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Grand Canyon's Remote Side – 2020

With a special focus on the Granite Rapids Loop:

Bright Angel – Tonto Plateau – Hermit Trail

Michelle Schroeder

Itinerary – Granite Rapids Loop

Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden to Granite Rapids via Tonto, out Hermit's Rest

1st day

Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden (4.8 miles), drop packs and set up camp, day hike to Phantom Ranch (9.9 miles total to bottom, 4,314 ft. elev. loss) and back to Indian Garden (5.1 miles, 1,254 ft. elev. gain) (total mileage for day 15 miles)

Good side hike alternative to hiking all of the way to Phantom Ranch would be to Plateau Point (1.5 miles from Indian Garden w/stunning views)

2nd day

Indian Garden (CIG) to Granite Rapids (BL8) via Tonto Plateau, after lunch and rest in Monument Creek (total mileage for day 12.3 miles)

Tonto Plateau drops ~ 500 ft. from Indian Garden (3900 ft from South Rim)

3rd day – hike out

Granite Rapids to Hermit's Rest Trailhead (10.3 miles, 4,271 ft)

Backcountry backpackers are given access code to 9-mile road out to Hermit's Rest Trailhead. Brought car to parking spot the night prior using the free shuttle.

Launch Prep

Camped at Mather Campground (reserve through recreation.gov)

Caught free shuttle to Bright Angel trailhead at nearby bus stop

- 4:30 am – for most buses; last bus varies by route
- For Hermit's Rest route (Red Route), 4:30 am – 30 minutes after sunset

Dangers (some examples)

Lightning Strikes – 25,000/year

Severe weather

Mountain Lions, snakes, scorpions, etc.

Dehydration, etc.



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Water

Bring electrolytes

Indian Garden – seasonal treated water via spigots (verify pipes are not broken)

Bright Angel – year-round treated water via spigots (verify pipes are not broken)

~~Horn Creek~~ Uranium mine up above – DO NOT DRINK

(Orphan Mine was active as recently as 1969. Some of the individual loads of ore that were taken from the Orphan Mine were among the highest grade uranium ever recorded from a North American mine.)

~~Salt Creek~~ – Highly mineralized – DO NOT DRINK

Cedar Creek – Can be unreliable and difficult to get

Monument Creek – generally reliable (access is a short way down the creek bed from main camping area and just below the Monument, but is harder to find)

Santa Maria Spring – ~2.5 miles below Hermit's Rest trailhead

During 1st and 2nd days, we carried only 2 liters each, refilling at spigots

Pack 6 liters for hike out from Granite Rapids (top off at Monument Creek)

For potable water sources, always contact the backcountry office to see if anything has changed or if there are any issues & do your research

Toilet

Some sites have composting toilets, some don't

Sites on the corridor trails do have facilities

Sites on other trails may have facilities, many do not

Bring toilet paper – for sites without facilities, you will need to **pack out your TP**

If you are by the river in sand dunes, you must dig a cat-hole above the sand dunes to do #2; for #1, go as close to the water as possible

Map

Map 261 National Geographic (available at MW Mtn)

7.5 Minute Grand Canyon Quad (USGS) Trails Illustrated Map

Sky Terrain Trails Map, Grand Canyon

Electronic – Gaia

Food Storage

- Mandatory cases are provided at Indian Garden, Bright Angel and Cottonwood.
- The Outsack mesh net is required at other sites (purchase or rent from Canyon Village Marketplace (a grocery store) on the South Rim 928-638-2262)
- Be sure your food is in sealed plastic bags/containers, or you will have an ant issue



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Grand Canyon's Remote Side – 2020 **Backcountry Permits**

Submit by 5pm MST (note: Arizona does not do daylight savings time) on the 1st of the month that is 4 months prior to the proposed start date. You can submit it up to 10 days earlier, but these earlier requests will be treated as if they arrived on the 1st and are placed in a computer-generated, random order once duplicates have been removed. It may take rangers 3 weeks to process all Earliest Convenience requests. Once this is completed, all later requests are considered in the order that they are received. Only by credit card.

3 Ways to Apply for a Permit

- Fax: 928-638-2125
- Mail: Grand Canyon Permits Office
1824 S Thompson St., #201
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
- In-person at Backcountry Information Center, inside park @ both the South and North Rims
- Backcountry Information: 928-638-7875
- <https://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/backcountry-permit.htm>

Permit Response: You are notified by either U.S. mail or email

Do not submit multiple permit requests for the same group. If they catch you, you'll all get canceled.

You **can** submit multiple itineraries and alternate start dates on the same request, just add pages. Itineraries can be longer than 7 nights. See backcountry web page.

Valid only for trip leader, itinerary, # of people, and dates specified on permit

Better odds for smaller groups (1-6); limited # of sites for larger groups

If you reserve with ample time, you will receive permit by mail. If your reservation is made close to your departure date, obtain your permit through the Backcountry Information Center at the South Rim of Grand Canyon Nat'l Park

- \$10/permit + \$8/person/night
- National Park Entrance fees are separate