

# Welcome to the Grand Canyon

*The Grand Canyon embodies the scale and splendor of the iconic American West, captured in its dramatic vistas, dusty inner canyon trails, and stories of exploration, preservation and exploitation.*

## Sublime Vistas

We've all seen images of the canyon in print and on-screen, but there is nothing like arriving at the edge and taking it all in – the immensity, the depth, the light. Descend into the canyon depths, amble along the rim or simply relax at an outcrop – you'll find your own favorite Grand Canyon vista. Though views from both rims are equally stunning, the South boasts many more official and dramatic overlooks. One of the most beautiful in its simplicity, however, is the view that whispers from the Grand Canyon Lodge's patio on the canyon's quieter north side.

## Hiking an Inverted Mountain

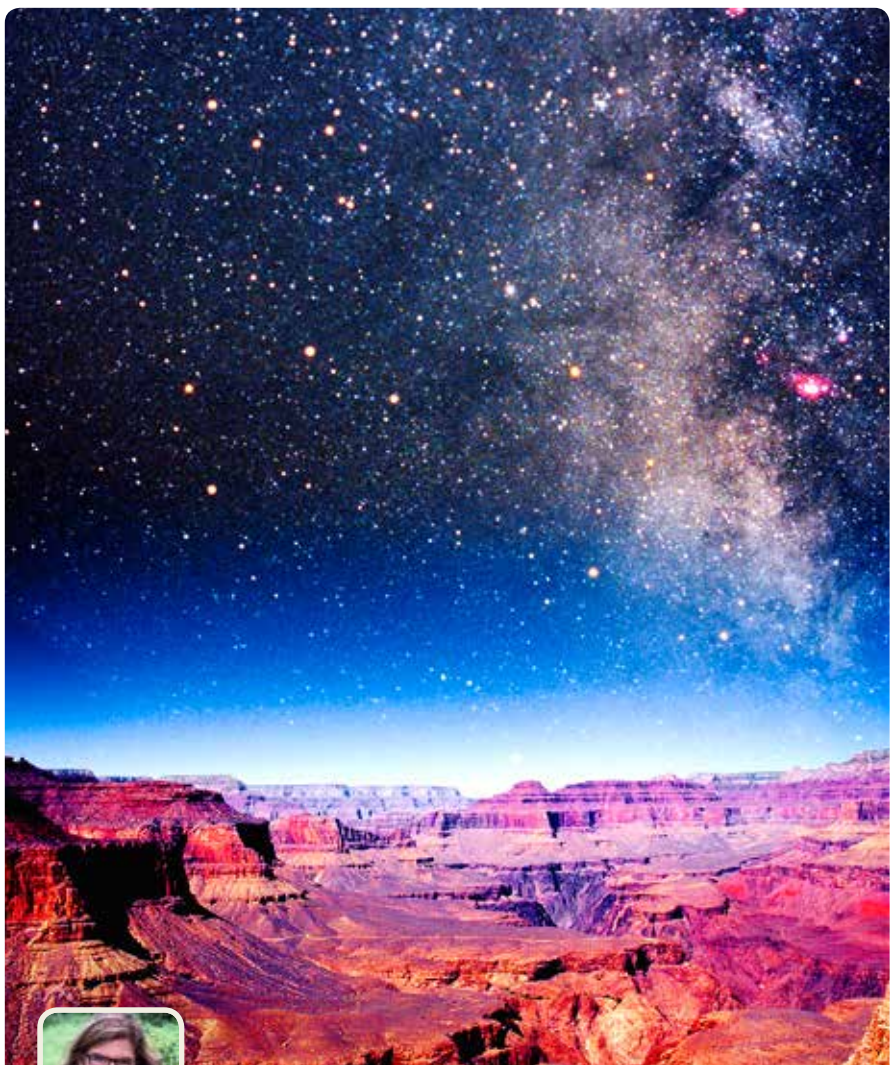
You don't have to be a hardcore hiking enthusiast to taste the park's inner-canyon splendor. Even a short dip below the rim gives a stunning appreciation for its magnificent scale and awesome silence; descend deeper and get a closer look at a mind-boggling record of geologic time. The park's raw desert climate and challenging terrain demand a slower, quieter, more reasoned pace, and that's just perfect. Because it's exactly that pace that is best for experiencing the Grand Canyon in all its multi-sensory glory.

## Geology

One look at the reds, rusts and oranges of the canyon walls and the park's spires and buttes, and you can't help but wonder about the hows of whys of the canyon's formation. Luckily for laypeople with rock-related questions, the South Rim has answers, primarily at the Yavapai Geology Museum and the Trail of Time installation, and both rims offer geology talks and walks given by the park's knowledgeable rangers. For a more DIY experience, hike into the canyon with a careful eye for fossilized marine creatures, animal tracks and ferns.

## Native American & Pioneer History

We all know about the canyon's distinct and unparalleled beauty, its awesome geologic canvas and its draw for outdoor types. Less recognized, perhaps, is the Grand Canyon's compelling human history, the drama that lies in its stories. Native Americans lived in and near the canyon for centuries, farming on its rim and in its depths. The region's national park history is also one of intrepid pioneer scientists and artists, prospectors, railroads and tourist entrepreneurs. Ranger talks are a great way to learn the park's stories, as are historic buildings and South Rim museums.



## Why I Love the Grand Canyon

By Jennifer Rasin Denniston, Writer

I came to the Grand Canyon for the first time with my toddler and newborn in tow. Frazzled and exhausted, and always the skeptical traveler, I was prepared to be underwhelmed. But seconds after walking onto the veranda of the North Rim lodge, I understood. My canyon isn't about the view alone, which I knew from postcards and books, photographs and oil paintings. Its power lies in the grounding silence and dusty quiet, the smells of ponderosa and desert, the clarity that comes from feeling so very small. We return year after year.

**For more about our writers, see p256.**