

Grand Canyon National Park

3-Day Deluxe Itinerary

Editor's Note

Grand Canyon is one of the Seven Wonders of The Natural World. It's 277 miles long, 18 miles wide and over 6,000 feet deep. Nothing can quite prepare you for its size and grandeur.

It's also extremely popular. Almost 6 million people visit the national park each year - most of them to the South Rim. It can be difficult to know the best way to beat the crowds, where and when to see the best views, and what else there is not to miss in the national park.

This is what this itinerary planner is here for.

Follow this detailed plan, while making choices along the way, and you will have the perfect 3-day itinerary for the South Rim tailored to your needs but without the stress and hassle of planning from scratch.

Enjoy your trip to the Grand Canyon!

James

James Ian
Founder



Parks Collecting

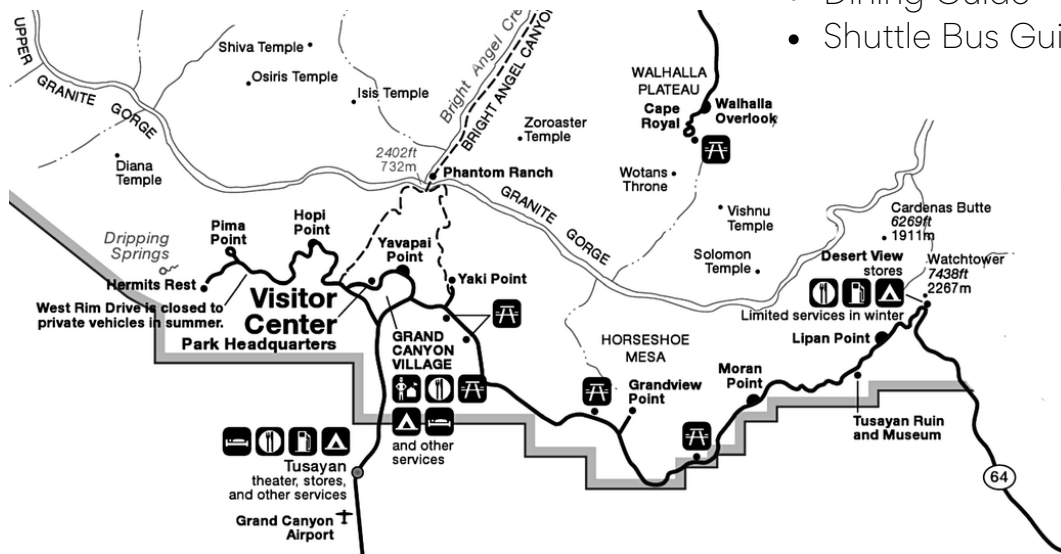


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PARK OVERVIEW

Getting Your Bearings

The center of South Rim is **Grand Canyon Village**. The nearest gateway town is **Tusayan**, where there are accommodations, restaurants and a small airport (mostly for scenic flights). It's five minutes from Tusayan to the national park's South Entrance and another ten minutes to the Visitor Center, where there is a large parking lot. This itinerary assumes you are staying in Tusayan or Grand Canyon Village. If you stay elsewhere, check the Adjusting Your Schedule section.

West of Grand Canyon Village along the South Rim is **Hermit Road**, to Hermit's Rest. Heading east from Grand Canyon Village along the South Rim is **Desert View Drive**, to Desert View, where there is a campground, and the park's East Entrance.



TIPS FOR VISITING

Entrance Fee

Visit the [NPS website](#) for the latest fees. If you plan to visit more than a couple of parks in a year, I recommend buying an [America The Beautiful Pass](#).

Getting There

If you plan to fly in directly, the nearest main airport is **Flagstaff**, 1 hour and 15 minutes south of Tusayan. There's an Amtrak station in Flagstaff as well (and it's on Route 66).

The nearest large international airports are **Phoenix**, approximately 3.5 hours away, and **Las Vegas**, about 4 hours from Tusayan.

[>>> Click here to book your flights](#)

[>>> Click here to book your rental car](#)

Getting Around

There is an extensive **shuttle bus service** that goes from Tusayan into the park, through Grand Canyon Village, west to Hermit's Rest, and as far east as Yaki Point. There are (different) buses from Flagstaff, so you can definitely visit the national park without a vehicle. However, if you want to go further east along Desert View Drive, you'll need your own vehicle or to take a tour. Read more information about the shuttle in the bonus [Shuttle Bus Guide](#).

Wildlife

Grand Canyon is not that famous for its wildlife; however, you have good chances of seeing mule deer and elk wandering around the Village; you may see bighorn sheep; and there are plenty of rattle snakes (though with any luck, you won't see any). The most dangerous animal in the national park is actually the rock squirrel! They may look cute, but they bite dozens of visitors every year. Stay away from them! Always stay at least 100 feet (30m) from elk, deer, and other large animals and 50 feet (15m) from small animals, birds and reptiles.

Hiking

Hiking in the heat is very hard on your body. Remember that if you plan to head below the rim, **going down is optional but going up isn't!** Drink about a quart of water or sports drink every hour. The hikes here are timed for cooler times of the day, but still take your time, rest in the shade, and drink plenty of water.



HOW TO USE THIS ITINERARY

This itinerary planner is designed to balance taking away the overwhelm with still giving you the freedom to **create an itinerary that suits your interests** and comfort level.

Please read all this information carefully so you can take full advantage of the itinerary planner.



Hikes

Where appropriate, several hike options are given, based on varying levels of difficulty and interest. In this case, you can **choose the hike** that best suits you.



Description

Includes **don't-miss sights, sites and insights**.



Meals

Meal suggestions or times are given. Detailed options are provided in the [Dining Guide](#).



Driving Directions

Detailed **driving directions** are provided for each day.



Shuttle Bus

There is an extensive shuttle bus system through most of the South Rim. Read the bonus [Shuttle Bus Guide](#) for full details.



Things To Note

Includes any warnings, **important information**, considerations or closures.



Highlights

There are great views throughout the park, but these are especially **great viewpoints and/ or sights**.



Cycling

This indicates an option to ride a bicycle or e-bike to see the sights.



Less-Active Options

To really get the most out of the national parks, you need to leave the roads, but that doesn't mean you can't have an awesome time if you can't or prefer not to hike.

Non-hiking or easy walking options are great for those with **limited mobility or fitness**.

Some of these suggestions involve no walking at all, while others may involve short distances on flat or mostly flat paths.



Accommodations

This itinerary is based around you staying in **Grand Canyon Village** or nearby **Tusayan**. Accommodation options in both areas are provided in the [Accommodations Guide](#). I recommend staying inside the park, if possible, but Tusayan is very close and on the shuttle route.

If you do stay somewhere other than Grand Canyon Village or Tusayan, read the **Adjusting Your Schedule** section so you can easily adapt your schedule based on where you stay.



Recommended

This symbol indicates that this is my **recommended choice**. However, you can still choose whichever option best suits your comfort level and interests.



The itinerary is **timed** for the best views of the canyon, the best chance of getting a parking spot, the best times to avoid long lines for the shuttle, the coolest times for hikes, and the least crowded times to visit the most popular areas and attractions.

Consequently, the itinerary has you **getting up early** in the morning. Grand Canyon is extremely popular and by getting started early, you will avoid having to wait in line to get through the park entrance if you're staying in Tusayan and avoid long lines for the shuttle buses and to see the canyon's most popular spots. This is also typically the best light for photos of the canyon. The national parks are more popular than ever, so the earlier you get there, the better, so if you started even earlier, that would be even better.

The itinerary has a detailed breakdown of suggested **activities**, with **alternatives** or **flexible options** in the morning and afternoon. Each of the alternate options take about the same length of time, so you can choose one, then move on to the next activity no matter which option you chose.

You can do the days in any order, but I strongly suggest **sticking to the order of events** in the schedule each day. They are arranged and timed intentionally so that you get the most out of your trip.

Note that the **maps** here are designed to give you an overview of the park and where to go, but are no replacement for a detailed map, especially of the hiking trails. You can pick up maps at a Visitor Center or buy a very detailed printed topographic map there or before you go.

I have listed the nearest **parking** lots to the place you'll start your itinerary. However, most of these parking areas are quite small and if you don't get there early, they may be full. If they are, head to the main Visitor Center, where there is a much larger parking lot. From there, you can take the Village shuttle or walk. If you're running late and enter the park after 9:00AM in the busy summer months, I'd recommend taking the shuttle from Tusayan instead. That way, you can skip the long lines to get into the park and not worry about the parking lots all being full.

The itinerary does not include timings for the **sunrise** and **sunset**, since they vary so much throughout the year, but these are wonderful times to see the canyon. Day 1 is a great day to see the sunrise if the weather is good, though you could also see it on Day 3 from Ooh Aah Point if you were OK hiking in the dark. Day 2 is a great sunset day, as Desert View Drive has several good sunset spots. [Check sunrise & sunset times.](#)



A note about the **hikes below the rim**:

There are two main trails from the South Rim into the canyon: South Kaibab and Bright Angel. South Kaibab is shorter (to the Colorado River) but steeper. Bright Angel is longer, but less steep. This itinerary has you hiking on both trails, because they are quite different. However, you have several options.

Day 2, you can hike **Bright Angel** to:

- 2nd Tunnel = 2 miles / 1 – 2 hours
- 1.5 mile Resthouse = 3 miles / 2 – 3 hours
- 3-mile Resthouse = 6 miles / 3 – 4 hours
- Indian Garden = 9 miles / 4.5 – 6 hours

Day 3, you can hike **South Kaibab** to:

- Ooh Aah Point = 1.8 miles / 1 – 2 hours
- Cedar Ridge = 2.8 miles / 2 – 3 hours

Which are the best options to choose?

If you like to hike, choose the longest options for both trails.

If you aren't very fit, but want to try both trails, choose the shortest options for both.

If you wanted to do the longer 3-mile distance on one and a shorter distance on the other, then I'd choose Cedar Point on South Kaibab as long as you are fit enough to deal with the steeper trail. The South Kaibab trail is much more open and especially after Ooh Aah Point, the walls of the canyon open up and the unobstructed views are spectacular. On Bright Angel, the views aren't that different between 1.5 Mile Resthouse and 3-Mile Resthouse.

If you want to choose just one trail, Bright Angel to 1.5-mile is easier than South Kaibab to Cedar Ridge BUT the South Kaibab trail has better views. So, if you want to do just one, and are fit enough, choose South Kaibab.

If you skip a hike completely, you can get a later start (but still aim to get into the park well before 9:00AM if you're staying outside the park to avoid long lines at the entrance gate and get a parking space) or spend more time at South Rim viewpoints.



ITINERARY UPDATES

This itinerary is reviewed annually, but is not updated in real time, throughout each year. However, things can change. So, I strongly recommend checking for NPS updates on changing conditions such as road works, facilities closures, trail closures, etc. that may affect part of this itinerary, especially as your trip gets closer.

[CHECK FOR CURRENT CONDITIONS HERE](#)

THE DAY BEFORE



You will arrive in Tusayan or Grand Canyon Village, either by driving or flying into Flagstaff, Phoenix or Las Vegas and getting a bus or rental car from there.

Check the **[Accommodation Guide](#)** to find a place to stay in Tusayan or Grand Canyon Village.



Use the **[Dining Guide](#)** to find somewhere for dinner in Tusayan or Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 1 AT A GLANCE

Today you'll travel along **Hermit Road** and see some of the most stunning views of the canyon, then spend the afternoon exploring the attractions in **Grand Canyon Village**.

OPTION A [page 9]

This option involves taking the shuttle plus walking between some viewpoints.

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:00AM: Walk to Trailview Overlook
8:30AM: Take Hermit Road Shuttle from Trailview Overlook to Maricopa Point
9:00AM: Take shuttle from Maricopa Point to Powell Point
9:15AM: Walk from Powell Point to Hopi Point
9:35AM: Walk from Hopi Point to Mohave Point
10:00AM: Take shuttle from Mohave Point to The Abyss
10:15AM: Take shuttle from The Abyss to Monument Creek Vista
10:30AM: Walk from Monument Creek Vista to Pima Point
11:15AM: Take shuttle from Pima Point to Hermit's Rest
11:20AM: Explore Hermit's Rest

OPTION B [page 14]

This option involves taking the shuttle between viewpoints (no walking).

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:15AM: Take Hermit Road Shuttle to Trailview Overlook
8:30AM: Take shuttle from Trailview Overlook to Maricopa Point
9:00AM: Take shuttle from Maricopa Point to Powell Point
9:15AM: Take shuttle from Powell Point to Hopi Point
9:30AM: Take shuttle from Hopi Point to Mohave Point
10:00AM: Take shuttle from Mohave Point to The Abyss
10:15AM: Take shuttle from The Abyss to Monument Creek Vista
10:30AM: Take shuttle from Monument Creek Vista to Pima Point
11:15AM: Take shuttle from Pima Point to Hermit's Rest
11:20AM: Explore Hermit's Rest

OPTION C [page 19]

This option has you hire a bicycle or e-bike and ride to Hermit's Rest, then take the shuttle back.

