WELCOME

Welcome to one of America’s most beautiful landscapes! In addition to fantastic scenery, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area offers some of the best hiking, rock climbing, biking, and outdoor recreation activities in the region. The 13-mile Scenic Drive offers several scenic overlooks, parking areas, picnic areas, and access to dozens of day hikes and trails. Red Rock Canyon’s spectacular sandstone escarpment, the iconic desert tortoise, and the thickets of Joshua trees herald the natural world of geology, animals, and plants to be experienced in the over 200,000 acre National Conservation Area, managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

GET READY TO SAFELY EXPLORE

Search and rescue incidents are unfortunate but do occur in Red Rock National Conservation Area. The Mojave Desert is an extreme environment subject to intense heat in the summer and very cold temperatures in the winter, especially during windy conditions or at higher altitudes. Let friends or family members know where you are going and what time you expect to be back. Don’t rely on mobile phones during your visit as coverage in the area can be unreliable or non-existent, especially within canyons. Never leave valuables in plain sight where they may tempt someone to break into your vehicle. Your safety is your responsibility. Please read the important safety tips below:

BRING SUFFICIENT WATER
Drink at least one gallon (four liters) per day if you are hiking, the day is hot or the trail is exposed to direct sunlight. The Visitor Center is the only area with refill stations and safe drinking water.

PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT
Temperatures in Red Rock Canyon can average more than 100° F (38° C) during the summer months. The best protection against heat is drinking plenty of water and limiting exposure to the sun. We recommend arriving early during the summer months.

BEWARE OF STEEP CLIFFS
Falls from cliffs have resulted in death. Loose sand or pebbles on stone are slippery. Never throw rocks; there may be hikers or climbers below you.

WATCH FOR DESERT DWELLERS
Watch where you put your hands and feet. Rattlesnakes, scorpions or venomous spiders may be sheltered behind boulders or under rocks and shrubs. Do not touch, collect, feed or harass these animals.

WEAR APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE GEAR
For hiking, select shoes that will provide a comfortable fit, ankle stability and protection against cactus spines. Wear a hat, dress in layers and apply sunscreen!

BEWARE OF FLASH FLOODS
Flash flooding is a greater risk at Red Rock Canyon due to the smooth sandstone – even a relatively small amount of rain can result in a flash flood.

WATCH FOR LIGHTNING
Lightning storms frequently occur in the afternoon during the summer months. To prevent lightning from striking you, avoid high places and seek cover in buildings or in vehicles with the windows rolled up.

PLAN AHEAD
Hikes sometimes take longer than expected. Remember to carefully plan your hike, being aware of sunset times and weather forecasts. Be sure to read all trail descriptions carefully and do not hike above your skill level. Always bring extra water.

DON’T RELY ON CELL SERVICE
There is currently little to no cell service available in Red Rock Canyon. While it may seem like we are very close to Las Vegas, it may be impossible to reach 911 or call for help in case of an emergency. Consider carrying an emergency GPS locator. In addition, this means that you will not be able to use popular rideshare apps on your return trip to Las Vegas. Make sure to arrange a taxi ahead of time.

DON’T CLIMB ON WET SANDSTONE
Sandstone becomes very brittle when wet and climbing wet sandstone poses an increased risk to climbers from dangerous breakoffs and injury from rockfalls. It is best practice to wait 24-72 hours after rain before climbing. If rain is in the forecast, consider the limestone sport crags instead.
Welcome to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area! Whether you are hiking, rock climbing or just enjoying the scenery along the Scenic Drive, Red Rock Canyon has some of the best sights and experiences the Mojave Desert has to offer. Plan your route carefully, as the scenic drive is a one-way only roadway. If you miss your intended stop, don’t worry – your amenity fee is good for the full day and you are welcome to re-enter at the fee booth.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:**
- Maximum speed limit is 35 mph – Please regard all posted signs.
- Share the road – Help keep you and your fellow motorists, bicyclists, runners and wildlife safe.
- Only park in designated lots – If a lot is full, please do not park off the road or atop vegetation as many plants can take decades to regrow if they come back at all.
- Have fun, be safe and enjoy your drive!
TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS. HIKING GUIDES AVAILABLE IN VISITOR CENTER

**EASY**

- **Moenkopi 1**
  - Visitor Center
  - 2 mi (3.2 km) 1.5 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail starts west of the Visitor Center near the picnic area. It offers panoramic views of the Calico Hills, the Spring Mountains, and La Madre Mountains.

