

# RED ROCK CANYON KEYSTONE VISITOR GUIDE

A NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION AREA  
ADMINISTERED BY  
THE BUREAU OF LAND  
MANAGEMENT

Proudly presented by Southern Nevada Conservancy in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management.

## FIRST STOP — VISITOR CENTER


Please stop by the visitor center on the way into the Scenic Drive. Here, you can view exhibits, find lots of useful information, and talk with volunteers and staff about how to make your visit more special. Public Wi-Fi is available in the visitor center, and it is your only chance to fill up on water.


[www.redrockcanyonlv.org](http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org)  
[www.blm.gov/site-page/rrcnca](http://www.blm.gov/site-page/rrcnca)





## GET READY TO EXPLORE ... SAFELY


The Mojave Desert is an extreme environment and can be dangerous. Let friends and/or family know exactly where you are going and when you expect to be back. To avoid theft, never leave valuables in plain sight. Your safety is your responsibility.


 **BRING SUFFICIENT WATER**  
Bring at least two liters of water per person, plus a liter per person per mile of hiking. You may consider bringing electrolytes or carrying more water depending on conditions. The visitor center is the only place to refill water.


 **PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT**  
Highs in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area can average over 100° F (38° C) in the summer. Drink plenty of water, limit your sun exposure, and arrive early when it is cooler out.


 **WATCH FOR WILDLIFE**  
Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and spiders like to hide in crevices, shrubs, and under rocks. Do not touch, feed, or harass any animals, and never put your hands or feet anywhere you cannot see.


 **DRESS FOR THE WEATHER**  
Wear a hat, dress in layers, and apply sunscreen! If you plan to hike, wear sturdy shoes with ankle support and protection against spiny plants. Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

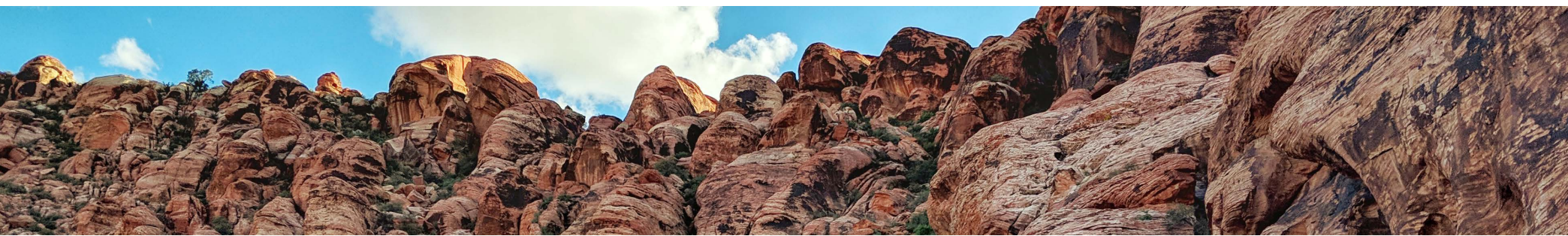
 **BEWARE OF FLASH FLOODS**  
Summer monsoon storms and winter rains can create flash flood conditions. Avoid washes when rain is possible, and never drive through flooded areas.

 **WHEN THUNDER ROARS, STAY INDOORS**  
Afternoon thunderstorms are common in the summer. Avoid open places and seek shelter indoors whenever you hear thunder or see lightning.

 **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**  
Read all trail descriptions before starting out. Always bring extra water, check the weather before starting on a hike, and always assume a hike will take longer than expected.

 **DON'T RELY ON CELL SERVICE**  
It may be impossible to reach 911 in case of an emergency. Consider carrying an emergency GPS locator when hiking and arrange all rideshare return trips before leaving the visitor center.

 **DON'T CLIMB ON WET SANDSTONE**  
Sandstone becomes very brittle when wet. Avoid climbing on sandstone within 72 hours after rain. Consider climbing limestone instead if rain is in the forecast.



## HOURS OF OPERATION

Visitor Center: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Scenic Drive, Red Rock Overlook on State Route 159 and Red Springs:  
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 and can be found at [www.redrockcanyonlv.org](http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org). For more information about other types of recreational activities, such as horseback riding or mountain biking, please ask at the visitor center or visit <http://www.blm.gov/site-page/rrcnca>. Groups of 15 or more should contact us at [rrc\\_recreation@blm.gov](mailto:rrc_recreation@blm.gov).

