, provides educational program schedules as well as shuttle times and facility details.

Restaurants

The Grand Canyon elicits a desire for meals cooked and enjoyed by the warmth of a campfire, beneath the glow of the sweeping night sky. However, such staples as franks and beans can get boring fast. Thankfully, this region’s raw splendor and distinctive culture is emulated in its inviting restaurants.

The Grand Hotel features Canyon Star, a Southwestern eatery roping in diners with such dishes as buffalo burgers, mushroom enchiladas, ribs and steaks. Breakfast and lunch are offered, while Native American dancers and melodic cowboy performances liven up dinnertime. The adjacent saloon conveys the spirit of the West with exposed timber, stone and ironwork décor; barstools made out of saddles; and toe-tapping country-and-western music.

At the Coronado Room in the Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn, discerning diners weary of eating straight from the skillet are pampered with escargot and elk steak. The Continental and Southwestern menu also features chicken, beef and seafood plates, along with an extensive wine list. An elegant, yet casual atmosphere, complemented by an attentive staff, affords the perfect setting to unwind.

Offering gourmet fare in a stylish setting, the El Tovar Hotel Dining Room resides in an architecturally striking lodge built of native stone and Oregon pine. The influence of Native American cultures is apparent in

both the décor and the menu. Corn, pumpkin seeds and pine nuts—staple ingredients to indigenous Indian tribes—add flair to a number of dishes. Try the blue cornmeal and buckwheat pancakes drizzled with pear syrup for breakfast, Navajo fry bread tacos for lunch and grilled lamb chops with cucumber mint yogurt for dinner.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Architect Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter integrated Native American designs into such projects as Hopi House, the [Watchtower](#) and [Bright Angel Lodge & Cabins](#). The last site is a center of activity at the [Grand Canyon National Park - South Rim](#), affording guests such seasonal options as a coffee house and an old-fashioned ice cream fountain. Near the apex of [Bright Angel Trail](#), a tavern illustrates the allure of the West through historic murals, folk musicians and western singers. Bright Angel Restaurant also celebrates the region's colorful past. Munch on stuffed jalapenos, green chili-cheese tamales or the signature Colorado quiche—filled with eggs, ham, Swiss cheese and green onions.

The Arizona Room at Bright Angel Lodge is known for impressive views of the canyon and creative Southwestern flavors. But get there early; long wait times are common and seating is first-come, first-served only. Both lunch and dinner are available, with menu items ranging from simple sandwiches to chili-crusted, pan-seared salmon and honey-chipotle baby back ribs. To quell sugar cravings, try the fudge lava cake, or share a slice of blackberry peach streusel pie.

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#); AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)

1. Canyon Star

Hwy 64
Grand Canyon National Park -
South Rim, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-3333

2. Coronado Room

74 SR 64
Grand Canyon National Park -
South Rim, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2681

**3. El Tovar Hotel
Dining Room**

Grand Canyon National Park
- South Rim, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2631

**4. The Arizona Room
at Bright Angel Lodge**

10 Albright Ave
Grand Canyon National Park-
South Rim, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2631

5. We Cook Pizza & Pasta

Hwy 64
Grand Canyon National Park -
South Rim, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2278

The cafeteria at [Maswik Lodge](#) is similar to a food court, dishing up complete meals with complementary sides. Enjoy a filling feast of spaghetti or barbecue chicken at fast-food restaurant prices. Surrounded by piñon and juniper forests, a seasonal café at [Yavapai Lodge](#) also is an inexpensive stop for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The dining hall features various stations, including a salad bar, where patrons can mix and match items.

If hotel dining halls aren't your style, grab a deli sandwich and a few snacks before heading back into the wilderness. Convenient, year-round concessions are found near [Desert View Campground](#), Hermits Rest and Grand Canyon Village Marketplace. Dine-in or take-out service is available at [We Cook Pizza & Pasta](#). The popular eatery sells calzones, microbrews, pasta, pizza and sandwiches, while an adjoining ice cream shop serves up cool treats.