- **Willow Spring Loop 9**
  - Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 1.5 mi (2.4 km) 1.25 hours 200 ft (60 m)
  - This trail passes several pictographs and agave roasting pits on both sides of the canyon.

- **Petroglyph Wall Trail 11**
  - Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 0.15 mi (0.24 km) 30 minutes 26 ft (7.9 m)
  - The trail starts across from the Willow Spring Picnic Area near the juniper fence turn around. The petroglyph wall is across the wash adjacent to a large juniper tree.

- **Lost 14**
  - Lost Creek
  - 0.75 mi (1.2 km) 55 minutes 200 ft (60 m)
  - This moderately easy trail is a wonderful place to explore because of the variety of plant life and a number of cultural sites. Depending on the season, there may be a waterfall based on recent rain or snowfall. Also look for a pictograph and an agave roasting pit site. This trail is a combination of rocky, uneven terrain and a boardwalk trail.

- **Fire Ecology 19**
  - Pine Creek Canyon
  - 0.75 mi (1.2 km) 55 minutes 200 ft (60 m)
  - This trail branches off the Pine Creek Canyon Trail. It is a short, figure eight trail that goes through a stand of ponderosa pine where a prescribed fire took place.

- **Oak Creek 22**
  - North Oak Creek
  - 2 mi (3.2 km) 1.5 hours 200 ft (60 m)
  - From the Scenic Drive, turn on to the dirt road leading to the Oak Creek Canyon parking lot and start the trail from there. The Oak Creek Trail heads through open desert and is a good wildflower viewing site during the spring.

**MODERATE**

- **Calico Hills 2**
  - Calico I Calico II Sandstone Quarry Visitor Center
  - 2.6 mi (4.2 km) 3.5 – 3.5 hours 400 ft (120 m)
  - This trail offers access to sport climbing areas and the best close-up views of the Calico Hills.

- **Calico Tanks 3**
  - Sandstone Quarry
  - 2.5 mi (4 km) 2 hours 450 ft (140 m)
  - From the parking lot, follow the trail that winds through the wash. There may be seasonal water present in a natural tank (linigual) at the end. This trail offers sweeping views of the Las Vegas valley.

- **Keystone Thrust 5**
  - Upper White Rock
  - 2.2 mi (3.5 km) 1.5 hours 400 ft (120 m)
  - The Keystone Thrust is one of the most significant geological features of Red Rock Park. This one mile loop will bring you back to the homestead. From there, follow the trail for one mile back to the parking lot.

- **White Rock - Willow Spring 6**
  - Upper White Rock Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 4.4 mi (7 km) 2.5 hours 200 ft (60 m)
  - From the parking area, walk up a portion of the exit Rocky Gap Road. The springs are a great place to watch for wildlife, including bighorn sheep. You can connect to the La Madre Spring Trail to see a year-round spring.

- **La Madre Canyon 10**
  - Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 3.3 mi (5.2 km) 2 hours 400 ft (120 m)
  - This trail connects the Lost Creek and Icebox Canyon trails. It follows the terrain at the base of the escarpment.

- **SMYC 15**
  - Lost Creek Ice Box Canyon
  - 2.2 mi (3.5 km) 2 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail links the upper section of the Arnight Trail with the Oak Creek Canyon Trail.

- **Dale’s 17**
  - Ice Box Canyon Pine Creek Canyon
  - 4.4 mi (7 km) 2.5 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail connects the Ice Box Canyon and Pine Creek Canyon trails. It follows the terrain at the base of the escarpment.

