

## **The Insider's Guide to the Grand Canyon: Winter 2006** **Helping You Get the Most Out of Your Grand Canyon Vacation**

Thank you for choosing [GrandCanyon.com](http://GrandCanyon.com) as your Southwestern vacation specialist! You've not only chosen an extraordinary place for your vacation, but you've also picked *the least crowded time of year* to visit. Having lived and worked in the Grand Canyon area for over 20 years, our staff has made a few observations and picked up a few "insider tips" that can help save you time, money and hassle - sometimes all three at once!

If you've gotten most of your Grand Canyon vacation planned by now - booked your flights, reserved your rental car, secured hotel rooms, mapped your itinerary, etc. - then take your left hand, put it on your right shoulder, and pat yourself on the back! You get to **skip to Travel Tip #8.**

For those who've just now decided on the Grand Canyon for your winter getaway, we hope you'll find this guide helpful in putting together a trip you'll be smiling about for years to come!

Before you dig in, we recommend that you have a few minutes of quiet time, a map or road atlas, a pen and/or a highlighter, maybe a beverage, and your **"Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure."**

*Let's get started and get YOU to the Grand Canyon!*



Photo courtesy of Grand Canyon Chamber of Commerce

## Travel Tip 1 – Where Is the Grand Canyon?

Grand Canyon National Park is in Northern Arizona.

## Travel Tip 2 – What Side Can I See it From?

**Grand Canyon South Rim** and **Grand Canyon West** are open year-round. **Grand Canyon North Rim** closes in wintertime, so most of the information provided in this guide will concentrate on the South Rim and West Rim. *Note that “Grand Canyon West” and “the West Rim Drive” of the South Rim are two totally different areas.*

**Insider tip:** Even though visitor facilities at the North Rim close around October 15<sup>th</sup>, Highway 67 from Jacob Lake to the park may remain open longer if drier weather prevails. Pack a picnic lunch or stop by the Jacob Lake Inn for lunch at their old-fashioned diner (it’s open year-round), and you can still have a very pleasant day trip to the North Rim, weather permitting. *Bring a coat and check [www.az511.com](http://www.az511.com) for road closure status before you go.*

## Travel Tip 3 – How Do I Find it on a Map?

Your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#) has one. You can also find several excellent maps on [our website](#). To find the Grand Canyon’s location on MapQuest or Yahoo!, use Zip code “86023” or “Grand Canyon, Arizona” for **Grand Canyon South Rim**. You can also use Airport Locator Code “GCN.” For **Grand Canyon West** (a.k.a. the “West Rim,”) Meadview, Arizona seems to be the closest mappable location. **Insider tip:** Be sure to do a “reality check” on all roads you plan to travel. Some mapping sites may inadvertently route you through unpaved roads, which are frequently rendered impassable in winter weather. *When in doubt, check it out.* Inquire at your hotel front desk, or check road conditions online. For Arizona, use [www.az511.com](http://www.az511.com); for Utah, visit [www.dot.state.ut.us](http://www.dot.state.ut.us) **Note that most rental car insurance policies WILL NOT cover damage sustained by taking vehicles off-road!**

## Travel Tip 4 - How Do I Get to the Grand Canyon?

### FLYING:



Most visitors begin their Grand Canyon vacations from one of three metropolitan airports within a day’s drive of the park:

Las Vegas, Nevada (LAS), 280 miles from the South Rim, average drive time 5 hours.

Phoenix, Arizona (PHX), 240 miles from the South Rim, average drive time 4.5 hours

Albuquerque, New Mexico (ABQ), 400 miles from the South Rim, avg drive time 6 hours

Commuter flights are also offered into several municipal airports closer to the park: Flagstaff, Arizona (FLG), served by America West/Mesa Airlines out of Phoenix, 85 miles from the South Rim, average drive time 1.5 hours.

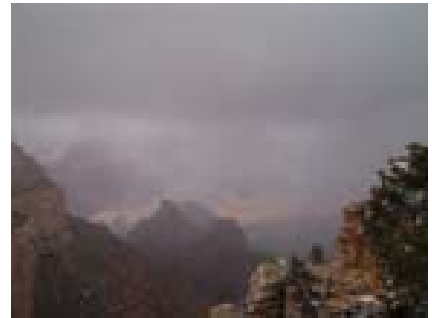
Page, Arizona (PGA), served by United Express/Great Lakes Airlines out of Phoenix or Denver. 150 miles from the South OR North Rim, average drive time 2.5 hours.

Car rentals are available at all the above airports. For availability and pricing of flights and car rentals, call (800) 916-8530.