## PLEASE NOTE:

Because this is a national conservation area, many activities such as target shooting, mountain biking, rockhounding, camping, and off-roading are restricted to certain areas or prohibited. Other activities, such as late exit permits, are available on [rec.gov](http://rec.gov). Any commercial use – including commercial filming and photography – must contact [blm\\_nv\\_film\\_BLMSouthernNevada@blm.gov](mailto:blm_nv_film_BLMSouthernNevada@blm.gov).

Emergency  
[702] 293-8932 or 911

Wildland Fire  
[702] 515-5300 or 911

BLM Southern Nevada District Office  
[702] 515-5000

Red Rock Admin Office  
[702] 515-5350

Friends of Red Rock Canyon  
[702] 515-5360  
[www.friendsredrock.org](http://www.friendsredrock.org)

Timed Entry & Late Exit Permits  
[877] 444-6777  
[www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

Information  
[702] 515-5367  
[www.redrockcanyonlv.org](http://www.redrockcanyonlv.org)

Elements Gift Shop  
[702] 515-5379

# SCENIC DRIVE

- Avenza maps available in the Visitor Center and at the Trailheads
- Georeferenced maps available at <https://www.blm.gov/maps/georeferenced-PDFs/nevada> or through the Avenza Maps app



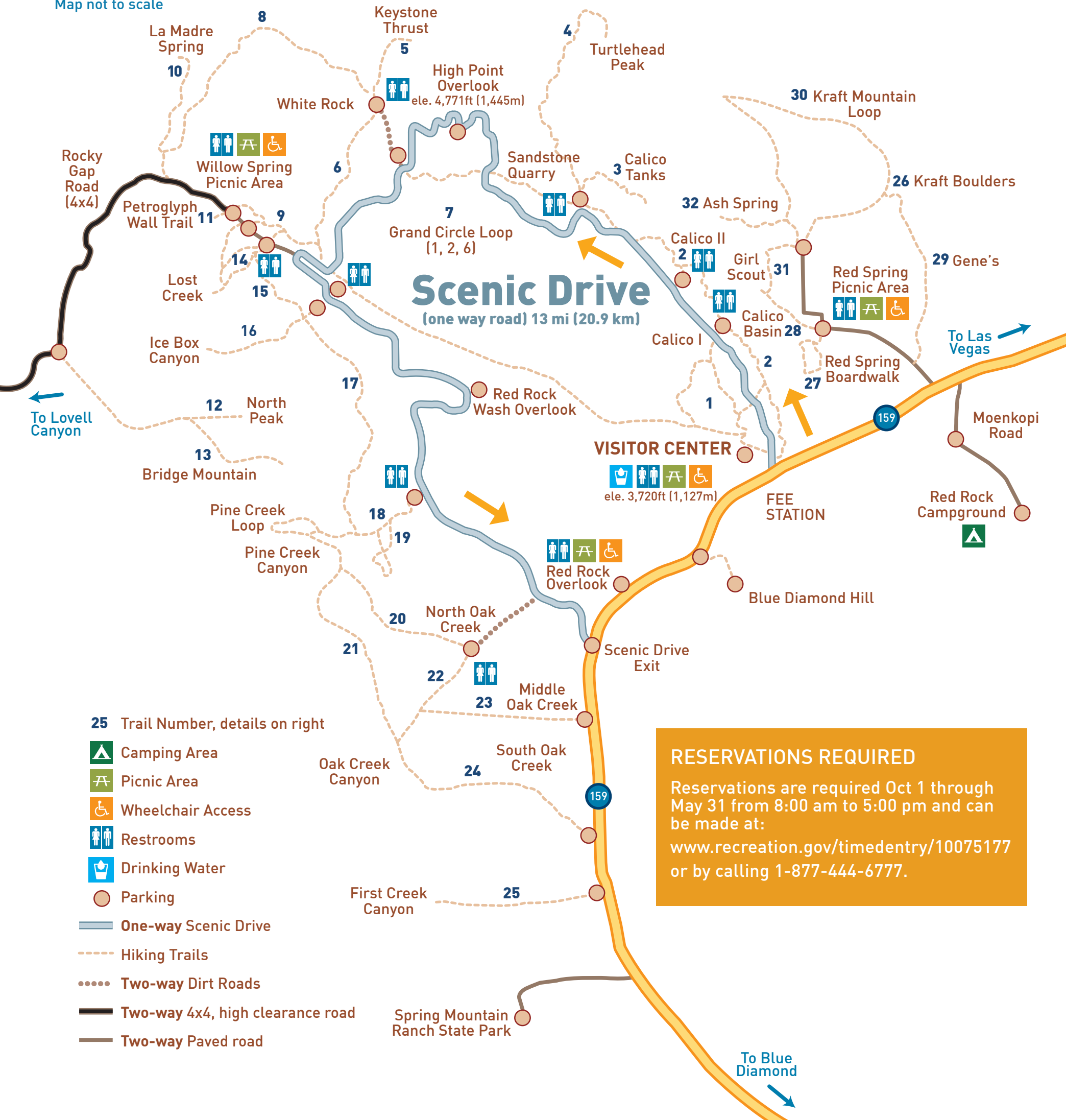
Map not to scale



**NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS**



**SOUTHERN NEVADA CONSERVANCY**



## RED ROCK BY CAR

Welcome to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area! Whether you are hiking, rock climbing or enjoying 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.

## ONLY PARK IN DESIGNATED LOTS

Parking off road damages sensitive desert vegetation, which can take decades to recover. Stopping along the Scenic Drive – even just to take a picture – causes accidents.



# TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

Trail Name	Trail # on map	Parking Lot/ Trailhead	Round Trip Distance	Approx. Hike Time	Elevation Gain	Description/Highlights
<b>EASY</b> Minimal uphill sections and some uneven terrain.						
Moenkopi	1	● Visitor Center	2.1 mi (3.37 km)	1.5 hours	210 ft (64 m)	This trail crosses a yucca-filled desert before ascending a small ridge, where hikers walk on Moenkopi Formation limestone. After taking in panoramic views, descend the back of the ridge to complete the loop.
Willow Spring Loop	9	● Willow Spring Picnic Area ● Lost Creek	1.1 mi (1.77 km)	1.25 hours	127 ft (39 m)	This rocky loop winds through canyon and riparian scenery. Archaeological sites including agave roasting pits and pictographs can be seen throughout the loop. Visitors may use this trail to connect the Lost Creek Trail and Petroglyph Wall Trail.
Petroglyph Wall Trail	11	● Willow Spring Picnic Area	.2 mi (.32 km)	30 minutes	47 ft (14 m)	This brief trail traverses a wash, leading to a rock panel with historic carvings and paintings created by the indigenous peoples of the area.
Lost Creek – Children’s Discovery	14	● Lost Creek	.8 mi (.96 km)	55 minutes	87 ft (27 m)	The moderately easy trail features several interpretive signs providing information on the ecology and history of the area. Plant life, archaeological sites, a stream, and a seasonal waterfall can be seen from this trail.
Fire Ecology	19	● Pine Creek Canyon	.4 mi (.64 km)	55 minutes	33 ft (10 m)	This moderately easy trail in Pine Creek Canyon leads visitors down a steep trail to a short figure-eight through a stand of ponderosa pine trees beneath the escarpment. A seasonal creek crossing may be present. Total roundtrip trail length starting from Pine Creek trailhead is 0.75 miles.
Oak Creek Canyon	22	● North Oak Creek	1.6 mi (2.58 km)	1.5 hours	179 ft (55 m)	This flat trail winds through the open desert, leading toward the stunning escarpment. It is a picturesque route to witness the first light illuminating the sandstone cliffs.
SMYC	15	● Lost Creek ● Ice Box Canyon	2 mi (3.2 km)	1.5 hours	1670 ft (51 m)	The SMYC trail weaves in and out of rocky ravines while traversing beneath the sandstone escarpment. This trail can be started from Lost Creek Trail or Icebox Canyon Trail and has great seasonal wildflower viewing.
<b>MODERATE</b> Uphill sections include up to 500 ft of elevation gain; single digit mileage; uneven terrain and some rock scrambling.						
Calico Hills	2	● Calico I ● Calico II ● Sandstone Quarry ● Visitor Center	66 mi (9.64 km)	1.5 -3.5 hours	1,640 ft (500 m)	The Calico Hills Trail winds through the colorful Calico Hills, offering close-up views of vibrant sandstone formations. Accessible from multiple points, visitors are able to choose their own adventure.
Calico Tanks	3	● Sandstone Quarry	2.2 mi (3.54 km)	2 hours	398 ft (121 m)	This steep trail meanders through a wash before ascending sandstone slabs that offer a moderate scrambling challenge. Visitors are rewarded with an intimate experience in the famous Calico Hills, including the opportunity to see seasonal pools – called tinajas – and sweeping views of the Las Vegas valley.
Keystone Thrust	5	● Upper White Rock	2.4 mi (3.86 km)	1.5 hours	367 ft (112 m)	This trail gradually gains elevation up the trail, allowing visitors to view the contact between red sandstone and gray limestone. This geological feature, known as the Keystone Thrust Fault delights many geology enthusiasts.
White Rock – Willow Spring	6	● Upper White Rock ● Willow Spring Picnic Area	4.6 mi (7.4 km)	2.5 hours	200 ft (61 m)	This trail can start from either Upper White Rock parking lot or Willow Spring Picnic Area. Through mostly open and rocky desert landscape, there is some vegetation and elevation gains along this moderate trail. Possible chances for wildlife viewing may be possible due to the year-round springs that are present.