* An alternate version of this that avoids the steepest hills is to take the shuttle as per Option B to Hopi Point then ride from there to Hermit's Rest.

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan.
Park at Visitor Center
8:00AM: Rent Bicycle or E-Bike

Follow Option A Schedule, but ride

11:20AM: Explore Hermit's Rest

OPTION A [page 23]

11:45AM: Lunch at Hermit's Rest
1:00PM: Take shuttle to Village (put your bike on the shuttle)

OPTION B [page 23]

11:45AM: Take shuttle to Village (put your bike on the shuttle)
12:30PM: Lunch in Grand Canyon Village



1:45PM: Explore Grand Canyon Village at your own pace [page 24]

Options include:

- Verkamp's Visitor Center
- Hopi House
- Kolb Studio
- Lookout Studio
- Grand Canyon Railway Depot
- The Pioneer Cemetery & Shrine of Ages
- El Tovar Hotel
- Bright Angel Lodge History Room

6:00PM: Dinner

* If you want to see the **sunrise**, start Option A or B earlier and go to Maricopa Point for the sunrise. If you choose Option C, see the sunrise at Mather Point, which is near the Visitor Center, then rent your bike afterwards.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Hermit Road and western Rim Trail



Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



OPTION A: Shuttle and walking

If you're able to walk a little, this is a nice combination of the shuttle and some walking. (It's also wheelchair accessible.)

Start by driving from Tusayan or taking the Village shuttle or walking through Grand Canyon Village. If you're driving, park in Lot D near the Back Country Information Center. This has the shortest walk. If the lot is full, park at the larger parking lot at the Visitor Center and either take the Village shuttle or walk to the western end of Grand Canyon Village. Both of these parking lots are OK for RVs.

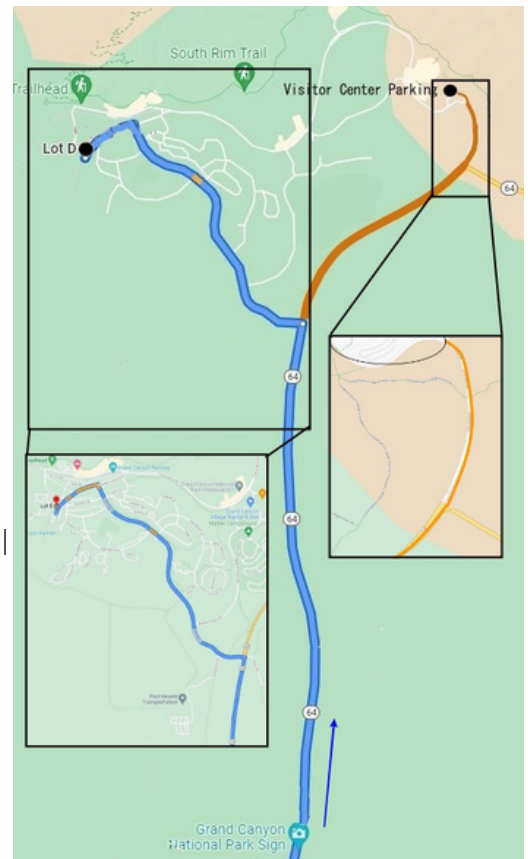


DIRECTIONS: Tusayan - Lot D | Visitor Center

Head north from Tusayan on AZ-64. You'll pass straight through a traffic circle on the edge of Tusayan, pass the National Park sign and enter the South Gate.

To Lot D, turn left on to Center Street 4.4 miles after the Tusayan traffic circle. After another 1.6 miles, turn left on to Village Loop Drive (at Lot C, where you can also park if Lot D is full). This becomes Backcountry Road (Village Loop Drive make a right turn). Keep straight. 0.3 miles after turning on to Village Loop Drive, you'll see Lot D on your right.

To the Visitor Center, from Tusayan keep straight on South Entrance Road past Center Street on your left and past Desert View Drive on your right. Turn right at the sign for Visitor Center parking lots.





DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Walk + Shuttle Hermit Road/ Rim Trail 8:00AM



You'll spend the morning exploring the section of South Rim west of Grand Canyon Village. The road is Hermit Road, and the trail along the rim is part of the Rim Trail. There is a shuttle bus along Hermit Road March 1 - November 30. The shuttle gets very busy and lines can get long, which is why the itinerary has you starting your day here, to avoid the worst of the crowds.

Option A uses a combination of the shuttle and walking some of the Rim Trail. Walking gives you a break from hopping on and off the shuttle, and lets you experience more of the South Rim at a slower pace.

It's a seven-minute walk from Lot D to the start of the red Hermit Road shuttle route and access to the Rim Trail. If you parked at the Visitor Center, you can walk or take the blue Village Route to the Hermit's Rest Route Transfer stop.



Start by walking along the Rim Trail west. It's about a 10-minute walk to the first viewpoint, **Trailview**

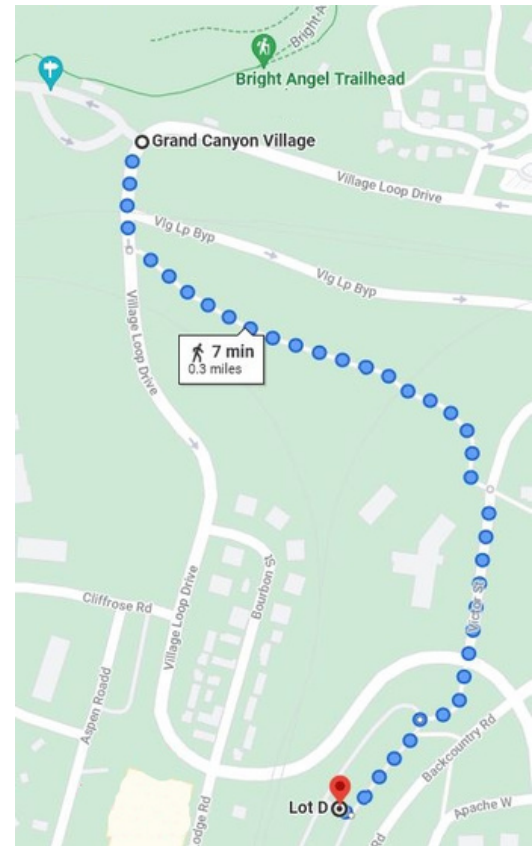


Overlook. This is the best spot to see the Bright Angel Trail zigzagging down the sides of the canyon. You'll hike part of it tomorrow.



Hop on the next shuttle bus and get off at the next stop, **Maricopa Point.** Maricopa Point is a small, narrow

point jutting out into the canyon. It has stunning 180-degree views of the canyon. There is even a tiny glimpse of the Colorado River (the first as you head west on Hermit Road).





DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Walk + Shuttle Hermit Road/ Rim Trail 8:00AM

Looking west, you can see a large gate and small clearing on the rim. This is the Lost Orphan Mine, where first copper and then uranium were mined between 1891 and 1967.



Hop back on the next shuttle and get off at the next viewpoint, **Powell Point**. Grand Canyon National Park's dedication ceremony was held here in 1920 and there is a large granite memorial for John Wesley Powell that you can walk up on to.

Powell was the first (western) person to successfully run the Colorado River through the canyon. Incredibly, he only had one arm while navigating the rapids of the river!



There is a tiny glimpse here of the river Powell traversed, but it's hard to spot and most people can't see it. Nonetheless, the view is great in both directions. You can climb the memorial and you can also go down to a slightly lower, but arguably even better, viewpoint.



The next two viewpoints are close by, so this is a great place to walk. It's just 1.1 miles from Powell Point to Mohave Point (with Hopi Point in between).



Head west along the Rim Trail to **Hopi Point** (typically less than a 10-minute walk). Hopi Point juts out further into the canyon than any of the other viewpoints on Hermit Road, giving you a great perspective and uninterrupted panoramic views to the east and west. Some of the rock formations you can see include *Isis Temple*, *Horus Temple* and *Osiris Temple*.

It's also the first good view of the Colorado River as you head west along Hermit Road. There are, in fact, five sections of the river that you can see from here, though one is especially clear and long.

Fun Fact: Hopi Point, named after the Hopi Indians, was originally called Rows Point after Sanford Rowe, the first person to offer guided trips into the canyon on Bright Angel Trail.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Walk + Shuttle Hermit Road/ Rim Trail 8:00AM



Keep walking along the Rim Trail to **Mohave Point** (about a 15-minute walk).



Mohave Point has incredible views of the western canyon and the Colorado River. On a clear day, you can see Salt Creek, Granite, and Hermit Rapids.

Looking north, down and across the canyon, the large promontory jutting out from Mohave Point is called *The Alligator*. Nearby are the *Horus* and *Osiris Temples*, with the *Tower of Ra* to their left, and the *Isis Temple* to their right. There are also great views of the 3,000-foot cliffs around The Abyss.

There are several places to enjoy the views here, all with slightly different perspectives, so it's worth spending a little time exploring the area.



If you have young kids and they are getting antsy, you can end your trip along Hermit Road here and take a return shuttle back to the Village.



Next up, hop back on the shuttle to the next viewpoint, **The Abyss**. The Abyss has the longest vertical drop on the South Rim. From the overlook, the canyon drops 3,000 feet straight down to the Tonto Platform.



Most overlooks are on sections of the rim that jut out further into the canyon. However, The Abyss is at the end of a side canyon, formed mostly by rocks falling off the cliff face. In addition to the sheer drop below, you can see several sandstone columns. The largest, *The Monument*, is the biggest sandstone column in the canyon.



Take the next shuttle to the next stop, **Monument Creek Vista**.



There's a great view of Monument Creek and Granite Rapid on the Colorado River far below.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Walk + Shuttle Hermit Road/ Rim Trail 8:00AM



Monument Creek Vista is the start of the Greenway Trail, which is a walking and biking path that goes all the way to Hermit's Rest. It's a lovely walk (about 35 minutes) to **Pima Point**.



The views at Pima Point are some of the best views at the Grand Canyon. There is a panoramic vista in both directions. Nearby is the deep red Hermit Creek Canyon. Opposite is a clear view down Ninety-four Mile Creek Canyon. Listen carefully and you hear the roar of Granite Rapids on the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon.



Take the shuttle to the final stop on Hermit Road, **Hermit's Rest**.



The building here was designed by Mary Colter in 1914 to look like an old miner's cabin. It's built of local stone and has a front porch and an enormous alcove fireplace.

There's a giftshop and snack bar (open 9:00AM – 5:00PM), restrooms and drinkable water to fill your water bottles.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Hermit Road and western Rim Trail

OPTION B: Shuttle only

If you prefer not to walk, you can take the shuttle the entire length of Hermit Road, hopping on and off the shuttle at each viewpoint.

Start by driving from Tusayan or taking the Village shuttle or walking through Grand Canyon Village. If you're driving, park in Lot D near the Back Country Information Center. This has the shortest walk. If the lot is full, park at the larger parking lot at the Visitor Center and either take the Village shuttle or walk to the western end of Grand Canyon Village.

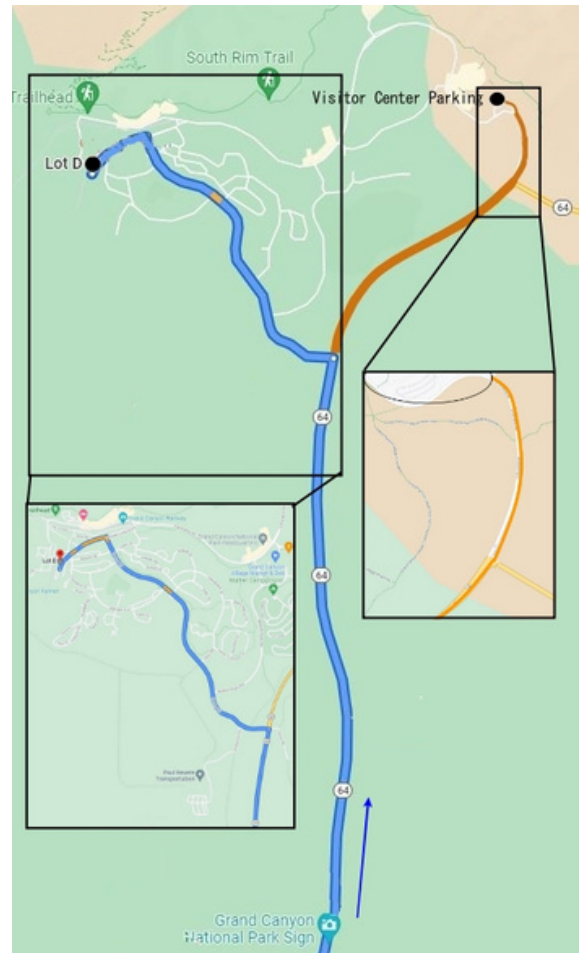


DIRECTIONS: Tusayan - Lot D | Visitor Center

Head north from Tusayan on AZ-64. You'll pass straight through a traffic circle on the edge of Tusayan, pass the National Park sign and enter the South Gate.

