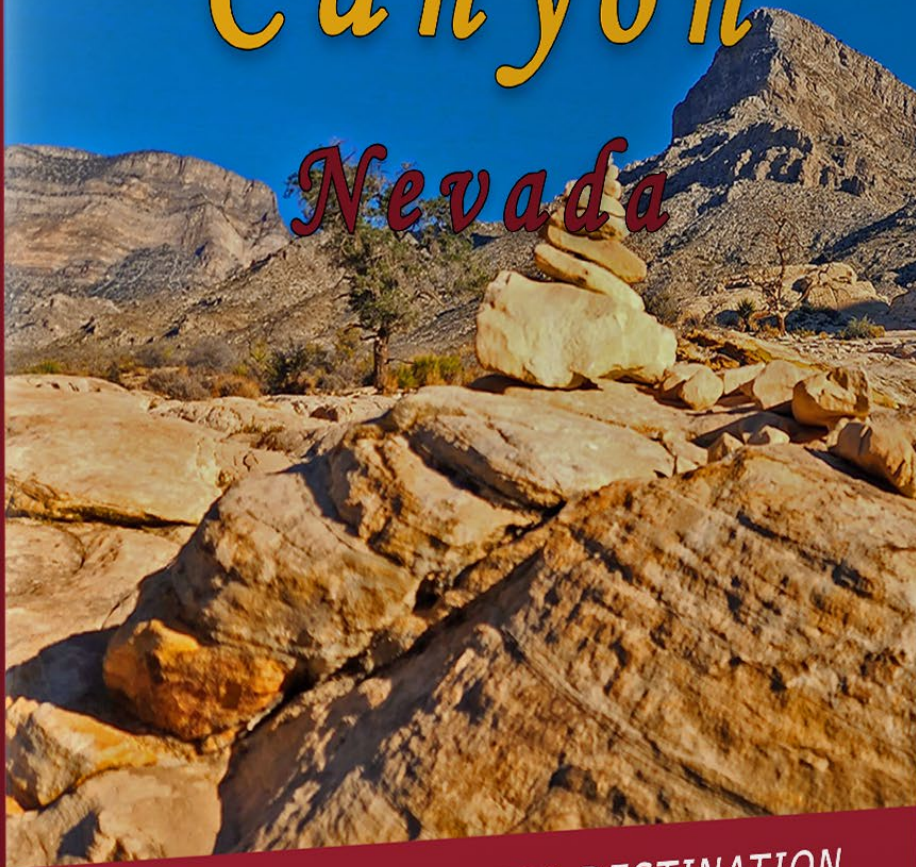


RED ROCK CANYON

Red Rock Canyon

Nevada



7 DAY GUIDE BOOK

FAMOUS WILDERNESS DESTINATION
5 MINUTES FROM NEAREST VEGAS CASINO
7-DAY GUIDE BOOK SERIES

DAVID SMITH

LASVEGASAREATRAILS.COM



Las Vegas Area Trails

Red Rock Canyon, Nevada

Immerse yourself in this amazing Southwestern Mojave Desert environment less than 10 minutes from the nearest Las Vegas casino! Here you will find a wide variety of climate zones, each with its unique flora and fauna ranging from cacti, yucca, and Joshua Trees at 3,500ft to juniper and pine forests at 6,000-8,500ft.

The variety of activities offered ranges from driving along a beautiful scenic route with numerous viewpoints and interpretive displays to hiking a huge network of trails to rock climbing from beginner to world-class technical levels. Enjoy biking, running and even a challenging 4WD road branching off to the Northwest.

Geologic features include spectacular ancient Jurassic-era sandstone cliffs and hills shaped over the ages by the action of wind and water to cliffs formed by the famous Keystone Thrust fault line.

Whether you live in the Las Vegas area and are able to make excursions over time, or are staying in a Las Vegas casino and looking for daytime nature excursions or want to camp in Red Rock Canyon and enjoy an extended immersion in the wilderness, Red Rock Canyon offers an experience that fits!

The portion of Red Rock Canyon that is the focus of this book is that familiar BLM gated area just West of Las Vegas with the visitor center and scenic drive. This is a beautiful desert environment surrounded on all sides by mountains and hills. The colorful Rainbow Mountains form the Western Border. The majestic Keystone Thrust cliffs of the La Madre Mountains form the Northern Border. The Calico Hills form the Eastern border and Blue Diamond Hill forms the Southern border.

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7-Day Guidebook Series

Red Rock Canyon, Nevada, is part of the **7-Day Guidebook Series**. A hidden secret to many is that Las Vegas, Nevada is far more than dazzling casinos and nightlife. Las Vegas is surrounded by vast, largely untouched wilderness areas, some of which begin just a few hundred feet from the edge of the city.

Vegas is a Little-Known World-Class Ecotourism Capital

The network of world-class hotels in Las Vegas at the edge of over 15 major wilderness areas easily positions Las Vegas as a world ecotourism capital! No matter where you live in the world, you may eventually travel to Las Vegas. The **7-Day Guidebook Series** is your guide to hidden wilderness areas you won't want to miss during your next trip. Do a little ecotourism on your next trip to Las Vegas!

7-Day Immersion

This series is your guide to a 7-day immersion in each of the 15 or more incredible wilderness areas surrounding Las Vegas. During your first 7 visits, you'll experience the wonder of each wilderness area. Where, in some cases, there are extreme adventures to be had, you will be guided to literally rise to those occasions through gradual step-by-step increments.

How to Strategize Your 7-day Immersion?

1. **7 Consecutive Days:** We'll show you where you can camp in the wilderness area enabling you to fully explore the wonders in 7 consecutive days.
2. **7 Days Over a Longer Time Period:** This is my approach as I live in Las Vegas. I spread the 7 days over a period of 7 weeks.
3. **Mix and Match:** A variation of the above approaches is to spend a week or 2 in Las Vegas and experience a day in a different wilderness area each day, then return when you are able to experience another day in each wilderness area until you have explored them all.

Virtual Immersion Experience

If you are unable to adventure into some of the more remote areas due to age, health, or distance, you will receive a virtual experience through additional vivid images, interactive maps and videos by following links to the wilderness adventure pages on LasVegasAreaTrails.com.

Use All the Features of This Book!

1. **Take-Away Guide:** Download the convenient .pdf format to your phone and take it along with you as an adventure guide.
2. **Multi-Media Experience:** Every image links to the adventure's master page on LasVegasAreaTrails.com for more detail, images, and videos on the adventure.
3. **Interactive Maps:** Click on any map to open that map on the world-wide Google Maps platform. Use the map as a GPS guide to get to the trailhead and a guide to navigate the adventure route.

Note: #2 & #3 above require an internet connection.

A Continually Evolving Project

This book is a continually evolving creation. The most significant coming updates will be attractive, engaging video shorts (around 5 minutes each) as introductions to the adventures herein. The original videos in the links at the time this book was first published are longer adventures giving a deeper, more extended immersion into the wilderness.

2 Purchase Options

Current Version - \$9.95

Includes this entire book and all links to around 300 pages of unique valuable content!

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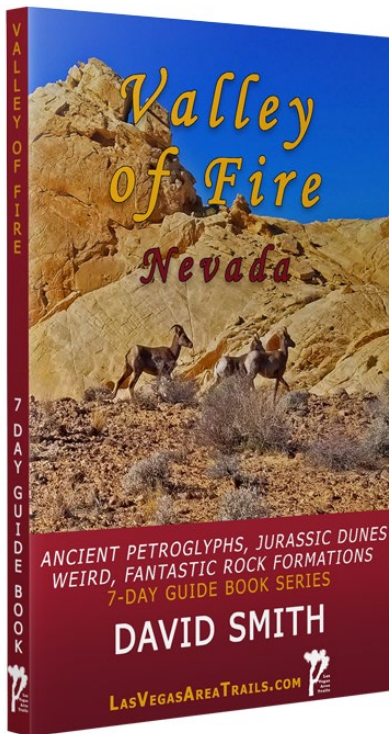
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Everything included in the current version plus lifetime updates emailed to you!
Updated Information, Images, Videos (Next updates: Video Shorts!)

PURCHASE

What's in the Series?

As each book is rolled out in the coming months, here's what you can expect. Subscribe to LasVegasAreaTrails.com and/or [visit this page](#) to be the first to know when the next 7-Day Guide Book is released.