- **Pine Creek Canyon 18**
  - Pine Creek Canyon
  - 3 mi (4.8 km) 2 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail takes you across the open desert, past an old homestead site and into the meadow. A one mile loop will bring you back to the homestead. From there, follow the trail for one mile back to the parking lot.

- **Arnight 20**
  - Oak Creek Canyon
  - 2.4 mi (3.8 km) 1.5 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail can be started at the Oak Creek Canyon parking lot or by taking the Pine Creek Canyon Trail. It connects the Oak Creek Park lot the end loop of the Pine Creek Canyon Trail.

- **Knoll 21**
  - Oak Creek Canyon
  - 3.5 mi (5.6 km) 2.5 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - The shortest and easiest way to access this trail is by taking the Oak Creek Canyon Trail. This trail links the upper section of the Arnight Trail with the Oak Creek Canyon Trail, following the base of the escarpment.

**DIFFICULT**

- **Turtlehead Peak 4**
  - Sandstone Quarry
  - 5 mi (8 km) 3.5 – 4.5 hours 2,000 ft (600 m)
  - From the parking lot, follow trail across the wash and through the sandstone rock formations and up the gulch toward a prominent rock formation at the saddle. Once you are above the rock formation, the trail splits, forming a loop that takes you to the summit and back to the rock formation where you will continue back down the way you came.

- **Grand Circle Loop 7**
  - Visitor Center
  - 11.3 mi (18.2 km) 5 – 6 hours 1,095 ft (334 m)
  - The Grand Circle Loop is a combination of trails that will take you from one point and Spring you back to that point. See the information desk for a detailed description. The north side of White Rock is one of the best areas for viewing bighorn sheep. You can connect to the La Madre Spring Trail to see a year-round spring.

- **White Rock - La Madre Spring Loop 8**
  - Upper White Rock Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 6 mi (9.6 km) 3.5 hrs 890 ft (270 m)
  - Starting from the parking lot, proceed up Rocky Gap Road to the summit and take the Bridge Mountain Trail to the North Peak junction 1.1 miles. When you get to the summit, enjoy the view and then follow your tracks back down to Willow Springs.

- **North Peak 12**
  - Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 10 mi (16 km) 5 hours 2,442 ft (744 m)
  - From the parking lot, proceed up Rocky Gap Road to the summit and take the Bridge Mountain Trail to Bridge Mountain. There is a class four rock scramble that must be traversed to get to the peak. See the information desk for a detailed description.

- **Bridge Mountain 13**
  - Willow Spring Picnic Area
  - 14 mi (22.5 km) 4 – 7 hours 2,412 ft (744 m)
  - From the parking lot, proceed up Rocky Gap Road to the summit and take the Bridge Mountain Trail to Bridge Mountain. There is a class four rock scramble that must be traversed to get to the peak. See the information desk for a detailed description.

- **Ice Box Canyon 16**
  - Ibex Canyon
  - 2.6 mi (4.1 km) 2 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - This trail crosses the open desert then enters the canyon. Hiking the canyon requires some tricky boulder hopping all the way back to where you may find a waterfall based on recent rain or snowfall.

**TRAILS FOUND OUTSIDE OF THE SCENIC DRIVE**

- **Middle Oak Creek 23**
  - Middle Oak Creek
  - 4 mi (6.6 km) 3 hours 187 ft (57 m)
  - The trailhead is located outside of the Scenic Loop Drive on SR-159 at mile marker 8. Walk through the opening in the fence and follow the trail across the open desert toward the escarpment and the juncture of the Oak Creek Trail.

- **South Oak Creek 24**
  - South Oak Creek
  - 5 mi (8 km) 3.5 hours 331 ft (101 m)
  - From the South Oak Creek trailhead located on SR-159, walk down the old campground road to the trailhead. Proceed through the tree line and into the open desert. The trail loops around Petate Knoll and return to the trailhead in approximately 5 miles.