La Madre Spring	10	● Willow Spring Picnic Area	3.6 mi (5.78 km)	2 hours	723 ft (220 m)	This trail gains moderate elevation through piñon-juniper woodland to access a natural spring. Wildlife sightings, while not guaranteed, are more likely due to the presence of water and riparian vegetation year-round.
Dale’s	17	● Ice Box Canyon ● Pine Creek Canyon	4 mi (6.42 km)	2.5 hours	348 ft (106 m)	This rocky path traverses through foothills and washes to connect Ice Box Canyon Trail and Pine Creek Canyon Trail, stopping at two benches along the way. Hikers seeking solitude may enjoy this underutilized trail.
Pine Creek Canyon & Pine Creek Loop	18	● Pine Creek Canyon	2.4 mi (3.84 km)	1 hour/1.5 hours	300 ft (91 m)	This trail’s initial slope leads to a mostly level path that parallels seasonal Pine Creek to the mouth of Pine Creek Canyon. This trail is one of the best to view Red Rock Canyon’s ecological diversity and a stunning view of Mesquite, a small sandstone peak in the center of the canyon. Pine Creek Canyon Trail is 1.6 mi and the Pine Creek Loop is 0.8 mi.
Arnight	20	● Oak Creek Canyon	2.2 mi (3.54 km)	1.5 hours	226 ft [69 m]	From the Oak Creek Canyon parking lot, this mostly flat path presents breathtaking views as it draws closer to Mount Wilson and Rainbow Mountain, ending at a T-junction with Knoll Trail.
Knoll	21	● Oak Creek Canyon	3.6 mi (5.78 km)	2.5 hours	148 ft (45 m)	From the end of Pine Creek Canyon Trail, this trail contorts along the escarpment foothills. Look back down on Pine Creek Canyon before descending into the open desert, where it joins Middle Oak Creek Trail and South Oak Creek Trail. Watch for birds, reptiles and mammals.
<b>DIFFICULT</b> Generally, lots of uphill sections; possibly more than 1000 ft of elevation gain; double digit mileage and/or difficult terrain and rock scrambling.						
Turtlehead Peak	4	● Sandstone Quarry	4.6 mi (7.4 km)	4 hours	2,014 ft (614 m)	The challenging trail begins in a wash, traverses foothills, and ascends a steep limestone gulch via switchbacks. Upon reaching the saddle, hikers loop around the back of Turtlehead Peak before a final climb on loose rock to the summit. From there, enjoy breathtaking views, sheer drop-offs, and the occasional graceful bird in flight.
Grand Circle Loop	7	● Visitor Center	11.4 mi (18.34 km)	6 hours	1,115 ft (340 m)	The Grand Circle Loop is a combination of trails that together create a grand tour of Red Rock Canyon. GPS enabled maps are encouraged for this trail.
White Rock Mountain Loop	8	● Upper White Rock ● Willow Spring Picnic Area ● Lost Creek	6.2 mi (9.97 km)	4 hrs	1,073 ft (327 m)	Counterclockwise from the Upper White Rock parking lot, this trail gains elevation while tucking hikers between the sandstone and limestone mountains. From the highpoint, head downhill through trees before meeting Rocky Gap Road, leading down to Willow Spring Picnic Area. From there, cut through open desert before a final hill back to the parking lot.
North Peak	12	● Willow Spring Picnic Area	11.8 mi (18.98 km)	6 hours	2,654 ft (809 m)	Hike Rocky Gap Road from Willow Spring Picnic Area until the well-defined Bridge Mountain Trail splits off. Gradually climb to a ridgeline where the North Peak Trail splits off and takes hikers to the summit. Look down on the sandstone escarpment and see Las Vegas in the distance.