Grand Canyon National Park Airport [South Rim] (GCN) is primarily used as a sightseeing airport. Limited scheduled flights are available through Scenic Airlines out of Las Vegas. Charter service is offered from other cities. Located in Tusayan, 1 mile South of the park entrance, drive time to South Rim 10 minutes. No car rentals offered, but taxi service is available on an on-call basis.

## DRIVING:

Around here, before you get somewhere, you have to go through a whole lot of nowhere. One of the most surprising aspects of Grand Canyon travel is the distances between places. Things are a lot more spread out here than you might be used to, and winter weather only makes it more challenging. So unless you fly into one of the smaller airports located near the park, be prepared to spend a good bit of time behind the wheel. You're on vacation, so relax and enjoy the scenery! But don't forget to check the weather before you head down the road, and if the forecast calls for heavy snow, stay put if you can.



From Las Vegas, Nevada - take Highway 93/95 Southeast to Kingman, Arizona; in Kingman, take Interstate 40 East to Williams, Arizona; from Williams take exit #165 (Highway 64) North to Grand Canyon National Park. Average drive time: 5 hours. **Insider tip:** Leaving Las Vegas? Get an early start to avoid construction delays at Hoover Dam.

From Phoenix, Arizona: Take Interstate 17 North to Flagstaff, Arizona; from Flagstaff, take Highway 180 Northeast to Valle, Arizona; from Valle, take Highway 64 North to the Grand Canyon. Average drive time: 4.5 hours

From Flagstaff, Arizona: **If the weather is good:** Take Highway 180 Northeast to Valle; From Valle, take Highway 64 North to Grand Canyon Village. **If the weather is bad:** stay off the road! If not, then take Interstate 40 to Williams, Arizona; from Williams, take Highway 64 North to Grand Canyon Village. Average drive time: 1.5 hours.

From Williams, Arizona: Take Highway 64 North approximately 60 miles. Average drive time: 1 hour.

From Page, Arizona: Take Highway 89 South to Cameron, Arizona; from Cameron, take Highway 64 West to Grand Canyon Village. Average drive time: 2.5 hours.

### BY TRAIN:



From Williams, Arizona: get to the Grand Canyon's South Rim Old West style, on the [Grand Canyon Railway](#)! Relive the journey undertaken by travelers throughout two centuries, in a genuine steam train dating back to the early 1900's. The Grand Canyon train departs daily from Williams, Arizona, with 3.5 hour layover at the South Rim. Overnight packages are also available.

**Insider tip:** The Grand Canyon Railway is *super* popular even in the off-season, so make your reservations promptly. The train does not run on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Consult your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#), or call Grand Canyon.com for more information at (866) 944-7263 or (928) 645-6845.

### BY BUS:

Scheduled shuttle service from Phoenix and Flagstaff is offered by Open Road Tours ([www.openroadtours.com](http://www.openroadtours.com)). A Grand Canyon Bus Tour from Las Vegas, Phoenix, Sedona or Flagstaff is also a great way to see the Grand Canyon when your time and/or money are limited. For more information on Grand Canyon day tours by bus, call (866) 944-7263 or (928) 645-6845.



## Travel Tip 5 - Where Do I Stay?

During spring, summer and fall, Grand Canyon hotels are typically booked months ahead. Around November, demand tapers off a bit, which means that you may be fortunate enough to secure lodging inside the park *if you make reservations very soon*. All in-park Grand Canyon hotels are managed by the official concessionaire, Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C. (888/297-2757 or 303/297-2757; [www.grandcanyonlodges.com](http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com)). Note that one of Xanterra's properties, Bright Angel Lodge, will close its rooms for renovations in January.

Other accommodations can be found in the park's gateway communities. **Tusayan** is located an easy 7 miles (10 minutes) from Grand Canyon South Rim. Here is where you'll find our preferred hotel property, the [Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn](#). This Grand Canyon hotel offers the most for families, like an on-site play center with a 6-lane bowling alley, video arcade, and billiard tables. The Squire also has fine dining and family style restaurants, as well as a cocktail lounge, gift shop, workout room, salon, spa services, even a cowboy museum. **Insider tip:** Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's are as busy as summertime, requiring reservations 9 months to a year in advance.

If hotel rooms are not available in Tusayan, your next best options will be:

[Williams, Arizona](#), 60 miles South

[Cameron, Arizona](#) 60 miles East

[Flagstaff, Arizona](#), 85 miles Southeast

[Page/Lake Powell, Arizona](#), 150 miles Northeast

**Insider Tip:** save money by scheduling your trip between November and March, when many area hotels offer reduced rates for the off-season!