- **First Creek Canyon 25**
  - First Creek Canyon
  - 3 mi (4.8 km) 2 hours 300 ft (90 m)
  - The trailhead is on SR-159, 2.6 mi (4.1 km) southeast of the exit to the scenic loop drive. The trail leads to the mouth of the canyon. Seasonal streams may be flowing through the trees from the trail.

- **Kraft Boulders 26**
  - Kraft Mountain
  - 1.5 mi (2.4 km) 1 hour 50 ft (15.2 m)
  - This trail starts at the end of Sandstone Drive within Calico Basin. Follow the trail east through a ravine and along the basin of Kraft Mountain to see gorgeously colored & shaped sandstone boulders. This is a popular spot for bouldering & rock climbing.

- **Red Spring Boardwalk 27**
  - Red Spring/Calico Basin
  - .5 mi (.8 km) 30 minutes 50 ft (15.2 m)
  - Enjoy rare salt grass as well as a year-round running spring. This spring supports numerous water dependent plants and wildlife.

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**TAKE CAUTION AND BE ALERT: TRAILS MAY CONTAIN LARGE CLIFFS OR DROP-OFFS.**

**EASY:** Minimal uphill sections and some uneven terrain

**MODERATE:** Uplift sections include up to 500 ft of elevation gain, single digit mileage; uneven terrain and some rock scrambling.

**DIFFICULT:** Generally, lots of uplift sections, possibly more than 1000 ft of elevation gain, double digit mileage and/or difficult terrain and rock scrambling.

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**Take Caution and be alert:** Trails may contain large cliffs or drop offs. Wildlife is commonly seen on this trail. Accessible trail. Seasonal waterfalls or unique water features may be present depending on the time of year. Place of archaeological or cultural significance.
AZTEC SANDSTONE

The great sandstone cliffs at Red Rock Canyon, thousands of feet high, are made up of Aztec Sandstone. What you see is the fossilized cores of old sand dunes laid down during the early Jurassic Period (180-190 million years ago,) covering from the Dakotas south into Mexico and west toward Los Angeles. The sand slowly changed into sandstone as subsurface water percolated through the sediments, depositing iron oxide and calcium carbonate in the pore spaces between the grains. These sandstone formations were slowly uplifted thousands of feet to their present elevation and exposed to weathering and erosion.

WHITE-TAILED ANTELOPE GROUND SQUIRREL (AMMOSPERMOPHILUS LEUCURUS)

This small mammal, about the size of a tennis ball, gets its name by holding its white tail vertically up while running around, similar to how pronghorn antelope act. You can spot these animals normally in gravelly areas looking for fruits and seeds, but they’re also spotted around our Visitor Center and picnic areas looking for food. As cute as they are, you certainly do not want to feed them because they’ll bite.

LIMESTONE

More than 500 million years ago Red Rock Canyon NCA was at the bottom of the Panthalassic Ocean, a superocean covering almost 70% of earth’s surface. Over the next 250 million years the calcified remains of sea life that flourished during that time sunk down and packed together on the ocean floor creating Paleozoic Era limestone. Early to mid-Paleozoic Era limestone is exposed on the escarpment on the west and north sides of the conservation area. Later Paleozoic Era Permian limestone outcrops can be seen on the east side, especially on Blue Diamond Hill and its extension to the north, Fossil Ridge.

CHUCKWALLA (SAUROMALUS ATER)

The Chuckwalla is one of the largest lizards in Southern Nevada. They can grow up to nine inches long and appear to be fat. Don’t be deceived, though! Chuckwallas have a good amount of loose skin on the sides of their bodies which help them to protect themselves. When threatened they will slip into a rock crevice and fill their lungs with air, increasing their body size and wedging themselves into the crevice making it very hard for predators to remove them. Chucks are known for their variety of coloration including tan, brown, and black, and juveniles have strong banding on their tails. Within Red Rock Canyon you can occasionally find them within the Calico Basin, Calico Hills, and Blue Diamond Hill areas lounging on rocky outcrops or hidden between rocks.

