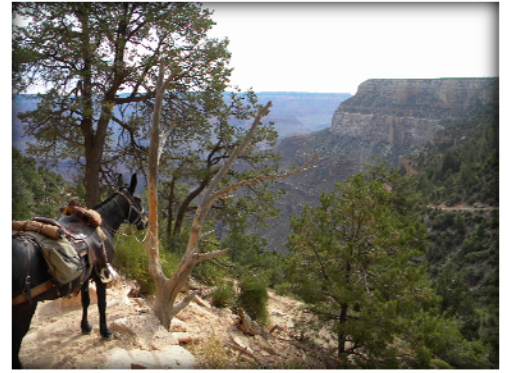


## Delightful Detours In Life. . .

If you ever get the chance, visit the Grand Canyon in Arizona. It is open year around and offers something to do or see for every age. The Canyon is 277 river miles long, nearly one mile deep, and an average 10 miles wide. The South Rim is open 12 months of the year, and the North Rim closes at the first major snowfall in November or December. The Grand Canyon is widely proclaimed as one of the wonders of the natural world. Since 1919, when it received official national park status, millions of visitors have ventured to see one of the truly amazing sights.



Park entrance is \$25 per vehicle (as of July 2009) and \$12 per person for pedestrians and bicyclists (the fees are good for seven consecutive days). Senior citizens can purchase a pass for \$10 (one-time fee) that is good not only for the Grand Canyon but also for all other national parks in the US.

Travel to and throughout the Canyon is varied and fun. You can get to the Canyon via car, train, airplane, or bus. Once inside the Canyon you will find a full range of services from banks, bookstores, lodging, dining (fine dining & cafes), gift shops, laundry, camp sites, lost and found, medical services, religious services, post office, to almost every other amenity offered in a large town. Lodging at the Canyon is first-rate and offers varied places and prices, including camp sites.

Another way to see the Canyon is via the Grand Canyon Railway, providing service between Williams, Arizona and Grand Canyon National Park. A vintage steam engine driven train leaves Williams for the approximately 2-hour trip around 9:00 a.m. during the summer with a second train added during peak demands. During the trip you will be entertained by musicians and singers, and on the return trip the Cataract Creek Gang boards the train for a fun mock train robbery. You will arrive in your 1920s fully restored Harriman coaches just steps from the South Rim. Some visitors choose to return to Williams the same day while others spend the night or more at the South Rim before returning to Williams via the train.

You can hike, ride a mule down to the bottom of the Canyon, take a river raft trip, or just stand around and be amazed at the ever changing colors on the rocks. By the time you take a picture with your digital camera the colors have changed. There are special sunrise and sunset tours that are not to be missed. The introduction of endangered California Condors several years ago provide a truly awe-inspiring sight as they soar high over the Canyon or rest quietly on outcroppings. Between the Big Horn Sheep, elk, coyotes, rock squirrels, ravens and other wildlife, it never gets dull. However, the wild animals are not to be fed or petted as some of them can carry diseases harmful to humans, and, in fact, if you are caught feeding the them, you can be fined. The Rock Squirrels are especially adept at begging for food and about 10 people a week are bitten.

Weather at the Canyon is remarkable in that the summer temperatures can vary from 70s to 80s at the rim to 110+ at the canyon bottom, and spectacular thunderstorms and/or sudden temperature drops are common. Spring and fall are always pleasant weather.

The special attraction of the Grand Canyon is its geologic significance. The erosion forces of the Colorado River are what shaped the Canyon in the past 5-6 million years. Erosion from running rain water, snowmelt, and tributary streams continue to constantly change the Canyon. Geologists from all over the world visit to view the spectacular rock formations and to study the remarkable record of the Precambrian rocks that are almost 2 billion years old. However, Mesozoic and Cenozoic rocks (250 million years old to present) are largely missing

at Grand Canyon. They have either been worn away or were never deposited. The spectacular colors of the Canyon are due to trace amounts of various minerals, mostly iron, which give hues of red, yellow and green.

The hiking in the Canyon can be strenuous and should only be done by experienced hikers. The hike is deceptive and many a hiker has had to be taken out of the Canyon by stretcher or Ranger. All overnight backcountry trips require a permit with the exception of Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the Canyon. Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground are popular overnight stops and are open year-round.

Within the canyon, the Colorado River drops 2,215 feet, getting wider as it descends through the Canyon. This makes for an adventurous whitewater ride. All river trips (April-October) originate at Lees Ferry and passengers can leave or join the trips at Phantom Ranch.

The Grand Canyon has some simple rules that you must follow:

- **Pack out what you pack in**
- **Don't feed the animals**
- Stay on established trails
- Practice minimum-impact camping.
- Recycle everything possible. There are recycling bins everywhere and Grand Canyon National Park has one of the most comprehensive and successful recycling programs in any national park today.
- Conserve water
- Keep hydrated

The North Rim is located in northern Arizona, 215 miles by road from the South Rim, although it is closed from November to mid-May. Only about 10 percent of the visitors travel to the North Rim. The view from the North Rim offers an extraordinarily beautiful view of the South Rim and various other sites can be viewed which are not offered from the South Rim. The North Rim is cooler and offers spectacular scenery from the moist Kaibab Plateau.

A trip to the Grand Canyon is an absolute "must do". You can hike, ride mules, ride bicycles, raft, take helicopter tours, fish, camp, kids activities, relax, dine, or any number of other functions. During the winter the Canyon is spectacular with its dusting of white over the walls and trails, and is a favorite photographic site around this time. Don't forget your camera, hiking boots, suntan lotion, and water. This is a trip you'll never forget.

Source: Grand Canyon, Your Complete Guide to the Park, 26<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2008/9.