Though most dining establishments are on the South Rim, the canteen at [Phantom Ranch](#) nourishes hikers venturing to the canyon floor with hiker's stew as well as vegetarian and steak dishes. Reservations are required, and there are specific seating times for breakfast and dinner. Also offered are sack lunches, snacks and supplies.

For picturesque views of the [Grand Canyon National Park - North Rim](#), stop at the [Grand Canyon North Rim Lodge](#). Architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood designed the 1937 structure, which showcases limestone walls and timbered ceilings. Patrons of the on-site restaurant nibble on blueberry chardonnay salmon and white wine-infused chicken breast. An abundant breakfast buffet provides sightseers with plenty of energy, while burgers, sandwiches and salads make up the lunch menu. Travelers also find snacks, picnic lunches and veggie burgers at a small café as well as gourmet coffee and pastries at the Roughrider Saloon.

Also serving North Rim visitors is [Jacob Lake Inn](#), built in 1923 amid the towering pines of adjacent [Kaibab National Forest](#). The inn's bakery and restaurant fills bellies with such wholesome fare as freshly prepared French toast and whole wheat pancakes. Heralded as one of the nation's best hamburgers, their loaded Grand Bull Sandwich is served on grilled

bread and piled high with mushrooms, grilled onions, cheese, bacon, tomato slices and green chilies. For dessert, sample a warm chocolate-parfait, lemon-zucchini or German chocolate cookie.

Attractions

In a national park with dozens of attractions and points of interest, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

Most attractions and facilities are located in the [Grand Canyon National Park - South Rim](#), including the Grand Canyon Greenway, [Lipan Point](#) and [Rim Trail](#). (For more information, see Recreation.) Brochures and knowledgeable employees are available at two visitor information outlets. Near Mather Point by the entrance station, [Canyon View Information Plaza](#) is accessed via free Grand Canyon Village shuttles year-round. Indoor and outdoor exhibits provide insight into the canyon, observed at an altitude of 6,950 feet.

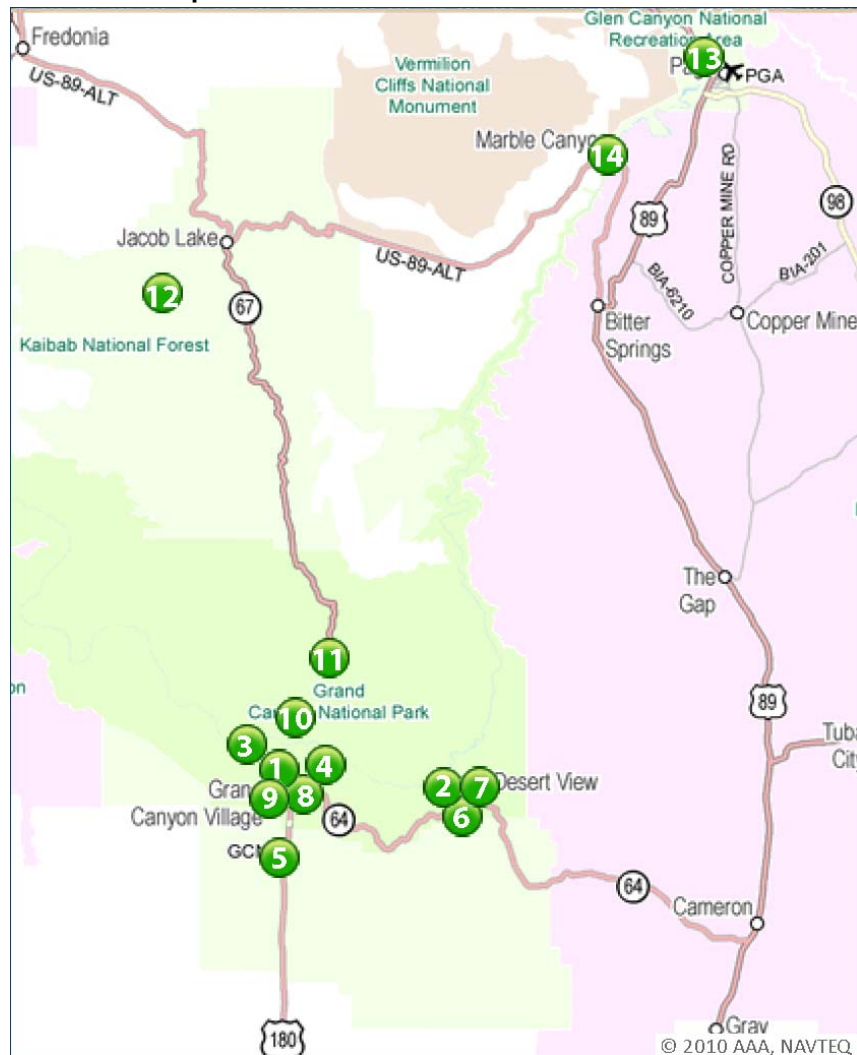
The staff at [National Geographic Visitor Center Grand Canyon](#) recommends time-saving tips using promotional literature and personal experience. Just a half mile north of Grand Canyon Airport, the center features an accurate model of the Grand Canyon, children's activities and historic exhibits. Its popular, 34-minute IMAX movie bares the sprawling gorge's untapped treasures, also tracing more than 10,000 years of human exploration in the region.