MOJAVE YUCCA (YUCCA SCHIDIGERA)

This plant dominates the landscape with its long & green pointy leaves, fibrous base, and cream-white flowers. You can find Mojave yuccas from three to 12 feet tall, depending on age and location. During spring, large white flowers appear on stalks from the top of this plant and attract female yucca moths (family Prodoxidae) that pollinate the plant. Pollinated flowers turn into small green fruits by the start of summer. Mojave yuccas provided food (fruits) and fibers (baskets & sandals from leaves) for Natives inhabiting the Mojave Desert.

FOSSILS & DINOSAURS

A long time ago, Red Rock Canyon was under water. We know this from the fossilized remains of ocean floor life found throughout many areas of Red Rock Canyon. You can find fossilized remains of corals, crinoids, blue-green bacteria, and sponges within a lot of the older limestone and dolomite rocks. Recent fossil discoveries include prehistoric foot prints of dinosaurs, mammals, and insects. Good places to look for fossils include the Blue Diamond Hills on the east side of SR-159, the hills along Cottonwood Valley south of SR-160, and the tops of the limestone mountains west behind the Red Rock Escarpment. Please only take pictures and leave any fossils on the ground for other visitors to enjoy.

NATIVE PEOPLE AND EARLY EXPLORERS AT RED ROCK

In the Mojave Desert, the key to survival is usable water. The springs and many natural catch basins at Red Rock Canyon sustain an abundance of plants and animals, which attracted Southern Paiutes, Spanish scouts, Mormon missionaries, explorers, miners, and settlers. Evidence of their presence includes mines, corrals, agave roasting pits, petroglyphs, and pictographs. These cultural resources are considered precious artifacts to respect and protect.
BIGHORN SHEEP (OVIS CANADENSIS)

Bighorn sheep are one of the most majestic large animals seen within Red Rock Canyon and happen to be the state animal of Nevada. They prefer steep, rocky terrain, which provides escape from coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions. Bighorn sheep forage on grasses, shrubs, and fruits. Both male (rams) and female (ewes) sheep have horns atop their head, although male sheep have bigger horns. The horns are made of keratin, the same material human fingernails consist of. Males smash into each other using their horns to establish dominance when it comes to selecting mates. On average, bighorn sheep live 10-15 years and can weigh anywhere from 110-200 pounds.

JOSHUA TREES (YUCCA BREVIFOLIA)

These might be the most familiar and iconic plant species within the Mojave Desert. These plants are part of the agave family (Agavaceae) and are not trees, although they can grow up to 30 feet tall. From March to May, you’ll see brilliant creamy white flowers on display that attract yucca moths. Once pollinated, the flowers turn into green seed pods. The plants are named as such because Mormon settlers thought their shapes looked like the prophet Joshua praying and pointing to the sky. These plants provide shelter for a wide variety of lizards and birds.

BURROS (EQUUS ASINUS)

These donkeys were first introduced to the area by explorers, ranchers, and miners to help carry heavy cargo. Some escaped or were let go and became feral/wild animals. Burros are able to survive on their own by finding spring water sources and grasses. As cute as they are, please remember that they are wild animals and can kick & bite. Give them plenty of space, do not pet or feed, and drive cautiously while visiting the area. Burros can often be spotted along SR-159 near First Creek Trail and around the village of Blue Diamond.

PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS (OPUNTIA SPP.)

During late spring, you can catch vibrant peach, pink, and purple colored flowers in bloom on top of their pads. When successfully pollinated, these flowers turn into red to purple fruits that become treats for wildlife. Natives would eat both the pads and fruits of prickly pear. Generally speaking, prickly pear species will grow to be one to three feet tall. Places to look for these cacti include Calico Basin, the Calico Hills, Willow Springs, and the Visitor Center.