To Lot D, turn left on to Center Street 4.4 miles after the Tusayan traffic circle. After another 1.6 miles, turn left on to Village Loop Drive (at Lot C, where you can also park if Lot D is full). This becomes Backcountry Road (Village Loop Drive make a right turn). Keep straight. 0.3 miles after turning on to Village Loop Drive, you'll see Lot D on your right.

To the Visitor Center, from Tusayan keep straight on South Entrance Road past Center Street on your left and past Desert View Drive on your right. Turn right at the sign for Visitor Center parking lots.





DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

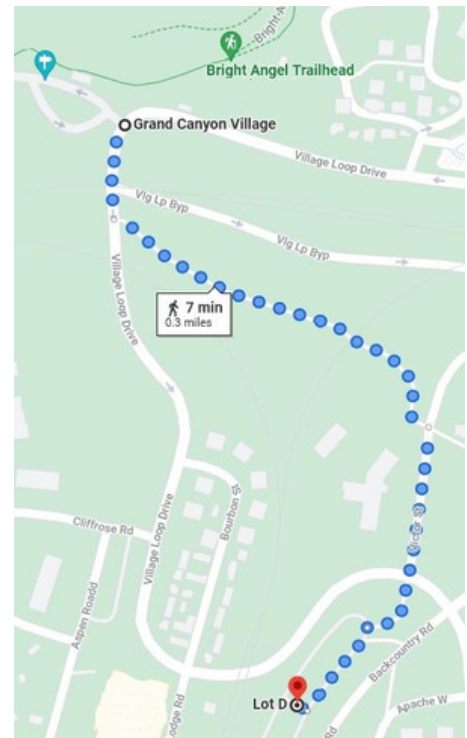
Shuttle Hermit Road 8:15AM



You'll spend the morning exploring the section of South Rim west of Grand Canyon Village. The road is Hermit Road, and the trail along the rim is part of the Rim Trail. There is a **shuttle bus** along Hermit Road March 1 - November 30, when the road is closed to regular vehicular traffic. The shuttle gets very busy, and lines can get long, which is why the itinerary has you starting your day here, to avoid the worst of the crowds.

Option B uses the shuttle the entire way for those who prefer not to walk. Also choose this option (but drive) if you're visiting December - February.

It's a seven-minute walk from Lot D to the start of the red Hermit Road shuttle route. If you parked at the Visitor Center, you can walk or take the blue Village Route to the Hermit's Rest Route Transfer stop.



Take the red Hermit Road shuttle and get off at the first viewpoint, **Trailview Overlook**.



This is the best spot to see the Bright Angel Trail zigzagging down the sides of the canyon. You'll hike part of it tomorrow.



Hop on the next shuttle bus and get off at the next stop, **Maricopa Point**.



Maricopa Point is a small, narrow point jutting out into the canyon. It has stunning 180-degree views of the canyon. There is even a tiny glimpse of the Colorado River (the first as you head west on Hermit Road).

Looking west, you can see a large gate and small clearing on the rim. This is the Lost Orphan Mine, where first copper and then uranium were mined between 1891 and 1967.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Shuttle Hermit Road 8:15AM



Hop back on the next shuttle and get off at the next viewpoint, **Powell Point**. Grand Canyon National Park's dedication ceremony was held here in 1920 and there is a large granite memorial for John Wesley Powell that you can walk up on to.

Powell was the first (western) person to successfully run the Colorado River through the canyon. Incredibly, he only had one arm while navigating the rapids of the river!



There is a tiny glimpse here of the river Powell traversed, but it's hard to spot and most people can't see it. Nonetheless, the view is great in both directions. You can climb the memorial and you can also go down to a slightly lower, but arguably even better, viewpoint.



Take the next shuttle to **Hopi Point**. Hopi Point juts out further into the canyon than any of the other viewpoints on Hermit Road, giving you a great perspective and uninterrupted panoramic views to the east and west. Some of the rock formations you can see include Isis Temple, Horus Temple and Osiris Temple.



It's also the first good view of the Colorado River as you head west along Hermit Road. There are, in fact, views of five sections of the river from here, though one is especially clear and long.

Fun Fact: Hopi Point, named after the Hopi Indians, was originally called Rowes Point after Sanford Rowe, the first person to offer guided trips into the canyon on Bright Angel Trail.



Take the next shuttle to **Mohave Point**.



Mohave Point has incredible views of the western canyon and the Colorado River. On a clear day, you can see Salt Creek, Granite, and Hermit Rapids.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Shuttle Hermit Road 8:15AM



Looking north, down and across the canyon, the large promontory jutting out from Mohave Point is called The Alligator. Nearby are the Horus and Osiris Temples, with the Tower of Ra to their left, and the Isis Temple to their right. There are also great views of the 3,000-foot cliffs around The Abyss.

There are several places to enjoy the views here, all with slightly different perspectives, so it's worth spending a little time exploring the area. The itinerary has you spending a little more time here, as it's a lovely place to relax, explore and enjoy the views.



If you have young kids and they are getting antsy, you can end your trip along Hermit Road here and take a return shuttle back to the Village.



Next up, hop back on the shuttle to the next viewpoint, **The Abyss**. The Abyss has the longest vertical drop on the South Rim. From the overlook, the canyon drops 3,000 feet straight down to the Tonto Platform.



Most overlooks are on sections of the rim that jut out further into the canyon. However, The Abyss is at the end of a side canyon, formed mostly by rocks falling off the cliff face. In addition to the sheer drop below, you can see several sandstone columns. The largest, The Monument, is the biggest sandstone column in the canyon.



Take the next shuttle to the next stop, **Monument Creek Vista**.



There's a great view of Monument Creek and Granite Rapid on the Colorado River far below.



Take the shuttle again to **Pima Point**.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Shuttle Hermit Road 8:15AM



The views at Pima Point are some of the best views at the Grand Canyon. There is a panoramic vista in both directions. Nearby is the deep red Hermit Creek Canyon. Opposite is a clear view down Ninety-four Mile Creek Canyon. Listen carefully and you hear the roar of Granite Rapids on the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon.



Take the shuttle to the final stop on Hermit Road, **Hermit's Rest**.



The building here was designed by Mary Colter in 1914 to look like an old miner's cabin. It's built of local stone and has a front porch and an enormous alcove fireplace.

There's a giftshop and snack bar (open 9:00AM – 5:00PM), restrooms and drinkable water to fill your water bottles.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Hermit Road and western Rim Trail

OPTION C: Bicycle/ e-bike

An alternative to taking the shuttle along Hermit Road is to **rent a bicycle or e-bike** and ride. This gives you the most flexibility and means you won't be dependent on the shuttle (and the long lines that can form by mid-morning).

Start by driving from Tusayan or taking the Village shuttle or walking through Grand Canyon Village to the bicycle rental agency, [Bright Angel Bicycles](#), which is at the main Visitor Center. If you're driving, park at the Visitor Center.



DIRECTIONS: Tusayan - Visitor Center

Head north from Tusayan on AZ-64. You'll pass straight through a traffic circle on the edge of Tusayan, pass the National Park sign and enter the South Gate.

Keep straight on South Entrance Road past Center Street on your left and past Desert View Drive on your right. Turn right at the sign for Visitor Center parking lots. Park in section *P4 Lizard* if possible, as this is the closest to the bike rental agency.





DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Cycling Hermit Road 8:00AM



You'll spend the morning exploring the section of South Rim west of Grand Canyon Village. The road is Hermit Road, and the trail along the rim is part of the Rim Trail. There is also a Greenway for part of the route.

Option C involves renting a bicycle or e-bike and riding the route.



Rent bicycles from [Bright Angel Bicycles](#) well in advance. They are very popular, and supplies are limited.

You can rent **bicycles** or **e-bikes** for a **whole day** (8:00AM - 5:00PM) or a **half day** (8:00AM - 1:00PM or 9:00AM - 2:00PM).

The shuttle buses that run from Grand Canyon Village to Hermit's Rest and back take bicycles and e-bikes (they have racks on their front). I recommend biking to Hermit's Rest and then taking the shuttle back, although you can bike back too. It's 10.5 miles to Hermit's Rest.

The part of the route with the most uphill part is the first section, from Grand Canyon Village to Hopi Point. If you want to skip this, take the shuttle from Hermit's Rest Transfer Station at the western edge of Grand Canyon Village and get off at Hopi Point and cycle to Hermit's Rest from there.



The viewpoints along the way are:



Trailview Overlook is the best spot to see the Bright Angel Trail zigzagging down the sides of the canyon. You'll hike part of it tomorrow.

Maricopa Point is a small, narrow point jutting out into the canyon. It has stunning 180-degree views of the canyon. There is even a tiny glimpse of the Colorado River (the first as you head west on Hermit Road).

Looking west, you can see a large gate and small clearing on the rim. This is the Lost Orphan Mine, where first copper and then uranium were mined between 1891 and 1967.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Cycling Hermit Road 8:00AM



Powell Point. Grand Canyon National Park's dedication ceremony was held here in 1920 and there is a large granite memorial for John Wesley Powell that you can walk up on to.

Powell was the first (western) person to successfully run the Colorado River through the canyon. Incredibly, he only had one arm while navigating the rapids of the river!

There is a tiny glimpse here of the river Powell traversed, but it's hard to spot and most people can't see it. Nonetheless, the view is great in both directions. You can climb the memorial and you can also go down to a slightly lower, but arguably even better, viewpoint.

Hopi Point juts out further into the canyon than any of the other viewpoints on Hermit Road, giving you a great perspective and uninterrupted panoramic views to the east and west. Some of the rock formations you can see include Isis Temple, Horus Temple and Osiris Temple.

It's also the first good view of the Colorado River as you head west along Hermit Road. There are, in fact, five sections of the river that you can see from here, though one is especially clear and long.

Fun Fact: Hopi Point, named after the Hopi Indians, was originally called Rowes Point after Sanford Rowe, the first person to offer guided trips into the canyon on Bright Angel Trail.

Mohave Point has incredible views of the western canyon and the Colorado River. On a clear day, you can see Salt Creek, Granite, and Hermit Rapids.

Looking north, down and across the canyon, the large promontory jutting out from Mohave Point is called The Alligator. Nearby are the Horus and Osiris Temples, with the Tower of Ra to their left, and the Isis Temple to their right. There are also great views of the 3,000-foot cliffs around The Abyss.



DAY 1

MORNING: 7:30AM - 11:45AM

Cycling Hermit Road 8:00AM



There are several places to enjoy the views here, all with slightly different perspectives, so it's worth spending a little time exploring the area. The itinerary has you spending a little more time here, as it's a lovely place to relax, explore and enjoy the views.



If you have young kids and they are getting antsy, you can end your trip along Hermit Road here and take a return shuttle back to the Village.



The Abyss has the longest vertical drop on the South Rim. From the overlook, the canyon drops 3,000 feet straight down to the Tonto Platform.

Most overlooks are on sections of the rim that jut out further into the canyon. However, The Abyss is at the end of a side canyon, formed mostly by rocks falling off the cliff face. In addition to the sheer drop below, you can see several sandstone columns. The largest, The Monument, is the biggest sandstone column in the canyon.

Monument Creek Vista has a great view of Monument Creek and Granite Rapid on the Colorado River far below.



Monument Creek Vista is the start of the Greenway Trail, which is a walking and biking path that goes all the way to Hermit's Rest.



The views at **Pima Point** are some of the best views at the Grand Canyon. There is a panoramic vista in both directions. Nearby is the deep red Hermit Creek Canyon. Opposite is a clear view down Ninety-four Mile Creek Canyon. Listen carefully and you hear the roar of Granite Rapids on the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon.



Hermit's Rest. The building here was designed by Mary Colter in 1914 to look like an old miner's cabin. It's built of local stone and has a front porch and an enormous alcove fireplace.

There's a giftshop and snack bar (open 9:00AM – 5:00PM), restrooms and drinkable water to fill your water bottles. You can take the shuttle back (before or after lunch) or ride back the way you came.



DAY 1

MIDDAY: 11:45AM - 1:45PM

OPTION A

Hermit's Rest 11:45AM



Use the [Dining Guide](#) to choose a place for lunch at Hermit's Rest. Or, pack your own lunch and have a picnic at one of the picnic tables at Hermit's Rest.

Options are more limited here than in the Village, but it's a lovely spot, and makes a change from the Village.