## Travel Tip 6 - How About Camping or RV Parks?

Hope you've got a heavy duty sleeping bag - it's *COLD* up here! Nighttime temperatures routinely dip down into the 20's and teens at this time of year; the occasional sub-zero night is reported, too. For those hardy souls ready to brave the elements, trailer and tent sites are offered at Trailer Village, which is administered by Xanterra, the in-park concessionaire, ([www.grandcanyonlodges.com](http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com), 888/297-2757 or 303/297-2757). Tent sites and limited trailer sites (no hook-ups) are also offered at Mather Campground. In-park campgrounds are managed by the National Park Reservation Service and are available on a "first come-first serve" basis from mid-November through March 1<sup>st</sup>. The gateway communities of Williams, Flagstaff, Page, and Kanab, Utah also have many fine RV Parks and Campgrounds. For more information, visit [www.rvpark.com](http://www.rvpark.com)

## Travel Tip 7 - How Long Should I Stay?



The typical Grand Canyon family vacation is two or three days (see Travel Tip 19). You tell us how much time you have to spend, and we can tell you how best to use it, whether you have a day, a weekend, a week, or more. Tell us how you're getting here, how much driving you're willing to do (or not do), and we'll help you coordinate a vacation that will last a lifetime in your memories, whether you're staying inside the park, or making Flagstaff, Williams, Sedona, Las Vegas, Phoenix or Lake Powell your "home base" for exploring the area. **Insider tip:** don't schedule your trip too

tightly. In the event of a snowstorm, road closures may result. Allow a day or two extra as a "cushion" in case you do get delayed or sidetracked by inclement weather.

## Travel Tip 8 - Do I Have to Pay to Visit Grand Canyon?

Yes, Grand Canyon National Park is a Federal Fee Area. It is \$25 per vehicle to enter the park. Persons entering the park by bicycle, foot, motorcycle, bus, train or other type of commercial vehicle must pay a fee of \$10 per person. Your entrance fee is good for one week's time, so be sure to keep your receipt with you each time you exit and re-enter the park. **Insider tip:** Save time by prepaying your park entrance fee *before you get there* at one of two National Park Service Pay Stations located at the [Valle Travel Stop](#) in Valle, Arizona

(between Williams and the South Rim at the Junction of Highway 180 & 64) or at [the IMAX Theatre](#) in Tusayan (1 mile South of the Park Entrance). Pre-purchasing your Grand Canyon Pass will allow you to pass through the Express Lane when entering the park at the South Rim. **Are you visiting more than one National Park on your vacation?** Read Travel Tip 20 or visit [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org) to learn more about the National Park Pass.

### **Travel Tip 9 - Can I Drive My Car in the Park?**

On the South Rim, the West Rim Drive to Hermit's Rest is closed to private vehicles through early November, as is Yaki Point on the East Rim Drive. Free shuttle service is offered to these viewpoints until the road re-opens. Shuttle service is offered year-round to the hotels, restaurants and gift shops in the Grand Canyon Village area. Shuttles pick up the various stops approximately every 10 minutes from sunrise to sunset. Check the information packet that you receive at the park gates for exact schedules, and information about which roads you can and cannot use to tour the park. The East Rim Drive to Desert View is open to private vehicles year-round.








### **Travel Tip 10 – Can I Bring My Dog?**

Dogs are welcome in the park as long as they are leashed at all times and remain **ONLY** on rimside trails. Dogs are not allowed on ANY inner canyon trails, nor are they allowed in any hotels (unless specified as pet-friendly), or in any restaurants, gift shops or other public places (service dogs for the disabled excepted). There is a kennel inside the park. Advance reservations are recommended. Call (928) 638-2631 or (928) 638-0534. At the South Rim of the Grand Canyon there are **two pet-friendly hotels**: the [Red Feather Lodge](#) and the [Grand Hotel](#), which are both in Tusayan. Pet-friendly hotels and dog boarding facilities are also available in Tusayan, Williams, Flagstaff or Page. For availability and pricing of hotels in these cities, call (800) 916-8530. Kennels and other commercial boarding facilities require proof of current shots. **Insider Tip:** Dogs are also not allowed on any tours (except for certified service dogs). If you're going on an early morning tour, you will need to have your pet kenneled the night before. Please allow sufficient time to make these arrangements. For more information on traveling with your dog, visit [www.thetravelerscompanion.com](http://www.thetravelerscompanion.com)

### **Travel Tip 11 - How's the Weather?**

Grand Canyon weather in wintertime can run the gamut from blue skies to blizzards. Average daytime highs at the South Rim can range from the 30's to the '60's. Nights are VERY cold with average lows ranging from subzero to the upper 20's. The Grand Canyon is at 7,000,' which means it snows up here, with accumulations of 12" or more occurring occasionally. Most storms usually drop just a few inches of snow that melt within a few days. Our first measurable snowstorm normally occurs around late October. Windy afternoons are common. Last winter was one of the driest on record, with measurable

snowfall not occurring until January. At press time (November 2006), the National Weather Service has forecasted another warmer than average winter, though an emerging El Niño could produce wetter conditions. Statistically, though, the Southwest remains in a drought.