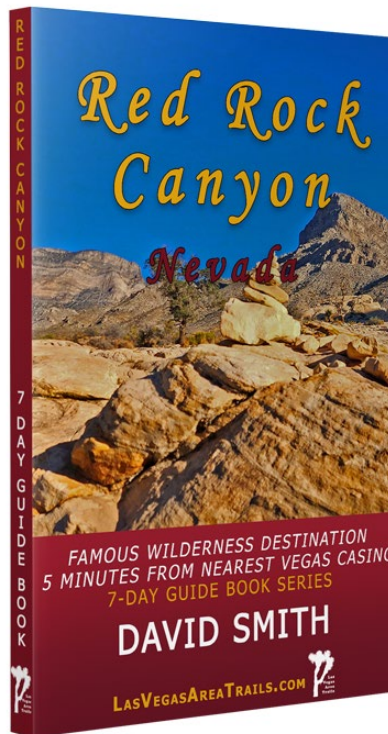
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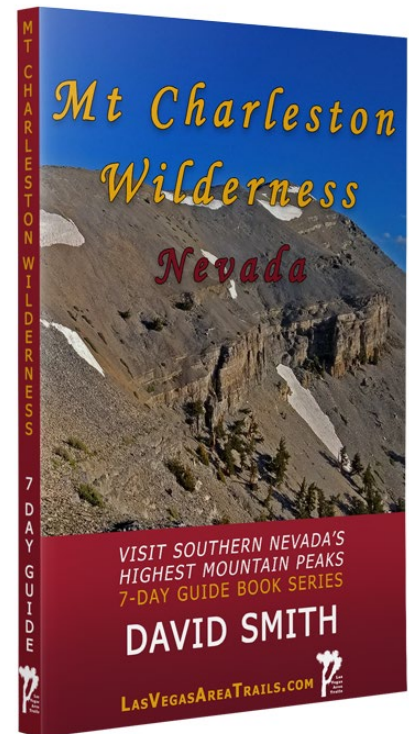
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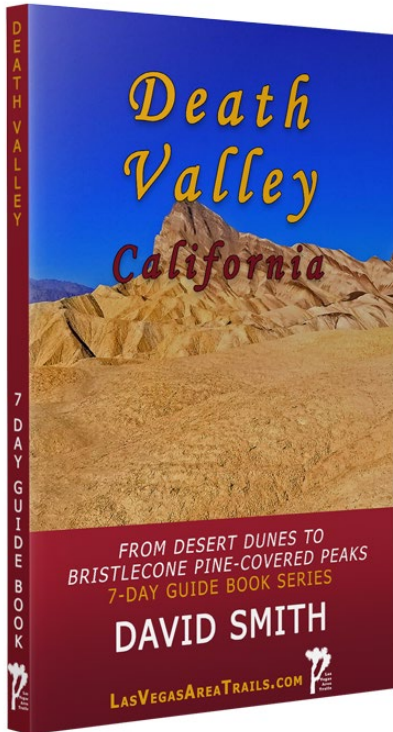
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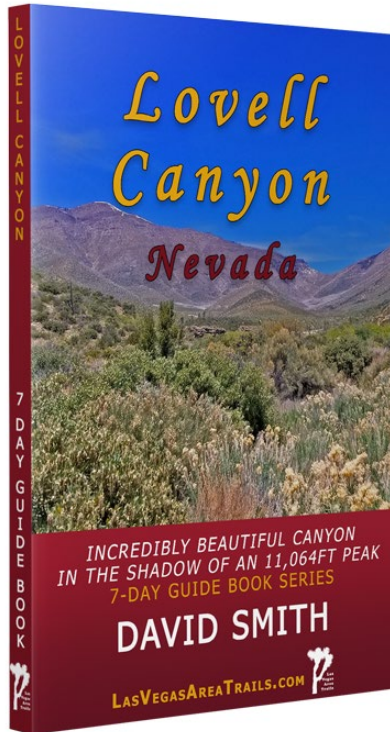
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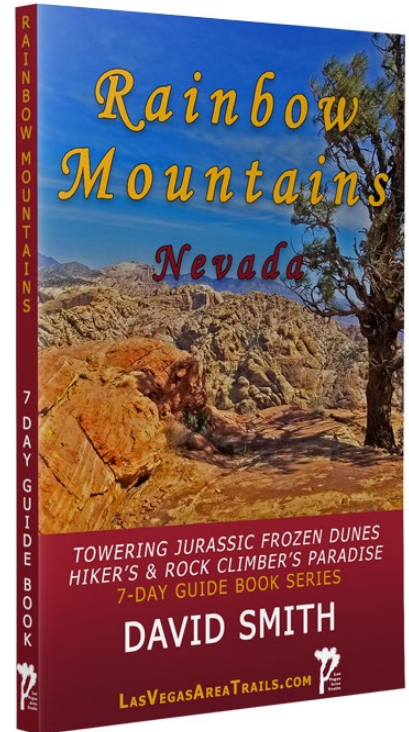
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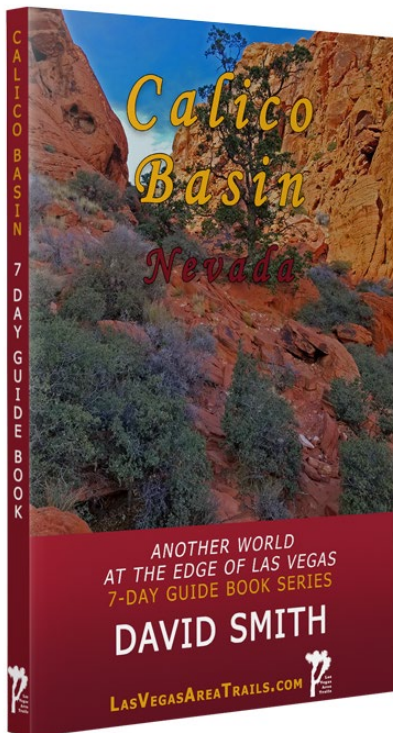
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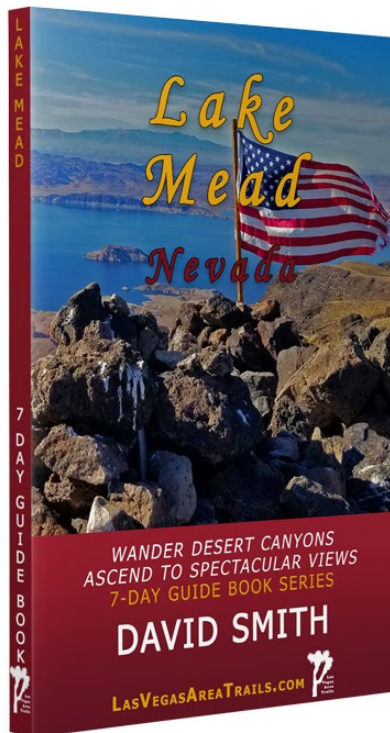
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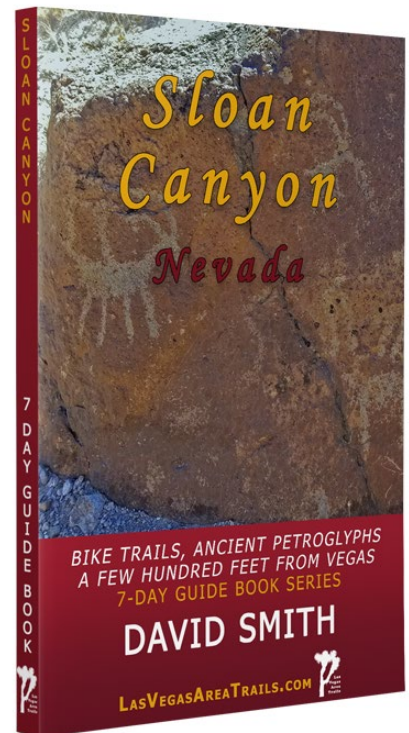
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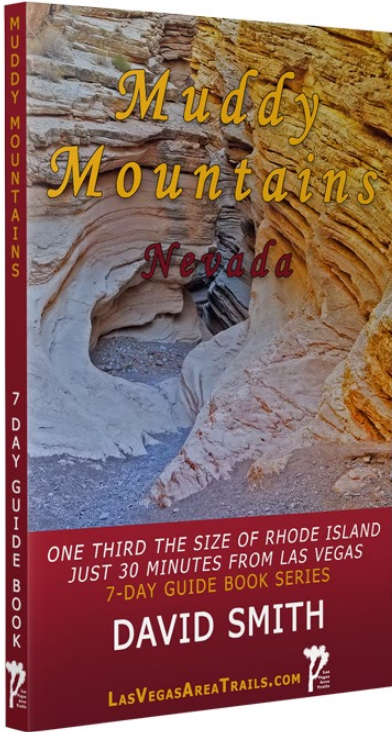
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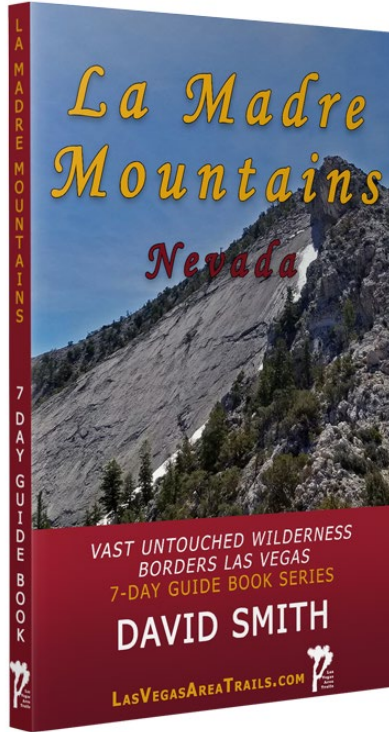
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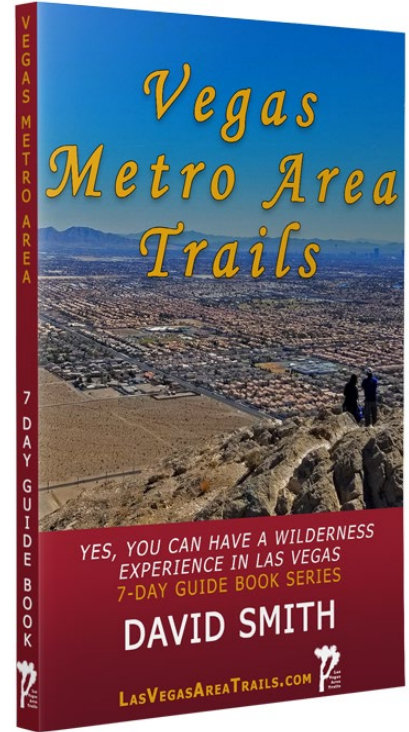
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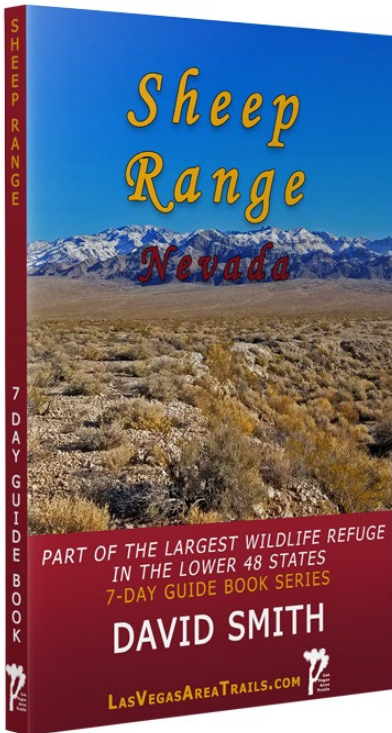
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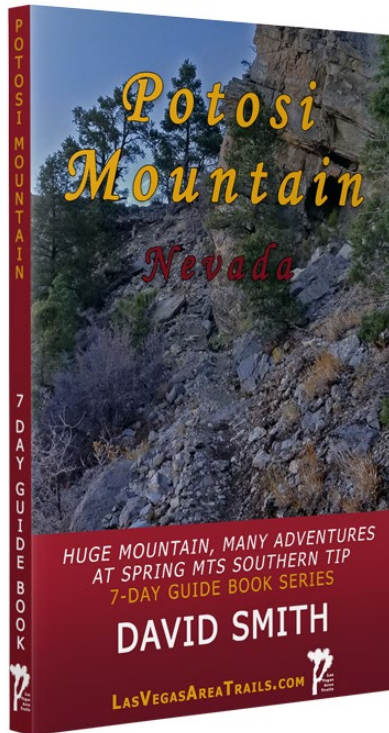
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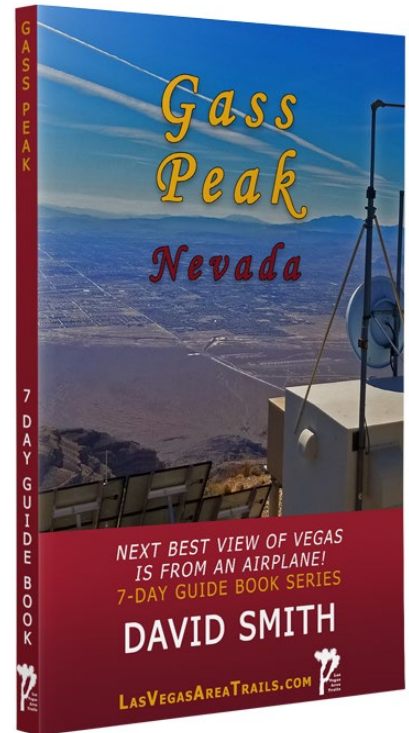
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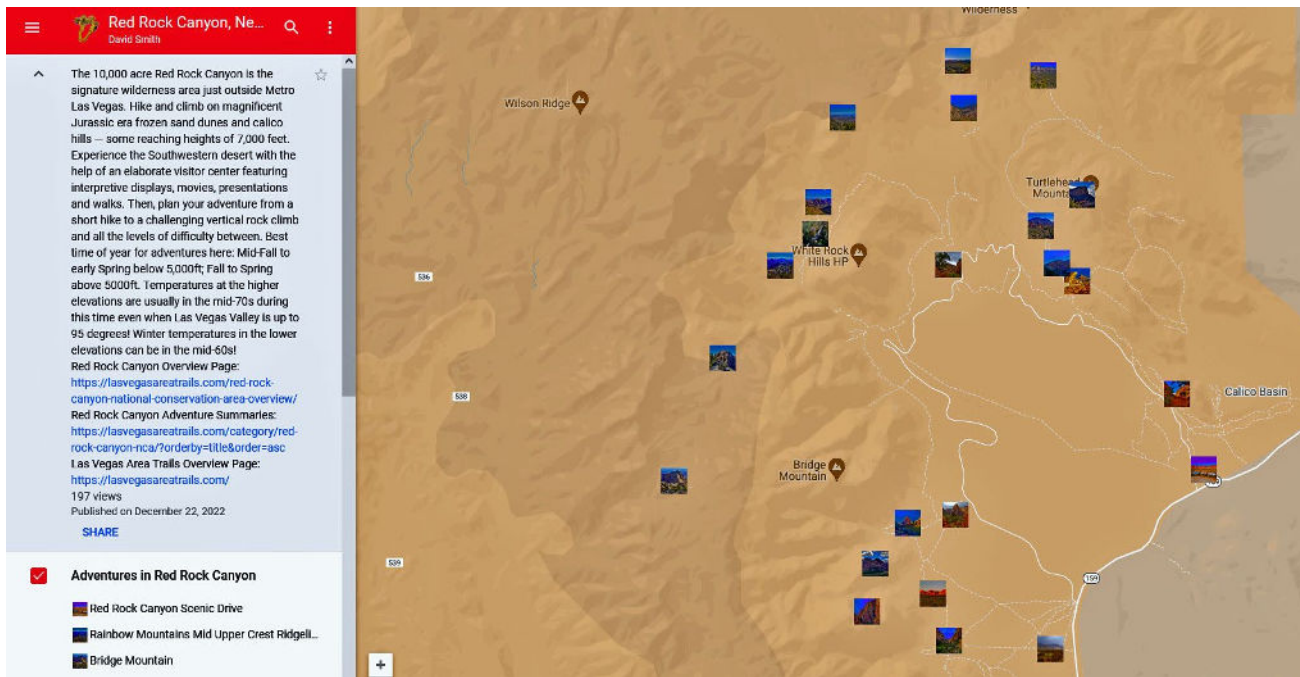


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Target: 2024

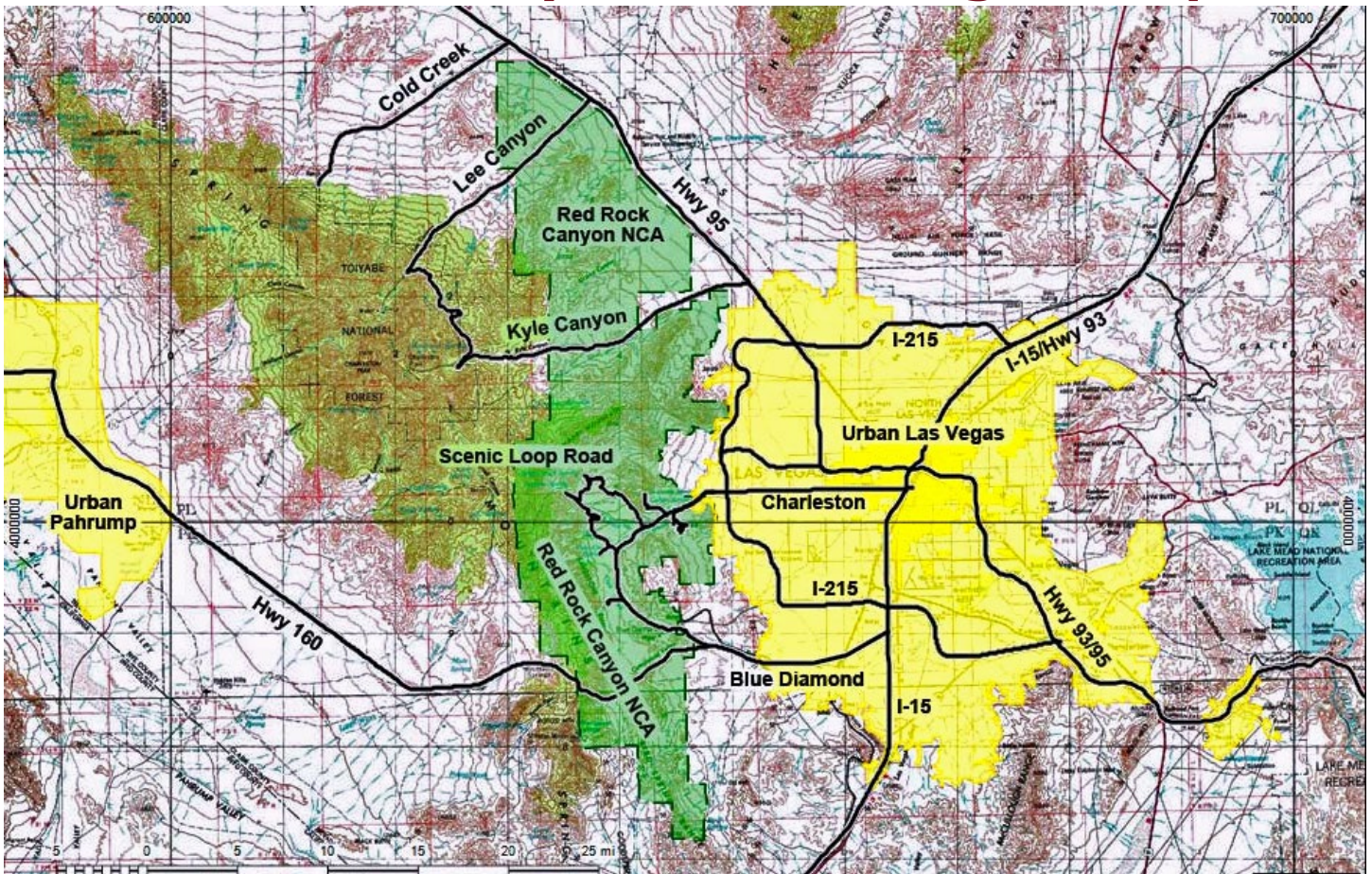
Red Rock Canyon Overview Map and Directions



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

This is your main Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Map. Open the interactive view on your phone and use it as a GPS guide to get to the park from wherever you are in the world, get a summary of the main park features and navigate around the park.

Red Rock Canyon Greater Region Map



To many, Red Rock Canyon is that gated area with the visitor center and scenic drive, surrounded by borderline mountains. In fact, we focus on this smaller portion of Red Rock Canyon in this book. However, Red Rock Canyon NCA extends far beyond the borderline mountains surrounding the Scenic Drive. The green shaded portion in the center of the map above will give you an idea of the total expanse of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and its relation to Las Vegas to the East (yellow shaded) and the Spring Mountains to the West (Greenish Brown Shaded). The map is based on the USGS 15 minute topo map (UTM NAD27 CONUS Grid).

Red Rock Canyon NCA Key Features

Covering an area of over 195,000 acres, Red Rock Canyon is a true gem of Nevada and a must-visit for anyone who loves nature, adventure, and outdoor activities. Some of the canyon's key features include:

Geology

The towering red rock formations that make up Red Rock Canyon were formed over millions of years of geologic activity. The canyon lies in the transition zone between the Great Basin and the Mojave Desert, two regions with different geologic histories. The unique geological features of the canyon include ancient sand dunes, limestone formations, and volcanic rocks. The rocks in the canyon are mostly sandstone and limestone, which have been weathered and eroded by wind and water over millions of years, giving rise to the distinctive shapes and colors that are visible today.

Wildlife

Red Rock Canyon is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including many species that are unique to the desert environment. While in the canyon you may see animals such as desert bighorn sheep, coyotes, kit foxes, and black-tailed jackrabbits. Note that animal sightings are most likely during the early dawn or evening hour just before sunset.

The park is also home to many species of reptiles, including lizards, snakes, and tortoises. Are you a bird watcher? You may enjoy spotting species such as the red-tailed hawk, the golden eagle, and the peregrine falcon. Do you like to view and photograph plants? The canyon features unique plant life, including Joshua trees, Mojave yuccas, creosote bushes and countless other plant varieties.

Activities

Do you love to experience nature by actively engaging in the environment? Red Rock Canyon offers a wide range of outdoor activities, including hiking, rock climbing, camping, and horseback riding. There are more than 30 miles of hiking trails that vary in length and difficulty. Basically, you can

find an activity for whatever your level of physical conditioning, along with an activity that will stretch you toward the next level! The Calico Hills, one of the most popular hiking and climbing areas in the park, will treat you to stunning views of the red rock formations and the surrounding desert landscape. Are you a rock climber? Prepare to encounter every imaginable level of rock climbing from bouldering to impossibly high vertical cliffs. There are several companies that offer guided climbing tours.

Camping

Immerse yourself in this amazing wilderness environment for an extended period of discovery and wonder. Camping is a popular activity in Red Rock Canyon, with the main campground located on the South end of the park. The campground offers both tent and RV camping, and there are facilities such as picnic tables, fire pits, and restrooms available.

Visitor Center

Would you like a quick introductory overview of Red Rock Canyon and its wonders, guided by experts and artistic, informative displays? Red Rock Canyon features a top-class visitor center that provides information on the geology, history, and wildlife of the area. The center also offers exhibits on the flora and fauna of the canyon and the surrounding desert environment. You can browse the gift shop and bookstore for souvenirs and books on the park's history and geology.