Shuttle to Grand Canyon Village 1:00PM



After lunch, take the shuttle directly back to Grand Canyon Village. If you chose Option C in the morning and have a bike, you can put it on front of the shuttle (you can also ride back, if you prefer).

OPTION B

Shuttle to Grand Canyon Village 11:45AM



Take the shuttle directly back to Grand Canyon Village. If you chose Option C in the morning and have a bike, you can put it on front of the shuttle (you can also ride back, if you prefer).

Grand Canyon Village 12:30PM



Use the [Dining Guide](#) to choose a place for lunch at Grand Canyon Village. There are more options here than at Hermit's Rest, so if nothing there appeals to you, then head back to the Village for lunch.

Also, if you chose Option C and rented your bike for half a day, you can get it back in time and then have lunch without stressing about being late.



DAY 1

AFTERNOON: 1:45PM - 6:00PM

Grand Canyon Village



You'll spend the afternoon exploring Grand Canyon Village. This is the center of the South Rim action. There are several lodges, a couple of campgrounds, several historical sites and plenty of fun things to do. You can explore all of the attractions or just relax over a drink with a view.



If you're doing a mule ride on Day 3 (Option C), check in at Bright Angel Transportation Desk this afternoon, so you don't need to check in before 6:30AM on Day 3.

Highlights of Grand Canyon Village include:



Verkamp's Visitor Center

Verkamp's Visitor Center was a curio shop and home of the Vercamp family for more than a century. John Verkamp built the building and opened a curio shop in 1906. The Verkamp family operated the Verkamp's store as a NPS concession until the National Park Service bought the building and opened it in 2008 as a visitor center and Grand Canyon Association bookstore.

It's staffed by park rangers and Grand Canyon Conservancy staff who will answer any questions you have. There are also daily ranger-led history walks from here.

The center also has exhibits focused on the Grand Canyon Community: what it was like to live and work here over the years. There's a walking history timeline on the floor that leads you through the exhibits about the important moments in local, national and international history.



Hopi House

Hopi House was designed by Mary Colter in 1905 to reflect the design of a Hopi Pueblo. The rectangular shape and multiple roofs are stepped at various levels to give the impression of Puebloan architecture from the outside. Inside, small wall niches, corner fireplaces, and a mud-plaster wall finish are all typical of Hopi interiors.



DAY 1

AFTERNOON: 1:45PM - 6:00PM

Grand Canyon Village

Hopi House



It was designed to house the sales rooms for Fred Harvey Indian Arts and it is still one of the best places to buy Native American art. It's open 9:00AM – 5:00PM.



Kolb Studio

Perched on the edge of the canyon at the start of the Bright Angel Trail, Kolb Studio is a national historic landmark. It was built in 1904 by the Kolb brothers as a home, photography studio, and theater for their slideshows and films. It was the first permanent commercial photographers' studio at the canyon, and one of the earliest commercial tourist businesses there.

Today, there's an art gallery, bookstore and information booth operated by the Grand Canyon Conservancy inside the historic building. There are also great views of Grand Canyon from the studio.



Lookout Studio

Designed by Mary Colter, the 1914 studio is built from local limestone to blend in with the canyon. Even back then, one of the most popular things to do on the South Rim was to gaze at, and photograph, the views. Which is why Colter designed the building as a place from which to view and photograph the canyon.



The views here are amazing. There are several small terraces on different levels, so you can take a photo of your friends or family from above, with the canyon behind and below. You can also clearly see Bright Angel's Trail's switchbacks zigzagging down into the canyon.

Grand Canyon Railway Depot



Built in 1920, the Grand Canyon Depot is another National Historic Landmark. The two-story log and wood-frame building was designed by Californian architect Francis W. Wilson to serve as the main station for the Grand Canyon and it still serves that function today. There were



DAY 1

AFTERNOON: 1:45PM - 6:00PM

Grand Canyon Village

Grand Canyon Railway Depot

only ever 14 log railway depots built in the United States, and this is one of only three still standing.

The Pioneer Cemetery and the Shrine of Ages



This historic cemetery is the final resting place of many early Grand Canyon families and pioneers. There are more than 390 individual graves, some dating back to before the establishment of the park and the dedication of the cemetery. People interred at the cemetery include Grand Canyon pioneers, war veterans, tribal members, and employees of the concessionaires, US Forest Service, and National Park Service. The American Legion Post dedicated the cemetery on May 30, 1928.

Try to find the grave of *John Hance*, who became one of the cemetery's first residents in January 1919, a month before the birth of the national park on February 26. Read more about this fascinating guy [here](#).

The nearby **Shrine of the Ages** was created as an interfaith chapel at Grand Canyon in 1970. Today it's a multi-purpose building that hosts a variety of ranger programs and special activities. Check to see if there are any programs during the day or evening while you're there. Topics include geology, human history, wildlife, night sky, water resources, rock art, canyon hiking, and more.

El Tovar Hotel



El Tovar is the grandest of the Grand Canyon National Park lodges and is often considered the finest of all the historic national park lodges. The hotel was built in 1905 for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway and was owned and operated by the famous Fred Harvey Company.

Inside are rustic Oregon pine log beams, native stonework and plush furniture, and it's a cozy spot to hang out. The back porch, with views of Grand Canyon, is especially hard to beat.



DAY 1

AFTERNOON: 1:45PM - 6:00PM

Grand Canyon Village

Bright Angel Lodge History Room



Bright Angel Lodge was designed by architect Mary Colter and built in 1935. The History Room at Bright Angel Lodge is well worth visiting. There are photos, historic postcards, a 100-year-old El Tovar menu, an original surrey carriage, and other displays showcasing the history of the lodge and the canyon.

The highlight, however, is the **Geologic Fireplace**, also designed by Mary Colter. The fireplace is built of rocks and stones from all of the major layers of the canyon. Starting with rocks from the Colorado River at its base and culminating at the top with the youngest rocks from the canyon's rim.



Dinner 6:00PM

Use the [Dining Guide](#) to find a place for dinner at Grand Canyon Village or Tusayan.



DAY 2 AT A GLANCE

Today, you'll hike part of the national park's most popular trail below the rim, the **Bright Angel Trail**, in the morning and spend the afternoon enjoying the views and attractions on the scenic **Desert View Drive**.

OPTION A [page 29 | 32]

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:15AM: Hike Bright Angel to 2nd tunnel
10:15AM: Walk Rim Trail around Village
Explore rest of Village
Relax on porch of El Tovar
11:30AM: Lunch

OPTION B [page 29 | 33]

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:15AM: Hike Bright Angel to 1.5 Mile Resthouse
11:15AM: Walk Rim Trail around Village
Explore rest of Village
Relax on porch of El Tovar
11:45AM: Lunch

OPTION C [page 29 | 34]

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:00AM: Hike Bright Angel to 3-Mile Resthouse
12:00PM: Lunch

OPTION D [page 29 | 35]

5:30AM: Leave Tusayan
6:00AM: Hike Bright Angel to Indian Garden
12:00PM: Lunch

OPTION A [page 37 | 39]

1:00PM: Start Desert View Drive
1:10PM: Arrive Shoshone Point parking. Hike.
2:10PM: Drive to Grandview Point
2:35PM: Drive to Moran Point
3:00PM: Drive to Tusayan Museum
3:35PM: Drive to Lipan Point
3:55PM: Drive to Navajo Point
4:10PM: Drive to Desert View
4:15PM: Explore Desert View, including Watchtower
5:00PM: Head back to Grand Canyon Village
6:00PM: Dinner

OPTION B [page 37 | 43]

1:00PM: Start Desert View Drive
1:20PM: Arrive Grandview Point
1:35PM: Drive to Moran Point
2:00PM: Drive to Tusayan Museum
2:35PM: Drive to Lipan Point
2:55PM: Drive to Navajo Point
3:15PM: Drive to Desert View
3:20PM: Explore Desert View, including Watchtower
4:25PM: Head back to Grand Canyon Village
5:00PM: Arrive Grand Canyon Village
5:30PM: Dinner

* If you want to see the **sunset**, stay at Desert View Point or drive back to Lipan Point



DAY 2

MORNING: 5:30AM/7:30AM - 1:00PM



Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



This morning, you'll hike part of **Bright Angel Trail**, the most popular trail below the rim.

The Bright Angel Trail has been in use for thousands of years, first by the Havasupai people, then pioneers, miners and tourists. It was given its current name by Ralph Henry Cameron in 1901. He built a hotel at the trailhead, extended the trail all the way down to the Colorado River, and charged \$1 (more than \$32 in today's money) to use the trail. In 1928, the Bright Angel Trail became part of the national park.

There are **bathrooms** and a **water fill station** at the trailhead.

There are **several places to turn back**, making for hikes with different levels of difficulty.





DAY 2

MORNING: 5:30AM/7:30AM - 1:00PM



The trail is shared by **mules**. If you encounter a mule train:

1. Step off the trail on the uphill side-away from the edge
2. Listen for and follow the directions of the wranglers
3. Remain completely quiet and stand perfectly still
4. Only return to the trail when the last mule is 50 feet (15 m) beyond your position

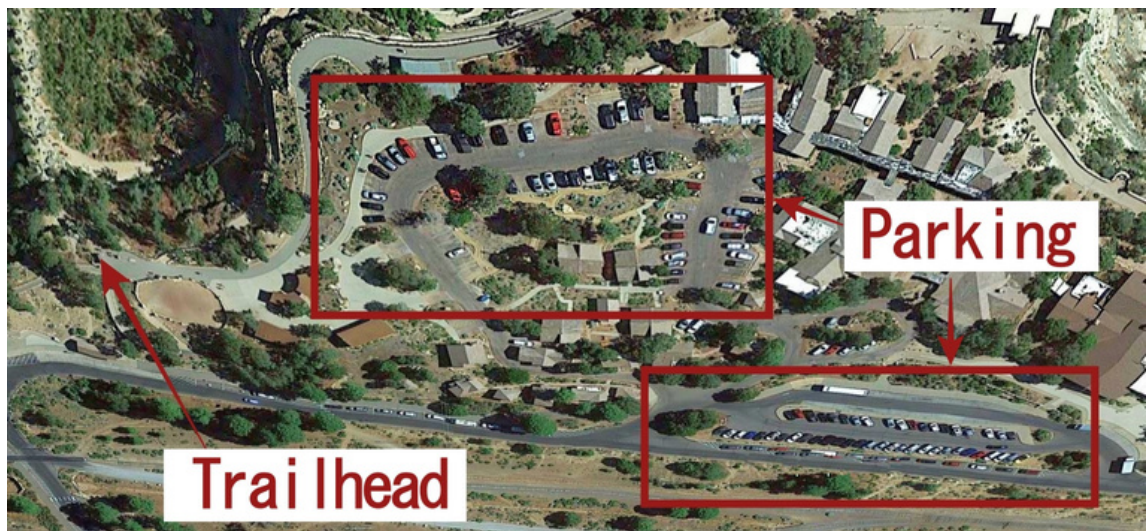
Remember, if you go down, you have to go back up. People often take **twice as long to go up** as they did to go down, so don't assume it will take you the same amount of time.

This is the desert, and it gets hotter the lower you get. Summers can be brutal. The itinerary has you hiking in the early morning to avoid the worst of the heat and crowds, but by the time you near the end, it will probably be hot. **Drink LOTS of water**. You can refill your water bottles at 1.5-Mile Resthouse, 3-Mile Resthouse, and Indian Garden.



DIRECTIONS: Tusayan - Parking

There is actually a tiny parking area right next to the trailhead. If you plan to hike down to Indian Garden and will therefore get a super early start, you can try it.





DAY 2

MORNING: 5:30AM/7:30AM - 1:00PM



Otherwise, your best bet is Parking Lot C or D or the Visitor Center. Parking Lot D is the closest, so try there first. If you have an RV, you'll need to park in Lot D or at the Visitor Center.

Driving north from Tusayan on AZ-64, after the Entrance Gate, take Center Street on your left (4.4 miles from Tusayan). Drive 1.6 miles until you get to the junction with Village Loop Drive.

Lot C is at the junction. For **Lot D**, turn left and drive straight until you get to Lot D on your right. For **Bright Angel Trailhead parking**, turn right onto Village Loop Drive. Then turn left on to South Entrance Road and follow this until you get to Bright Angel Parking on your right. Just after this small parking lot, turn right. The road loops around right **next to the trailhead** and there are a few parking spots there that may be empty (the closest, but also the smallest option).



If all of these closer/ smaller lots are full, there is much larger parking lot at the **Visitor Center**. From the Visitor Center, take the blue shuttle route to the Hermit's Rest Transfer Stop. **See driving direction on Page 9.**



DAY 2

MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:00PM

OPTION A: Hike to 2nd Tunnel



Bright Angel Trail 8:15AM

This is the easiest option. It will give you a sense of being below the rim and surrounded by the canyon walls without all the switchbacks. This is good if you have very young children, limited mobility, or just don't want to do a strenuous hike.