Jutting off the Grand Canyon's ridge, the Kolb Studio structure is just as remarkable as the artwork displayed inside. Built before the territory's national park designation, it served as home and workplace to the first men to film a Colorado River expedition. Evolving from simple photography darkroom to five-story cultural center, the studio accommodates a bookstore, an interpretive center and art gallery, with continuing restoration projects enhancing its historic appeal.

The Hopi's ancestors inhabited the village found at Tusayan Ruin and Museum, often facing such setbacks as poor soil, scarce rainfall and drinking water shortages. Though described as Anasazi (more recently named Ancestral Puebloans), these early Pueblo farmers never referred

to themselves by the Navajo term meaning "ancient enemy." Models, pottery and modern tribe exhibits introduce visitors to Native American culture at the AAA GEM attraction, while a paved trail leads to a U-shaped pueblo.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Grand Canyon National Park

South Rim



2. Lipan Point

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

3. Rim Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

4. Canyon View Information Plaza

SR 64 & S Entrance Rd
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7888

5. National Geographic Visitor Center Grand Canyon

SR 64 & US 180
Tusayan, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2468



6. Tusayan Ruin and Museum

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7888



7. Watchtower

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

8. South Kaibab Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

9. Bright Angel Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

10. Phantom Ranch

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (303) 297-2757

11. Grand Canyon National Park

North Rim



12. Kaibab National Forest

Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center
US 89A and SR 67
Jacob Lake, AZ 86022
Phone: (928) 643-7298

13. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Phone: (928) 608-6404,
(928) 608-6200

14. Marble Canyon

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Weathered stones and salvaged logs make up the Watchtower, built around a steel frame in 1932 to mimic prehistoric towers. From the highest South Rim viewpoint of 7,522 feet, visitors glimpse powerful vistas of surrounding piñon and juniper woodlands as well as the winding Colorado River. A snake altar greets visitors on the first floor, while murals and replicated pictographs appear throughout the four-story edifice.



European contact with the Havasupai people came in 1776, when a Spanish priest arrived in Havasu Canyon. Today, visitors to Supai still encounter some of the tribe's approximately 650 members at the village café, general store and lodge. Hikes through the AAA GEM attraction's red valley reveal such flora as cattails, willows and box elders. At limestone-swathed Havasu Creek, an underground river emerges at a rate of about 28,000 gallons per minute.