Rock Formations in Red Rock Canyon

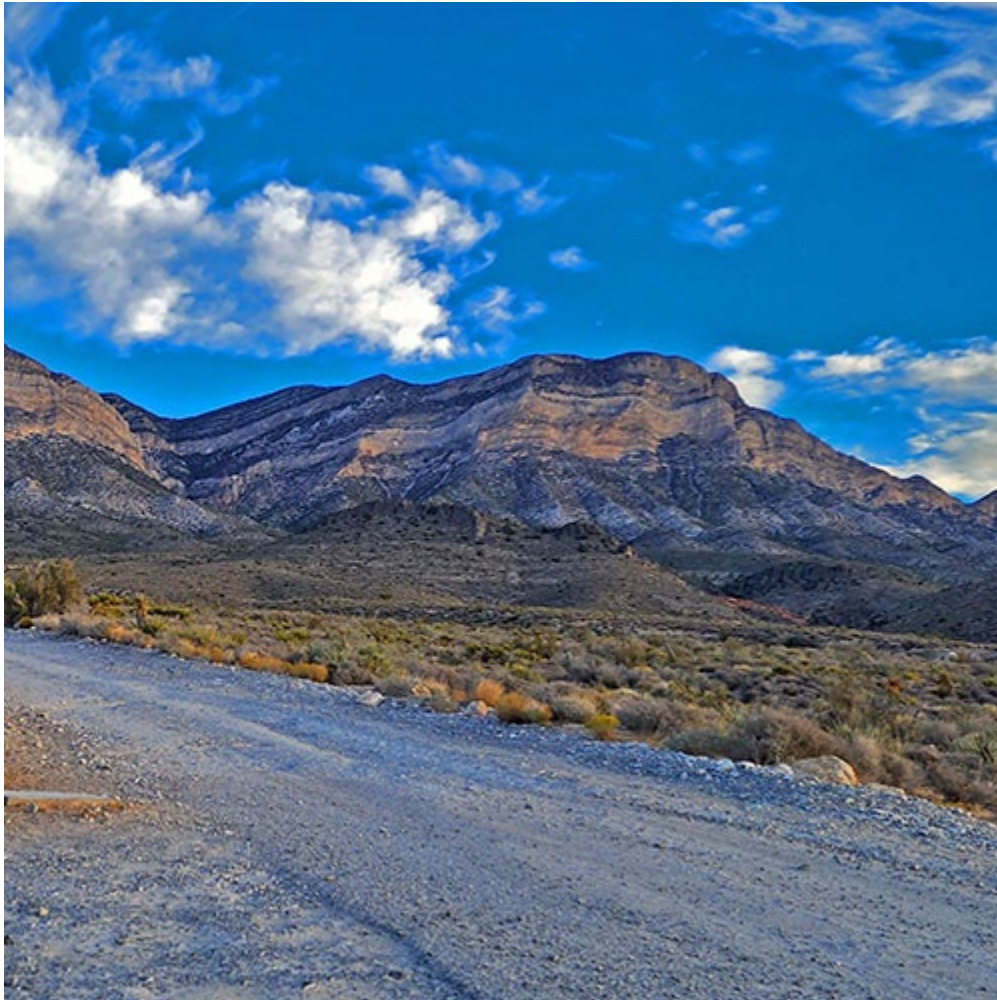


Jurassic Era Frozen Sand Dunes

(Calico Hills Pictured Above, One of the Most Popular Attractions in Red Rock Canyon)

The sandstone formations in Red Rock Canyon have a rich geological history that spans millions of years. The rocks that make up the formations were deposited during the Jurassic Period, approximately 180 to 140 million years ago, when the area was covered by a shallow sea. Over time, layers of sediment and organic matter built up on the sea floor, eventually forming the sandstone, limestone, and shale formations you see today. The colors of the sandstone, ranging from deep reds to vibrant oranges and pinks, are a result of iron oxide in the rocks.

Subsequent tectonic activity and erosion have shaped the sandstone formations into the spectacular structures seen in Red Rock Canyon.



Keystone Thrust Fault

(El Padre Mountain Pictured Above: North End of the Canyon)

Over 15 miles of the Keystone Thrust fault line can be seen from the Red Rock Canyon area. It's part of a larger fault line that runs through the region and also includes the Southern border of Valley of Fire State Park. The entire fault line extends for over 100 miles from near the Utah-Nevada border to the southwest corner of Nevada.

One of the most prominent portions of the fault line in Red Rock Canyon are the cliffs on the Northern end of the canyon (pictured above).

Formation of the Keystone Thrust Fault Line:

Two tectonic plates (rock layers) collided 65 million years ago to form the Keystone Thrust fault line. The older gray limestone Pacific Plate of the Cambrian age buckled, folded and was forced over the red, Jurassic age sandstone of the younger North American plate. This resulted in the formation of a steeply dipping fault plane, with rocks of the Precambrian and Cambrian ages exposed on its eastern side and rocks of the Jurassic and Cretaceous ages exposed on its western side, creating a distinct layer pattern that is visible in the rock formations of Red Rock Canyon. The red sandstone of the younger North American Plate is a result of the iron oxide in the sandstone.

Hiking trails offer stunning views of the fault line and the surrounding landscape. You can actually stand on the dividing line with one foot on the Cambrian age rock and the other foot in the Jurassic age rock, hoping that the fault does not become active at that moment!

In addition to its recreational opportunities, the Keystone Thrust Fault is an important site for geological research. The fault line provides valuable information about the earth's crust and the effects of tectonic activity on the landscape. Scientists study the fault to better understand the geological history of the region and to make predictions about future geological activity.



Red Rock Escarpment

(Rainbow Mountain Pictured Above)

The Keystone Thrust fault line is responsible for the formation of the Red Rock Escarpment, a towering rock formation that rises to 3,000 feet above the surrounding landscape. The escarpment, better known as The Rainbow Mountains, is made up of Aztec sandstone, which was deposited in the area around 180 million years ago during the Jurassic period. Layers of sandstone, limestone, and shale have been pushed up and over each other by the fault line. The rock has been shaped by erosion over millions of years, resulting in the dramatic cliffs and canyons that you see today. Rock climbers from around the world come to Red Rock Canyon to climb the unique rock formations created by the fault. The area offers a variety of climbing routes, from beginners to advanced world-class rock climbers.

Mount Wilson - Standing at 7,070 feet, Mt Wilson is the highest point in the colorful Rainbow Mountain Wilderness which forms the Western border of Red Rock Canyon. It is a popular spot for rock climbers, with several challenging routes available.

Rainbow Mountain - This colorful peak just North of Mt. Wilson features layers of sandstone in shades of red, pink, and orange and is another popular destination for hiking and rock climbing.

Some of the other peaks on the escarpment include Bridge Mountain, Juniper Peak, Indecision Peak, Hidden Peak, Black Velvet Peak, Windy Peak Hollow Rock Peak and South Peak. Learn more about these peaks and how to access them at <https://lasvegasareatrails.com/rainbow-mountain-wilderness-nevada-overview/>

What's the Difference Between the Keystone Thrust and the Red Rock Escarpment?

The ***Keystone Thrust Fault*** is a major fault zone formed during the Laramide Orogeny (a time period of mountain building in western North America, which started in the Late Cretaceous, 70 to 80 million years ago, and ended 35 to 55 million years ago.)

On the other hand, the ***Red Rock Escarpment*** is a natural rock formation shaped by erosion over millions of years. The Keystone Thrust Fault is a significant feature of the geology of Nevada, while the Red Rock Escarpment, better known as The Rainbow Mountains, is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers.

Bordering Major Wilderness Areas

In addition to the incredible rock formations in Red Rock Canyon there are also the adjacent wilderness areas. Standing within Red Rock Canyon you can simultaneously see 4 surrounding wilderness areas:

- The [Rainbow Mountain Wilderness](https://lasvegasareatrails.com/rainbow-mountain-wilderness-nevada-overview/) to the West (https://lasvegasareatrails.com/rainbow-mountain-wilderness-nevada-overview/)
- The [La Madre Mountains Wilderness](https://lasvegasareatrails.com/la-madre-mountains-wilderness-nevada-overview/) to the North (https://lasvegasareatrails.com/la-madre-mountains-wilderness-nevada-overview/)
- The [Calico Basin and Brownstone Canyon](https://lasvegasareatrails.com/calico-basin-nevada-overview/) to the East (https://lasvegasareatrails.com/calico-basin-nevada-overview/)
- [Blue Diamond Hill](https://lasvegasareatrails.com/01-blue-diamond-hill-nevada-overview/) to the South (https://lasvegasareatrails.com/01-blue-diamond-hill-nevada-overview/)

Each surrounding area presents you with a unique and rugged outdoor experience.

[Rainbow Mountain Wilderness](#): Located to the west of Red Rock Canyon, Rainbow Mountain Wilderness covers over 27,000 acres (10,926 hectares) of rugged terrain, including several peaks over 7,000 feet (2,133 meters) in elevation. The area is home to a variety of desert wildlife, including tortoises, jackrabbits, and lizards, and offers numerous hiking trails and backcountry camping opportunities.

[La Madre Mountains Wilderness](#): Located on the northern edge of Red Rock Canyon, The La Madre Mountains Wilderness covers over 47,000 acres (19,020 hectares) of rugged mountain terrain, including several peaks over 8,000 feet in elevation. The area is home to diverse wildlife, including bighorn sheep, mule deer, and mountain lions, and offers a variety of hiking trails and backcountry camping opportunities.

[Calico Basin](#):

The approximately 5,700-acre Calico Basin Recreation Area is a popular rock climbing, hiking, and equestrian use destination within the larger Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area west of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Brownstone Canyon:

Brownstone Canyon Archaeological District comprises 2,920 acres (1,180 ha) and is located in the La Madre Mountain Wilderness. The area is administered by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management and includes many petroglyphs.

Blue Diamond Hill:

With its intricate network of multi-use trails, Blue Diamond Hill is a popular location for a variety of activities including hiking, trail running, mountain biking and horseback riding. The hill offers spectacular views of The Rainbow Mountains, Red Rock Canyon, La Madre Mountains Wilderness on the Keystone Thrust cliffs, Calico Basin, Sheep Range, Las Vegas Valley and Strip and many points beyond. Many use Blue Diamond Hill as their regular workout/training location. Trails on the hill are lined with fossil-embedded rock, some dating over 400 Million years old!

Additional Wilderness Area Seen from Turtlehead Peak in Red Rock Canyon - Mount Charleston Wilderness:

Located to the north of Red Rock Canyon, Mount Charleston Wilderness covers over 57,000 acres of high-elevation terrain, including the highest peak in southern Nevada, Charleston Peak, which rises to over 11,900 feet in elevation. The area is home to a variety of wildlife, including mule deer, mountain lions, and numerous species, like The Charleston Chipmunk, found only in this Mojave Desert island and nowhere else on the planet! There are numerous hiking trails and backcountry camping opportunities.

The 11,064ft **Griffith Peak** in Mt. Charleston Wilderness can be seen from Turtlehead Peak in Red Rock Canyon and from the Rainbow Mountain peaks on the Western end of the Canyon.

Best Time of Year to Visit Red Rock Canyon

The best time of year to visit and hike or climb in Red Rock Canyon is mid-Fall through mid-Spring. Avoid the high mid-day summer temperatures which can easily exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Getting lost, underestimating the extent of your adventure in Red Rock Canyon or failing to adequately prepare during the heat of the Summer can quickly result in a life-threatening situation.

History of Red Rock Canyon NCA

The history of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA) dates back to the early 20th century, when the area was first recognized for its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. In 1931, a group of local citizens formed the Las Vegas Grotto, a chapter of the National Speleological Society, to explore and map the area's many caves and canyons.

Over the next few decades, the area continued to attract visitors and outdoor enthusiasts, and in the 1960s, a grassroots movement began to protect the area from increasing development pressures. In 1967, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) designated a small portion of the area as the Red Rock Recreation Lands, which offered limited protection for the area's natural and cultural resources.

In 1990, Congress passed the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Act, which designated the area as a National Conservation Area and provided permanent protection for its unique geologic formations, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. The act also established the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Advisory Council, which works with the BLM to manage and protect the area.

Today, Red Rock Canyon NCA covers over 195,000 acres and is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with local stakeholders and conservation organizations, to ensure the area's natural and cultural resources are protected for future generations.

Preparing for Your Adventure

Preparing to visit Red Rock Canyon NCA can help ensure that you have a safe and enjoyable experience. Here are some things to consider before heading out:

1. **Weather:** The weather in the park can be extreme, especially in the summer months when temperatures can reach well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure to check the weather forecast before you go and plan accordingly. Bring plenty of water and sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun.
2. **Clothing:** Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes for hiking and dress in layers to adjust to changing temperatures which can vary by as much as 60 degrees in one day! Also, consider bringing a hat and sunglasses to protect your head and eyes from the sun.
3. **Park map:** Pick up a park map at the entrance or visitor center. Download this guide onto your phone, and plan your route beforehand. There are several hiking trails of varying lengths and difficulties, so choose one that is suitable for your fitness level and time constraints.
4. **Water and snacks:** Bring plenty of water and snacks to keep you energized and hydrated throughout your visit. There are no stores or restaurants within the park, so bring everything you need.
5. **Camping:** If you plan to camp, make sure to reserve a campsite ahead of time as they can fill up quickly. Red Rock Canyon has both RV and tent sites.
6. **Respect the environment:** Red Rock Canyon is a natural wonder, so make sure to respect the environment and leave no trace. This includes packing out all your trash and respecting the wildlife.

By considering these factors before your visit, you can better enjoy the stunning beauty and unique landscape that Valley of Fire State Park has to offer.

Make a Reservation!

Red Rock Canyon's Scenic Drive loop opens at 6am. You need to register 30 days in advance (but there is a 2-day rolling reservation option).

- Reservations are \$2 non-refundable reservation fee plus entrance fee.
- Park passes still accepted, but reservation fee still applies.
- For example, if the park fee is \$15.00 and you have a park pass, the \$15.00 will be waived, but the \$2.00 reservation fee still applies.
- **Note:** Vehicles entering before 8am do **NOT** need a reservation! The park opens at 6am so you have a 2-hour window where the reservation is waived. However, the entrance fees still apply.

Booking your reservation is easy:

- Go to <https://recreation.gov>
- Search for "Red Rock Timed Entry"
- Sign up or log in
- Make your reservation

Day 1

Visitor Center

(Take a left after passing through the park entrance gate. If you miss that left turn, you'll need to go all the way around the one-way 13-mile scenic loop to get back to the visitor center!)

Scenic Drive

(Stay to your right after passing through the park entrance gate. The scenic drive is one-way, so be sure to stop at the viewpoints you want to see on your first pass. You can't go back.)

Calico Hills

(This is the first viewpoint parking area on the scenic drive. Explore the Jurassic Era frozen sand dune hills up close. Avoid huge drop-offs!)

Willow Spring

(Lost Creek Canyon; Willow Springs Loop; Petroglyph Wall; Picnic Area. All these locations are at the Willow Springs area, a turn-off a little over half way around the scenic drive loop.)

Total Walking Mileage for Day 1

About 6 Miles

The goal for Day 1 is to give yourself an overview sampling of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Today you will take in the displays and movies at the visitor center. Ask questions of the park personnel. Learn the geological, archaeological, human and animal history of Red Rock Canyon. Attend a presentation or two. What you learn here will inform and shape your experience throughout your exploration of Red Rock Canyon, National Conservation Area. Be sure to take in the numerous displays outside behind the visitor center along with the circular display describing each stop along the scenic drive.

Then, move on from the visitor center to continue your overview by visiting the stops along the scenic drive and viewing the displays and sights. Get a more close-up immersion by hiking around the Calico Hills. Pause later along the scenic drive at the Willow Springs area to have a picnic and take

in the brief hikes at Lost Creek Canyon, the Willow Springs Loop and Petroglyph Wall.

Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center



The Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center is your main information and orientation hub. Located at the entrance to the park, the visitor center is open year-round and provides a variety of resources and services to help you make the most of your visit.

Visitor Center Hours: The visitor center is open daily from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, with extended hours during the summer months. Admission to the visitor center is free, although there is a fee to enter the park. You can purchase park passes, maps, and other resources at the visitor center, as well as obtain permits for backcountry camping and other activities.

Some of the key features and services available at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center include:

Information Desk: The information desk is staffed by knowledgeable rangers and volunteers who can provide information and advice on hiking trails, scenic drives, and other recreational opportunities in the park.

Exhibits: The visitor center features a variety of exhibits on the area's geology, wildlife, and cultural history. Exhibits include interactive displays, multimedia presentations, and artifacts from the area's early homesteading and mining days.

Geology Exhibit: This exhibit features interactive displays and models that explain the geological formations of Red Rock Canyon, including sandstone formations, fault lines, and volcanic activity. You can learn about the forces that shaped the landscape and the different rock types found in the area.

Wildlife Exhibit: This exhibit features life-size models and dioramas of the animals that call Red Rock Canyon home, including bighorn sheep, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, and other desert wildlife. You can learn about the behavior and adaptations of these animals, as well as the challenges they face in their habitats.

Desert Tortoise Habitat: This outdoor exhibit features a living habitat for the desert tortoise, a threatened species that is native to the Mojave Desert. You can observe the tortoises as they bask in the sun, graze on native plants, and burrow into their underground homes.

Cultural History Exhibit: This exhibit features displays and artifacts that highlight the human history of the area, including the Native American tribes who lived in the region for thousands of years, as well as the European explorers and settlers who later came to the area. You can learn about the different cultural traditions, tools, and technologies used by these groups, as well as their relationships with the land.

Art Gallery: The Visitor Center also features a rotating art gallery that showcases the work of local artists and photographers who have been inspired by the beauty and diversity of Red Rock Canyon.

Gift Shop: The gift shop offers a variety of books, maps, souvenirs, and other items related to the park's natural and cultural history. Proceeds from the gift shop support conservation and education programs in the park.

Theater: The visitor center's theater shows a variety of films and presentations on the area's natural and cultural history, as well as safety and conservation issues.

Restrooms and Picnic Area: The visitor center also offers restrooms and a shaded picnic area for you to relax and enjoy the park.

Trailhead Access: Several hiking trails along with the 13-mile scenic drive begin near the visitor center. The hiking trails offer a quick initial experience of the desert area in the canyon and can be found behind the visitor center. You might even take in the interpretive displays along the first 200 feet of the Grand Circle Loop.

Trailheads at the visitor center include:

Moenkopi Loop Trailhead: This moderate 2.2-mile (3.5 km) loop trail winds through a colorful desert landscape, offering views of sandstone formations, desert vegetation, and wildlife. The trail is rated as moderate due to some rocky sections and elevation changes.

The Grand Circle Loop is a 11.8-mile (19 km) hiking trail that begins and ends at the visitor center. The trail is rated as difficult due to its length and steep elevation changes, but offers spectacular views of the surrounding mountains, canyons, and desert landscapes.

Ranger Talks: The visitor center offers a variety of ranger talks and guided tours that provide an opportunity to learn more about the natural and cultural history of the area. Here are some of the main ranger talks and tours that may be available:

- **Ranger-Led Hikes:** The Visitor Center offers a variety of ranger-led hikes that explore different trails and habitats within the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. These hikes range in difficulty from easy walks to strenuous climbs, and cover topics such as geology, wildlife, and plant ecology.
- **Scenic Drive Tours:** You can also take a guided tour of the 13-mile scenic drive that winds through the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. These tours provide an opportunity to learn about

the geology, wildlife, and history of the area, as well as enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and canyons.

- **Cultural History Tours:** The Visitor Center also offers guided tours that focus on the human history of the area, including the Native American tribes who lived in the region for thousands of years, as well as the European explorers and settlers who later came to the area. These tours explore archaeological sites, historic homesteads, and other cultural landmarks.
- **Astronomy Programs:** You can also participate in astronomy programs that are offered by park rangers and local astronomers. These programs include stargazing events, telescope demonstrations, and discussions about the night sky and the celestial bodies that can be seen from Red Rock Canyon.

All ranger talks and guided tours are led by knowledgeable and experienced park rangers who are passionate about sharing their love and understanding of Red Rock Canyon with visitors. The schedules and availability of these programs can vary depending on the season and weather conditions, so you are advised to check with the visitor center or the [park's website](#) for the latest information and schedules.

Red Rock Campground



(Aerial View of Red Rock Canyon Campground
from Above on Blue Diamond Hill)



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Overall, camping at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is a unique and memorable experience, allowing you to fully immerse yourself in the area's natural beauty.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area has one developed campground. Opened in 1998 to replace the Old Oak Creek Campground, and formerly known as the 13-Mile Campground, the Red Rock Canyon Campground is located two miles east of the Visitor Center on W. Charleston Blvd (State Route 159). The campground is located one mile south on Moenkopi Road from the junction with W. Charleston Blvd. Its physical address is 3293 Moenkopi Road, Las Vegas, NV 89161.

Campground Amenities:

The Red Rock Canyon Campground is fairly primitive, though the individual sites are well laid out.

- No electrical, water and sewer hook-ups.
- No dump station for recreational vehicles.
- No showers.
- Shade structures are available throughout the group sites and many of the individual sites.
- Restrooms are vault toilets.
- Water faucets for drinking water are located throughout the campground.

Making Reservations:

Reservations can be made up to six months in advance but not less than 48 hours before the desired arrival date.

Reserve single or group campground sites by calling 1-877-444-6777 or visiting

<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/250877>.

Campground Hours:

The Red Rock Canyon campground is closed annually during the summer, typically between Memorial Day and September 1 each year.

Check-in is 2PM; Check-out is 11AM

More information on the Red Rock Canyon Campground:

- [Bureau of Land Management's website](#) Click the "Camping" tab
- Call the Red Rock Canyon Campground automated information line at 1-702-515-5387

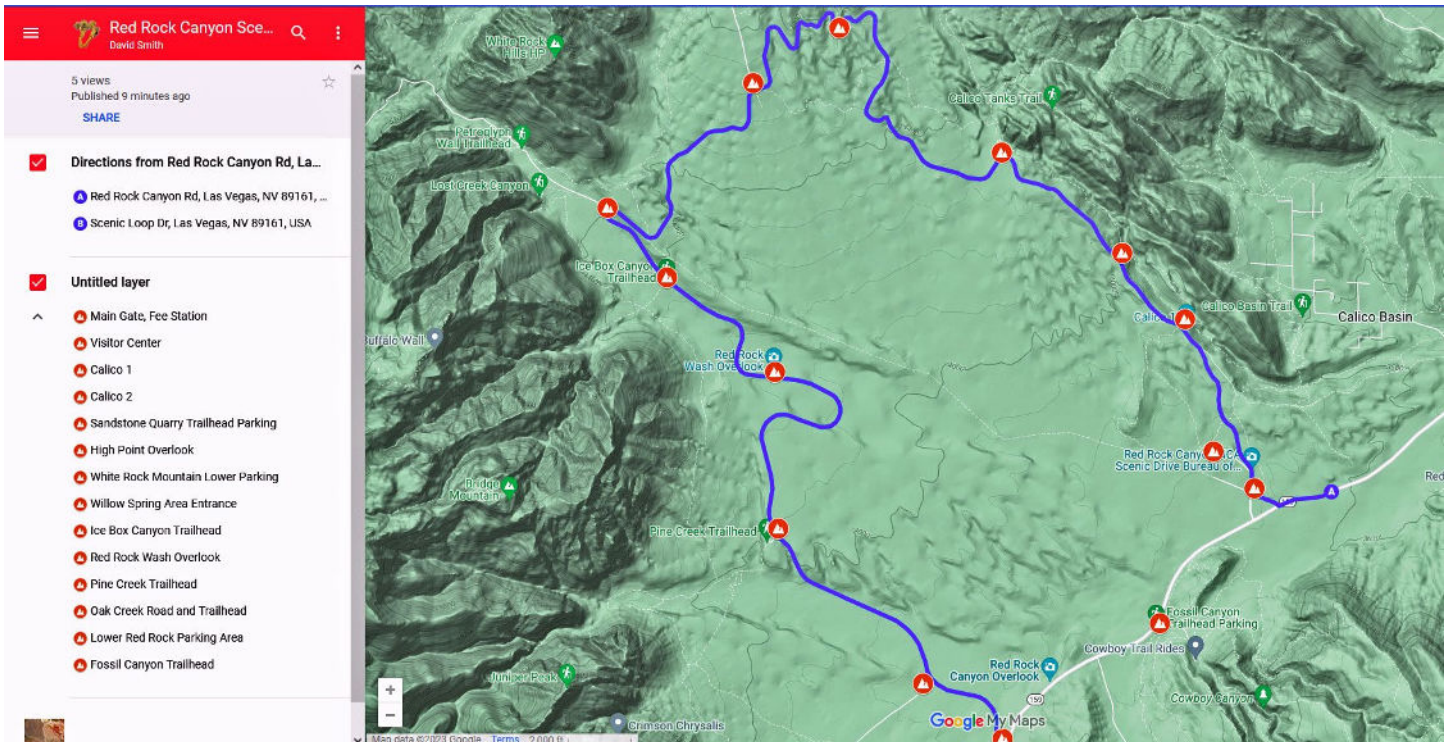
To Camp, or Not to Camp

I myself am rarely an overnight camper or a night hiker. Nearly all my adventures are *out-and-back* in the course of a day. So, the adventures of each day in this book are designed with time to travel to and from Las Vegas, all during daylight hours, even on shorter Winter days.

Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive



Pictured Above: Scenic Drive Viewpoints Display Behind the Visitor Center



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

The Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive ...

The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area in Nevada offers a 13-mile scenic drive that winds through some of the most spectacular and iconic landscapes of the Mojave Desert. The scenic drive can be completed in approximately one hour, but get the most out of the scenic drive by taking your time: Stop at the various overlooks and picnic areas, and enjoy the natural beauty and tranquility of Red Rock Canyon.

Park Entrance Station: The scenic drive begins at the Red Rock Canyon Entrance Station, where you can pay the entrance fee, obtain maps and brochures, and get information about the park's facilities and activities. Please ask your extended questions at the visitor center so as not to hold up the traffic of others waiting to pass through the entrance station.

Here are the 10 stops along the scenic drive:

Calico Hills 1: The first major scenic highlight of the drive is the Calico Hills, a series of vividly colored sandstone formations that range from deep red to bright orange and yellow. These formations are a popular spot for rock climbing, hiking, and photography.

Calico Hills 2: This is a smaller parking area mostly used by experienced rock climbers scaling the more vertical cliff areas in the Calico Hills.

Sandstone Quarry: The Sandstone Quarry is a historic site that features a display of old mining equipment and a quarry wall that reveals the layers of sandstone that make up the Red Rock Canyon formations. This area also provides access to several hiking trails, including the Calico Tanks Trail, which leads to a natural water pocket and offers panoramic views of the surrounding desert and the Turtlehead Peak Trail that leads to one of the most spectacular viewpoints in Red Rock Canyon.

Scenic Drive High Point: This stop offers an incredible panoramic view down the length of Red Rock Canyon from the North end of the canyon. This is a great spot for photography, bird watching, and enjoying the natural beauty of the area. It's the best view available without hiking.

White Rock Mountain: There is a lower parking area for non-rugged vehicles and an upper parking area about a half-mile above along a rough unpaved road. The upper parking area is the trailhead for the White Rock Mountain Loop, the Keystone Thrust Trail and short hike (less than a mile) to the beautiful, peaceful White Rock Mountain Spring.

Willow Spring Trailhead and Picnic Area: Willow Spring is a historic site that was once a watering hole for early settlers and travelers. Today, it is a popular picnic area with shaded tables and grills, as well as access to several hiking trails, including the Lost Creek Trail which leads to a hidden waterfall and a series of pools, Willow Spring Loop, Petroglyph Wall and Childrens' Interpretive Trail.

Ice Box Canyon: This is a great way to experience the nature of the canyons at the base of the Rainbow Mountains. Prepare to navigate heavy brush, boulders and ledges and a creek! In spite of (or because of) the challenge, this is one of the most popular trailheads in Red Rock Canyon. The other canyons up and down the base of the Rainbow Mountains will offer similar challenges, but on a larger scale!

Red Rock Wash Overlook: Stop to view the huge desert wash that spans the length of Red Rock Canyon. Experience the power of water to shape the landscape.

Pine Creek Canyon: This is the canyon between Bridge Mountain and Juniper Peak in the Rainbow Mountains. Experience a couple canyon loop trails – the Fire Ecology Trail and the Pine Creek Loop Trail. Access the trailheads to the Dales Trail (Northward) and the Knoll Trail (Southward) that span the length of the Northern Rainbow Mountains along Red Rock Canyon. This is a great jumping-off point for a summit climb of Juniper Peak. It's also a great place to view the spectacular Mescalito Pyramid formation in the center of the canyon and to watch experienced rock climbers scaling impossibly high vertical cliffs! In addition, there is a picnic area in beautiful, peaceful Pine Creek Canyon.

Oak Creek Canyon: This is the canyon between Rainbow Mountain and Mt. Wilson in the Rainbow Mountains. It's also a good starting point for a Juniper Peak summit climb. There's a beautiful, peaceful picnic area at the base of the canyon. The canyon itself offers access to the rock-climbing areas on the Northern face of Mt. Wilson and the Southern face of Rainbow Mountain.

Note that the road leading to the Oak Creek Canyon trailhead area is unpaved, but generally in good condition for 2WD vehicles.

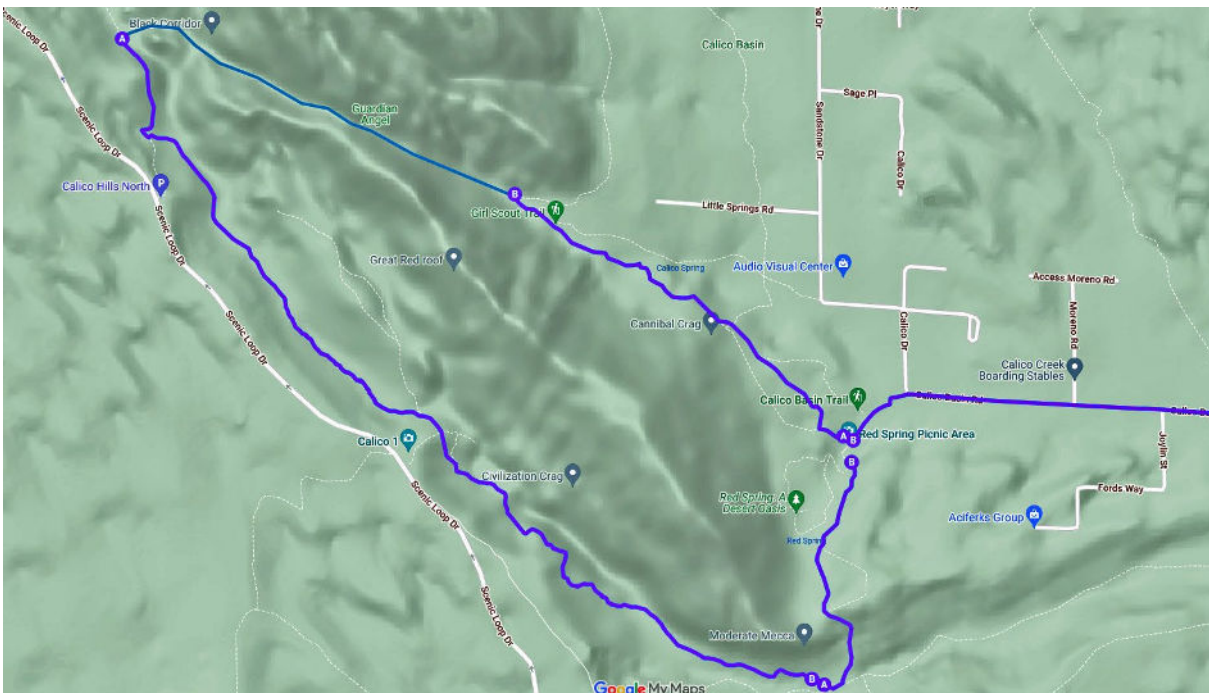
Lower Red Rock Parking Area: This often-missed parking area at the exit gate of the scenic drive on Highway 159 is actually a hub for numerous trailheads that offer access to the Oak Creek area and trails heading North and South beyond Oak Creek. You can park there without paying the Red Rock Canyon entrance fee, but you will need to hike in further in order to connect with trails in Red Rock Canyon.