There are two tunnels. You go through the first one just 315 yards/ 290 meters from the trailhead. Just past the first tunnel, look up on your left to see some ancient pictographs under the overhang. You can also see the trail snaking out below you.

The path starts to get steep around 0.45 miles/ 725 meters into the hike. The **second tunnel** is 0.75 miles/ 1.2 km into the hike.

After you've rested, turn around here and return to the trailhead.



Grand Canyon Village 10:15AM

You have rest of the morning to relax around Grand Canyon Village. If there is something from yesterday afternoon's suggestions you didn't have time to do, now is a great time. Do some shopping or relax on the porch of the El Tovar. You can also walk along the Rim Trail around the Village and enjoy the views.



Lunch 11:30AM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 2

MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:00PM

OPTION B: Hike to 1.5-Mile Resthouse



Bright Angel Trail 8:15AM

This option will give you a sense of being below the rim and surrounded by the canyon walls and, with just one set of switchbacks, you'll see the first of the resthouses.

There are two tunnels. You go through the first one just 315 yards/ 290 meters from the trailhead. Just past the first tunnel, look up on your left to see some ancient pictographs under the overhang. You can also see the trail snaking out below you.

The path starts to get steep around 0.45 miles/ 725 meters into the hike. The **second tunnel** is 0.75 miles/ 1.2 km into the hike.

After the second tunnel, you can really start to see the layers of the canyon. You'll also encounter the first set of switchbacks and then arrive at **1.5-Mile Resthouse**.

The actual resthouse is up some steps to the right. It's a small shelter where you can get out of the sun or rain. There is water (seasonally), restrooms, and an emergency phone straight ahead.

After you've rested, turn around here and return to the trailhead.



Grand Canyon Village 11:15AM

You have rest of the morning to relax around Grand Canyon Village. If there is something from yesterday afternoon's suggestions you didn't have time to do, now is a great time. Do some shopping or relax on the porch of the El Tovar. You can also walk along the Rim Trail around the Village and enjoy the views.



Lunch 11:30AM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 2

MORNING: 7:30AM - 1:00PM

OPTION C: Hike to 3-Mile Resthouse



Bright Angel Trail 8:00AM

This option takes you deeper into the canyon to the second resthouse on the trail. It includes two sets of switchbacks.

There are two tunnels. You go through the first one just 315 yards/ 290 meters from the trailhead. Just past the first tunnel, look up on your left to see some ancient pictographs under the overhang. You can also see the trail snaking out below you.

The path starts to get steep around 0.45 miles/ 725 meters into the hike. The **second tunnel** is 0.75 miles/ 1.2 km into the hike.

After the second tunnel, you can really start to see the layers of the canyon. You'll also encounter the first set of switchbacks and then arrive at **1.5-Mile Resthouse**.

The actual resthouse is up some steps to the right. It's a small shelter where you can get out of the sun or rain. There is water (seasonally), restrooms and an emergency phone straight ahead.

Continuing along the trail, you'll go down the second set of switchbacks. There's a sign at the 2-mile mark. The trail gets even steeper after that. Then at the 3-mile mark, is the **3-Mile Resthouse**.

The restrooms are up some stairs to the right just past the resthouse. If you go straight past the restrooms turn-off, you'll get to a wide-open area. This used to be a cable car station used by miners to haul ore and equipment up and down the canyon.

After you've rested, fill up your water bottles, then turn around here and return to the trailhead.



Lunch 11:30AM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 2

MORNING: 5:30AM - 1:00PM

OPTION D: Hike to Indian Garden



Bright Angel Trail 6:00AM

This is the granddaddy of day hikes on Bright Angel. Indian Garden is the furthest point recommended by the NPS for a day hike into the canyon.



You need to be reasonably fit to do this hike - and be well prepared with lots of **water and snacks**. You can refill your water bottles at both resthouses and Indian Garden.

You will need to **get an early start**. 6:00AM is the latest you should start - even earlier is better, to avoid the worst of the heat. It usually takes me about 3.5 hours to go back up, and less time to go down. BUT **take your time**. If you need to take longer, then do it. Don't worry about the afternoon schedule. You can skip some viewpoints in the afternoon if you need to make up time.



There are two tunnels. You go through the first one just 315 yards/ 290 meters from the trailhead. Just past the first tunnel, look up on your left to see some ancient pictographs under the overhang. You can also see the trail snaking out below you.

The path starts to get steep around 0.45 miles/ 725 meters into the hike. The **second tunnel** is 0.75 miles/ 1.2 km into the hike.

After the second tunnel, you can really start to see the layers of the canyon. You'll also encounter the first set of switchbacks and then arrive at **1.5-Mile Resthouse**.

The actual resthouse is up some steps to the right. It's a small shelter where you can get out of the sun or rain. There is water (seasonally), restrooms and an emergency phone straight ahead.

Continuing along the trail, you'll go down the second set of switchbacks. There's a sign at the 2-mile mark. The trail gets even steeper after that. Then at the 3-mile mark, is the **3-Mile Resthouse**.



DAY 2

MORNING: 5:30AM - 1:00PM

OPTION D: Hike to Indian Garden



The restrooms are up some stairs to the right just past the resthouse. If you go straight past the restrooms turn-off, you'll get to a wide-open area. This used to be a cable car station used by miners to haul ore and equipment up and down the canyon.

Continuing down the trail, you'll encounter the third set of switchbacks, called Jacob's Ladder. After that, the trail evens out before you arrive at **Indian Garden**.

It's a shady spot that makes a nice respite and place for a snack. There are picnic tables, water year-round from a natural spring, restrooms and an emergency phone. There is also a campground here. There are some remains of ancient structures built by Puebloan and Cohoninas Native Americans, who had a garden here (hence the name).

After you've explored the area, relaxed, had a snack, and refilled your water bottle, head back up to the trailhead.



Lunch 12:00PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for lunch options in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM

This afternoon, you'll explore the eastern section of the South Rim - **Desert View Drive** beyond Yaki Point (you'll explore the section between the Village and Yaki Point tomorrow).



There is no shuttle along Desert View Drive between South Kaibab Trailhead / Yaki Point and Desert View Watchtower, so you'll need your own vehicle.

If you don't have one, you could take a tour. This [3-hour sunset tour](#) includes a couple of viewpoints on Desert View Drive, including sunset at Grandview Point. It leaves from Tusayan, so you can take a shuttle into Tusayan.



DIRECTIONS: Grand Canyon Village - Desert View Drive

If you parked at the **Visitor Center**, turn left out of the parking lot on to South Entrance Road. After about 0.5 miles, turn left on AZ-64/ Desert View Drive.

If you parked at one of the smaller parking lots **near Bright Angel Trailhead**, follow the map on the next page to get on South Entrance Road and follow this around past the Visitor Center and then turn left on to Desert View Drive.



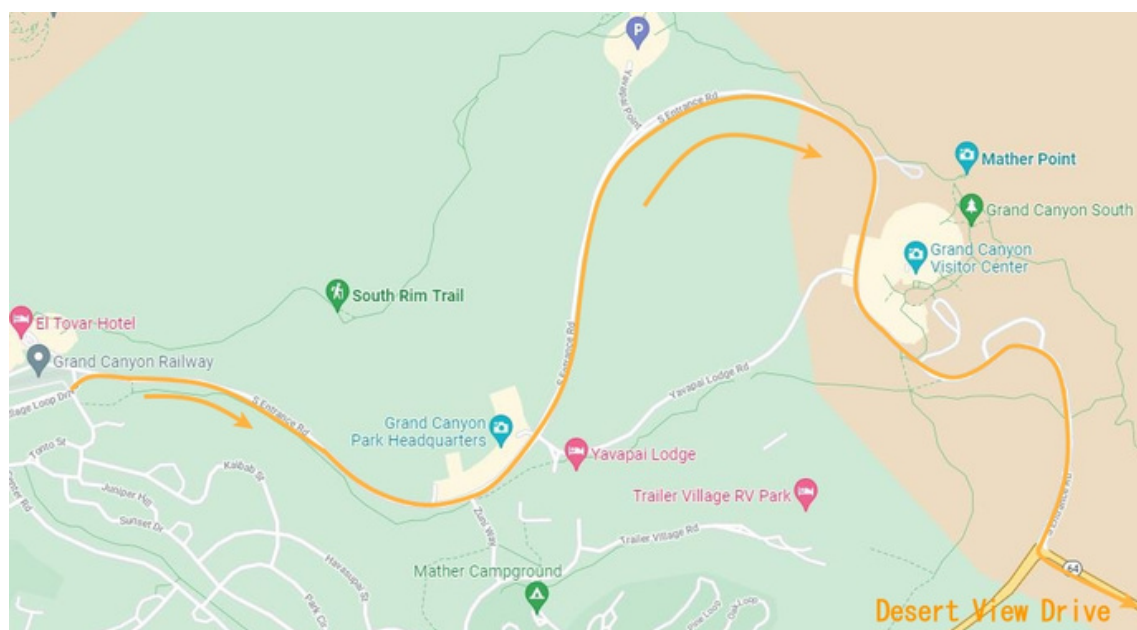
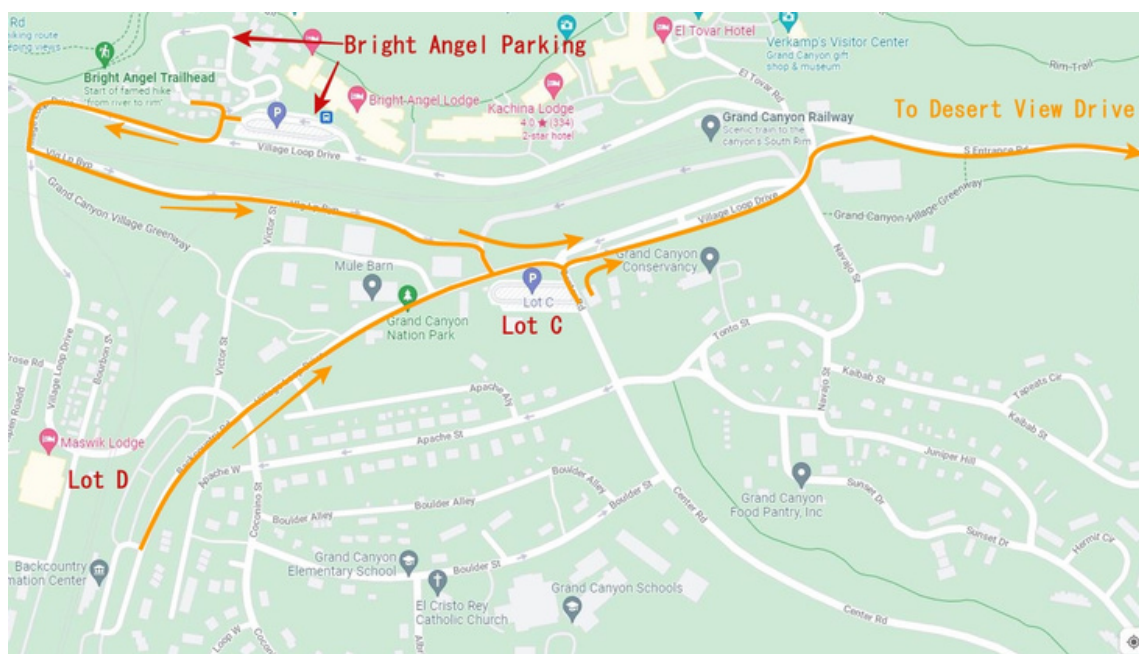


DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



DIRECTIONS: Bright Angel Area Parking - Desert View Drive





DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM

OPTION A: Desert View Drive with hike to Shoshone Point



This option includes a short hike to Shoshone Point. It's a 'secret', unmarked (but easy) trail to a lookout that few people know about. I recommend it - but if you have limited mobility or are worn out after your morning hike, choose Option B. Most of the afternoon is driving, so you can take it easy the rest of the day after your morning's efforts.



Shoshone Point 1:10PM

From the parking lot (**see Driving Directions below**), you'll see a large metal gate. Walk past the gate and along the dirt road. It's a flat, easy road that goes through a ponderosa pine forest (so there's some shade).

After about a mile / 20 minutes), the road splits. Take either direction. It dead ends soon after. There's a picnic area, benches, a shelter, barbecue grills, pit toilets, and even mule hitching posts. This is the only area in the national park where functions are allowed, so you may see a wedding in progress.

Continue past the picnic area. There's a small trail leading to Shoshone Point a bit further along - it's a natural rock outcrop at the end of a ridge with 180-degree views of the canyon. Take care - there is no guardrail, and you do this hike at your own risk. There's one big step down at the end.



