

Grand Canyon

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona



Visiting Archaeological Sites with Respect

A guide for enjoying and respecting Grand Canyon National Park's resources and history.

Did you know Grand Canyon is home to 11 associated Tribal Nations?

Havasupai Tribe • Hopi Tribe • Hualapai Tribe • Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians • Las Vegas Paiute Tribe • Moapa Band of Paiutes • Navajo Nation • Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah • Pueblo of Zuni • San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe • Yavapai-Apache Nation

Each Tribal community has individual cultural connections to archaeological sites as a direct link to their heritage and ancestors. By visiting with respect, you can help protect cultural and natural resources important to Tribal Nations and Grand Canyon National Park.



Visit with Respect



Think about how your actions can preserve this place for future visitors and generations—including Indigenous peoples with direct connections to these sites. Stacked rocks, artifact piles, graffiti, social trails, and littering can negatively impact the context and cultural value of archaeological sites. Frequent visitation leads to irreversible damage or looting, so please take photos but refrain from posting on social media.



Leave What You Find

Leave artifacts where they lie. The locations of artifacts and structures still have a significance to many Indigenous people and should be left in place to maintain knowledge about the site. It is important that artifacts remain in place because a site may tell archaeologists and Indigenous people about events that happened in the past. By leaving everything as you found it, you avoid creating artifact piles and preserve information important to the archaeological site.



Stacking Rocks

Stacking rocks on top of walls creates additional weight to already unstable and deteriorating structures. Stacking may lead to a wall collapsing. Creating new rock piles or walls on or around structures may also redirect water, causing further damage to the site. Moving rocks also disrupts the habitats of animals and insects.

Enjoy pictograph and petroglyph rock images but avoid the temptation to touch the graphic. Oils from our hands can deteriorate the rock surface and pigments. Graffiti (scratches, carvings, drawings) defaces and destroys rock images, structures, and other resources. Graffiti is vandalism and punishable by federal law.

Leave No Trace



Avoid eating food in archaeological sites. Food crumbs or trash left behind, (such as orange and banana peels and apple cores) attracts animals that can cause further disturbance and damage, like rodent burrows or trampling.

Choose a bathroom location at least 200 ft. (61 m) away from archaeological sites, dry washes, camps, trails, and water. Dispose of waste in a "cathole" at least 6 in. (15 cm) deep and pack out used toilet paper/wipes.

Building "camp furniture" (windbreaks, stove pedestals, seating, etc.) can disturb or destroy archaeological features.



Zuni religious leaders conduct annual monitoring at the South Canyon petroglyph panel. M. Lyndon/NPS Photo.

Plan Ahead



Do your research! For safety and for fun! Look up where you are going and etiquette rules, like this one, to know the appropriate behavior when visiting. Also, read the regulations on backcountry permits, which provide important information.

This information can be accessed by visiting the Backcountry Information Center (BIC) in person or online:



[Backcountry Information Center](#)



[Backcountry Rules and Regulations](#)

Hiking and Camping



Be aware of your surroundings. Areas absent of vegetation and near water likely have been used for centuries by people and often are documented archaeological sites. Archaeological sites are very fragile due to old age. Walk carefully and avoid stepping and sitting on artifacts and wall structures. Camping and fires can damage archaeological and cultural resources. Avoid camping, building campfires, and smoking in and near archaeological sites and historic structures.

Special Note: Social Trails

 Social trails can lead to erosion, so please stay on designated trails. Walking off of designated trails may harm wildlife, flora, or ancestral sites.



Each year, Grand Canyon National Park archaeologists, law enforcement rangers, and Tribal Nations actively monitor hundreds of archaeological sites, some of which have been inadvertently, or intentionally, damaged. Archaeological sites on federal lands are protected by laws such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) which prohibit the excavation, removal, damage, alteration, or defacing of archaeological materials.

If you see people vandalizing a site, please report it immediately. Call or text Investigative Services Branch (ISB) Tip Line 888-653-0009 or email nps_isb@nps.gov. If it is an emergency, call 911.

Thank you!