

Lauren  
PLUS 03



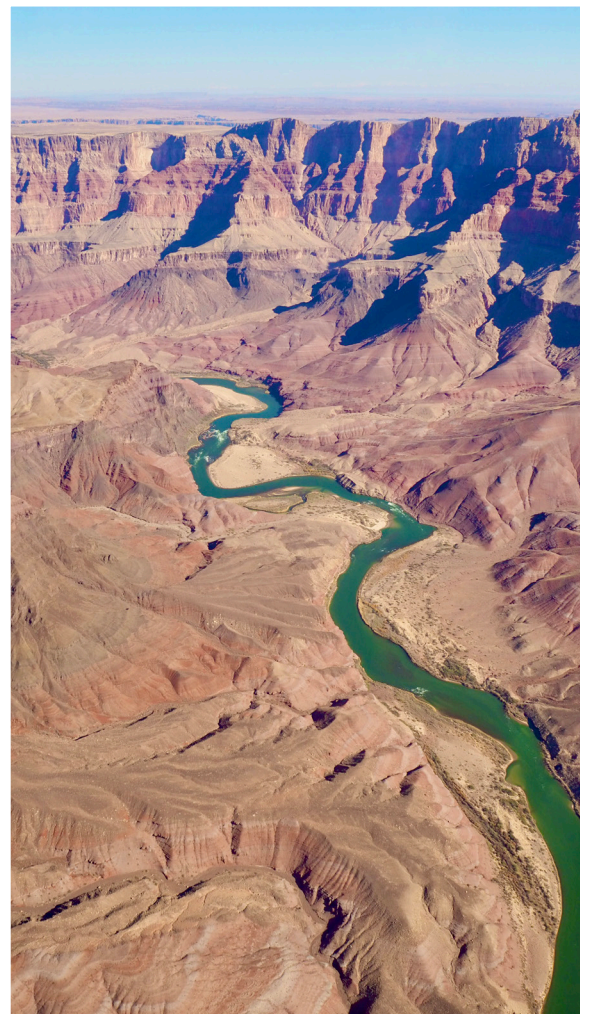
36.1069° N · 112.1129° W

# GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

**And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.**

Its expanse is mind-boggling. Its colors defy even the most colorful palette you've ever seen. And everywhere you look, there are layers upon layers of history and geology to uncover.

Grand Canyon National Park is packed with outdoor adventures. Hiking, biking, rafting, camping, dramatic viewpoints, scenic flights — Grand Canyon has it all. But it can be a very overwhelming place. We visited during Thanksgiving 2021, during a global pandemic. The crowds were thin and nothing like we had ever seen before. It wasn't our first visit to one of the most extraordinary places on earth but it was without a doubt a different experience. Things were different but outlined below is our experience and tips to making the best of your Grand Canyon vacation.



# EXPLORING THE GRAND CANYON

## OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO SEE AND DO

### **Bike the Rim**

Bright Angel Bicycles & Mather Point Café

### **Desert View Drive**

It heads east from the Visitor Center for 22 miles to the Desert View Watchtower. Both of these drives are fantastic and provide different perspectives of the canyon.

### **Hike the South Rim with kids**

There are plenty of places to hike along the twelve mile South Rim Trail

### **Hike Bright Angel Trail**

I had previously done this with my father ~ 28 years ago! Requires planning and preparation.

### **South Kaibab Trail**

One of our favorite trails! Gorgeous at sunrise!

### **Walk to Shoshone Point**

Easy hike, easy access. Plenty of wildlife to view, and a GORGEOUS view at the end.

### **Hopi House**

Hopi House allows the visitor to peek into our Native American past and at the same time provides excellent gifts and souvenirs of the handicrafts of the Hopi Indians.

### **Helicopter Tour**

It was AMAZING! We used Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopter Tours.

### **Havasupai Falls**

It was closed during Covid so we were unable to visit, but I hear it as a MUST DO!

### **Grand Canyon Skywalk**

A 4 hour drive from the South Rim and I don't recommend!

### **Route 66 souvenirs**

The classic Route 66 road trip is an unforgettable journey into America, then and now. If you have the opportunity to drive even a portion of it be sure to stop in a purchase a fun souvenir!



## WHERE WE STAYED

### **El Tovar Hotel**

9 Village Loop Drive  
Grand Canyon Village, AZ 86023

The Legendary El Tovar Hotel - Grand Canyon's Premier Lodge. El Tovar retains its elegant charm and is widely considered the crown jewel of Historic National Park Lodges. Located directly on the canyon rim, it offers spectacular sunrises and sunsets of the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon, a 1-mile deep gorge carved by the Colorado River.

## HOW MANY DAYS WILL YOU NEED

I recommend a minimum of 3 days in order to explore the Grand Canyon National Park.

# EXPLORING THE GRAND CANYON

## OUR ADVENTURE TO OOH AAH POINT

What an amazing sunrise hike below the south rim of the Grand Canyon. Although it was a bit chilly (22°F) we wore layers and pushed through. Well worth the 6am wake up!

There is no parking at the trailhead so park on the (wide) roadside around the area where the Arizona Trail (AZT) intersects Rt 64/Desert View Drive. From there, you walk up the AZT to the Rim Trail and then a short distance to the South Kaibab Trail

The hike took us around 2 hours down and up - lots of switchbacks towards the top but manageable even with 3 kids (ages 6-9) in tow.

This is by far my favorite hike at the south rim!



## TRAVEL TIPS

The Grand Canyon is popular, very popular! Avoiding the crowds in Grand Canyon National Park is easy, even during peak summer season and holidays. The Grand Canyon is big – almost 2,000 square miles – yet most tourists flock to a handful of famous viewpoints on the South Rim. Visit those viewpoints at the wrong time and you'll encounter big crowds.

**Here are some of our favorite tips on how to avoid the crowds in Grand Canyon National Park.**

1. Hiking is one of the best ways to avoid the crowds in Grand Canyon. Most visitors only experience Grand Canyon from the rim. If you're looking to get away from the crowds, this is great news. Go for a hike and the crowds will thin out immediately. Choose a challenging trail and you'll wonder where everyone went. In addition, hiking trails offer some of Grand Canyon's most spectacular views. The popular Rim Trail offers opportunities for solitude if you hike away from Grand Canyon Village.
2. Wake up Early! Sunrise is an incredible experience in Grand Canyon. But most visitors sleep right through it. Wake up early and you'll avoid the crowds, even at the most popular viewpoints. And don't forget your camera. Early morning light is terrific for photos.
3. Pack a picnic - Grand Canyon's restaurants are often crowded at mealtime. Long lines are common, even at cafeterias serving mediocre food. Pack a picnic basket instead. It'll save you time, frustration, and it will probably be cheaper and healthier.
4. Enjoy the stars at night - Grand Canyon enjoys some of the darkest skies in America. If you're not admiring the stars overhead, you're literally missing half the show.