There are usually very few people here, so it's a nice place to sit and enjoy the view at leisure. You can see the river from Shoshone Point. See if you can identify Hance Rapids, Desert View Tower, Vishnu Temple, Horseshoe Mesa and many other landmarks.



This is a good hike for small kids but is not wheelchair accessible.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



DIRECTIONS: Desert View Drive turnoff - Shoshone Point

Drive east along Desert View Drive. Look for sign to South Kaibab Trail/ Yaki Point to left. Don't take this turnoff! But look at your odometer and go 1.3 miles more miles. You'll see a large, unmarked unpaved parking lot on your left. (It's unmarked but is on Google maps.) This is the parking lot for Shoshone Point. It's just west of mile marker 246, so if you see that, you've gone too far.



There's no cell service, so if you're using Google maps, have it pre-loaded.

Grandview Point 2:20PM



This is many people's favorite viewpoint. There are panoramic views of the canyon plus the first glimpse of the Colorado River traveling east along Desert View Drive from Grand Canyon Village.



After Shoshone Point, you'll pass a couple of unnamed pullouts. The first one has an interpretive sign about a column that looks like a duck is sitting on top (if you have a very active imagination). The turnoff to Grandview Point is well marked. It's just after Mile Marker 251. The viewpoint is about a mile down a side road. There are drop toilets.



From Grandview Point, you can see Desert View Watchtower in the distance, Horseshoe Mesa, and several stunning buttes including Shiva Temple, Rama Shrine, Krishna Shine, and Vishnu Shrine. From the main viewpoint, there are several other overlooks that you can easily walk to for slightly different perspectives.

Fun Fact: In the late 1800's, Grandview Point was the main center for tourism on the South Rim. There was a hotel, the eponymous Grandview Hotel, and the start of the Grandview Toll Trail to Horseshoe Mesa in the canyon below. The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad and a convenient railway station enticed people to Grand Canyon Village instead, and Grandview Point was eventually abandoned.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



Moran Point 2:50PM

This viewpoint is named after the painter Thomas Moran, a famous Hudson River School landscape artist whose works helped inspire the creation of several national parks. Fun Fact: This was where westerners first saw the canyon.

All three of Grand Canyon's main rock groups are visible here. Across the canyon is the North Rim's Cape Royal. The section of the Colorado River you can see is the Hakatai Rapids. You can also see the famous [Sinking Ship](#) - look for a rock formation that looks like a tilted sinking ship.



Tusayan Museum 3:10PM

You can choose between visiting Zuni Point or go a little further along to Tusayan Museum. (You could do both, but you want to make sure you leave enough time to explore Desert View area before things close at 5:00PM).

Tusayan Museum is the remains of a small Ancestral Puebloan village. A short 0.1-mile trail goes around the ruins. There are interpretative signs explaining about the people who lived there.



Lipan Point 3:40PM

To reach Lipan Point, drive down a short side road on the left. There is a small, elevated area that provides close to a 360-degree view.

There are river views in both directions. To the west is the best view. Grand Canyon is wide and expansive here and the vista is one of the widest. It also provides the longest view of the Colorado River, seen as it enters the inner gorge of the canyon. The wide area below with a snake in the river used to be a Native American settlement. Lipan Point is a great place to see all the layers of the canyon, including the Grand Canyon Supergroup of sedimentary rock formations.

On a clear and quiet day, you can see the Vermillion Cliffs to the west and hear the Hance Rapids four miles away.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



Navajo Point 4:00PM

Navajo Point is the highest point on the South Rim. To the east, the view is similar to that at Desert View; however, you can actually see the Desert View Watchtower. To the west is another expansive view, with a glimpse of the Colorado River.

The parking lot is right next to the road, so this view is easy to access.



Desert View 4:15PM

Desert View is the most eastern viewpoint on the South Rim. You can clearly see the Colorado River making a turn to the west.

In addition to the view, the other attraction is the Desert View Watchtower. This is a four-story, 70-foot-tall stone circular tower that was designed by Mary Colter in 1932 to resemble an Ancestral Puebloan watchtower or kiva. The stone tower is built on what is designed to look like the rubble of old ruins.

You can climb to the top of the tower (there are 85 steps). You first come to a terrace, then there are narrower steps up 4 levels to the top, where there are windows, some with telescopes. There are stunning 360-degree views of the canyon, Colorado River, and surrounding area from the top. There's a limit on how many people can go up at a time.

The main space is the Kiva Room, a large circular room with a (false) ceiling built from logs salvaged from the old Grandview Hotel, and with a fireplace and large picture window. There's a shop inside the room.

The watchtower isn't the only thing at Desert View. There's a campground, large parking area, gas station, deli, bookstore, and a Trading Post selling Native American crafts, coffee and ice cream.

When you've finished exploring, drive back to Grand Canyon Village. The exit is at the far end of the parking lot. There are no signs.



Dinner 6:00PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for dinner options in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM

OPTION B: Desert View Drive



This option skips the hike to Shoshone Point. If you have limited mobility or are worn out after your morning hike, this is the best option. You can drive to all of the viewpoints, so you can take it easy after your morning's efforts.

Grandview Point 1:20PM



This is many people's favorite viewpoint. There are panoramic views of the canyon plus the first glimpse of the Colorado River traveling east along Desert View Drive from Grand Canyon Village.



After Shoshone Point, you'll pass a couple of unnamed pullouts. The first one has an interpretive sign about a column that looks like a duck is sitting on top (if you have a very active imagination). The turnoff to Grandview Point is well marked. It's just after Mile Marker 251. The viewpoint is about a mile down a side road. There are drop toilets.



From Grandview Point, you can see Desert View Watchtower in the distance, Horseshoe Mesa, and several stunning buttes including Shiva Temple, Rama Shrine, Krishna Shine, and Vishnu Shrine. From the main viewpoint, there are several other overlooks that you can easily walk to for slightly different perspectives.



Fun Fact: In the late 1800's, Grandview Point was the main center for tourism on the South Rim. There was a hotel, the eponymous Grandview Hotel, and the start of the Grandview Toll Trail to Horseshoe Mesa in the canyon below. The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad and a convenient railway station enticed people to Grand Canyon Village instead, and Grandview Point was eventually abandoned.



Moran Point 1:50PM

This viewpoint is named after the painter Thomas Moran, a famous Hudson River School landscape artist whose works helped inspire the creation of several national parks. Fun Fact: This was where westerners first saw the canyon.

All three of Grand Canyon's main rock groups are visible here. Across the canyon is the North Rim's Cape Royal. The section of the Colorado River you can see is the Hakatai Rapids. You can also see the famous [Sinking Ship](#) - look for a rock formation that looks like a tilted sinking ship.



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



Tusayan Museum 2:10PM

Tusayan Museum is the remains of a small Ancestral Puebloan village. A short 0.1-mile trail goes around the ruins. There are interpretative signs explaining about the people who lived there.



Lipan Point 2:40PM

To reach Lipan Point, drive down a short side road on the left. There is a small, elevated area that provides close to a 360-degree view.

To the west is the best view. Grand Canyon is wide and expansive here and the vista is one of the widest. It also provides the longest view of the Colorado River, seen as it enters the inner gorge of the canyon. The wide area below with a snake in the river used to be a Native American settlement. Lipan Point is a great place to see all the layers of the canyon, including the Grand Canyon Supergroup of sedimentary rock formations. On a clear and quiet day, you can see the Vermillion Cliffs to the west and hear the Hance Rapids four miles away.



Navajo Point 3:00PM

Navajo Point is the highest point on the South Rim. To the east, the view is similar to that at Desert View; however, you can actually see the Desert View Watchtower. To the west is another expansive view, with a glimpse of the Colorado River.

The parking lot is right next to the road, so this view is easy to access.



Desert View 3:20PM

Desert View is the most eastern viewpoint on the South Rim. You can clearly see the Colorado River making a turn to the west.

In addition to the view, the other an attraction is the Desert View Watchtower. This is a four-story, 70-foot-tall stone circular tower that was designed by Mary Colter in 1932 to resemble an Ancestral Puebloan watchtower or kiva. The stone tower is built on what is designed to look



DAY 2

AFTERNOON: 1:00PM - 6:00PM



Desert View 3:20PM

like the rubble of old ruins.

You can climb to the top of the tower (there are 85 steps). You first come to a terrace, then there are narrower steps up 4 levels to the top, where there are windows, some with telescopes. There are stunning 360-degree views of the canyon, Colorado River, and surrounding area from the top. There's a limit on how many people can go up at a time.

The main space is the Kiva Room, a large circular room with a (false) ceiling built from logs salvaged from the old Grandview Hotel, and with a fireplace and large picture window. There is a shop inside the room.

The watchtower isn't the only thing at Desert View. There's a campground, large parking area, gas station, deli, bookstore, and a Trading Post selling Native American crafts, coffee and ice cream.

When you've finished exploring, drive back to Grand Canyon Village. The exit is at the far end of the parking lot. There are no signs.



Dinner 5:30PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for dinner options in Grand Canyon Village or Tusayan.



DAY 3 AT A GLANCE

Your final day will see you again heading below the rim, this time on the **South Kaibab Trail**. You'll also visit the **Geology Museum** and walk the **Trail of Time**. You'll end your Grand Canyon adventure with some free time so you **Create Your Own Adventure** - there are loads of things to choose from.

OPTION A [page 47 | 48] *

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:30AM: Hike South Kaibab Trail to Ooh Aah Point
10:00AM: Take shuttle to Yaki Point
10:15AM: Take shuttle to Mather Point
10:30AM: Mather Point
10:45AM: Yavapai Point & Geology Museum
11:15AM: Walk Trail of Time
12:15PM: Lunch
1:30PM: Create Your Own Adventure

OPTION B [page 47 | 51]

7:30AM: Leave Tusayan
8:30AM: Hike South Kaibab Trail to Cedar Ridge
11:30AM: Take shuttle to Yaki Point
11:45AM: Take shuttle to Visitor Center
12:00PM: Lunch
1:30PM: Mather Point
1:45PM: Yavapai Point & Geology Museum
2:15PM: Walk Trail of Time
3:15PM: Create Your Own Adventure

OPTION C [page 47 | 58]

7:00AM: Leave Tusayan
7:30AM: Check in at Mule Barn
8:00AM: Mule ride
11:30AM: Lunch
1:00PM: Walk Trail of Time (in reverse)
2:00PM: Yavapai Point & Geology Museum
2:30PM: Shuttle to South Kaibab
2:45PM: Hike South Kaibab Trail to Ooh Aah Point
4:15PM: Shuttle to Yaki Point
4:30PM: Shuttle to Mather Point (or Visitor Center)

CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE [page 55]

- Option 1: Bike ride
- Option 2: Jeep tour
- Option 3: Van tour
- Option 4: UTV tour
- Option 5: Scenic flight
- Option 6: Helicopter flight
- Option 7: Skydive
- Option 8: IMAX movie
- Option 9: Ranger programs

5:30PM | 6:00PM: Dinner

* If you prefer not to hike the South Kaibab at all, have breakfast in the Village and pick up Option A at 10:00AM.



DAY 3

MORNING - EARLY AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 3:15PM



Breakfast

Have breakfast at your hotel or campground before leaving.



This morning you'll hike part of the South Kaibab Trail. The South Kaibab Trail was the first trail from the rim to the river built by the National Park Service. When the Grand Canyon became a National Park in 1919, Bright Angel trail was privately owned and charged a toll. The NPS tried to purchase the Bright Angel, but it was cheaper to build another trail, so they carved out the South Kaibab. It's generally considered the most beautiful trail below the rim - the views are truly stunning. However, it's also steeper and more strenuous than Bright Angel.

There are two possible turning back points. For a shorter, easier hike, you can turn back at the appropriately-named **Ooh Aah Point**. A longer hike to **Cedar Ridge** will give you more opportunity to see the canyon, as the view opens up even more for the last stretch. A third Option C has you hiking to Ooh Aah Point, but after a mule ride in the morning (since the timing doesn't work out to do it in the afternoon).



There is **no water** along the trail. There are **restrooms** and a water fill station by the shuttle bus stop and basic restrooms at Cedar Ridge. You may encounter **mules** on the trail.



If you prefer not to hike the South Kaibab at all, have breakfast in the Village and pick up Option A at 10:00AM.



SHUTTLE: Visitor Center - South Kaibab Trailhead

Park at the Visitor Center parking. See Page 9 for directions.

To get to the South Kaibab Trailhead from the Visitor Center parking, there are two shuttle options.

1) Hiker's Express Shuttle. There are 3 early morning shuttles (2 in the middle of winter) from the Visitor Center directly to the trailhead.

2) Orange Kaibab Rim Shuttle. The shuttle has frequent departures.