Bridge Mountain	13	● Willow Spring Picnic Area	15.8 mi (25.42 km)	8 hours	2,606 ft (794 m)	Hike up Rocky Gap Road from Willow Spring Picnic Area to the highpoint before getting on the Bridge Mountain Trail. Follow a clearly defined path to a ridgeline before dropping down to sandstone slabs marked with cairns. Steep class four scrambling rewards hikers with a magnificent arch, giant tinajas, and a surprising ponderosa grove. A last section of exposed scrambling takes hikers to the summit.
Ice Box Canyon	16	● Icebox Canyon	2.2 mi (3.54 km)	3 hours	404 ft (123 m)	This trail traverses open desert before entering the canyon. Tricky boulder hopping is required to reach the back, where a seasonal waterfall can be found among the narrow walls.
<b>TRAILS FOUND OUTSIDE OF THE SCENIC DRIVE</b>						
Middle Oak Creek	23	● Middle Oak Creek	3 mi (4.82 km)	3 hours	239 ft (73 m)	This trail begins along an old road through fire-scarred desert, showing the stark effects of a 2007 wildfire. The easy path offers stunning views of the cliffs before it joins Oak Creek Canyon Trail.
South Oak Creek	24	● South Oak Creek	4.8 mi (7.72 km)	3.5 hours	431 ft (131 m)	This easy trail starts as a rocky, disused road before transitioning into a single-track trail that tucks between Mount Wilson and the Knoll (hill). Be on the lookout for petrified wood and conglomerate rock before the trail ends at a junction with Knoll Trail.
First Creek Canyon	25	● First Creek Canyon	4 mi (6.42 km)	2 hours	484 ft (148 m)	This level dirt path leads through desert scrub toward First Creek in the mouth of the canyon. The easy trail continues up the tree-lined creek before turning back the same way. Wildlife sightings are relatively common in this area, especially in the early morning.
Kraft Boulders	26	● Kraft Mountain	1.5 mi (2.4 km)	1 hour	50 ft (15 m)	Stroll through a boulder field on soft sand, watch reptiles sunbathe, and see rock climbers from around the world test themselves against the rocks.
Red Spring Boardwalk	27	● Red Spring/Calico Basin	.5 mi (.8 km)	30 minutes	50 ft (15 m)	This wheelchair accessible boardwalk loops around a salt-grass meadow where a spring supports water-dependent plants and wildlife. Interpretive signs along the way provide additional information on the area.
Kraft Mountain Loop	30	● Kraft Mountain	3.5 mi (5.63 km)	3 hours	613 ft (187 m)	This trail starts at the end of Sandstone Drive in Calico Basin. Follow the trail around Kraft Mountain as it enters into a colorful wash with many patterned rocks. This strenuous trail features a large elevation gain and some rock scrambling.
Gene’s Trail	29	● Red Spring/Calico Basin	2.6 mi (4.26 km)	1.5 hours	333 ft (102 m)	Located off Calico Basin Road, Gene’s Trail ascends a steep hill and meanders through the desert until meeting Kraft Mountain Loop. This moderate trail provides excellent views of the vivid sandstone framing Turtlehead Peak.
Girl Scout	31	● Kraft Mountain	1.3 mi (2.08 km)	1 hour	173 ft (53 m)	This easy trail starts from the back of the Kraft Mountain parking lot. Follow an old dirt road to a foot path along the base of the cliffs until it joins Calico Basin Trail. This trail offers close-up experiences with the intricate sandstone patterns and colors.
Calico Basin	28	● Red Spring/Calico Basin	1.5 mi (2.4 km)	1 hour	183 ft (56 m)	From the Red Spring parking lot, start the trail to the right of the boardwalk. This easy trail crosses dirt and large sandstone slabs – skirting the base of the escarpment. Watch climbers and look for wildflowers as the trail meanders into ash trees near the seasonal Calico Spring.
Ash Spring	32	● Kraft Mountain	1 mi (1.6 km)	1 hour	83 ft (25 m)	From the Kraft Mountain parking lot, follow an easy trail into the lush wash where ash trees grow before arriving at the end of the small canyon. The seasonal spring creates an oasis where many varieties of birds are often spotted.