				
46 °   22 °	59 °   24 °	62 °   25 °	59 °   27 °	53 °   25 °
Clear	Clear	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

Snow or no snow, it is especially important at this time of year to be prepared for anything. Pack a jacket, scarf, and gloves, maybe a rain poncho, and keep an eye on the weather as your trip date approaches. On your favorite weather website, use zip code **86023**, [or check our weather page](#) for up-to-the-minute conditions and 10-Day Forecasts.

Snow can also mean road closures, which means you should always check the status of the roads you plan to travel before you set out. For road conditions, visit [www.az511.com](http://www.az511.com). **Insider tip:** Again, do not schedule your vacation too tightly at this time of year. You may find a bit of “wiggle room” handy in the event you are detoured or delayed by weather.

### **Travel Tip 12 – Will My Cell Phone Work in the Park?**

Don't count on it. The primary providers in the Grand Canyon area are Alltel and Verizon, but even their subscribers report occasional inconsistencies with their service due to the altitude and the ruggedness of the terrain. If you need to have a phone number for family or work to get ahold of you, give your hotel phone numbers just to be on the safe side.

### **Travel Tip 13 – Can I Bring My Laptop or Check E-mail?**

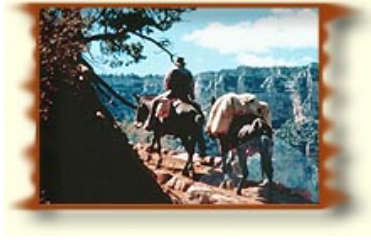
Grand Canyon.com's preferred hotel, the [Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn](#), has DSL in its Deluxe Rooms. If you are not staying at the hotel, there is also a public internet connection in the lobby. There is an Internet Café in Tusayan across from the Holiday Inn Express. Inside the park, Maswik and Yavapai Lodges have internet kiosks available for a nominal fee. Check with the front desk for details. If you're visiting the North Rim, the closest place to check your e-mail will be Vermillion Espresso in Kanab, Utah (1.5 hours away), or Beans Coffee House in Page, AZ (2.5 hours).

### **Travel Tip 14 – Is That the Right Time?**



Arizona and the Grand Canyon **do not observe daylight savings time; we are on Mountain Standard Time year-round** (exception: the Navajo Indian Reservation). Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado DO observe daylight savings time. Arizona is one hour ahead of Nevada and California, but on the same time as Utah, New Mexico and Colorado. Be sure you keep this in mind when scheduling tours or other activities, particularly if it requires that you cross time zones. Example: coming from Las Vegas, Nevada to Williams, Arizona for the [Grand Canyon Railway](#) trip, or going from Arizona to Las Vegas for a [Las Vegas Grand Canyon Tour](#).

## Travel Tip 15 - So, How About Those Mule Rides?



Here's one of several instances where traveling in the wintertime can work to your advantage. During the spring and summer, these extremely popular trips are typically sold out months in advance. At this time of year, however, demand is not nearly as high, which means you may have a chance of taking part in one of these incredible adventures *if you act quickly*. Contact [Xanterra](#) at 888/297-2757 or 303/297-2757.

Before you make that call, there are some physical requirements that all mule riders must meet - **no exceptions**. They are: 1. No rider may weigh more than 200 pounds fully dressed (ALL riders are weighed, and if you weigh 201, you will not ride); 2. All riders must be 4'7" tall (children are measured if necessary); 3. All riders must speak and understand fluent English (if in doubt, they check you out); and 4. No pregnant women. The trip is also not recommended for those with back, hip or knee problems, fear of heights or large animals.

You must be in excellent health and have a strong sense of adventure - this trip presents a few physical challenges at this time of year. For example, rigorous aerobic activity, such as hiking, naturally makes you feel warmer. On the mule ride, though, you will be sitting still in the saddle for hours at a time. That can make cold weather feel even colder, and if it's raining or snowing, that can be downright miserable. There could be ice on the trail, but the mules are equipped with special shoes in wintertime to prevent slipping. Not your cup of tea? Contact Grand Canyon.com about other ways to get to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Grab your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#) and take a look at the "[Las Vegas Grand Voyager Tour](#)," the "[Rim to River Expedition](#)" or the "Colorado River Journey."

