



# South Rim

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## Best Hikes

- » Rim to rim (p72)
- » Grandview Trail to Horseshoe Mesa (p70)
- » Hermit Trail to Santa Maria Spring (p71)
- » South Kaibab Trail to Cedar Ridge (p69)
- » Shoshone Point (p67)

## Best Places to Stay

- » El Tovar (p81)
- » Bright Angel Lodge (p81)
- » Desert View Campground (p80)
- » Inn at 410 (p103)
- » L'Auberge de Sedona (p114)

## Why Go?

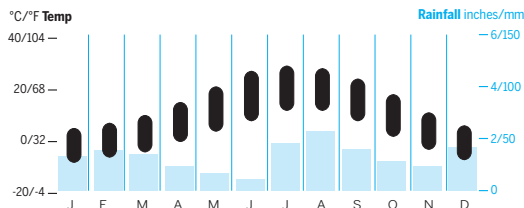
Step up to a South Rim overlook, and as the maw dramatically opens out before you – breeze carrying a soaring California condor along with high-desert hints of piñon and sage – you can expect to feel very small.

Taking in the grandeur from the rim is as far as most visitors go. But ranging below the rim brings the sheer immensity and splendor of the gorge into perspective; even hiking down a short way reveals fossils embedded in sandstone and rock art left by ancient Native Americans. Hiking up exposes the canyon's scale in a new, sweat-sheened light.

Desert wildflowers bloom out of rock in the springtime, autumn leaves light up the landscape in the fall, and the canyon's spires and temples are breathtaking when frosted with snow. All the while, light and shadow creep across the canyon, constantly recreating the landscape before you – a beautiful reminder to be here now.

## When to Go

### South Rim



**Spring**  
Occasional snow, wildflowers blooming, cooler temps.

**Fall**  
Fewer crowds, milder weather.

**Winter**  
No crowds. Snow-capped temples and buttes in the canyon.

## Entrances

The South Rim has two park entrances: the South Entrance, 80 miles north of Flagstaff on Hwy 180, and the East Entrance on Hwy 64, 32 miles west of Cameron.

Unlike the Spanish explorers led by García López de Cárdenas in 1540, when you arrive at the South Rim you'll have some idea of the awesome views awaiting you. What you might not expect are long lines at the South Entrance, with waits of 30 minutes or more in the summer. Most visitors enter here, heading a few miles thereafter to Grand Canyon Village.

If possible, enter the park through the East Entrance, which is only 10 miles further from Flagstaff than the South Entrance. At this entrance you'll find a campground, a gas station and the Desert View service hub, which offers a snack bar, small information center, general store, gift shop and the Watchtower (p59). As you drive the 25 rim-hugging miles to Grand Canyon Village, your first glimpses of the canyon will be more dramatic and much less hectic.

### DON'T MISS

As in life, the best things at the South Rim are free – like **sunrise** or **sunset** at a viewpoint along Desert View Dr, or a stop at **Mohave Point** to listen for the mighty **Hermit Rapid** below. Get inspired at **Kolb Studio**, shore up your geology knowledge at **Yavapai Geology Museum** and marvel at the canyon's human history at **Tusayan Ruins**.

Only slightly more expensive are prickly-pear margaritas on the porch swing at **El Tovar**, or an ice-cream cone from **Bright Angel Fountain** to enjoy on a walk along the **Rim Trail**. Or rent a bike at **Bright Angel Bicycles** for a spin along the rim.

## When You Arrive

- » The \$25-per-vehicle park entrance fee permits unlimited visits to both rims within seven days of purchase. Those entering by bicycle, motorcycle or on foot pay \$12.
- » Upon entry, you'll receive a map and a copy of *The Guide*, a National Park Service (NPS) newspaper with current park news, and information on ranger programs, hikes, accommodations and park services.
- » Make your first stop at Grand Canyon Visitor Center to get your bearings, walk out to Mather Point and then carry on with your day.

## PLANNING TIP

Consult *The Guide* or the kiosk at Desert View Information Center for sunrise and sunset times. It's worth showing up early to stake out a prime location.

## Fast Facts

- » Miles of rim trails: 12
- » Highest elevation: 7420ft
- » Elevation change: 4420ft

## Reservations

- » Make in-park accommodation reservations as early as possible if visiting the South Rim during high season. Hikers wishing to stay at Phantom Ranch can book as early as 13 months ahead; the same timeframe applies for mule-ride reservations.

## Resources

- » Xanterra ([www.grandcanyonlodges.com](http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com)) is the primary in-park concessionaire, booking South Rim and Phantom Ranch lodgings and mule trips.