Red Rock Canyon Overlook: As the scenic drive high point offers a spectacular panoramic view of Red Rock Canyon looking South, this nice picnic area on the lower South side of the canyon on Highway 159 offers a similar view of the canyon looking North. There is no fee for this area which has numerous well-placed, shaded picnic areas along with a short trail.

Calico Hills



Calico Hills Viewed from Calico Hills 1 Scenic Drive Stop



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

The Calico Hills are one of the most iconic and recognizable features of the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and are located near the Calico Basin. They are a series of red and white sandstone cliffs in jagged formations that rise dramatically out of the desert landscape, creating a vivid contrast of colors and textures.

The hills consist of Aztec red sandstone that was deposited in a shallow sea over 180 million years ago during the Jurassic period. At that time, the area was covered by a shallow sea that periodically flooded the surrounding land. As the sea retreated, it left behind a thick layer of sand and sediment that eventually hardened into the distinctive red and tan sandstone formations that can be seen today.

Over time, the sandstone was subjected to intense pressures and temperatures, causing it to fold and twist into complex patterns. This process, known as deformation, is responsible for the dramatic angles and jagged edges that characterize the Calico Hills.

In addition to deformation, the Calico Hills have also been shaped by erosion. Millions of years of wind and water have worn away the softer

layers of sandstone, leaving behind the harder, more resistant rock that makes up the towering peaks and ridges. The resulting landscape is a testament to the power of natural forces and the beauty that can be created through their interaction.

There are two Calico Hills parking areas on the Scenic Drive:

Calico Hills 1: This is a great stopping point for the general public to experience climbing and wandering among the Calico Hills. Here you can find the trailhead for the [hiking loop that makes a full 5-mile circuit around the Calico Hills](#). Take the loop to the opposite side of the Calico Hills (in Calico Basin) and ascend the [Grand Staircase](#), which is the most direct, easy way to summit the Calico Hills and experience the spectacular 360-degree panoramic views from the summit (some class 3 rock climbing involved). Find more detailed directions to these Calico Hills adventures along with adventure video at the above links.

Note that there are some huge vertical drop-offs, and it's easy to get disoriented in the maze of passageways in the Calico Hills. The hills look small and easy from the parking area. Once you actually begin to wander among the hills they are suddenly huge and challenging with many opportunities to get lost. Bring lots of water, good hiking footwear, sunscreen, a hat and stick to the mid-Fall to mid-Spring seasons to avoid 100-degree+ temperatures. If it's your first time hiking and scrambling among the rock formations, it's wise to do so during daylight hours in order to orient yourself to the area.

Calico Hills 2: This is where the more experienced rock climbers launch their adventures scaling the impossibly high vertical cliffs in the Calico Hills. It's actually a world-class rock-climbing destination. There are a variety of challenging routes and boulder problems. Climbers are encouraged to follow *Leave No Trace* principles and obtain the necessary permits before climbing in the area.

This is also a great place for the rest of us to observe rock climbers on the cliffs.

Additional Calico Hills Activities:

Wildlife Viewing: The Calico Hills are home to a variety of desert wildlife, including bighorn sheep, coyotes, and a variety of reptiles and birds. Keep a safe distance and observe wildlife from a distance to avoid disturbing their natural behaviors. Actually, wildlife sightings are very rare and most likely during the morning or evening hours around sunrise or sunset.

Photography: The Calico Hills are a popular spot for photography, offering a variety of unique perspectives and dramatic lighting conditions throughout the day. Bring your camera and capture the natural beauty of the area.

Interpretive Displays: In addition to the interpretive displays at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center, there are interpretive displays at the Calico Hills and other stops along The Scenic Drive that provide information about the geology, ecology, and cultural history of the hills and the surrounding area. Take time to view the displays and learn about the rock formations, the plants and animals that call the area home, and the human history of the region.

Additional Background on the Calico Hills:

Deposition: The sandstone that makes up the Calico Hills was deposited over millions of years in a shallow sea that covered much of Nevada during the Jurassic period. The sand was eroded from nearby mountains and carried by rivers and streams into the sea, where it settled and compacted over time. As the sea retreated, it left behind a thick layer of sand and sediment that eventually hardened into the distinctive red and tan sandstone formations that you see today.

Uplift and Erosion: Around 65 million years ago, a series of tectonic events caused the region to uplift and tilt, exposing the sandstone layers to erosion. Millions of years of wind and water have worn away the softer layers of sandstone, leaving behind the harder, more resistant rock that makes up the towering peaks and ridges.

Geological Processes: The sandstone that makes up the Calico Hills is composed of layers of compressed sand grains that were cemented together by minerals such as silica and calcium carbonate. The rock is also

characterized by unique features such as cross-bedding and ripple marks, which provide clues about the ancient environment in which it was formed.

Human History: The Calico Hills have also played an important role in the human history of the area. The sandstone was quarried by Native American tribes for tools and building materials, and later by European settlers for use in construction. There is a huge boulder covered with ancient petroglyphs between the Calico Hills 2 parking area and the Sandstone Quarry parking on the [Grand Circle Loop](#).



Petroglyph Boulder at the Base of The Calico Hills
on The Grand Circle Loop Trail



Petroglyph Boulder at the Base of The Calico Hills
on The Grand Circle Loop Trail

References:

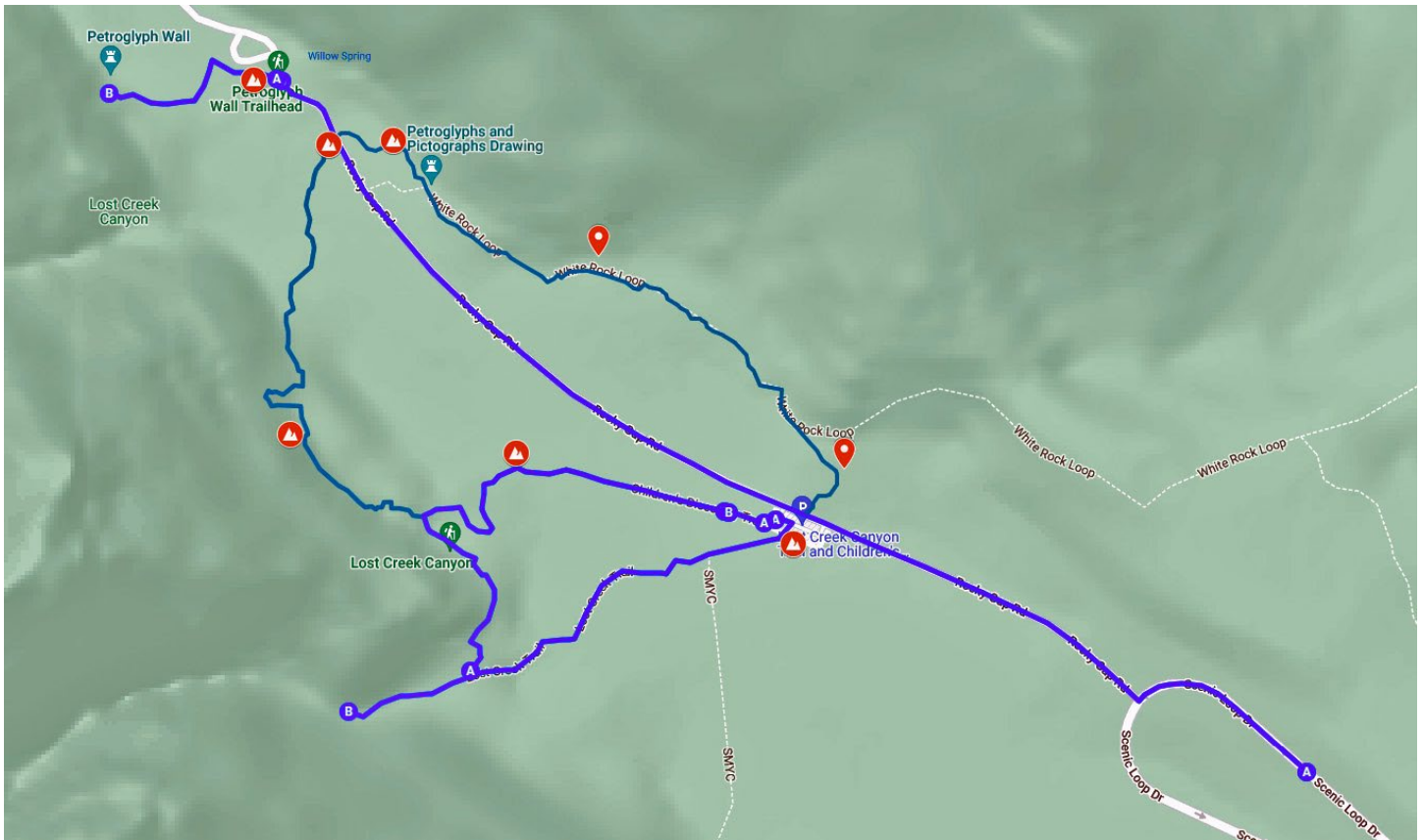
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Willow Spring Picnic Area



Interpretive Sign and Picnic Table at Willow Spring Picnic Area



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Willow Spring Picnic Area is located a little over halfway around the Redrock Canyon Scenic Drive. Unlike the other stops on the scenic drive, the Willow Spring Picnic Area is on its own adjoining road: Rocky Gap Road.

Here you are in a lush, greener desert climate and plant zone compared to the area you covered along the Scenic Drive to this point. It's like suddenly finding yourself in a beautiful desert garden fed by a natural spring and in part shaded by the towering red and calico cliffs on either side. You'll immediately feel a measure of relief from the searing heat of the desert sun. It's like dropping into another world!

The picnic area is equipped with several shaded picnic tables and a restroom facility. Here you'll find yourself in a hub of area trails featuring a variety of distances from less than a mile to longer multi-day adventures. The shorter trails (from a few hundred feet to a little over a mile) offer interpretive signs which are informative and family friendly. These trails feature historical sites, desert botanical garden areas, geological sites and

spectacular views of the surrounding canyons, rock formations, and desert landscape.

Here are a few of the trails you might want to check out at the Willow Spring Picnic Area:

[Willow Spring Loop Trail](#) - This is a moderate 1.5-mile loop trail that starts and ends at the Willow Spring Picnic Area. The trail takes you through a desert landscape, offering an immediate immersion in a garden-like desert environment unlike the starker environment just a half mile away in Red Rock Canyon.

[Lost Creek Canyon Trail](#) - This is a moderate 3-mile out-and-back trail that takes you through a narrow canyon and ends at a high cascading waterfall. Along the way, you'll see colorful rock formations, desert vegetation, and wildlife. You'll also get a mini experience of what it takes to navigate the brush, boulders and streams of the canyons along the Eastern base of the Rainbow Mountains.

[Children's Interpretive Trail](#) - This is a short, easy trail designed to provide children with an interactive and educational experience in nature. The trail is approximately 0.3 miles long and features several interpretive signs and exhibits that explain the natural history and ecology of the area. Along the trail, children can learn about the native plants and animals that call the desert home, as well as the geology and history of the area. There are interactive displays that allow children to learn about desert animals and their adaptations.

[Petroglyph Wall](#) - This is a very short trail leading to a fascinating historical and cultural site that features hundreds of petroglyphs, or rock carvings, created by Native American tribes that lived in the area thousands of years ago.

[White Rock Mountain Loop Trail](#) - This is a strenuous 6.5-mile loop trail that takes you through a scenic desert landscape and offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and rock formations. Along the way, you'll see colorful rock formations, desert vegetation, and wildlife.

[La Madre Spring Trail](#) – Taking the White Rock Mountain Loop Trail in a clockwise direction from the Willow Spring picnic area brings you to a left split-off trail in about a mile. This trail leads within about a half mile to the La Madre Spring area, a beautiful year-round mountain spring cascading down the length of a canyon in the cliffs of the La Madre Mountains Wilderness. Above the spring is a **[historic miner's cabin](#)** and a very challenging ascent to the **[summit of The La Madre Mountains cliffs](#)**.

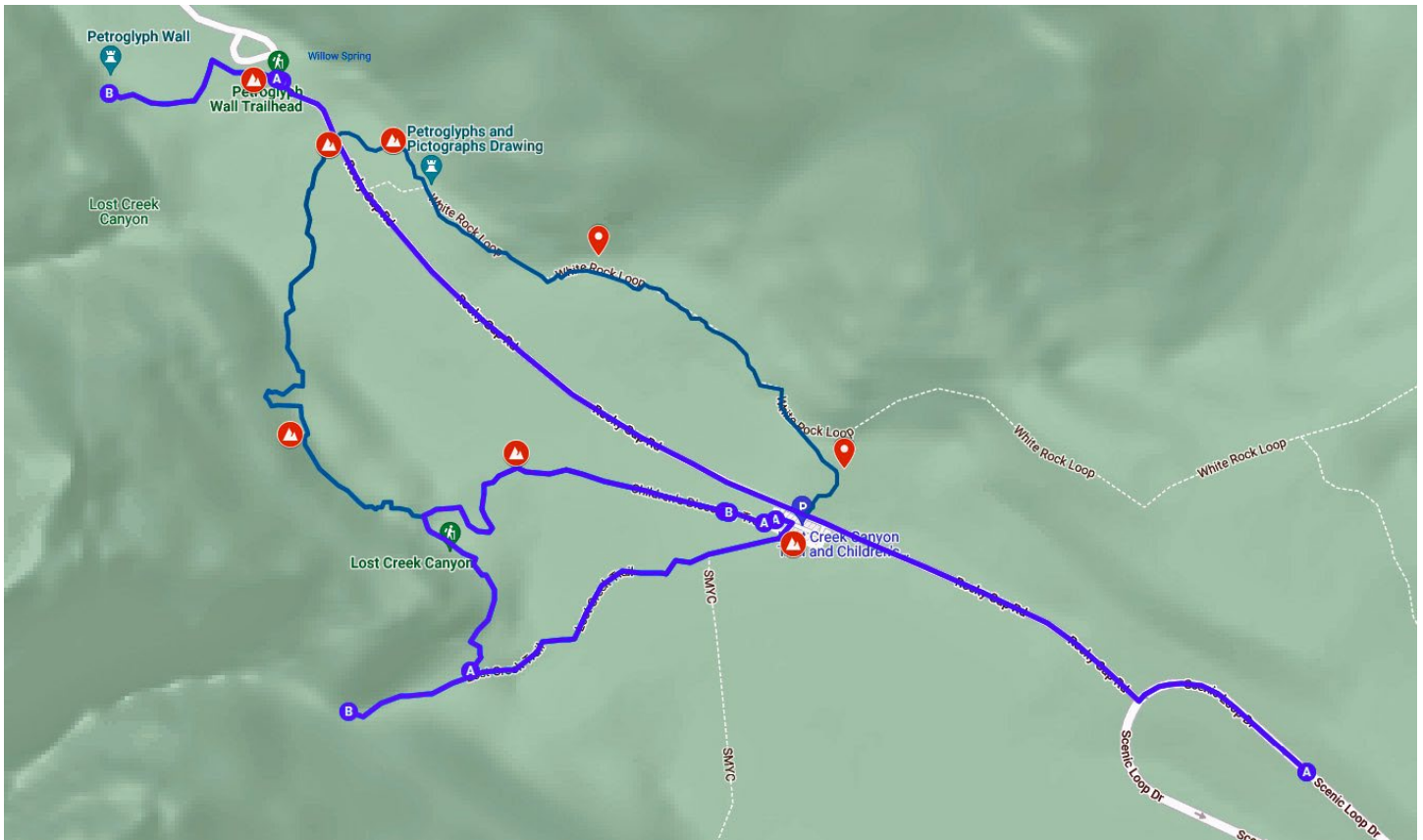
Rocky Gap Road – This is the road that splits off to the right from the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive, leading to the Willow Spring area. Just beyond the picnic area the road continues as a very rugged 4WD road over The Rainbow Mountains and all the way to **[Lovell Canyon](#)** on the West side of the Rainbow Mountains. Along the way there are trailheads to **[North Peak](#)**, and **[Bridge Mountain](#)**, two of the high peaks in the Rainbow Mountain Wilderness along with access to the Northern stretch of the **[Rainbow Mountains Upper Crest Ridgeline](#)**.

