

Grand Canyon Trails

The Grand Canyon is so internationally popular that there are more people wishing to camp in the canyon than there are places for them, especially during the summer months. Plan your trip and get reservations three (3) months in advance!

The exploits of one-armed Major John Wesley Powell are well known to any who have read about the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. As a government explorer, however, he was not the first. He was preceded twelve years earlier by Lieutenant Joseph Christmas Ives, who led an 1857 land expedition into the area. Ives's report to congress, related by author/hiker Colin Fletcher a masterpiece in malprognostication, stated:

“Ours has been the first and will doubtless be the last party of whites to visit this profitless locality. It seems intended by nature that the Colorado River, along the greater portion of its lonely and majestic way, shall be forever unvisited and undisturbed.”

In its report to the 103rd Congress, the National Park Service reported 4,547,027 visitors to the Grand Canyon in 1992 alone! In 1992 there were over 800,000 user days inside the canyon. Camper nights in the popular corridor area totaled 44,136 with another 42,692 nights spent in other parts of the canyon. A permit system has been in use for years. Respect for its restrictions is vital to the preservation of this most grand hiking opportunity. Hikes in the canyon, perhaps more than anywhere else, require fastidious planning and preparation. With those 4,547,027 visitors came 1,170 emergency medical service responses, 421 costly search and rescue incidents, and 20 deaths. Scout groups were involved in all three categories in 1992. What follows is not to be taken lightly.

MAPS: Unless otherwise indicated, either of these USGS topographic maps covers the trails in this awards series: Grand Canyon National Park and Vicinity, Arizona (1:62,500); or Bright Angel Quadrangle, Arizona (15'). A large number of hiking guides and privately published recreation maps are available. Some are better than others, depending on the experience of the reader/hiker. Ask advice from experienced hikers and do plenty of homework. The planning packet available from the Backcountry Reservation Office contains a good map and lots of information.

PERMITS: *All hikes in this series require either a hiking or camping permit in advance.* It should go without saying that the Grand Canyon National Park is internationally popular (about 40% of its visitors came from other countries). There are more people wishing to camp in the canyon than there are spaces for them, especially during the spring and summer months. Unless you plan your trip and receive reservations well in advance, you will probably be disappointed in not getting a permit. Full compliance with National Park Service rules and regulations is required, and **VIOLATORS ARE CITED**. For information, a trip planner packet, hiking permits, and camping reservations in the Grand Canyon, contact:

Backcountry Reservation Office
Grand Canyon National Park
Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023

PACE: A simple but important rule of thumb - It takes two to three times as long to hike out of the canyon as it does to hike in! On summer days the temperatures can exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. More than a gallon of water may be needed each day per hiker. Drink the water, don't save it!

LODGING: When school is out during the summer months, you may arrange for your unit to use the Grand Canyon High School for sleeping before the hike starts and to leave extra gear safely stored while in the Canyon. There is a small fee and you must sign a facilities use agreement and show proof of insurance. For more information contact:

Business Manager
Grand Canyon Schools
Box 519
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023

CAVEATS: Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Canyon Council, BSA, combine to offer a few additional cautions.

1. Plan your trip with the least experienced hiker in mind. Allow plenty of time for the slowest hiker. The faster hikers can use the extra time to soak up the experience.

2. Good physical condition is required of both Scouts and Scouters. Admit it: the kids will probably not be the out-of-shape hikers. Don't underestimate the ruggedness of this one-mile-deep canyon.
3. Completion of a corridor hike is strongly recommended before attempting threshold, primitive, or wilderness hikes. Corridor trails are well maintained trails crossing the canyon arid include the North and South Kaibab Trails and the Bright Angel Trail.
4. Leaders of any non-corridor hike are strongly advised to experience the hike themselves before leading the unit.
5. A ratio of 6 boys to 2 leaders is optimal to assure both safety and resource protection.
6. Summer months (May to September) are very hot in the canyon and hikes are not recommended for these months.
7. This series of hiking awards is available only to registered Scouts, and consists of a center or title patch and twelve segments. The title patch is available to any Scout who completes one of the segment hikes. It is highly recommended that new Scouts and those with no experience in the canyon start with one of the first two hikes described. A brief description of each of the twelve hikes follows.