## GEOLOGY

The rocks before you tell a story going back over 500 million years. It begins with limestones formed in a shallow sea, where invertebrate fossils show about 250 million years' worth of marine ecosystem development. Then, Jurassic sand dunes partially stained red by iron oxide captured dinosaurs' and other animals' behavior in fossil trackways. Finally, movements of the Earth's plates created the Keystone Thrust Fault, a unique tectonic feature still visible as the contact between the older grey limestones above and younger red and tan sandstones below.



## ECOLOGY

The Mojave Desert, the driest and hottest in North America, is often seen as a barren wasteland. However, it hosts diverse microhabitats due to varied altitudes, water presence, and soil composition. These microhabitats support unique plant and animal species, contributing to the biodiversity of Red Rock Canyon. Every organism, from the desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) to biological soil crust, plays a crucial ecological role. Spot the tiny Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*) on Mojave yucca (*Yucca schidigera*) leaves or the red-spotted toad (*Anaxyrus punctatus*) in soft sand. Look for burrows and tracks of desert kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys deserti*), white-tailed antelope squirrels (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*), or desert tarantulas (*Aphonopelma chalcodes*).





## HUMAN HISTORY




Indigenous groups have long managed the landscape, leaving behind tools and rock writings as evidence of their changing climate and resource use. These artifacts, rich in cultural and scientific value, deserve respect. A trail established by Europeans along indigenous trade routes from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Los Angeles, California is now a National Historic Trail called the Old Spanish Trail. In the 1840s, it facilitated trade of various goods and was used by settlers passing through Red Rock Canyon. By the late 19th century, people in the area raised livestock, cultivated crops, and quarried the canyon's iconic sandstone, with remnants still visible at Sandstone Quarry.



## LEAVE NO TRACE

We practice the 7 Leave No Trace Principles to conserve the natural beauty and biodiversity of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area for future generations.

-  **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**  
Do your research and bring what you need.
-  **TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**  
Stay on designated trails.
-  **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**  
Pack it in, pack it out- including pet waste.
-  **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**  
Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts, and other objects as you find them.

-  **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**  
Only use approved fire rings at the Red Rock Campground or in approved picnic areas.
-  **RESPECT WILDLIFE**  
For the safety of the animals, and yourself, keep your distance from wildlife and never provide food.
-  **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS**  
Respect other visitors and allow them to have a quality outdoor experience.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is home to an amazing diversity of life, scenery, and history. As you traverse its desert and canyons, you will witness dynamic ecosystem changes and intricate relationships between living things and their environments. As natural spaces become scarcer, it serves as a haven from urban life, allowing people to experience the natural world and our shared human history. However, this delicate ecosystem is also threatened by human influence, and the choices you make here will have a ripple effect on the Mojave Desert's environment. You can help conserve this magnificent landscape by practicing Leave No Trace principles and by making conscious choices to be a steward of the land.

## SUPPORT RED ROCK CANYON AFTER YOUR VISIT



### LICENSE PLATE

If you're a Nevada resident, you can show your support of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area by purchasing the Red Rock Canyon license plate. Proceeds from your purchase support Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

[www.friendsredrock.org/nevada-license-plates-car-and-motorcycle/](http://www.friendsredrock.org/nevada-license-plates-car-and-motorcycle/)



### 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. Membership is offered by both non-profit partners of Red Rock Canyon, Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Southern Nevada Conservancy.

[www.SouthernNevadaConservancy.org](http://www.SouthernNevadaConservancy.org)  
[www.FriendsRedRock.org](http://www.FriendsRedRock.org)