All of the above trails and routes can be accessed from the Willow Spring picnic area, making this area perhaps the greatest, most versatile trail hub in all of Red Rock Canyon. The links above will take you to videos and more detailed descriptions of the adventures indicated above on **<https://LasVegasAreaTrails.com>**.

Petroglyph Wall



Petroglyphs on Petroglyph Wall



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

The Petroglyph Wall is approximately 150 feet long and 30 feet tall and is covered with numerous intricate and beautiful petroglyphs. These petroglyphs are thought to have been created by the ancient Puebloan people, who inhabited the region for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. The Puebloan people were skilled artists and created a wide range of intricate and beautiful rock art, including images of animals, people, and geometric patterns. The petroglyphs are believed to have been created for a variety of purposes, including storytelling, religious and spiritual rituals, and communication between different tribes.

Some of the most prominent images on the wall include depictions of bighorn sheep, which were an important food source for the ancient people who lived in the region. Other images include geometric patterns, spirals, and depictions of human figures engaged in various activities, such as hunting, dancing, and farming. The petroglyphs at the Petroglyph Wall are estimated to be between 800 and 2,000 years old.

While the exact meanings and significance of many of the images remain unknown, they provide a fascinating glimpse into the lives and beliefs of the people who created them. However, if you're curious to learn more about the meaning of ancient petroglyphs in Southern Nevada, download and view the 74-page Master of Arts Degree in Archaeology thesis "[Valley of Fire Petroglyphs: A New Perspective On An Old Idea](#)" by Eric Pacl.

Interpretive signs are located throughout the area, providing information about the history and significance of the petroglyphs and offering a deeper understanding of the cultural and spiritual traditions of the people who created them.

The path itself from the Willow Spring Picnic Area to the Petroglyph Wall is only about 200 feet long making this an easy must-see destination.

References:

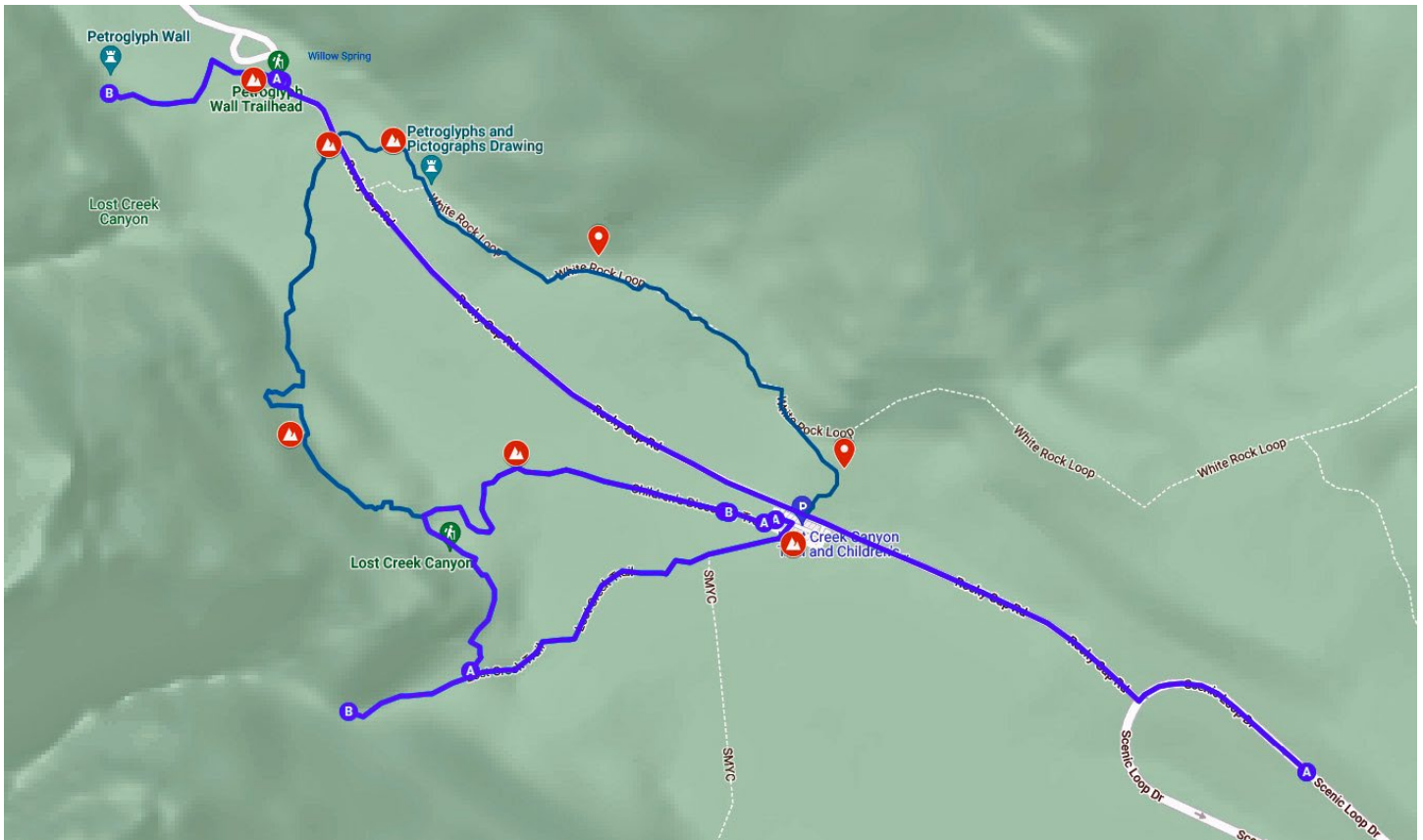
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Willow Spring Loop



Willow Spring Loop Trailhead



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Willow Spring Loop is a moderate 1.5-mile loop trail that offers stunning views of the surrounding desert landscape. The trail starts and ends at the Willow Spring Picnic Area and takes approximately 1-2 hours to complete.

The trail is well-marked and easy to follow, with several interpretive signs along the way that explain the natural history and ecology of the area.

The plant and animal life along the Willow Spring Loop is also diverse and fascinating. The trail passes through a number of different plant communities, ranging from the open desert to the shaded riparian zone near Lost Creek.

Along the trail, you will see a variety of desert vegetation, including Joshua trees, yuccas, and cacti, as well as colorful rock formations and scenic vistas.

One of the highlights of the Willow Spring Loop Trail is Willow Spring itself, which is located approximately halfway along the trail. The spring is a rare source of water in the desert and provides a vital habitat for a variety of

wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep, coyotes, lizards, and a wide variety of bird species.

In addition to its natural beauty, the Willow Spring Loop also has a rich cultural history. The trail passes by a number of historic sites, including a number of petroglyphs and dwelling sites of the Native American peoples who once occupied the area on a seasonal basis. These sites offer a glimpse into the human history of the area and provide a sense of the long and rich cultural heritage of the region.

By exploring the trail and taking the time to appreciate the unique and diverse landscape and history of the area, you can gain a deeper understanding of the complex and fascinating world of the Mojave Desert.

References:

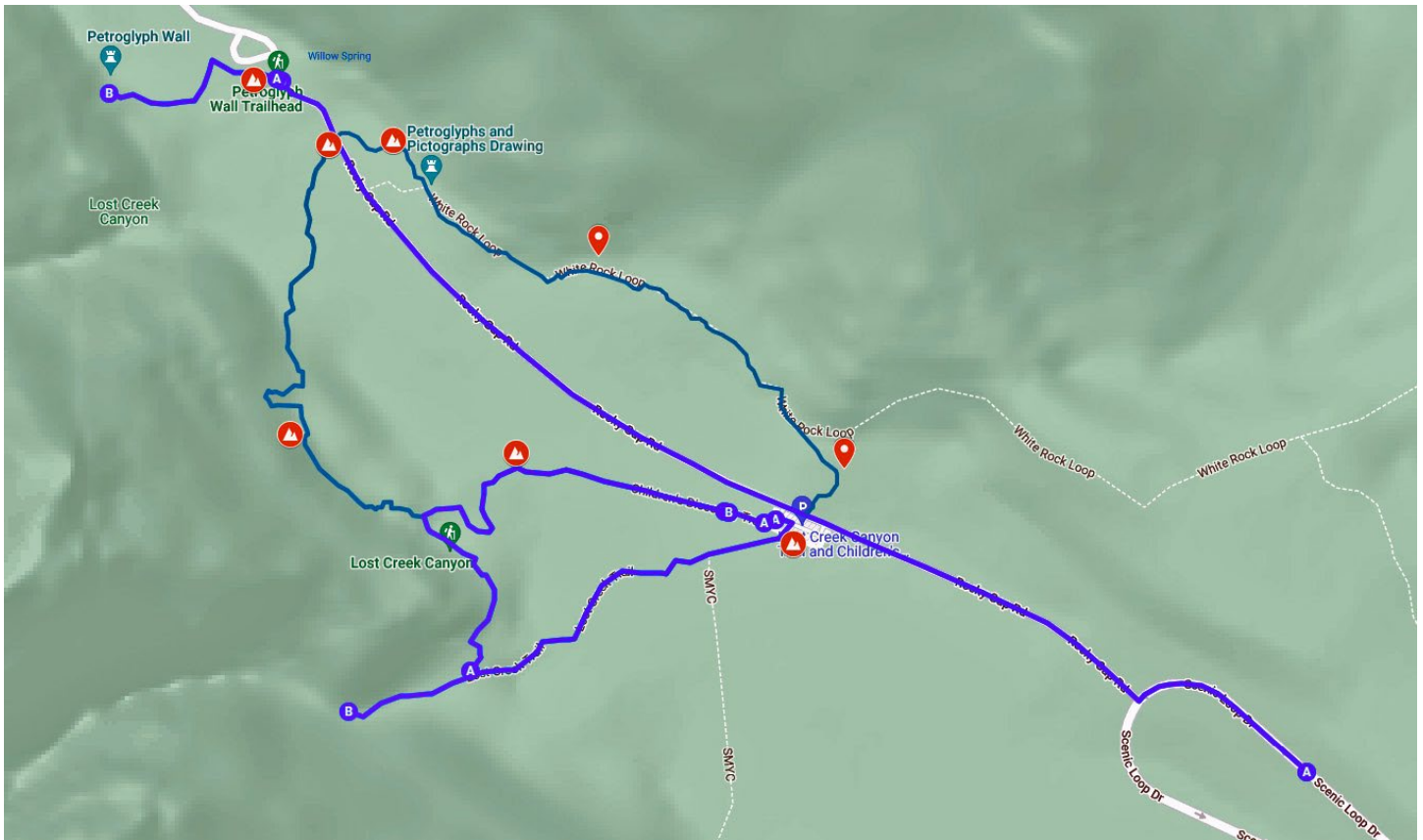
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Lost Creek Canyon



Seasonal Waterfall at the Upper End of Lost Creek Canyon



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Lost Creek Canyon as a Great Training Canyon: If you've never been in one of the canyons at the base of the Rainbow Mountains, Lost Creek Canyon is a great place to experience your first canyon adventure. Many of the other canyons come with serious challenges including thick brush, boulders, ledges, creeks to ford multiple times and difficulty picking out the best route from a number of choices. And, due to the light traffic in the deeper canyons, you are likely to face all these challenges in isolation. Some of the deeper canyons include:

- [Ice Box Canyon](#)
- [Pine Creek Canyon](#)
- [Juniper Canyon](#)
- [Oak Creek Canyon](#)
- [First Creek Canyon](#)

On the other hand, Lost Creek Canyon will give you a very tame sampling of all the above challenges. So, try Lost Creek Canyon out first. Then, graduate to the next level of difficulty: [Ice Box Canyon](#).

The Experience of Lost Creek Canyon: Lost Creek Canyon is a narrow, twisting canyon that winds its way through towering sandstone cliffs, offering a unique and breathtaking hiking experience. The hiking trail in Lost Creek Canyon is a round trip of less than one mile with an elevation gain of 165 feet. Along the way you will need to cross a creek a couple times and select from a few route options. But you're unlikely to get lost, and there are usually other hikers nearby.

The canyon is home to a number of interesting geological features and natural wonders, including a seasonal waterfall and a hidden cave.

Geological Formation: The geological history of Lost Creek Canyon is similar to that of the broader Red Rock Canyon area. The sandstone formations in the canyon were formed during the Jurassic Period, approximately 180 to 140 million years ago, when the area was covered by a shallow sea. Over time, the sand and sediment deposited by the sea hardened into the distinctive red and tan sandstone formations you see today.

The Shaping Activity of Erosion: As with many of the canyons in the area, Lost Creek Canyon has been shaped by millions of years of erosion. Water and wind have worn away the softer layers of sandstone, leaving behind the harder, more resistant rock that makes up the towering cliffs and narrow canyon walls. This ongoing process of erosion is responsible for the unique and striking landscape of the canyon.

The Seasonal Waterfall: One of the most notable features of Lost Creek Canyon is the seasonal waterfall that can be seen in the upper reaches of the canyon. The waterfall is fed by a spring located high above the canyon, and only flows during periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt. During these times, the waterfall cascades down the sandstone cliffs, creating a natural ice-cold shower. I witnessed a brave individual standing beneath the fall, being showered by water that had been mountain ice only a few hours earlier! For most of us, the waterfall is a sight only to view in a spirit of

wonder: A beautiful oasis in the desert, with clear, cool water cascading over red rocks and into a small pool.

The Hidden Cave of Lost Creek Canyon: Another natural wonder in Lost Creek Canyon is the hidden cave, which can be accessed by a short side trail from the main hiking trail. The cave is located high in the canyon wall and is only visible from a certain angle. Inside the cave, you can see the remnants of ancient stalactites and other rock formations, evidence of the slow and ongoing processes of erosion and change that have shaped the canyon over millions of years.

Human History in and around Lost Creek Canyon: In addition to its natural wonders, Lost Creek Canyon also has a rich human history. The canyon was used by Native Americans for thousands of years as a source of water, and evidence of their presence can still be seen.

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Day 2

Calico Tanks

(2.5-mile round trip among sandstone formations dotted with bonsai-like pines leading to two beautiful pools and an incredible view.)

Keystone Thrust Trail

(2.2-mile round trip along a world-famous tectonic fault line along the base of the majestic La Madre Mountain cliffs.)