Trail Descriptions and Requirements

RIM TO RIVER: Actually, rim to river to rim, unless you hire a helicopter or mule to get back out. We recommend this or the following hike for a first-time Grand Canyon experience. On this one you don't have to catch a ride 100 miles to pick up your vehicles. Use the Bright Angel Trail, the South Kaibab Trail, or a combination of both. If you want to experience both, go down the shorter but steeper Kaibab and up the longer but more gradual Bright Angel. Camping (by permit only) is available at Phantom Ranch and Indian Gardens.

RIM TO RIM A minimum of three days is recommended for this hike. From the South Rim take either the Bright Angel Trail or the South Kaibab Trail to the river, and then take the North Kaibab Trail up along Bright Angel Creek to the North Rim. The route may be done in reverse as well. Using the Bright Angel Trail the total distance is 23.5 miles, compared to 20.3 miles via the South Kaibab Trail. There are only three campgrounds along this route and camping elsewhere is prohibited. Reservations must be made well in advance.

Requirements:

1. A minimum of two days is recommended.
2. From South Rim, via Bright Angel Trail (25 miles), or the South Kaibab Trail (21 miles), take the North Kaibab Trail up Bright Angel Creek to the North Rim, or take the reverse route. Campgrounds are along the creek.

RIM TO RIM TO RIM: This hike is 40.6 to 47 miles depending on route choices and should not be attempted in less than four days. Use any combination of corridor trails (South Kaibab, Bright Angel, and North Kaibab Trails). The entire trip is to be completed in one outing but is not to be a marathon; allow plenty of time.

Requirements:

1. A minimum of four days is recommended for this 47 mile hike.
2. South Kaibab or Bright Angel Trails from the South Rim and the North Kaibab Trail from the North Rim.
3. Hike must be completed in one trip.

BASS, GRANDVIEW, HANCE, HERMIT, and THUNDER RIVER TRAILS: These are five separate hikes, each recognized by a different segment. They all go from the South Rim to the river, except for the Thunder River Trail, which starts at the North Rim. None of these trails is maintained, but each still requires a permit, as does all inner-canyon hiking. To get these permits, previous Grand Canyon hiking experience is required. Information, experience, and mature judgment are especially important on these hikes. Do plenty of reading and learn from the experiences of others. To complete each of these hikes you must reach the Colorado River.

Requirements: All are un-maintained and require a hiking and camping permit.

1. Each trail has its own segment award.

PRIMITIVE TRAILS: Go from either rim to the Colorado River by any route not yet mentioned. The Boucher and Tanner Trails are examples. Everything said for the previous five trails applies to this segment too.



Requirements:

1. This award may be earned by hiking any trail, not previously named, from either rim to the Colorado River.
2. The Boucher and Tanner Trails are examples.
3. A permit is required in all cases.

SUPAI TO RIVER: This hike takes you into Havasu Canyon, home of the Havasupai tribe, ending below the waterfalls of Havasu creek. The ten mile trail to the campground isn't part of the awards program, but is the only way to get to the trailhead. The hike for this segment begins at Mooney Falls and goes eight miles to the Colorado River. The 16 mile round trip takes a full day, so three days are needed for this outing. The water-covered vertical descent down Mooney Falls is strenuous and hazardous. The last four miles are within Grand Canyon National Park, and camping is not permitted in that area of the park.

This hike is only partly within the Grand Canyon National Park. It starts at Hualapai Hilltop, some 60 miles north of Peach Springs, AZ., on Arizona 66, about is four hours driving time from the Canyon's South Rim. The best map is USGS Grand Canyon National Park, West Half (1:48,000).

Requirements:

1. Allow three days for entire trip.
2. Travel down the creek bed to reach the Colorado River.
3. Advance reservations and fees (\$30.00 per hiker for two nights in 1992) are required. Write to:

Havasupai Tourist Enterprise
Supai, Arizona 86435
Phone (928) 448-2121.

