

# GRAND CANYON



The Grand Canyon is a vast protected area covering 4,531 km<sup>2</sup>. It is 445 kilometres long and up to 16 kilometres wide (between the North Rim and the South Rim). It is also a unique geological phenomenon whose story began more than 2 billion years ago. With an average of 4.5 million visitors per year, it is the second most visited national park in the United States (after the Great Smoky Mountains NP). It is the southern edge of the canyon, South Rim, which receives the most visitors. South Rim is more accessible than the North Rim and has a greater number of spectacular viewpoints. The park was created in 1919 and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK



## WHAT TO DO

The **South Rim** section of Grand Canyon National Park offers beautiful views, an abundance of visitor services and family-oriented activities. It is home to **Grand Canyon Village** with its historic district, Market Plaza, service areas, restaurants, stores, campgrounds and accommodations. Here are the don't-miss attractions of South Rim:

### HISTORIC DISTRICT ★★

The Historic District of Grand Canyon Village contains many historic buildings dating back to the **early 20<sup>th</sup> century**. The most luxurious and well-known hotel near the Grand Canyon, the **El Tovar Hotel** ★, was built in 1905. Stop there to admire, among

other things, its magnificent dark wood lobby. Be sure to visit **Hopi House** ★, a tribute to the Hopi and their ancestors who have inhabited the Grand Canyon for centuries, and **Lookout Studio** ★★, where visitors can use the telescopes to observe the natural beauty of the canyon. **Bright Angel Lodge** ★★ boasts a fireplace in the lobby featuring all of the rock layers of the Grand Canyon, arranged according to age. Finally, the **Railway Depot** ★★ marked a turning point in the history of the Grand Canyon when it was completed in 1909, making it more accessible to travellers and at a lower cost.

### GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK ★★★

**Season:** Open year-round, 24 hours a day (South Rim).

**Visitor center:** Generally open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. from January-October and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in November-December (South Rim).

**Peak period:** Between March and October. Arrive before 8 am or after 3 pm to avoid traffic.

**Shuttle service inside the park?** Yes (see box below)

[www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)



LOOKOUT STUDIO

© iStock-1155966382, Shannon McCanless



GRAND CANYON VILLAGE TRAIN STATION

© iStock-516319070, tibu

## RIM TRAIL ★★★

The Rim Trail is an easy **hiking trail** that runs directly along the Grand Canyon west of the Visitor Center, offering breathtaking views of the Eighth Wonder of the World.

Part of the Rim Trail runs alongside **Hermit Road**, which is 11 kilometres long. The best way to explore the Rim Trail is to take the Hermit Road shuttle and get off at the most scenic viewpoints.

You can then continue on foot, from one point to the next, or take the shuttle between viewpoints. You can also walk the entire trail, but it is important to note that it is 21 km from the Visitor Center in the east to Hermit's Rest in the west. This makes for a long day of walking, even though the trail is mostly flat. This trail is a great way to discover the spectacular

landscapes of the Grand Canyon and its many scenic viewpoints.

Your first view of the most spectacular canyon in the world will almost certainly be at **Mather Point ★★★**, just behind the Visitor Center. Here are some of the other don't-miss viewpoints along the Rim Trail, each of which offers its own perspective:

**Trailway Overlook ★★★**, **Maricopa Point ★★**, **Hopi Point ★★** and **Mohave Point ★★★**, to name just a few. In high season, the best time to take the shuttle along **Rim Trail is in the morning**. As of late morning, wait times for the bus become longer and longer and it is not uncommon to have to wait 25-30 minutes (two or three buses) before being able to board.

## SHUTTLE SERVICE

The park's highly efficient shuttle service is the best way to visit. In addition to being **free**, it offers **four different routes** and many stops. This service is one of the main reason why the park is a perfect destination for a western USA family vacation.

Buses run every 10 to 15 minutes throughout the day. They all have bicycle stands and are wheelchair accessible.

This service is offered **year-round for the Blue Route** (Grand Canyon Village) and the **Orange Route** (around the Visitor Center). **Red Route** (Hermit Road Route) service runs from **March 1 to November 30**, while the **Purple Route** (between Tusayan and the Grand Canyon Visitor Center) runs from **Memorial Day (end of May) to Labor Day (beginning of September)**.

**Tip:** If your accommodations or campground is outside the park, arrive early in the morning to be sure of getting a parking space (before 9 a.m.). The parking complex fills up quickly and you may end up spending more time looking for parking than admiring the scenery.

If you are in an **RV**, you will have to park in **Lot 1, B or D**, which have designated RV spaces, or the Park-and-Ride near the IMAX.

In high tourist season (May-November), we strongly suggest **taking the Purple Route shuttle to the park** (unless you are planning to go to Desert View Drive).

To board the bus, you will need to present your valid park entry pass, which you can purchase at a park entrance station or at one of the following locations in Tusayan: Canyon Plaza Resort, National Geographic Visitor Center (IMAX), Red Feather Lodge or R.P.'s Stage Stop.