Total Walking Mileage for Day 2

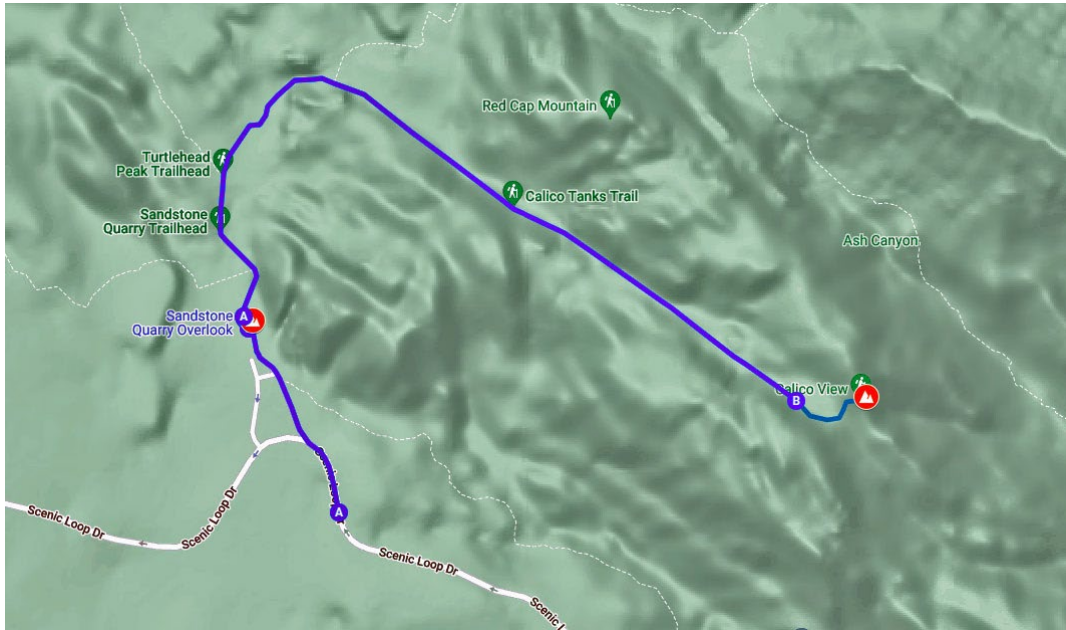
(About 5 miles with a far more dramatic altitude gain than Day 1.)

The goal for Day 2 is to venture deeper into the geology and beauty of Red Rock Canyon, along with adjusting to some more dramatic altitude inclines.

The Calico Tanks



The Upper Calico Tank



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

The Calico Tanks trail is one of the most popular hikes in Red Rock Canyon. It begins at the Sandstone Quarry trailhead area off the Red Rock Scenic Drive. After viewing the historic Sandstone Quarry, you'll cross a large desert wash, then enter an incredibly beautiful canyon which is your passageway to the Calico Tanks and spectacular viewpoint just beyond.

What makes this canyon so beautiful is the red and white sandstone cliffs towering on either side, and for a good part of the hike, the sandstone floor which is your pathway. As if the sandstone cliffs and ledges were not incredible enough, they are dotted with artfully placed bonsai-like pines and other plants. Many of the steeper ascents are made more manageable by decorative sandstone-block stairways.

In the Spring, flowing, cascading streams make the entire scene almost too much to take in. Bring your camera for the many photo opportunities. Near the summit of the canyon the streams become peaceful pools amid the sandstone cliffs and floor of the canyon. The largest pool is the higher pool, but don't stop there. Continue to the spectacular viewpoint just beyond where you'll see a portion of the colorful [Rainbow Mountains](#) in the distance, [Blue Diamond Hill](#), the Las Vegas Valley and Strip and many other scenic points in the distance beyond. Then look down to see an impressive Aztec red rock sandstone canyon below.

Return to the higher Calico Tank to stop for a picnic and rest a bit before heading back down the canyon. On the way down, watch for the impressive [Turtlehead Peak](#). There are a number of variations to this hike, including an extended trip on the adjoining [Rattlesnake Trail to the Calico Basin](#). But you might want to save this for another day.

Suggestions:

- **Best time to see the tanks full:** The Calico Tanks are most likely filled with water in the Spring and early Summer. The area tends to dry out later in the Summer and into the Fall.
- **Avoid High Summer Temperatures:** Summer heat can rise above 110 degrees, so this may not be the best time for your Calico Tanks excursion. You may end up drying out like the tanks!
- **Avoid Rainy Days:** Within 24 hours of a rainstorm, all that sandstone on the canyon floor and the beautiful stairs become like a skating rink with some scary drop-offs, so take note!
- **Spring Crowds:** During the best time of year in the Spring, the trail and the tanks can become a bit like a mob scene. But the experience is well worth navigating the crowd. And...one more point: During peak times of year the Sandstone Quarry Trailhead parking may be full by as early as 9am...even perhaps 8am, leaving no place to park for later arrivals. And remember, the scenic drive is one-way. There are no overflow parking areas, so if you miss the Sandstone Trailhead parking, you've missed the Calico Tanks that day!

Additional Facts

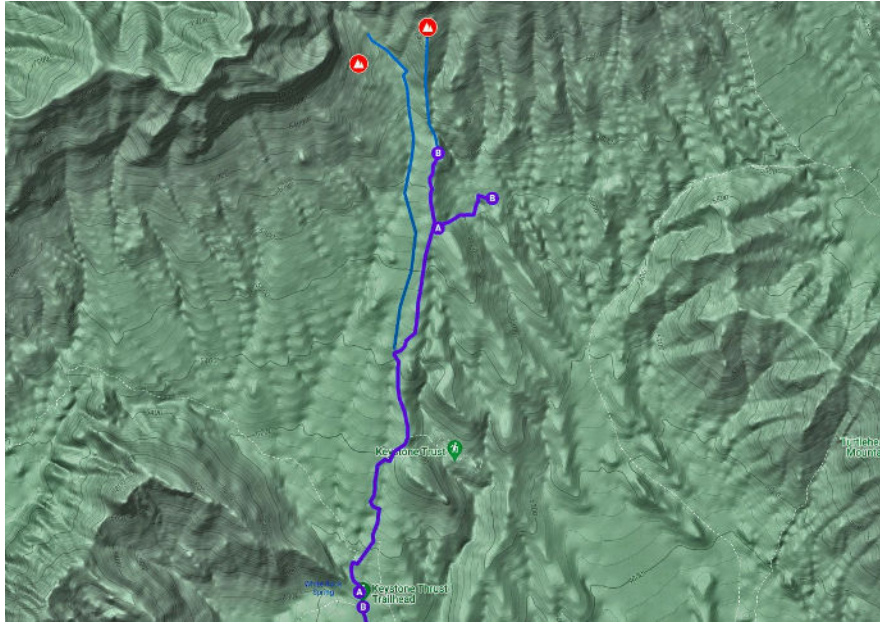
The trail itself is about 2.5 miles round trip and is moderately difficult, with some steep inclines and rocky terrain.

You may encounter a variety of desert wildlife, including lizards, rabbits, and a variety of birds. The trail is particularly popular for birdwatchers, who come to spot birds such as the Red-tailed Hawk and the Peregrine Falcon.

The Keystone Thrust Trail



The Keystone Thrust Trailhead at The White Rock Mountain Parking Area



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Upon entering Red Rock Canyon, you can't miss those towering cliffs straight ahead at the far north end. There's quite a story behind their formation. The story involves a famous earthquake fault, **The Keystone Thrust**. This is your opportunity to stand on that fault line and look around!

The brief "fault tour" hike begins at the White Rock Mountain trailhead area off the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive. For no more than a 2.2-mile round trip you can see the fault up close and stand at the base of those towering cliffs. There are a few healthy inclines involved in the hike, but nothing more difficult than walking up a steep hill. The reward is well worth the effort! The trail winds through a variety of desert habitats, including rocky outcroppings, sandy washes, and groves of Joshua trees.

And there are a couple adventures that will bring you even closer to the cliffs, again without experiencing the difficulty of more than a steep hill – very steep in some cases:

1. This is the easiest way to make it to the summit of those cliffs...a little-known route. I call this [The Keystone Thrust Summit from Willow Spring](#).
2. I call this the beginning of the Southern portion of [The Kyle Canyon Grand Crossing](#).

Don't get me wrong, these two adventures are not for beginners. There are no trails, some basic wilderness navigation skills are involved, there is some light class 3 rock scrambling with minimal exposure, depending on the route you take. You'll want to proceed carefully and only advance to your comfort level.

That said, the official ***Keystone Thrust Trail*** pictured in the image and map above is an entirely different matter, accessible to most hikers.

Additional Background Information on The Keystone Thrust:

The Keystone Thrust is a geological phenomenon that was formed when one layer of rock was thrust up and over another layer of rock. This created a distinct line between the two layers, which can be seen clearly along the Keystone Thrust Trail. That line is a testament to the powerful forces of nature that have shaped the landscape over millions of years. The Keystone Thrust is one of the most impressive geological features in the area. As noted above, The Keystone Thrust is part of a larger fault line that runs through the region and also includes the Southern border of Valley of Fire State Park. The entire fault line extends for over 100 miles from near the Utah-Nevada border to the southwest corner of Nevada.

In addition to the stunning scenery and unique geological formations, the Keystone Thrust Trail is also a great place to spot wildlife. You may see a variety of desert birds, lizards, and small mammals such as jackrabbits and ground squirrels, mostly in the early morning or later evening hours.

Day 3

White Rock Mountain Loop

(5-mile loop beginning at White Rock Mountain Trailhead of Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive)

La Madre Spring

(3-mile round trip beginning at the Willow Spring Picnic Area off the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive)

White Rock Mountain Spring

(Less than a quarter mile from the upper White Rock Mountain parking area off the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive)

Total Mileage for Day 3

(About 8 Miles)

The goal for Day 3 is to become familiar with White Rock Mountain and the Northern end of Red Rock Canyon.

Can you climb White Rock Mountain? Yes, however the route to the summit is not on the main trail maps and there is no established trail. It's more a matter of picking your way along a ridge to the summit. It's recommended that you have rock climbing experience.

Mountain, Hill or Peak?

Is it a *mountain*, a *hill* or a *peak*? Let's get technical. [USGS.gov](https://www.usgs.gov) says there are no official definitions. However, here is the best of my knowledge regarding the terms. The difference lies in 3 factors ([from an article on the Summit Post](#)):

1. **Elevation:** the height of the summit above mean sea level.
2. **Prominence:** the elevation rise of the peak, from the highest connecting saddle of another higher peak.
3. **Isolation:** the distance from a given summit to the nearest higher land or summit.

Basically, if the summit rises more than 1,000ft from its surroundings, it tends to be a *mountain*. Less than 1000ft and it's more likely a *peak* or a

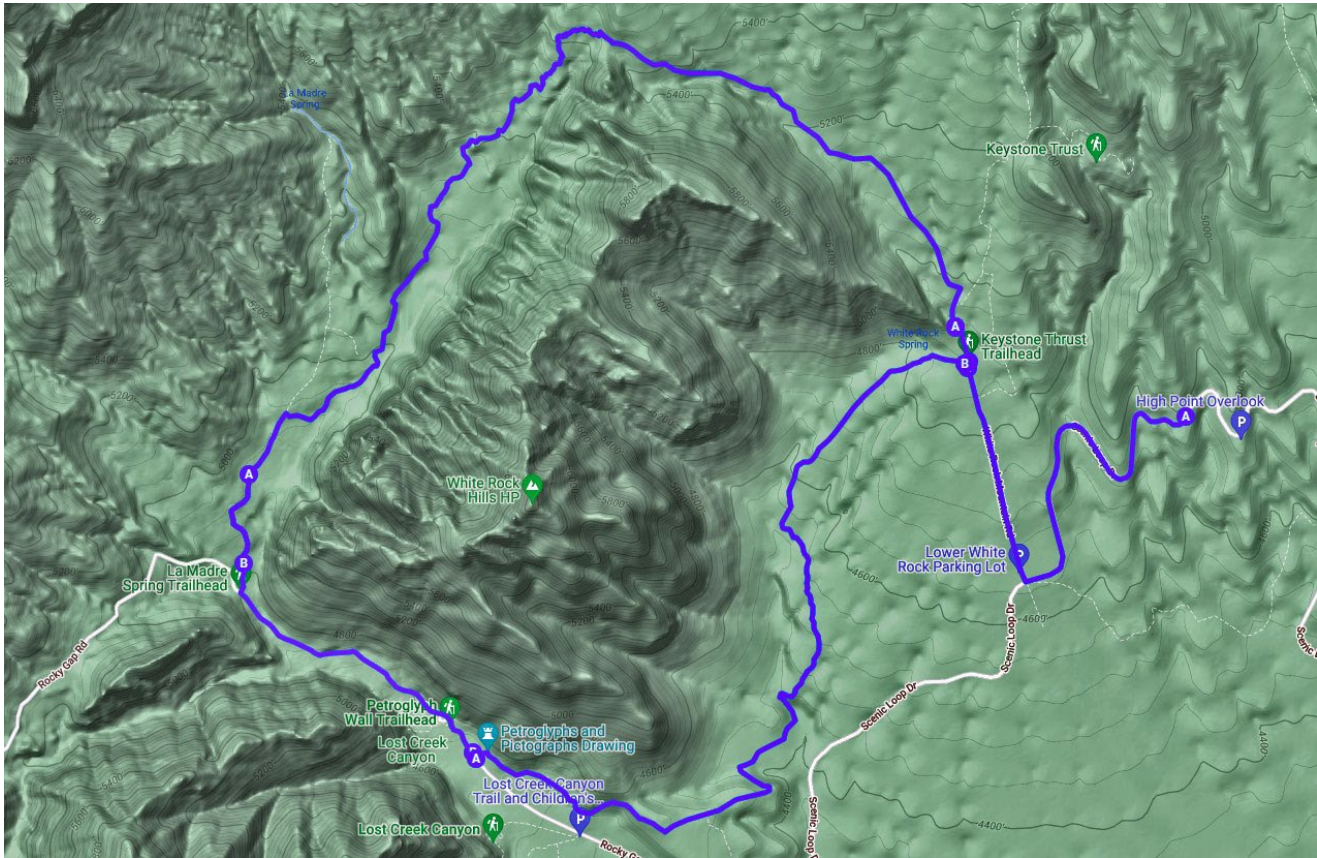
hill. Examples: [Mummy Mountain](#); [Harris Mountain](#); [Charleston Peak](#); [Griffith Peak](#); [Blue Diamond Hill](#).

That said, it may be more difficult to determine the difference between a mountain and a peak based on the 3 factors above and the USGS warning of the obscurity of terms. So, don't get too worried if someone who appears to be a more seasoned hiker or climber corrects you saying you should have referred to that high point over there as a *peak* or *hill* rather than a *mountain*!

White Rock Mountain Loop



North Side of White Rock Mountain Loop at Sunrise



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Talk about a dramatic change in environment, [The White Rock Mountain Loop](#) gets the award for one of the most dramatic changes in a short 5-mile loop trail. Where you begin and end the loop at the White Rock Mountain Trailhead, you're in a stark dry desert environment. However, if you're taking the loop in a counterclockwise direction around White Rock Mountain, within less than a mile you'll find yourself in a beautiful, lush pine forest with a flowing spring.

How is this dramatic climate change possible? The North side of White Rock Mountain is shielded from the sustained direct heat of the sun by towering cliffs on either side. To the North are the cliffs of the La Madre Mountains Wilderness and to the South are the cliffs of White Rock Mountain. The somewhat narrow channel between is fed by La Madre Spring (a brief but memorable detour off the loop if you have a little extra energy). There is additional run-off from the La Madre Mountains cliffs.

If you can be on the North side of the White Rock Mountain Loop as the sun is rising, the summit of White Rock Mountain forms a silhouette, and as the sun tops the mountain, the trees on the summit actually glow in the light!

If you're a runner or hard-core hiker looking for a conditioning route, you'd look hard to find a better 5-mile loop than the White Rock Mountain Loop. The trail is mostly good for running and there are a number of challenging inclines and descents along the way. You might actually meet up with another runner or two or a small group along the way.