With virtually no shade, the 7-mile South Kaibab Trail is a steep, taxing journey lasting about 4-6 hours one-way. However, the well-maintained scenic path descends more than 4,500 feet, offering peeks at multiple sedimentary rock layers, including Kaibab limestone, Coconino sandstone and Hermit shale. Interpretive signs, fossil exhibits, campgrounds and facilities are found along the way.

Grand Canyon Railway once supplied all water to the Grand Canyon, also transporting tourists lured by President Theodore Roosevelt's adulation of the yawning formation. The national treasure is still accessible via a 130-mile trip aboard restored steam engines and vintage diesel trains, with gun-slinging lawmen and masked desperadoes resurrecting the Wild West during scheduled shows. In 1989, 88 years after the first passenger train departed Williams, the AAA GEM attraction resumed service following more than 2 decades of closure.

Passing through cottonwood trees and such landforms as Tonto Platform, Bright Angel Trail starts just west of Bright Angel Lodge, descending 3,770 feet to Plateau Point and 4,460 feet to the Colorado River.

Overnight stays in the vicinity are available at Indian Garden and Bright Angel campgrounds. Diverse wildlife populates the steep, well-defined trail traversed by both the Havasupai and 19th-century prospectors. (For more information, see Recreation.)

The 9-mile trail also leads to one of architect Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter's many regional works, Phantom Ranch. Separate dormitories for men and women, rustic cabins and a canteen are reached only by foot, mule or raft. Completed in 1922, the ranch remains highly popular, with several months advance reservations necessary.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton designated Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, more than 1 million primitive acres north of Grand Canyon National Park. Spanning four ecological regions, the monument contains Dellenbaugh and Hurricane faults; Whitmore Canyon and Shivwits Plateau; and exposed purple, pink and white shale at Hells Hole. Kaibab squirrels, desert tortoises and wild turkeys roam the volcanically shaped land that humans have inhabited for more than 11,000 years.

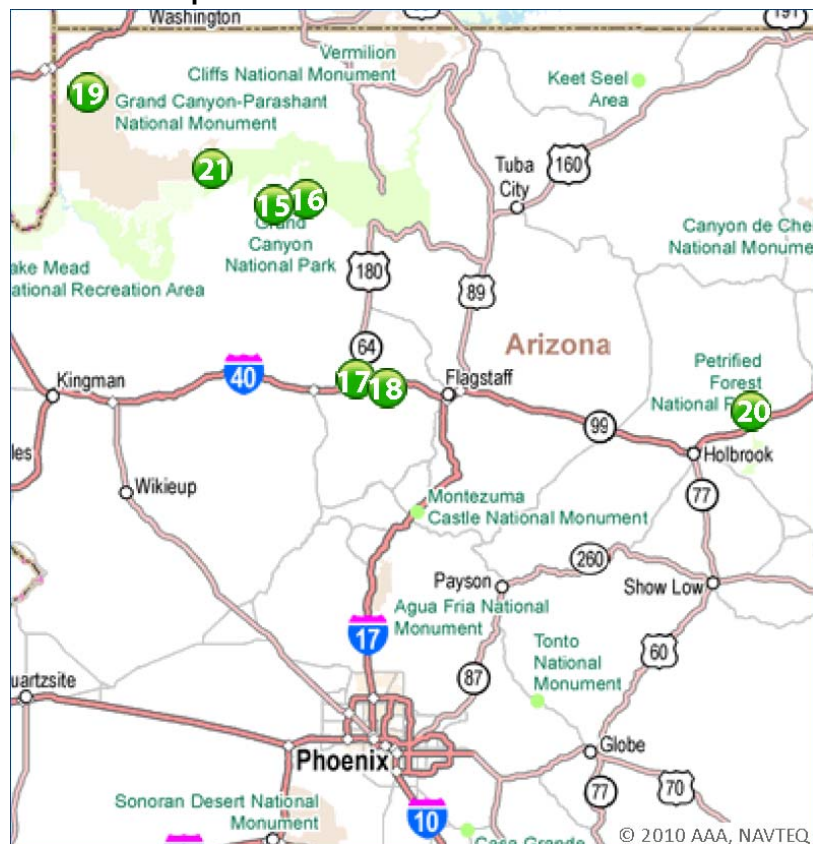
Less developed than its southern counterpart, the Grand Canyon National Park - North Rim is on average 1,000 feet higher than the south, making temperatures about 5-10 degrees cooler. Winter snow closes entrance roads, but cross-country skiers can still access its secluded pine forests and dramatic plateau perches (for more information, see Recreation). Soaring 8,803 feet into cloud-streaked skies, the park's highest viewpoint, Point Imperial, presents views of the Painted Desert and the Navajo Indian Reservation upland.