PARIA CANYON: The canyon of the Paria River is about 45 miles long, with its origin near Bryce Canyon National Park and its terminus at Lees Ferry on the Colorado River., The hike begins in a shallow wash just below US 89 in southern Utah. Hikers should allow four to six days to complete the trip to Lees Ferry. The river is shallow and easily waded in its entirety, except in flood conditions. Check weather conditions with the BLM office just before you set out.
Contact:

Bureau of Land Management
320 North First Street East
Kanab, Utah 84741
[Telephone (801) 644-2672]

A backpacker's guide and illustrated map are available from the Kanab District Office. Also before leaving, check in with the National Park Service at Lees Ferry [(520) 335-2235] to let them know when you expect to arrive and how many are in your group in exchange for up-to-the-minute hiking conditions. (Topos: Paria, Utah; Paria Plateau, Arizona; and Lees Ferry, Arizona Quads; all 15)

Requirements:

1. Allow four to six days to complete the entire trek to Lee's Ferry, AZ.
2. The canyon is 45 miles long and embraces the Paria River, a perennial stream that begins near Bryce Canyon National Park and runs into the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry.
3. The hike begins in a shallow wash just below U.S. Highway 89 where it crosses the Colorado River in southern Utah.

RAINBOW BRIDGE: There are two trails you may hike to earn this segment. The first is the 24 mile Rainbow Trail (elevations: 6,300' to 3,800') that starts at the old abandoned Rainbow Lodge and goes around the west side of Navajo Mountain. The Cameron Trail is several miles longer but offers easier going (elevations: 6,000' to 3,800'). It starts near Navajo Mountain School and goes around the east and north sides of the mountain. You can return by either trail, go out by boat on Lake Powell, or come in by boat and hike out. Information for these hikes is available from:

Superintendent
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Box 1507
Page, Arizona 86040
Phone: (928) 645-2471

This hike is in a remote and seldom visited area of the Navajo Reservation. Permits are required by and are available from the tribal government. (Topo: Navajo Mountain, UT-AZ, 15' Quad) Contact:

Director
Recreational Resources Dept
Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, AZ 86515
Phone: (928) 871-4941, ext 1645

Requirements:

1. Two trails may be hiked to earn this segment: the Rainbow Trail or the Cameron Trail.
2. Return by either trail or go out by boat on Lake Powell, or come in by boat and hike out by trail.
3. Permits are required by the Tribal Government.

Grand Canyon Trails Medal

Requirements:

To earn this award, you must complete one requirement from (1) and one from (2):

Requirement (1)

- Complete the Rim to Rim to Rim hike
- Complete any three separate hikes in this series.

Requirement (2)

- Write your own 800-word report on your hikes covering geology, plant and animal life of the area hikes as you saw them.
- Read a book on the Grand Canyon, which has been approved in advance by your unit leader as appropriate to your age and interests. Be sure to name the book you read on the application form.



Suggested Reading List for the Grand Canyon Trail Medal

Younger Scouts

- Foster, Lynne. *Exploring the Grand Canyon: Adventures of Yesterday and Today*. Grand Canyon National History Association, 1990.
- Gamble, Felton. *Explore Grand Canyon*. Northland Press, 1971
- Jeans, Charlotte. *Grand Canyon Hike*. Follett Publishing, 1963.

Older Scouts and Adults

- Babbitt, Bruce. *Grand Canyon, an Anthology: a selection of Outstanding Writings*. Northland Press, 1978.
- Fletcher, Colin. *The Man Who Walked Through Time*. Knopf, 1967.
- Price, L. Greer. *Grand Canyon: the story behind the Scenery*. KC Publications, 1991.
- Stokes, William. *Scenes of Plateau Lands and How They Came to Be*. Starstone Publishing, 1989.

Notes on Wearing These and Other Hiking Awards

Title or center patches and segments may be displayed on jackets, packs, blankets, camping gear and even on the right shirt pocket in the space reserved for temporary patches, (only one temporary patch is displayed on the uniform at a time). Medals may be worn on the left breast pocket of the Scout uniform. If the Eagle medal is worn, the trail medal is on its left.

Topographic Maps

Rim to Rim Trail Grand Canyon National Park