## Travel Tip 16 – Is Grand Canyon Rafting Available?



Grand Canyon river rafting trips typically stop operating from late October (white water) to mid November (smooth water), with a couple of exceptions: in the Las Vegas area, the Black Canyon Adventure (float trip from the base of Hoover Dam to Willow Beach) is offered through November 30th.

Tours to Grand Canyon West, such as the [Las Vegas Grand Voyager Tour](#), [Rim to River Expedition](#), and the Grand Canyon Colorado River Journey, include a pontoon boat experience. These tours are offered year-round. They do not include rapids, so children as young as 5 can take part.

Consult your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#), or call Grand Canyon.com at (866) 944-7263 or (928) 645-6845 for more information. Visit our website and [watch videos](#) of our most popular Grand Canyon rafting trips!



## Travel Tip 17 – What’s Good for Kids or Seniors?

All Grand Canyon tours described in your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#) are family-oriented and appropriate for children and seniors, with virtually no strenuous activity required. Children of all ages are welcome on [Grand Canyon air tours](#), [Grand Canyon helicopter tours](#), [Grand Canyon jeep tours](#) (which are only offered through the end of November) and the [Grand Canyon Railway](#). On some jeep and van tours, you will be required to provide a car seat for infants and younger children. On the Grand Canyon Railway, children of all ages may ride the Coach, Club or First Class cars, but must be at least 11 to ride the Observation Dome or Luxury Parlor cars.

The National Park Service also offers a variety of quality free programs for children, such as lectures, slide shows, guided hikes, and the world-famous “Junior Ranger” Program. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca) or [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org). In Tusayan, just outside the park, visit the National Geographic Visitors’ Center.

While you’re at the South Rim, be sure to check out the spectacular IMAX Movie “Grand Canyon: The Hidden Secrets.” **Ask how Grand Canyon.com can save you 20% on your IMAX tickets!** Call (866) 944-7263 or (928) 645-6845.

## Travel Tip 18 - Do I Need a Permit for Grand Canyon Hiking?

If you’d just like to take a day hike, then a permit is not required. **You still need to do your homework and know your limitations, even in wintertime.** For every hour you hike down, it will take 2 hours to hike back up. Food and water should be taken if you plan on spending any more than an hour or going further than one mile round-trip. **HIKING RIM TO RIVER AND BACK IN A DAY IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED AT ALL TIMES! Hypothermia is a very real danger for wintertime hikers.** Know the symptoms and be prepared to act if someone in your party appears to be suffering from it.



If you’re with small children or seniors, a good short hike that will allow you to experience the inner canyon without stress or strain is to hike to the “First Tunnel” down the Bright Angel Trail (though ice may be present at this time of year). If you’re up for a little more of a challenge, Cedar Ridge on the Kaibab Trail offers outstanding views. The hike is 3 miles round-trip, requiring 3 hours to complete on average. The Kaibab Trailhead is at Yaki Point, which is only accessible by shuttle through the end of November.

For overnight hikes in the canyon, backcountry permits or reservations at Phantom Ranch are required. Like the mule rides, demand for these subsidies a bit during the winter months, so you may luck out on a cancellation *if you act quickly*. For more information on Phantom Ranch, visit [www.grandcanyonlodges.com](http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com) or call Xanterra at 888/297-2757 or 303/297-2757. For more information on backcountry hiking permits, visit [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)

## Travel Tip 19 - Should I Spend My Whole Week There?



Strange as it may sound, if you have a week or more to work with, we don't recommend you spend the entire time at the Grand Canyon. Why? Because there are so many other beautiful places to see, like Sedona, Lake Powell, Zion, or Bryce Canyon. There's also Monument Valley, Navajo National Monument, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Paria Canyon Wilderness – the possibilities are too numerous to do justice to here! Give us a call and we'll happily help you coordinate a vacation that's relaxing, rewarding and fun. GrandCanyon.com is also a member of the Grand Circle Association, another excellent source for information about travel destinations around the Grand Canyon area. Get

their free travel guide at [www.grandcircle.org](http://www.grandcircle.org)

## Travel Tip 20 - Should I Get a National Park Pass?

If you're visiting more than one National Park on your vacation, a National Park Pass is a great deal. For \$50, you and everybody in your vehicle are granted access to all National Parks, Monuments and Federal Fee Areas in the United States for one year (except Indian Tribal Parks). Visitors 62 or older qualify for a Golden Age Passport, which grants you lifetime access to all National Parks for a one-time fee of \$10. If you are disabled, ask about the Golden Access Passport.



**Insider tip:** Purchase your National Park Pass *before* you go on vacation at [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org) or call 1-888-Go-Parks. Golden Age Passports must be purchased in person.