With portions of its 1,556,432 acres bordering both the North and South rims, Kaibab National Forest is part of the largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest in the United States. Black bear, Abert squirrels and porcupines meander through Engelmann and blue spruce woodlands. Birdwatchers benefit from the forest's natural landscapes, with nuthatches, bluebirds and Steller's jays commonplace.

The remote Tuweep Area (also known as Toroweap) rewards visitors who undertake the challenging journey to marvel at its impressive geologic attributes. Sitting on the flat Esplanade shelf at an elevation of 4,600 feet, about halfway between the canyon bottom and the coniferous North Rim forests, Tuweep boasts dramatic views of the inner gorge and the volcanic aftereffects of the Toroweap Fault. Widespread lava flows define this undeveloped region, as do such life forms as black cryptobiotic soil and slickrock water organisms.



Glen Canyon National Recreation Area contains a well-preserved Pueblo abode and numerous petroglyphs; Hole-in-the-Rock trail, the perilous path Mormon pioneers undertook in 1879; and the Lees Ferry and Lonely Dell Ranch Historic District. Recreational activities abound, with canoes and larger vessels negotiating Lake Powell. The area also is a popular starting point for raft trips down the Colorado River. At the Navajo Bridge Interpretive Center, visitors 467 feet above the waterway cross a 616-foot-long pedestrian bridge for views of North Rim's Marble Canyon. (For more information, see Recreation.)

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com:

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

15. Havasu Canyon
 Supai, AZ 86435
 Phone: (928) 448-2141



16. Supai

17. Grand Canyon Railway
 235 N Grand Canyon Blvd
 Williams, AZ 86046
 Phone: (800) 843-8724



18. Williams

19. Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

20. Painted Desert
 I-40 & US 180
 Petrified Forest National Park, AZ 86028
 Phone: (928) 524-6228



21. Tuweep Area
 Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Recreation

Biking, swimming, backpacking, fishing, hiking—whatever your interest, make sure you experience these recreational highlights, as chosen by AAA editors.



Though prohibited in wilderness areas and on most trails, bicycles are allowed on the Grand Canyon Greenway. A developing set of multi-use paths along the South Rim, the Greenway project is designed to reduce vehicular traffic in the park. The first

phase from Yavapai Point to Pipe Creek Vista on Desert View Drive and the second phase from Canyon View Information Plaza to Grand Canyon Village are complete; North Rim trails and a third South Rim phase may be added in the future. Both paved and unpaved park roads also are accessible to bicyclists, though the shoulders are narrow and automobile traffic can be heavy. Pedal from Grand Canyon Village along Hermit Road, an 8-mile route highlighted by the Abyss, an abrupt 3,000-foot drop to the Tonto Platform. The road ends at a historic stone building designed by architect Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, where restrooms, snacks and gifts are available. Bicycles are not available for rent inside the park.

Visitors often negotiate the rocky terrain of [North Kaibab Trail](#) on half-day [North Rim Muleback Trips](#), although some spend the whole day aboard the sure-footed creatures, continuing to Roaring Springs for further exploration of the canyon. [South Rim Mule Trips](#) head to Plateau Point along [Bright Angel Trail](#), with overnight ventures leading to [Phantom Ranch](#).