DESERT TORTOISE (GOPHERUS AGASSIZII)

These animals can grow eight to twelve inches long and live up to 80 years old. Desert tortoises are found throughout the Mojave Desert along gravelly soils and graze on a variety of plant material. Wild sightings at Red Rock Canyon are rare, so if you see one consider yourself lucky. However, there are several resident tortoises that can be viewed in the outdoor exhibit behind the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center. From November to March, the tortoises typically are in a type of hibernation called brumation and aren’t seen much. The desert tortoise is listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. There are laws that protect these tortoises. Please do not touch, harass, collect, kill, feed or move desert tortoises unless they are in imminent danger (i.e. about to get hit by a vehicle).

KEYSTONE THRUST FAULT

Keystone Thrust is the name for a prominent geologic fault in Red Rock Canyon. Faults are fractures in the Earth’s crust that occur from the movement of rock layers. The Keystone Thrust is one of a series of faults that formed an estimated 65 million years ago, near the end of the Mesozoic geologic era – about the same time the dinosaurs went extinct. At that time, the Pacific plate began moving under the North American plate. This caused compressional forces to push up older limestone rock layers over younger sandstone rock layers. At Red Rock Canyon, this is visible as grayish carbonate or limestone layers over red- and buff-colored sandstone. This feature runs north & south for 13 miles along State Route 159, and curves at La Madre Mountain. It is one of the best examples of thrust faulting there is because you can stand along it with one foot on the younger sandstone rock layer and the other foot on the older limestone rock layer.

GAMBEL QUAIL (CALLIPEPLA GAMBELEII)

Do you recognize this bird by its flamboyant head dressing, its rooster-like call, and its little line of followers? This bird gets its name from an early explorer of the Southwest: William Gambel. Gambel Quail can be seen scurrying across the ground together in a group called a covey. They are plump little birds with short legs, measuring around 10 inches from head to tail. The colorings are tan and gray with black, red, and white markings. To top it off, the males have a red cap and a small cluster of feathers called a plume that sticks up and curls over the head. The females have a smaller head plume and don’t have the red cap. Gambel Quail can be spotted running from shrub to shrub in Calico Basin, around the Visitor Center, within Willow Spring Picnic Area, and along many of our trails.
HOURS OF OPERATION
Visitor Center: 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
13-Mile Scenic Drive, Red Rock Overlook on State Route 159 and Red Spring:
November - February: 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.
March: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.
April - September: 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
October: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

GUIDED HIKES & PROGRAMS
Guided Hikes and Interpretive programs are offered daily at the Visitor Center. For more information about other types of recreational activities, such as horseback riding or mountain biking, please see the Visitor Center or call (702) 515-5350. For groups of 15 or more, please call (702) 515-5371.

PLEASE NOTE:
Certain types of activities are prohibited, such as target shooting.
Many activities require a permit. These activities include, but are not limited to: overnight or late night exits; providing commercial services, weddings, sponsoring commercial and noncommercial guided tours, and commercial filming and photography. Call (702) 515-5350 for more info.

SUPPORT RED ROCK CANYON AFTER YOUR VISIT

LICENSE PLATE
If you’re a Nevada Resident, you can show your support of volunteer programs and projects at Red Rock Canyon by purchasing the Red Rock Canyon license plate. Proceeds of your plate purchase support Friends of Red Rock Canyon, a volunteer based non-profit partner to Red Rock Canyon NCA.

BECOME A MEMBER
Membership is a great way to give back and stay involved with Red Rock, no matter where you call home. Plus, members get a discount at the gift shop for an entire year. Sign up information is located in the Visitor Center and gift shop. Membership is offered by both non-profit partners of Red Rock Canyon, Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Southern Nevada Conservancy..

www.FriendsOfRedRockCanyon.org
www.SouthernNevadaConservancy.org

SUPPORT RED ROCK CANYON AFTER YOUR VISIT

SHOP
Your purchase at the gift shop (located in the Visitor Center) supports a wide variety of programs at Red Rock Canyon. 100% of the proceeds from your tax free purchase help support activities like free guided hikes, school field trips, maintenance of exhibits and signage, community outreach and much more. Remember, your day pass includes re-entry to the visitor center in case you missed Nevada Conservancy.

www.SouthernNevadaConservancy.org