## Travel Tip 21 - Any Good Restaurants in the Area?

Tons! The El Tovar Hotel Dining Room is probably the South Rim area's most famous, featuring a palate-pleasing fusion of Southwestern and Continental cuisine. Reservations are recommended for dinner (call (928) 638-2631) and breakfast and lunch are also served. The Arizona Room is another excellent choice for lunch or dinner. Located at Bright Angel Lodge, the lunch menu features a variety of barbecue entrees and sandwiches from 11.30 to 3.00 PM. For dinner, enjoy juicy steaks, seafood or poultry dishes from 4.30 to 10.00. Bright Angel Lodge also features a family-style restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Maswik and Yavapai Lodges have cafeteria-style facilities.



**Insider tip:** If you're going to any of the rimside restaurants for lunch, try to get there before the Grand Canyon Railway arrives. The Grand Canyon Railway arrives at 12:15 PM, dropping off hundreds of visitors to compete for those few tables.

You'll also find many good restaurants outside the park. In Tusayan (7 miles from the Park), the Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn's Coronado Room offers a fine dining restaurant and a coffee shop.

The Quality Inn's Atrium restaurant features family-style dining in a most unique setting, or enjoy cowboy style cuisine and live entertainment at the Grand Hotel's Canyon Star restaurant across the street.

Another restaurant that's a *personal favorite* of just about everybody at GrandCanyon.com is the [Cameron Trading Post](#) on the Navajo Indian Reservation. A real Old West commerce center dating back to 1916, the house specialty is the Navajo Taco. The gift shop and gallery also have one of the area's finest collections of Native American crafts. It's located 60 miles from the park, but the scenic drive and delicious meal make the Cameron Trading Post well worth the trip. **Insider tip:** the Navajo Taco comes in "regular" and "mini" size. Unless you're ravenously hungry, order the mini. If not, be prepared to take home a "doggie bag."

Flagstaff, Williams, Sedona, and Page also have many choices of both chain and independent restaurants. Check the local newspapers, TV or radio stations, or your hotel front desk for recommendations, or ask for your special advance copy of our Grand Canyon Dining Guide!

### **Travel Tip 22 – How Should I Dress?**

In a word, WARM! For a wintertime visit to the Grand Canyon, pack the works: coat, scarf, hat, gloves, and a sturdy pair of shoes in case it does snow while you're here. We're not that into dressing up. Even the area's more upscale restaurants have a *very* relaxed dress code (if they have one at all). You might need to bring more dressy attire if you're attending a special function for Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's. Contact the hotel or restaurant where you'll be dining for their particular requirements. Most of the time, though, "casual" and "comfortable" define the Southwestern sense of style.

### **Travel Tip 23 – How are Gas Prices Out There?**

At press time (November 2006), Arizona gas prices ranged from \$1.93 to \$2.64 a gallon; Utah gas prices ranged from \$2.17 to \$2.69 a gallon. **Insider tip:** It can be a long way between gas stations, so fill 'er up when you have the chance. **Another insider tip:** the best gas prices are not necessarily where you'd expect to find them. Check out are [www.arizonagasprices.com](http://www.arizonagasprices.com), [www.utahgasprices.com](http://www.utahgasprices.com) and [www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com)



### **Travel Tip 24 – Anything Special Going On for Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's?**

Definitely! In early December, the more upscale hotels in the area will get decked out in holiday finery, creating an especially enchanting atmosphere at the older lodges like the El Tovar Hotel and Bright Angel Lodge. Many hotels, such as Flagstaff's famous Little America Hotel, will have special Christmas lights displays, and holiday craft shows are a regular occurrence as well. In Williams, the kids can join Santa Claus for a magical journey aboard the Grand Canyon Railway's annual "Polar Express" tour.

Many restaurants will offer special menus in honor of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Some will require reservations; *however*, others that require reservations during the rest of the year (such as the El Tovar Hotel) will seat guests on a first come-first serve basis for their holiday dinners. *When in doubt, check it out.* New Year's Eve parties typically take place both inside and outside the park.

For more information on Grand Canyon area happenings, visit [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com), [www.kaneutah.com](http://www.kaneutah.com) or [www.azreporter.com](http://www.azreporter.com) or [www.flagstaffevents.com](http://www.flagstaffevents.com)

### **Travel Tip 25 – What About Skiing or Snowboarding?**

Don't laugh - there are many wonderful ski areas in the Southwest. The question is, will there be enough snow? Unfortunately, the last couple of years haven't brought the usual amounts of it. At press time (November 2006), the upcoming winter is expected to be warmer than average, but possibly wetter than last year. If it does happen to snow when you visit, check out the [Arizona Snow Bowl](#) in Flagstaff. At the Grand Canyon, cross-country skiing is possible in the Kaibab National Forest. You can rent cross country skis at the Canyon Marketplace, and break trail virtually wherever you want. Occasionally, tracks will be groomed at the Arizona Trail on the East Rim Drive. The beautiful White Mountains are within half a day's drive of Phoenix, with Pinetop-Lakeside's [Sunrise Park Resort](#) providing ample opportunities for all kinds of wintertime activities. Further to the North, [Brian Head, Utah](#) is located about 3 hours from Page/Lake Powell, Arizona.