Hikers reach Mather Point along [Rim Trail](#), an easy, well-shaded track also offering shuttle bus service. [Yavapai Observation Station](#) is another interesting trail resting point, as are Pipe Creek Vista and Hopi Point. At Trailview Overlook, visitors scanning nearby Bright Angel can get an impression of the steeper pathway and resolve to tackle it another day.

After finally hiking Bright Angel for 4.6 miles to Indian Gardens, you can rest beneath the shade of a cottonwood. The black-and-white Cottonwood Borer, one of North America's largest insects, may be spotted chewing on the poplar trees. (These long-horned beetles, which grow up to 1.5 inches long, aren't harmful to the trees.) A ranger station is available at this point, which is the farthest you'll want to travel during a summer day-hike.

With the park containing more than 20 trails, give your feet a rest and hop aboard an all-terrain vehicle for fun, off-road adventures around [Kaibab National Forest](#) and the [North Rim](#). Several companies lead guided ATV tours.

Closed to automobiles and snowmobiles in the winter, the North Rim's serene wilderness is only accessible via cross-country skis or snowshoes. Visitors can swish or crunch over the 4-10 feet of snow typically concealing the park's northern meadows and access roads mid-November to mid-May. Backcountry permits are required if you plan on camping in the area; however, book early, as the demand for overnight Grand Canyon access far exceeds availability.

Squinting through binoculars, visitors to Grand Canyon National Park can catch sight of some 355 bird species. Bald eagles nest in the Colorado River corridor, while inner canyon cliffs house at least 100 pairs of peregrine falcons. The park's conifer forests offer asylum to otherwise threatened goshawks and spotted owls.

Sports enthusiasts often pull in 10-pound wild rainbow trout while fly-fishing the Colorado River's cold tailwaters. Because the best spots change from hour to hour, visitors should arrange for a guide and use sinking lines to catch 10-20 fish a day. Fishing in the park requires an Arizona state fishing license, available at Canyon Village Marketplace in Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim. Regulations and licenses also are available online from the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Paddle stretches of the 1,450-mile Colorado River, or get sprayed riding in a motorized raft. One demanding rapid is named after an archaic slang

word for “knockout blow.” In addition to unrivaled thrills, white-water rafting lets Grand Canyon visitors explore about 2 billion years of geologic history amid picturesque limestone and sandstone walls still scoured by turquoise waters. Rafting trips can be arranged at Page, Lees Ferry or in the park. Trips range from 1 day to 3 weeks. Make reservations early, as even commercial outfitters such as [Raft Trips](#) need to obtain permits from the National Park Service.

Adventurous travelers strap on water skis at [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#), where nine busy marinas are found at Lakes Mohave and Mead. The park stretches through Arizona and Nevada, with about 8 million to 10 million visitors annually cooling off in its sun-kissed waters, bounded by sheer cliffs, the Hoover Dam and dry canyon washes.

Recreation Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)

1. North Kaibab Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

2. North Rim Muleback Trips

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (435) 679-8665

3. South Rim Mule Trips

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (888) 297-2757

4. Bright Angel Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

5. Phantom Ranch

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023
Phone: (303) 297-2757

6. Rim Trail

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

7. Yavapai Observation Station

Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

8. Desert View Campground

Grand Canyon National Park, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7875

9. Mather Campground

Grand Canyon National Park, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7888

