

STRENUOUS HIKE NOTICE - BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL

The Bright Angel Trail is steep and long. It is 7.5 miles from rim to river and covers one vertical mile in elevation change. The trail is wide and well maintained, but you don't want to underestimate this hike.

Lower Canyon trip participants hike downhill from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River. Participants meet and start the hike as a group at first light (4:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. depending on time of year). *There is a limited time window to complete this hike.* The boats depart Pipe Creek Beach at 11:00 a.m. due to the fact that we cannot camp near the hike-in point and must travel through several big water rapids before reaching a stretch where we can begin to look for campsites.

While undertaking your conditioning program, consider how the rigors of this hike will impact how you will feel at the start of your river trip. Please read the *Float Notes* section on conditioning for this hike!

Please be certain that you are ready to commit to a training regimen that will ensure you are able to complete this hike within the allotted time frame. If you are not conditioned adequately and are unable to arrive at certain points on the trail by certain times, our hike guide will turn you around. This will result in you missing the trip and your trip fare will be forfeited.

Why This Hike Is Not For Everyone

Hiking downhill, with a back pack, is very hard on hips, thigh muscles, knees, and ankles. The steepness of the trail necessitates constant "braking" and significant impact to joints and to muscles we don't use routinely.

There is a time limit for completing the hike down to the river. You will begin at first light and must arrive at the river no later than 10:30 a.m. (boats depart at 11 a.m.). In the spring and fall, this leaves only 5 hours to complete the entire hike.

You must be in shape to carry the weight of your backpack/clothing (20-30 lbs) and two quarts of water. This load significantly increases the stress on your body and amount of effort exerted. Dry, desert conditions result in serious water depletion requiring that you carry and consume lots of water, and snack regularly to avoid electrolyte depletion.

Extreme temperatures are compounded by prolonged exposure to desert sun. Summer temperatures regularly exceed 100°F and sometimes exceed 115°F.

Strenuous exercise at elevation (the elevation at the South Rim is 7,200'; elevation at the river is 2,400') can be hard to prepare for.

Please note that we cannot accommodate personal gear carried into the Grand Canyon by the Fred Harvey mule/duffle service. The associated logistics negatively impact the experience of other trip participants.

Please consider arriving a full day before the orientation to avoid complications due to cancelled/delayed flights. **Lower Canyon trip logistics involve serious consequences if travel delays cause you to miss our orientation/transport to the South Rim. There are no shuttles, buses, or flights available between Phoenix or Flagstaff and the rim at that time of day.** Options include hiring a taxi or renting a car for 9 days as the car agencies have no "drop-off" locations at the rim. The rim is a 4 hour drive from Phoenix and a 1.5 hour drive from Flagstaff.

Flying dehydrates and is often exhausting. A day to rest, to adjust to the dry climate and altitude, and to pre-hydrate prior to doing your hike down to the trip can make a big difference in how well you will feel when you arrive at the river.

Conditioning

It is essential that you take time to condition for your trip. Serious pre-trip conditioning is a must for you to have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable journey. We suggest training with a weighted backpack on a stair-master, treadmill (set on incline), or a set of stairs (go to a local stadium or tall building). However, any exercise that builds cardiovascular and lower body muscle strength will help. Please allow plenty of time for conditioning prior to your trip.

Medical Concerns

If you have *asthma, high blood pressure, or a heart condition*, attempting this hike puts your health at serious risk. If you have any of these conditions or are unsure whether you are in good enough shape for this hike, we strongly urge you to get your physician's approval for this trip. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about the canyon's environment and how we deal with the sometimes extreme conditions. When you consult your physician, please take a copy of this sheet so that she/he is advised of the conditions that you will experience during the hike.