DAY 3

MORNING AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 1:30PM

OPTION A: South Kaibab to Ooh Aah Point | Yavapai | Trail of Time



South Kaibab Trail to Ooh Aah Point 8:30AM

On this hike, you'll reach one of the most stunning viewpoints in the entire national park. It does have steep switchbacks, which can be strenuous coming back up, but this option skips even more switchbacks that you'd hike if you went all the way to Cedar Ridge (Option B).

From the shuttle stop, head down the paved path and then go left at the end. The trail is wide, clear and easy to follow. You'll soon head down a series of steep switchbacks for the first half mile. There are nice views of the colored rocks of the canyon walls – but the views get better further along.

After the steep switchbacks, the trail levels out for another half mile of so until it reaches **Ooh-Ahh Point**.



This is a rocky outcrop with sensational panoramic views. The view really starts to open up here and you have breathtaking vistas of the canyon around you, including the more remote eastern section of Grand Canyon.

Rest, have a snack and water and enjoy the views. When you're ready, return back the way you came.



Yaki Point 10:00AM

Yaki Point is the only viewpoint on Desert View Drive that you can't drive to for most of the year. It's on the same side road as South Kaibab Trail, so take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle.



To the east, you can see the Desert View watchtower in the distance on a clear day. Look west and there are great views of the South Kaibab Trail wiggling its way down the canyon, so you can see where you just were.



DAY 3

MORNING AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 1:30PM

Mather Point 10:15AM



Take the orange Kaibab Rim shuttle westbound three stops to Mather Point.



Mather Point is one of the most popular viewpoints on the South Rim, partly because it's so close to the Visitor Center and parking lots.

There's an expansive view of the canyon – you can see more than 30 miles to the east and 60 miles to the west on a clear day. You can even spot Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon on a clear day. Some of the buttes and pinnacles you can see include Vishnu Temple, Isis Temple, Temple of Zoroaster, and Cheops Pyramid.



Its popularity does mean it gets crowded. You'll have seen plenty of other views by this stage, so if it's too crowded, you can skip it, or just spend a little time here.

Yavapai Point & Yavapai Geology Museum 10:45AM



Take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle one stop to Yavapai Geology Museum. You can also walk along the rim trail. It's a flat 15-minute walk.



Yavapai Point is the most northern viewpoint on the South Rim. On a clear day, you can see as far as Havasupai Point to the west and Desert View to the east.



The other main reason to go there is to visit the **Yavapai Geology Museum** (formerly called the Yavapai Observation Station). There are exhibits, including 3-D models, photos, and artwork, explaining Grand Canyon's geology, so you can understand all the different layers of rock that you see and learn how the canyon was created. The museum also has a large topographic relief map of the canyon, so you see exactly where everything is.

The museum is perched right on the edge of the canyon, and another highlight is a huge picture window for seeing the canyon, with interpretive displays explaining what you see. There's also a bookstore and gift shop.



DAY 3

MORNING AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 1:30PM



Trail of Time 11:15AM

The Trail of Time is an interpretive walking trail along the rim that's designed to be a **geologic timeline**. In addition to providing frequent views of the canyon itself, each meter walked on the timeline trail signifies one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history. Along the timeline trail are a series of rocks and exhibits that explain how Grand Canyon and its rock formed.

The Trail starts at Yavapai Geology Museum and goes back in time as you head towards Grand Canyon Village. First up is the "Million Year Trail", which transitions from human time scales to geologic ones. This is immediately followed by the main Trail of Time where each meter equals one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history.



The trail is paved, mostly flat, and wheelchair accessible. It's 1.3 miles to the Verkamp's Visitor Center in Grand Canyon Village. You could continue along it for another 1.5 miles to Maricopa Point in the afternoon if you like.



Lunch 12:15PM

Check the [Dining Guide](#) for somewhere to eat in Grand Canyon Village.



DAY 3

MORNING | EARLY AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 3:15PM

OPTION B: South Kaibab to Cedar Ridge | Yavapai | Trail of Time



South Kaibab Trail to Cedar 8:30AM

On this hike, you'll reach Cedar Ridge, deep in the canyon. It's strenuous and there's no water available on the trail, so be prepared and get an even earlier start if possible.

From the shuttle stop, head down the paved path and then go left at the end. The trail is wide, clear and easy to follow. You'll soon head down a series of steep switchbacks for the first half mile (which are strenuous to climb back up). There are nice views of the colored rocks of the canyon walls – but the views get better further along. After the steep switchbacks, the trail levels out for another half mile or so until it reaches **Ooh-Ahh Point**.



This is a rocky outcrop with sensational panoramic views. The view really starts to open up here and you have breathtaking vistas of the canyon around you, including the more remote eastern section of Grand Canyon.

From Ooh Aah Point, the trail gets even steeper (remember, you have to walk back up!). There are more switchbacks for the next 0.5 miles or so. You'll encounter some cobbled sections that can be slippery when wet (take care) and some steps. The trail then starts to wind around Yaki Point and opens up. It then goes along the spine of Cedar Ridge with views on both sides, deep in the middle of the canyon.



Cedar Ridge is a large open area which used to house an exhibit of Grand Canyon fossils. There are a few trees for shade. There are some very basic restrooms off the right as you approach, and a hitching post for the mules that take supplies in and out of the canyon.

Rest, have a snack and water and enjoy the views. When you're ready, return back the way you came. Take your time, as those switchbacks are tough going.



DAY 3

MORNING | EARLY AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 3:15PM



Yaki Point 11:30AM

Yaki Point is the only viewpoint on Desert View Drive that you can't drive to for most of the year. It's on the same side road as South Kaibab Trail, so take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle.



To the east, you can see the Desert View watchtower in the distance if you look hard. Look west and there are great views of the South Kaibab Trail wiggling its way down the canyon, so you can see where you just were.



Lunch 11:45AM

Take the shuttle to the Visitor Center. From there, you can walk or take a Blue Ville route shuttle to Market Plaza for lunch. This is the most convenient place for lunch, as you will pick your afternoon itinerary up from near the Visitor Center.



Check the [Dining Guide](#) for somewhere to eat in the Market Plaza area



Mather Point 1:30PM

Take the Blue Village shuttle to the Visitor Center and transfer to the westbound orange Kaibab Rim shuttle one stop to Mather Point. Alternatively, you can walk one or both these routes.



Mather Point is one of the most popular viewpoints on the South Rim, partly because it's so close to the Visitor Center and parking lots.

There's an expansive view of the canyon – you can see more than 30 miles to the east and 60 miles to the west on a clear day. You can even spot Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon on a clear day. Some of the buttes and pinnacles you can see include Vishnu Temple, Isis Temple, Temple of Zoroaster, and Cheops Pyramid.



Its popularity does mean it gets crowded. You'll have seen plenty of other views by this stage, so if it's too crowded, you can skip it, or just spend a little time here.



DAY 3

MORNING | EARLY AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 3:15PM

Yavapai Point & Yavapai Geology Museum 1:45PM



Take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle one stop to Yavapai Geology Museum. You can also walk along the rim trail. It's a flat 15-minute walk.



Yavapai Point is the most northern viewpoint on the South Rim. On a clear day, you can see as far as Havasupai Point to the west and Desert View to the east.



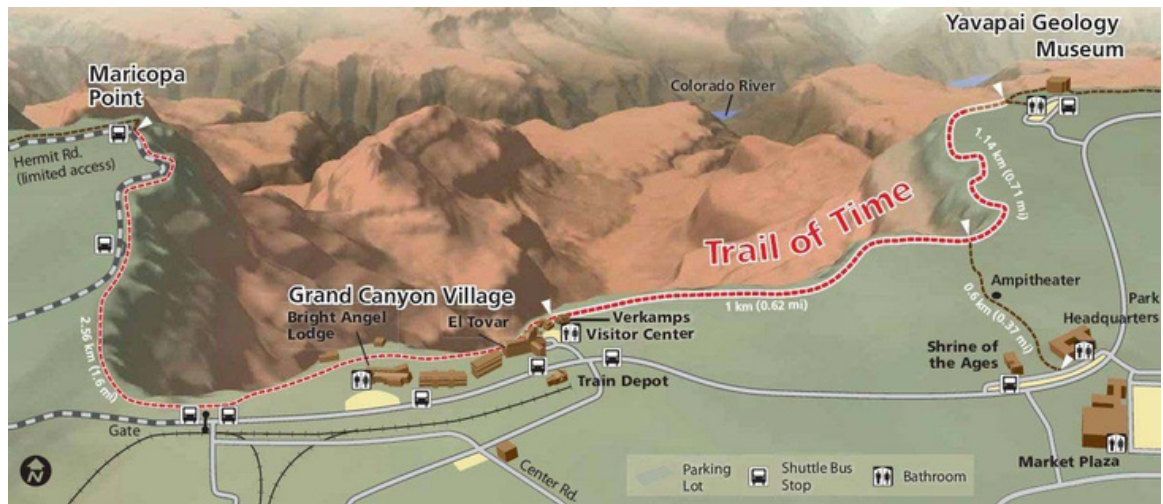
The other main reason to go there is to visit the **Yavapai Geology Museum** (formerly called the Yavapai Observation Station). There are exhibits, including 3-D models, photos, and artwork, explaining Grand Canyon's geology, so you can understand all the different layers of rock that you see and learn how the canyon was created. The museum also has a large topographic relief map of the canyon, so you see exactly where everything is.

The museum is perched right on the edge of the canyon, and another highlight is a huge picture window for viewing the canyon, with interpretive displays explaining what you see. There is also a bookstore and gift shop.



Trail of Time 2:15PM

The Trail of Time is an interpretive walking trail along the rim that's designed to be a **geologic timeline**. In addition to providing frequent views of the canyon itself, each meter walked on the timeline trail signifies





DAY 3

MORNING | EARLY AFTERNOON: 7:30AM - 3:15PM



Trail of Time 2:15PM

one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history. Along the timeline trail are a series of rocks and exhibits that explain how Grand Canyon and its rock formed.

The Trail starts at Yavapai Geology Museum and goes back in time as you head towards Grand Canyon Village. First up is the "Million Year Trail", which transitions from human time scales to geologic ones. This is immediately followed by the main Trail of Time where each meter equals one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history.



The trail is paved, mostly flat, and wheelchair accessible. It's 1.3 miles to the Verkamp's Visitor Center in Grand Canyon Village. You could continue along it for another 1.5 miles to Maricopa Point in the afternoon if you like.



DAY 3

AFTERNOON: 1:30PM / 3:15PM - 6:00PM



Create Your Own Adventure

You have the rest of your final afternoon free to create your own adventure. There are plenty of additional activities to choose from, including:



Bike ride

If you didn't ride a bicycle on Day 1, then you have another chance now. You can rent bicycles or e-bikes at [Bright Angel Bicycles](#). Do this months in advance, if possible, as they book out. They're located at the Visitor Center.

You can ride on any roads that allow general vehicular traffic as well as greenways:

- From the Visitor Center to the South Entrance
- From the Visitor Center to South Kaibab Trailhead
- From the Visitor Center south of Village Loop Road to Grand Canyon Village
- Between Monument Creek Vista and Hermit's Rest along Hermit Road

You can put bicycles and e-bikes on the shuttles.

Read all about bicycling on the [NPS website](#).



Jeep Tours

There are several jeep tours, with guided commentary. Grand Canyon Chamber and Visitors Bureau lists the available tours, with links, on [their website](#).



Van Tours

If you'd like to take a tour but would prefer a little more (air-conditioned) comfort, then there are also several van tours with guided commentary.

Grand Canyon Chamber and Visitors Bureau lists the available tours, with links, on [their website](#).



DAY 3

AFTERNOON: 1:30PM / 3:15PM - 6:00PM

Create Your Own Adventure



UTV Rentals

If you're into adventure activities, then you can rent a UTV (Utility Terrain Vehicle) either by the hour (minimum 2 hours) or for a half a day of off-roading. Full day rentals are also available if you stay longer. Plenty of suggested routes are provided by the rental company.

Check [Grand Canyon Rentals](#) for more details.



Scenic Flight

Fly in a fixed-wing plane from nearby Grand Canyon National Park/ Tusayan Airport over and into the canyon and beyond. Flights are typically 40 minutes in the air.

Check [Grand Canyon Airlines](#) for details.



Helicopter

The other way to fly over the canyon is in a helicopter. A couple of companies have frequent flights from nearby Grand Canyon National Park/ Tusayan Airport.

Check [Maverick Helicopter](#) or [Papillon](#) for details.



Skydiving

If you're an adrenaline junkie, you can do a tandem skydive, leaving from Grand Canyon National Park/ Tusayan Airport.

The jump is not over the canyon itself, but you'll have great views of the canyon as you jump out of a small plane nearby (attached to an experienced skydiver), freefall for a few crazy seconds, then float slowly down, with ample time to soak in the Grand Canyon views.