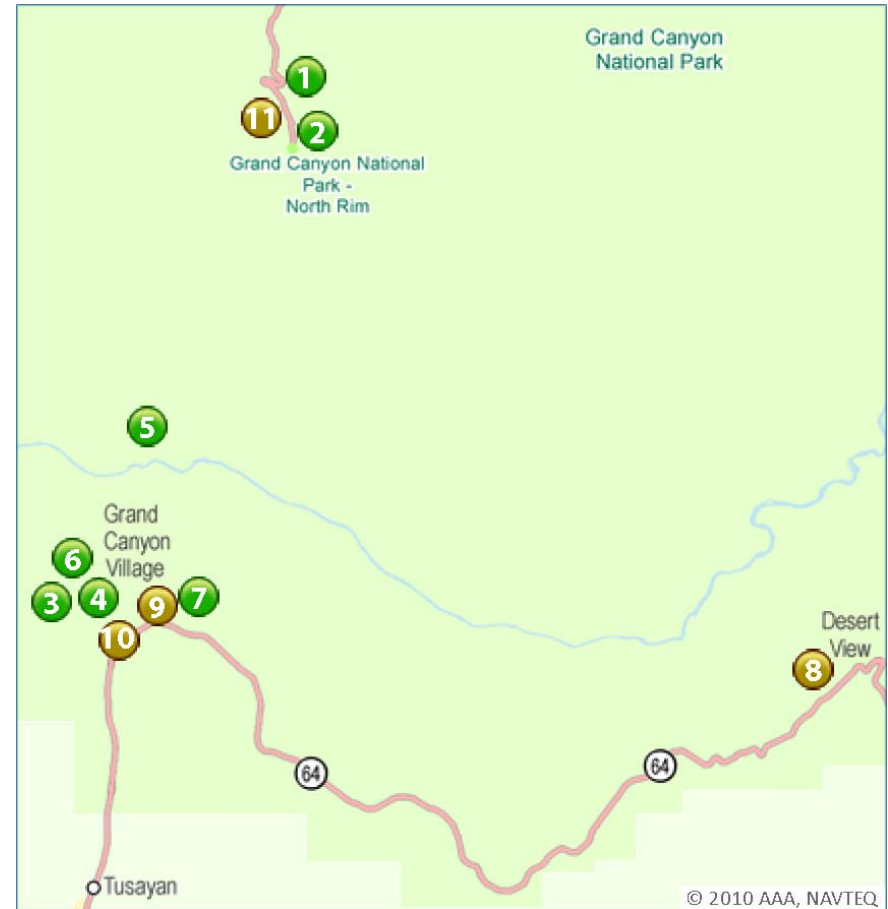
10. Xanterra South Rim Trailer Village

Grand Canyon National Park, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-2631
(888) 297-2757

11. North Rim Campground

Grand Canyon National Park, AZ 86023
Phone: (928) 638-7888

Recreation Map



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Divers in Lake Mead swim past steep drop-offs, white gypsum reefs and sandstone rocks. Kingman Wash is a good area for novices, while only advanced divers should attempt Ringbolt Rapids’ turbulent water. Diving outfitters in Flagstaff and Bullhead City offer classes, and several outlets in Las Vegas rent equipment just outside the recreation area. After examining sunken ships at Dive Park, go spearfishing for carp and striped bass while identifying such aquatic life as eel grass and Asiatic freshwater clams. A fishing license is required, as standard Nevada and Arizona State fish and game regulations apply.

Kayak the country's second largest man-made lake, Lake Powell, which stretches from Page, Arizona, to Hite, Utah. Slip into twisting canyons while navigating the lake's warm waters, taking in stark red spires, ridges and buttes at [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#). Fishing, swimming and mountain biking can also be enjoyed at the park, which is northeast of the Grand Canyon.

Mount up on a relaxing journey beneath rolling lavender clouds by arranging an evening horse expedition. Several stables offer tours of the Grand Canyon. At sunset, roast a marshmallow on the campfire as shadows overtake the crimson gorge that Roosevelt declared "a natural wonder absolutely unparalleled in the world."

Listen to howling coyotes as you settle into your sleeping bag at first-come, first-served [Desert View Campground](#). Reservations are accepted at Grand Canyon Village's [Mather Campground](#), which offers tent and RV camping. Just next door, [Xanterra South Rim Trailer Village](#) features RV sites with hook-ups. Ponderosa pines blanket [North Rim Campground](#), with canyon views available from some of its 83 tent-camping sites. (For detailed listings, pick up a copy of the AAA Southwestern CampBook at your local club.)