### **Travel Tip 26 – “Where Can I Watch The Super Bowl?”**

**You asked, we answered!** Football fans can catch the game at one of several sports lounges in the Grand Canyon area. Inside the park, the Maswik Lounge and Sports Bar has not one, but *seven* TV's tuned to sporting events around the world. Outside the park, the Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn has an excellent sports lounge with billiard tables. Across the hall is the Squire's world-famous family play center, which means that while you watch the game, the rest of the family can enjoy bowling, video games and other activities. Across the street from the Squire, the Grand Hotel's Canyon Star Saloon has a big screen TV as well. The gateway communities of Williams and Flagstaff (home of Northern Arizona University) also have several fine pubs and cocktail lounges that cater to sports fans.

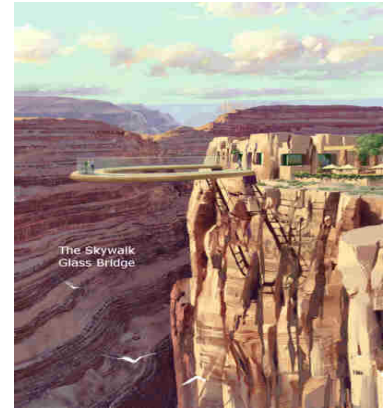
### **Travel Tip 27 – What is “Grand Canyon West?”**

Grand Canyon West (*not to be confused with the “West Rim Drive” on the South Rim*) is another developed area of the Grand Canyon on the Hualapai Indian Reservation North of Peach Springs, Arizona. If you have limited time for a Grand Canyon trip, and you're going to Las Vegas, Phoenix, or Sedona, a trip to Grand Canyon West may be just what you're looking for. Grand Canyon West offers opportunities like helicopter trips to the bottom of the canyon, where you can take a pontoon boat ride, or even have a champagne picnic - or not. If you're content to enjoy the view from the rim, Grand Canyon.com has tours for you, too. Take a look at your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#) for some suggestions.

Remember that Grand Canyon West is lower in altitude than the North or South Rims, which means that it will be about 10-15 degrees warmer there. Also, one of the main access roads to Grand Canyon West is unpaved for about 40 miles and heavily traveled by buses and other commercial vehicles. *Most rental car companies strongly discourage you from taking their vehicles to this area and you could be liable for any damage sustained by doing so.*

### **Travel Tip 28 – What is the “Grand Canyon Skywalk?”**

The Grand Canyon Skywalk is an amazing attraction slated at press time (October 2006) to open in 2007 at Grand Canyon West. This glass-bottomed horseshoe-shaped walkway will jut seventy feet over the lip of the canyon, which means that you’ll feel like you’re floating 4,000 feet in the air above the Colorado River! A café and gift shop are also under construction. Even if the Skywalk doesn’t open on schedule, Grand Canyon West still warrants consideration as a warmer alternative to the South Rim. Consult your [Grand Canyon Top Tours Brochure](#) for suggestions on tours to Grand Canyon West.



### **Travel Tip 29 – Last Word/First Word**

**SAFETY FIRST – ALWAYS!** The last thing we want to hear about is your long-awaited vacation being ruined by an accident or other mishap. Here are a few last tips culled from our years of experience seeing all kinds of people get into all kinds of trouble on their Grand Canyon vacations.

1. Practice defensive driving. You’re sharing the roadways with people who are just as unfamiliar with the area as you are, many of whom are used to driving on the left hand side of the road, and/or driving in snow for the first time. Use your headlights, even during the daytime. Don’t follow the car in front of you too closely. Avoid stopping suddenly in the middle of the road. If you see an animal, pretty view, or something you want to photograph, pull off the side of the road to where it’s safe, then take your picture. If you find yourself lost, again, pull off to the side of the road to where you are out of the way of traffic, then look at your map.

Remember that winter driving poses its own set of hazards. If you’re unaccustomed to driving in snow, take it slow. Better yet, curl up next to a nice cozy fire with a cup of hot chocolate and stay off the road altogether. If you must drive, be sure to check road conditions before you head out. Inquire at your hotel front desk or visit [www.az511.com](http://www.az511.com) for current road conditions, including closures.