Check [Paragon Skydive](#) for details.



DAY 3

AFTERNOON: 1:30PM / 3:15PM - 6:00PM

Create Your Own Adventure



IMAX Movie

If you don't want to actually hop in a tiny plane or paddle a whitewater raft, you can still experience the best of Grand Canyon National Park on a 6-story IMAX screen. In nearby Tusayan, there's an IMAX theater showing "Grand Canyon: The Movie." Fly over the canyon, swoop down into its depths, ride the river rapids, discover the canyon's hidden secrets, and learn all about its history.

Check [Explore The Canyon](#) for more details.



Ranger Programs

Park rangers hold a variety of different programs throughout the day and evenings. Check [the NPS website](#) and at the Visitor Center for more details.



Dinner 5:30/ 6:00PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for dinner options in Grand Canyon Village or Tusayan.

That's the end of your Grand Canyon itinerary!

From here, it's:

- 1 hour to Williams
- 1.5 hours to Flagstaff
- 2 hours to Sedona
- 3.5 hours to Phoenix
- 4 hours to Las Vegas
- 4.5 hours to Zion National Park



DAY 3

ALL DAY: 7:00AM - 5:30PM

OPTION C: Mule ride | Trail of Time | Yavapai | South Kaibab to Ooh Aah Point

Choose this option if you want to do a mule ride. The timing doesn't work out to do it in the afternoon, so I've flipped the whole day's schedule to accommodate the mule ride. It does have you hiking in the afternoon, which is not ideal, since it's so hot, but if you take it easy and have plenty of water, you should be OK.



Mule Ride 8:00AM

There are three-hour, four-mile trips through pine forests to a viewpoint. You spend two hours in the saddle: one hour riding to the viewpoint, one hour there, and another hour riding back. Wranglers stop at least six times along the way to provide guided information.



You need to check-in by 6:30AM for the 8:00AM and arrive by 7:45AM at the latest. You can check in at Bright Angel Lodge on Day 1 to avoid the early morning check-in.

There are age and weight restrictions.

You don't need to be an experienced rider, but if you're not, 2 hours in the saddle will be PLENTY (I speak from personal experience!)

Book well in advance [here](#).



Lunch 11:30PM

Check the [Dining Guide](#) for somewhere to eat in Grand Canyon Village.



Trail of Time 1:00PM

The Trail of Time is an interpretive walking trail along the rim that's designed to be a **geologic timeline**. In addition to providing frequent views of the canyon itself, each meter walked on the timeline trail signifies



DAY 3

ALL DAY: 7:00AM - 5:30PM

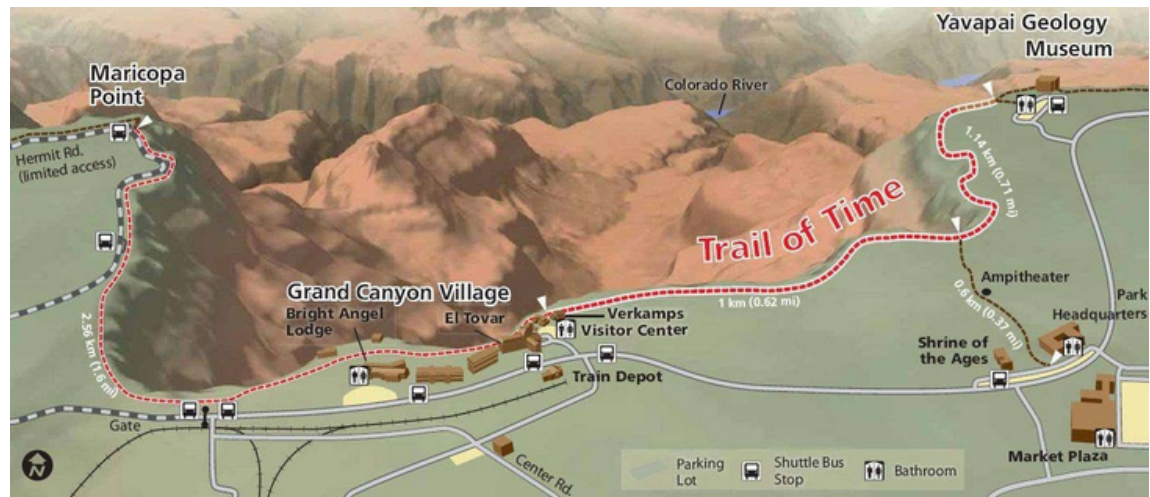


Trail of Time 1:00PM

one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history. Along the timeline trail are a series of rocks and exhibits that explain how Grand Canyon and its rock formed.

You'll start in Grand Canyon Village and walk towards the Yavapai Geology Museum, going forward in time. Each meter equals one million years of Grand Canyon's geologic history. It ends with the "Million Year Trail", which transitions from geologic time scales to human ones.

Pick the trail up at the Verkamp's Visitor Center. The trail is paved, mostly flat and wheelchair accessible. It's 1.3 miles to Yavapai.



Yavapai Point & Yavapai Geology Museum 2:00PM



The Trail of Time ends at Yavapai Point. This is the most northern viewpoint on the South Rim. On a clear day, you can see as far as Havasupai Point to the west and Desert View to the east.



The other main reason to go there is to visit the **Yavapai Geology Museum** (formerly called the Yavapai Observation Station). There are exhibits (3-D models, photos, and artwork), explaining Grand Canyon's geology, so you can understand all the different layers of rock that you



DAY 3

ALL DAY: 7:00AM - 5:30PM

Yavapai Point & Yavapai Geology Museum 2:00PM



see and learn how the canyon was created. The museum also has a large topographic relief map of the canyon, so you see exactly where everything is.

The museum is perched right on the edge of the canyon, and another highlight is a huge picture window for viewing the canyon, with interpretive displays explaining what you see. There's also a bookstore and gift shop.

South Kaibab Trail to Ooh Aah Point 2:30PM



Take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle to the South Kaibab Trailhead.



On this hike, you'll reach one of the most stunning viewpoints in the entire national park. It does have steep switchbacks, which can be strenuous coming back up, but you'll skip even more switchbacks that you'd hike if you went all the way to Cedar Ridge (Option B).

From the shuttle stop, head down the paved path and then go left at the end. The trail is wide, clear and easy to follow. You'll soon head down a series of steep switchbacks for the first half mile. There are nice views of the colored rocks of the canyon walls – but the views get better further along. After the steep switchbacks, the trail levels out for another half mile of so until it reaches **Ooh-Ahh Point**.



This is a rocky outcrop with sensational panoramic views. The view really starts to open up here and you have breathtaking vistas of the canyon around you, including the more remote eastern section of Grand Canyon.

Rest, have a snack and water and enjoy the views. When you're ready, return back the way you came.



Yaki Point 4:15PM

Yaki Point is the only viewpoint on Desert View Drive that you can't drive to for most of the year. It's on the same side road as South Kaibab Trail, so take the next orange Kaibab Rim shuttle.



DAY 3

ALL DAY: 7:00AM - 5:30PM

Yaki Point 4:15PM



To the east, you can see the Desert View watchtower in the distance if you look hard. Look west and there are great views of the South Kaibab Trail wiggling its way down the canyon, so you can see where you just were.

Mather Point 4:30PM



Take the orange Kaibab Rim shuttle westbound 3 stops to Mather Point.



Mather Point is one of the most popular viewpoints on the South Rim, partly because it's so close to the Visitor Center and parking lots.

There's an expansive view of the canyon – you can see more than 30 miles to the east and 60 miles to the west on a clear day. You can even spot Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon on a clear day. Some of the buttes and pinnacles you can see include Vishnu Temple, Isis Temple, Temple of Zoroaster, and Cheops Pyramid.



Its popularity does mean it gets crowded. You'll have seen plenty of other views by this stage, so if it's too crowded, you can skip it and head straight back to the Visitor Center after Yaki Point (you pass it to get to Mather Point), or just spend a little time here.

On the other hand, Mather Point is a great (albeit popular/ crowded) spot to see the sunset, so you could stay here and watch the canyon during Golden Hour.



Dinner 5:30/ 6:00PM

Refer to the [Dining Guide](#) for dinner options in Grand Canyon Village or Tusayan.



That's the end of your Grand Canyon itinerary!

From here, it's 1 hour to Williams, 1.5 hours to Flagstaff, 2 hours to Sedona, 3.5 hours to Phoenix, 4 hours to Las Vegas, 4.5 hours to the North Rim, and 4.5 hours to Zion National Park.



ADJUSTING YOUR SCHEDULE

ADDING IN NON-SOUTH RIM ACTIVITIES

You can easily spend longer than 3 days in Grand Canyon National Park.

Stay overnight inside the canyon



If you spend overnight inside the canyon, I recommend hiking down South Kaibab and up Bright Angel.

- Do Day 1 the same
- Start your hiking with Day 3 but continue into the canyon on South Kaibab. Overnight in the canyon.
- Hike up Bright Angel then pick the itinerary back up for Day 2 afternoon.
- On your fourth day, pick up Day 3 from Yaki Point (Option B) or start with Option C and after Yaki Point, add a *Create Your Own Adventure*.



If you want to stay at **Phantom Ranch**, you'll need to enter a lottery 15 months in advance. Read my [Guide to Phantom Ranch Reservations](#) for more information.

There are two **campgrounds** you can use - Bright Angel and Indian Garden. You'll need a back country permit. You can apply in a window 5 months in advance. [Read about getting backcountry permits here.](#)

Take a river trip



There are several options for **multi-day river trips** through the canyon. If you are OK to hike up Bright Angel trail, I recommend taking a trip through the upper canyon, which ends at Phantom Ranch. Read my [Guide to Grand Canyon Rafting Trips](#) for more information.

If you do this, start with the river trip (which goes from Flagstaff usually). You won't have a car, so you won't be able to do Day 2 afternoon.

- Start with Day 1 afternoon.



ADJUSTING YOUR SCHEDULE

MORE DAYS

Take a river trip



- On your second day, do Day 3
- On your third day, do Day 1 morning. You then have the afternoon to *Create Your Own Adventure* (I'd recommend taking a tour that goes along Desert View Drive, so you don't miss that section) or take a bus back to Flagstaff.

If you only have time for a **one-day river trip**, they only go to the West Canyon. You could follow the itinerary as is but skip the *Create Your Own Adventure* on Day 3 afternoon, and drive to Peach Springs, where you'll pick up a one-day trip the following day (book well in advance).

STAYING IN DIFFERENT PLACES

The schedule is based on a stay in **Tusayan**. If you stay elsewhere, adjust the timings as follows:

Grand Canyon Village

The timings are basically the same. Keep your vehicle parked at your accommodations, except for the Desert View Drive. Depending on which lodge or campground you stay in, you might need to tweak it by 15 - 30 minutes (you may already be at the start of the shuttle route or trailhead, or you may need to take a Village shuttle to get there).

EAST ENTRANCE

Desert View Campground

Start each day about 45 minutes earlier

Cameron

Start each day 1 hour and 15 minutes earlier

EAST ENTRANCE

Flagstaff

Start each day 1 hour and a half earlier

Williams

Start each day 1 hour earlier



USEFUL LINKS

These links are all available in the actual itinerary, but here they are all together as a useful planning and preparation resource.

Bonus extras (Accommodation Guide, Dining Guide, Shuttle Guide)

<https://parkscollecting.com/grand-canyon-bonus-extras-2v6x8dOg8/>

Itinerary Updates

<https://parkscollecting.com/itinerary-updates-f6x9m2/>

Grand Canyon National Park Entrance Fee

<https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/fees.htm>

Annual Pass: [America The Beautiful Pass](#)

Guide to Reservations at Phantom Ranch

<https://parkscollecting.com/making-reservations-for-phantom-ranch-grand-canyon/>

Bright Angel Bicycles

<https://bikegrandcanyon.com>

NPS Guide to Bicycling in Grand Canyon National Park

<https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/bicycling.htm>

Ranger Programs

<https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/ranger-program.htm>

Backcountry Permits (includes campgrounds below the rim)

<https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry-permit.htm>

Guide to River Trips Through The Grand Canyon

<https://parkscollecting.com/white-water-rafting-grand-canyon/>

Organized and Activities in Grand National Park

<https://grandcanyoncvb.org/activities/>

Current Park Conditions

<https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/weather-condition.htm>

Grand Canyon Scenic Flights

<https://www.grandcanyonairlines.com/>

Sunrise and Sunset Times

<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/@5296401>

Book Flights: [Skyscanner](#)

Camper Van Rentals: [Escape Campervans](#)

Accommodations

[Hotels and motels](#)

[Vacation rentals](#)

[Campspot](#)

[Campnab](#)

Travel Insurance: [Travelex](#)

Packing Lists: <https://parkscollecting.com/packing-lists/>



TRIP NOTES

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