The Purple Route shuttle **runs every 20 minutes from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.** You can catch it in Tusayan at one of the following stops: IMAX Theater/ R.P.'s Stage Stop, Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn, The Grand Hotel or Big E Steakhouse and Saloon.



MATHER POINT



SUNRISE ON HOPI POINT



VIEW OF MOHAVE POINT



## DESERT VIEW DRIVE ★★

Desert View Drive is a scenic 40-km stretch of road to the east of Grand Canyon Village that is not covered by the shuttle service. It must be explored on foot or, ideally, by car. It offers several viewpoints on the Colorado River, the most popular of which are:

**Grandview Point ★★★**, which offers panoramic views of Grand Canyon from east to west. **Lipan Point ★★★** with its superb view of the Unkar Rapids and the Colorado River. **Desert View ★★★** and its stone watchtower on a promontory overlooking the canyon, providing majestic 360-degree views. The highest spot on the South Rim, the Watchtower is the

perfect spot to watch the sun set. The best time to explore this scenic road is in the afternoon, as this section of the park is usually less crowded at that time.

## HELICOPTER FLIGHT OVER THE GRAND CANYON ★★★

The ultimate Grand Canyon experience is a **helicopter tour...** Imagine the spectacular birds-

eye view you will have as you soar high over this incredible natural wonder! The flight will take you from the South Rim to the wilder and less accessible North Rim. A dream come true!

**PAPILLON GRAND CANYON HELICOPTER : 702-736-7243**  
**WWW.PAPILLON.COM/GRAND-CANYON-NATIONAL-PARK**

## FESTIVAL

### Grand Canyon Music Festival

**Dates :** late August to mid-September

A chamber music festival offering a variety of concerts. A «treat for eyes and ears».  
[www.grandcanyonmusicfest.org](http://www.grandcanyonmusicfest.org)

## WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO SLEEP INSIDE THE PARK?

Because the Grand Canyon is one of the most popular natural attractions on the planet, many people book their accommodations up to a year in advance and more to be sure to be close by. That's why you sometimes have to stay in an adjacent town such as Tusayan, Williams or Flagstaff, which become your only options for visiting this one-of-a kind destination.



GRAND VIEW POINT, A 180° VIEW

© Authentik USA, Simon Lemay



© Authentik USA, Simon Lemay

HELICOPTER TOUR

## WHERE TO EAT

### 1 FRED HARVEY BURGER (\$\$-\$\$\$)

No-frills, casual, affordable, family-style cuisine. The menu includes salads, steaks, ribs, pasta, burgers, fajitas, fish and other traditional fare. Be prepared to wait for a table as the restaurant is often very busy. No reservations are available, and seating is on a first come, first served basis. The decor is simple, with large shuttered windows and original artwork.

DESERT VIEW DRIVE, GRAND CANYON VILLAGE / 928-638-2631  
 WWW.GRANDCANYONLODGES.  
 COM/DINE/FRED-HARVEY-BURGER

### 2 BRIGHT ANGEL FOUNTAIN (\$\$-\$\$\$)

The perfect spot to grab a coffee, a sandwich, hotdog, pastry, fresh fruit or ice cream. It is located a short distance from Bright Angel Trail Head. NORTH VILLAGE DRIVE, GRAND CANYON VILLAGE / 928-638-2631  
 WWW.GRANDCANYONLODGES.  
 COM/DINING/BRIGHT-ANGEL-FOUNTAIN

### 3 ARIZONA STEAKHOUSE (\$\$-\$\$\$)

Located on the edge of the

Grand Canyon, the Arizona Steakhouse lives up to its name with its regionally-inspired cuisine featuring locally-sourced ingredients and magnificent views of the canyon. The menu features premium steak, ribs, chicken and fish dishes with an Arizona and southwestern flare. Reservations are recommended as the place is quite popular. DESERT VIEW DRIVE, GRAND CANYON VILLAGE / 928-638-2631  
 WWW.GRANDCANYONLODGES.  
 COM/DINE/ARIZONA-ROOM

### 4 EL TOVAR DINING ROOM / EL TOVAR HOTEL (\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$)

El Tovar Dining Room is one of the best restaurants for miles around. This spectacular dining

room with its dark wood and stone decor is in the prestigious El Tovar Hotel, built in 1905. It offers a gourmet dining experience in a classic and traditional ambiance, serving contemporary southwestern cuisine with an exotic touch. Guests such as Teddy Roosevelt, President Bill Clinton, and Sir Paul McCartney have dined and shared stories within these walls. Note that reservations are necessary! If it's full for dinner, try for breakfast or lunch. DESERT VIEW DRIVE, GRAND CANYON VILLAGE / 928-638-2631  
 WWW.GRANDCANYONLODGES.  
 COM/DINE/EL-TOVAR-DINING-ROOM-AND-LOUNGE