2. The altitude can affect your attitude. Grand Canyon’s South Rim is 6,000’+ above sea level. Acclimation takes about two weeks for a person in good health. Individuals with heart or lung problems should exercise care. If your physician advises you not to go to such high altitudes, Grand Canyon West is only 4,000’ high and a bit warmer, too. But if you’re walking the rim or hiking in the canyon and need to take a break, TAKE A BREAK!

3. Watch children and pets at all times. Many canyon view points do not have guardrails, so approach the rim slowly, and keep your pets leashed always. **NEVER** leave a pet or a child unattended in a parked car, even with the windows cracked open. Temperatures inside parked vehicles can still get very hot, even at this time of year!



4. This is the desert – but then again it’s not. Don’t let cool temperatures on the canyon rim or even a little rain or snow fool you. Conditions here are probably much drier than you’re used to. Take care not to become dehydrated, especially when hiking or exerting yourself. **Carry water and drink it.** Protect yourself from the sun, even at this time of year. Dress warmly and in layers, and wear a **hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.** Carry lip balm and moisturize often. **Insider tip:** You’ll find that your hair dries out a lot easier than at home, and hotels typically provide shampoo, but not conditioner. Bring your own.

**Extreme weather dangers:** **Flash floods** are also a very real danger at this time of year, even when you can’t see a cloud in the sky! Check weather before venturing into slot canyons or riverbeds. **NEVER** try to drive across a flooded roadway. **Blizzards** are particularly dangerous on the highways. Avoid driving during severe snowstorms if at all possible. Road closures may result. **Lightning storms** can also be treacherous. **DO NOT** stand on the canyon rim during one of these storms. Dry weather and windy conditions make the area susceptible to **dust storms** at any time of year. Use caution when driving through flat, sandy terrain or unplanted agricultural fields. If you are caught in a dust storm while driving, pull off the highway a safe distance until the disturbance passes. For more information, visit the Arizona Department of Transportation’s website [www.az511.com](http://www.az511.com) or the Arizona Department of Public Safety’s website at [www.azdps.gov](http://www.azdps.gov)

5. Watch out for wildlife on the highway and don’t feed them. Deer and elk are notoriously nocturnal and can dart out from the forest before you have time to react. Obey the speed limit and keep your eyes open for them when driving after dark. During the daytime, it’s not unusual to see deer, elk, squirrels and birds come right up to people and beg for food. These creatures may look perfectly tame, but they’re not. Animals that become accustomed to human handouts lose their ability to fend for themselves, and can become aggressive when food runs out. “People food” is not good for them anyway. Squirrels, chipmunks and other rodents also have fleas, which harbor infectious diseases. Enjoy the wildlife from a distance. **Look, but don’t touch.** Remember, this is a National Park where hunting is prohibited, as is throwing objects at animals or birds.

6. When it gets dark, it gets really, really dark. Artificial lighting is kept to a minimum in the National Parks, which makes the darkness more pronounced than you may be used to. Many of the hotel rooms inside the park are situated in the woods, too, so bring a flashlight or headlamp along on your sunset walk. Blindly stumbling around in unfamiliar territory is not only unnerving, but unsafe.

7. Beware of hypothermia. This probably won't be an issue for you unless you plan on hiking, skiing or taking part in any other outdoor sports. If you do plan to include any of these activities in your Grand Canyon vacation, be aware of the symptoms of hypothermia and be prepared to act in case you or someone in your party exhibits them. They are: bouts of shivering, grogginess and muddled thinking, inability to think and pay attention, slow and shallow breathing, and slow, weak pulse.

8. **BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE, EVEN AT THIS TIME OF YEAR!** At press time (October 2006) Arizona is in the midst of a drought. The 2006 wildfire season was particularly devastating, as evidenced by the fires on the North Rim, Navajo Mountain and Sedona. High fire danger could carry over into the winter months without sufficient precipitation. That may mean foregoing campfires and abstaining from smoking. Obey any and all fire restrictions in the parks you visit! Make sure that your campfire is completely out by dousing it, stirring it and dousing it again. If you smoke, grind your cigarette out in the dirt (but never on a stump or log), and NEVER toss a lit cigarette out your car window.

**In case of emergency call 9-1-1**

**Thank you for reading  
The Insider's Guide to the Grand Canyon: Winter Edition**



We hope this guide has helped you plan your Grand Canyon vacation efficiently and easily. We look forward to publishing this and other special holiday and seasonal guides annually. As this is our first edition of this season's guide, we welcome and encourage your comments, suggestions and questions. Please contact us at (866) 944-7263 [Toll Free in the US] or International Toll, (928) 645-6845, or e-mail [info@grandcanyon.com](mailto:info@grandcanyon.com)

**Thank you again, and Happy Travels!**

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