After spending a relaxing evening in the backcountry, rock climbers enjoy scaling Brahma and Zoroaster temples. In the 1800s, an American geologist first began naming these landforms after such world gods as Shiva, the Hindu destroyer; Buddha, the "Awakened One" in Buddhism; and Wotan, a Scandinavian deity. Climbers employ minimum-impact techniques—climbing without the use of power tools to install bolts or other hardware—to safeguard the Grand Canyon's extremely fragile rock formations.

Grand Canyon National Park interpretive programs cover such topics as geology, wildlife and cultural history through ranger-led hikes and lectures. Visitors can discover remnants of 270-million-year-old marine creatures, including brachiopods and sponges, walking along a 0.5-mile exposed fossil bed. Another class orients first-time visitors to the area, offering vacation itinerary ideas. Seasonally, rangers discuss the re-

introduction of the California condor to northern Arizona and also the importance of the Colorado River.

Insider Info

Grand Canyon Hiking Tips

In Grand Canyon National Park, sweeping red cliffs, forested plateaus and rare fauna make hiking an irresistible sightseeing option. Fashioned by millions of years of geological activity and erosion, the raw marvel enticed prehistoric man into its chiseled depths and later, 19th-century western explorers. Today, more than 5 million trailblazers annually find solace and adventure in the biologically diverse region, embracing its jaw-dropping landscapes via more than 400 miles of park trails.

Aside from providing great scenery, low- to moderate-intensity walking promotes weight loss and helps prevent such diseases as diabetes and osteoporosis. However, Arizona hiking poses certain health risks; each year more than 250 unprepared visitors are rescued due to the Grand Canyon's rough terrain and extreme weather conditions. In the words of one park ranger: "There's only two kinds of hikers in the inner canyon in high summer—fools and rangers. And one's only there because of the other." Nearly 6,000 feet below the rim, hikers roast in the dry valley bed, with summer temperatures often exceeding 105 F.

While the inner gorge presents its own unique challenges, heat exhaustion and heatstroke can occur anywhere. A top priority on any hiker's list is staying hydrated; drinking water and eating salty snacks replaces vital electrolytes the body sweats out. Good scheduling also averts illness and fatigue; avoid oppressive afternoon temperatures by staying off trails between 10 and 4, and accordingly, don't walk uphill in direct sunlight.

Loose, neutral-colored and lightweight clothes work for some; others prefer to limit sun exposure by layering with synthetic fibers that dry quickly, keeping moisture at bay. Experienced hikers skip cotton articles, particularly when choosing socks. Dodge painful foot problems and prolong the outdoor experience by wearing cushioning wool socks over a thinner polypropylene or nylon pair—along with comfortable, broken-in

hiking boots. Layering is especially important during colder months, though most perceptions of the Grand Canyon exclude the snowy, icy environment found there in winter.

Whether the agenda calls for a short hike or an overnight backpacking trip, knowing what to bring is essential. While a map and first aid kit are key, lugging a cooler to the canyon floor is not a good idea. Balance your load by centering heavier gear close to your back, with similar items grouped into color-coded stuff sacks. Plastic containers keep animals away from food and prevent crushed provisions. Keep the basics handy; don't spend the whole trip searching through belongings for your sunglasses or camera.

Though such items as sun protection, extra food and a compass are indispensable, travel as light as possible, remembering that anything brought in needs to be carried out. In addition to preserving the locale, be courteous to others by giving uphill hikers the right of way and by using cell phones only for emergencies. Always travel in groups, setting the pace according to the party's slowest member. Besides, as naturalist John Muir put it, "People ought to saunter...not hike!" Take in the beautiful sandstone canyons and rumbling waterfalls along Bright Angel Trail and North Kaibab Trail, remembering to enjoy one of Mother Nature's grandest gifts.

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