Once you pass through the lush pine forest on the North side of White Rock Mountain, you'll find yourself in the Willow Spring Picnic area with all the activities described above in that section.

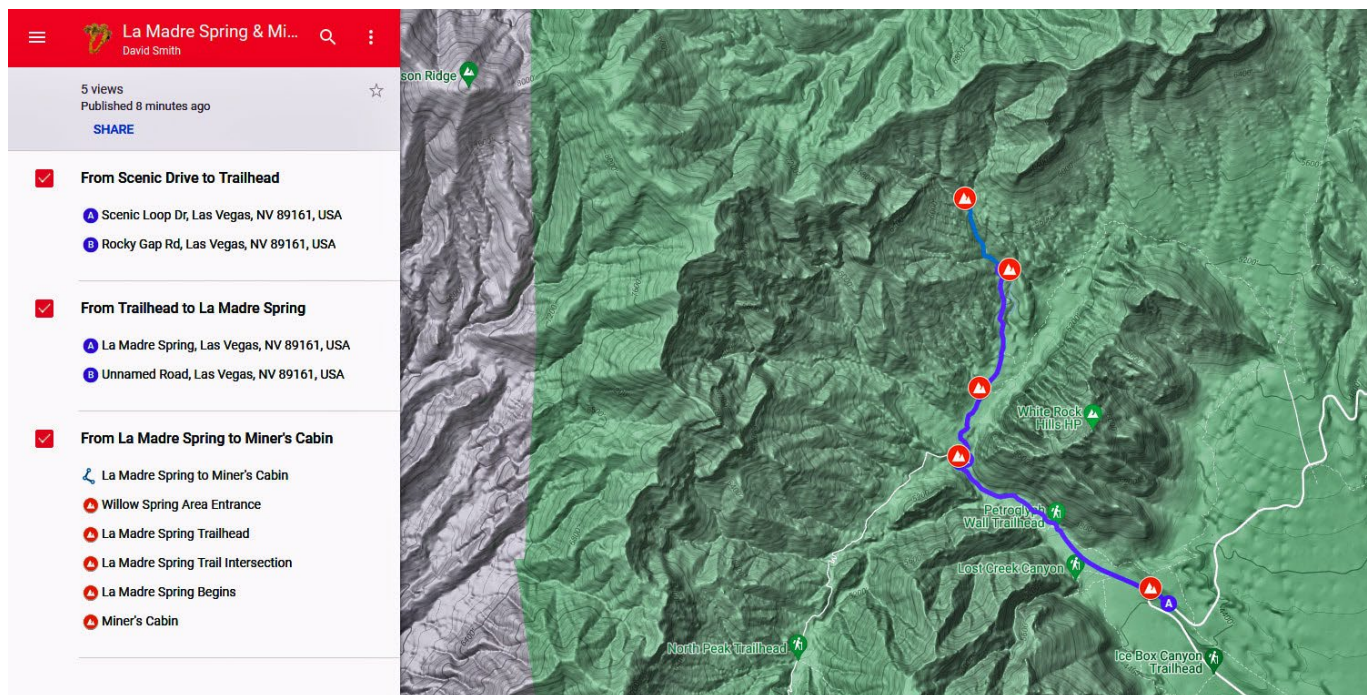
Then, upon rounding the corner to the South side of White Rock Mountain you're in that stark desert environment along with a huge canyon to cross. Do take time to notice the effects of millions of years of erosion and geological activity, including the distinct layers of rock that make up the landscape.

Near the end of the loop is White Rock Spring, only a few hundred feet off the loop trail. The spring is a beautiful oasis with a nice bench. I could bring a book and spend an entire day there!

La Madre Spring & Historic Miner's Cabin



One of Many Waterfalls in The La Madre Spring Canyon



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

La Madre Spring & Historic Miner's Cabin ...

After driving through the arid desert environment of the Red Rock Scenic Loop, one of the last things you're expecting is a mountain spring that runs year-round. For this reason, La Madre Spring is a welcome, peaceful desert oasis.

"La Madre" Spring is named after the Spanish words for "the mother" and is located at the base of the La Madre Mountain range. If you begin the La Madre Spring hike at the Willow Spring Picnic Area, it's about a 6-mile round trip that takes you along the North side of White Rock Mountain and then up a canyon ascending the base of the La Madre Mountains cliffs.

Unlike White Rock Spring, which exists only as a small pool, La Madre Spring is a stream that cascades for over a mile down that canyon at the base of the La Madre Mountain Cliffs. As it tumbles over rocks and ledges, it forms a series of beautiful singing waterfalls. Looking up the canyon, the narrow strip of green vegetation along the spring stands in stark contrast to the arid desert environment above on the canyon walls on either side. That narrow strip of vegetation is rich with diverse wildlife, including a variety of

bird species such as peregrine falcons, canyon wrens, and black-throated sparrows. Watch for a variety of mammals, including mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, and coyotes.

The trail itself is a bit sketchy in places and crosses the stream several times. In places, especially at the time of year the brush is thickest (Fall), it's not clear which side of the stream you need to be on at any given point. However, if you reach a dead-end rocky cliff area, just retrace your way back down to the stream and cross to the other side where you will once again find yourself on the trail. It's a puzzle, but this makes the trail more interesting.

The Miner's Cabin

Stick with the twists and turns along the spring, and you'll be rewarded with arriving at the historic miner's cabin! The cabin is a small one-room structure made of logs, with a dirt floor and a stone fireplace. The cabin was used as a home and shelter by miners who were working the nearby mountains in the late 1800s searching for gold and other minerals. On one hand, it must have been a pretty bleak existence in that one-room structure made of logs, with a dirt floor and a stone fireplace. The roof would have been too low to allow occupants to stand. A few rusty cans remain, giving you the idea of the quality of meals that matched the structure in which they were consumed.

However, as you exit the cabin, pause a moment to take in the spectacular view from the front door. In comparison, the view that confronts us every morning as we emerge from our own front doors is totally underwhelming!



Entrance to Miner's Cabin Above La Madre Spring

Continuing Up the La Madre Mountain Cliffs

If you have a lot of extra energy, water, food and time, the easiest way to reach the summit of the La Madre Mountains cliffs is to continue upward beyond the miner's cabin on a little-known route I call the [The Keystone Thrust Summit from Willow Spring](#).

There is no trail, but if you look closely, you will locate a faint pathway that will appear, disappear and reappear as it winds its way up an opening in the cliffs. Look back often and keep in mind your return trip because on the way back down if you make a wrong turn, you could find yourself at a cliff dead-end requiring you to retrace your way back and forth until you locate the opening you passed through on your original ascent. Things look a lot different when you're heading in the opposite direction on the return trip!

Still, if you can correctly piece together the route, you'll find it possible to ascend and descend the La Madre Mountain cliffs without any major exposure and only one brief class 3 rock scramble at the half-way point. It's an unexpected "walk in the park", though rather steep! And the reward at the summit... you can walk for miles along the summit of the cliffs. The opposite side is far more gradual. There is no more spectacular view in the area. It's like being on a mountain top the entire way!

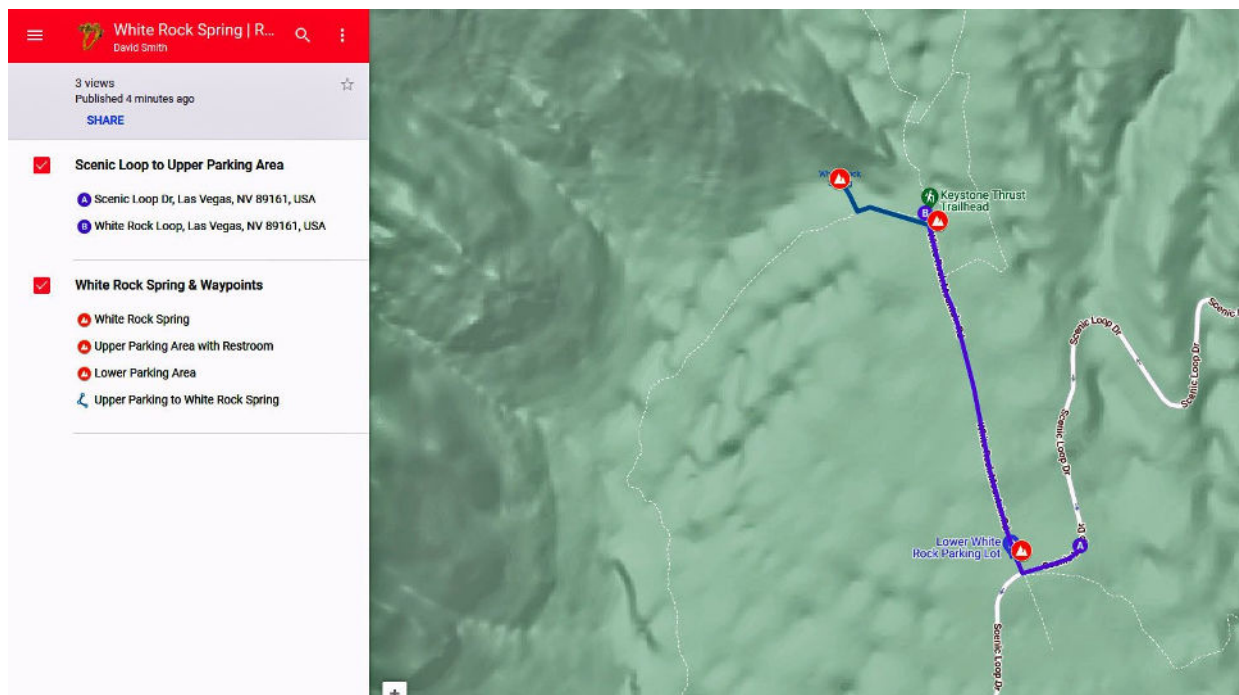


View from Keystone Thrust Summit Back Down to White Rock Mountain

White Rock Spring



Spring Water Flowing Through Pipe into White Rock Spring Pond



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

White Rock Spring is a natural, beautiful oasis in the desert landscape! I've described it more fully above. Be sure to sit on the nice bench and let the peaceful surroundings soak into your soul.

The spring itself is composed of a small pool fed by mountain water flowing through a narrow pipe. But that is enough to create a small, joyful explosion of greenery in the stark arid surroundings on the South side of White Rock Mountain. As the water descends beyond the pool and disappears beneath the ground, the narrow strip of Pines and other vegetation reveals the unseen water flowing below.

The spring is named after the white rocks that surround it, which are made of limestone formed millions of years ago. The area surrounding the spring is rich with diverse wildlife, including a variety of bird species such as canyon wrens, black-chinned hummingbirds, and Gambel's quail. You may also spot a variety of mammals, including mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, and coyotes.

The spring is only about a quarter mile from the upper White Rock Mountain parking area off the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive. Remember, there are two parking areas: Lower (no restrooms) and upper (primitive restroom).

Take the White Rock Mountain Loop in a clockwise direction from the upper parking area and look for a sign for White Rock Spring within less than a quarter mile. Take a right and descend a couple hundred feet to the spring.

Day 4

Turtlehead Peak

(5-mile round trip from the Sandstone Quarry Trailhead area – Very difficult ascent, but nothing technical.)

Pine Creek Canyon Loop & Fire Ecology Trail

(2.5-mile round trip from the Pine Creek Canyon Trailhead area on the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive)

Total Mileage for Day 4

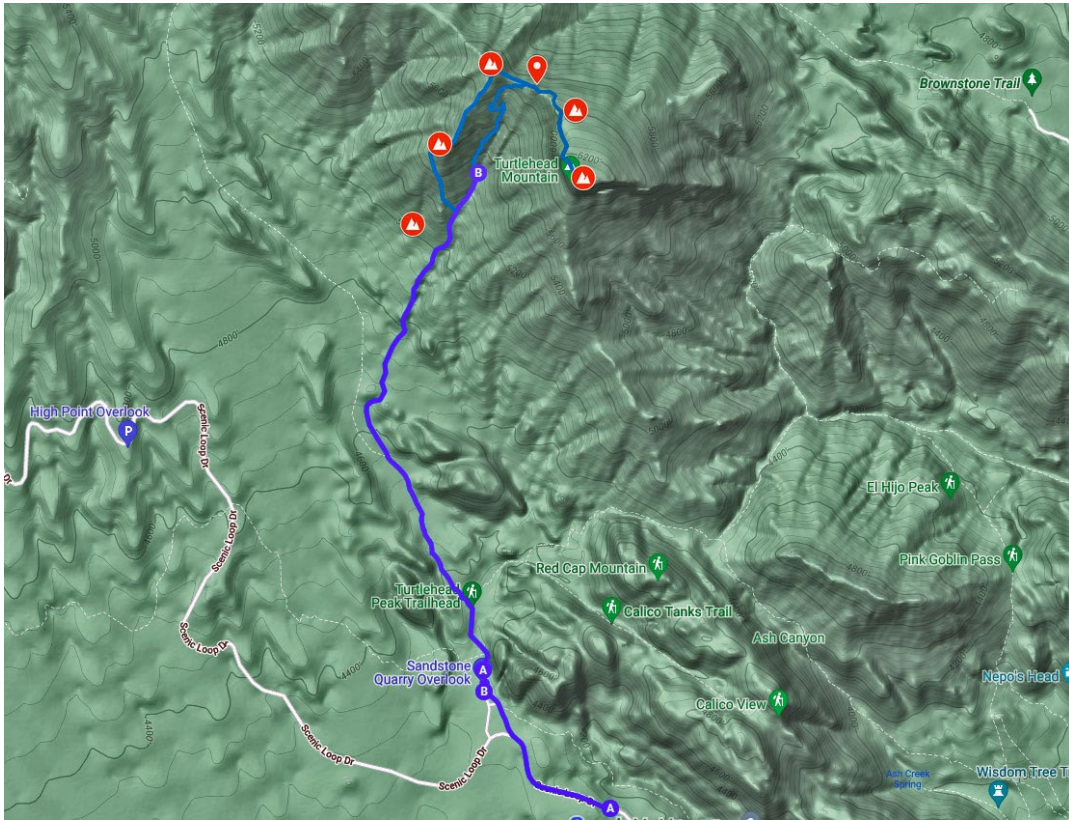
(7.5 Miles)

Goal for Day 4: Ascend to one of the most popular and spectacular 360-degree overlooks of Red Rock Canyon, the Calico Basin and surrounding area. In addition, arrive at a vantage point in Pine Creek Canyon where you can enjoy a picnic and may observe experienced rock climbers scaling cliffs.

Turtlehead Peak



Turtlehead Peak Viewed from North Side of Approach Canyon



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Turtlehead Peak is one of the most popular hikes in Red Rock Canyon. For this reason, if you're not at The Sandstone Quarry Trailhead before 9am, forget it! There's no back-up parking area, and you're back on the one-way 13-mile scenic loop. To add to the congestion of the parking area, it doubles as the trailhead for another close contender for "Most popular Red Rock Canyon hike": [The Calico Tanks](#).

Why is Turtlehead Peak so popular?

1. **The Challenge:** The 5.2-mile round trip to the summit is steep, there's loose rock above drop-offs, so you need to be awake and aware to keep your footing. And, in places you need to watch carefully to pick out the best route among multiple choices. This creates a challenge that makes the summit a true celebration of personal achievement. But there are usually people around, so you're not in isolation, and it's possible for most hikers who are in reasonably good shape to successfully reach the summit.

2. **The Scenery:** At every point during the ascent, you can turn around to see views of Red Rock Canyon and The Rainbow Mountains opening up in ever increasing glory.
3. **Immersion in the desert environment:** Scattered junipers, pines and yucca plants stand out like bonsai plantings in this arid environment. I've even been treated to the scene of a passing flock of rare bighorn sheep along the way. And you're always surrounded by the geology and action of water in shaping the environment.

Turtlehead Peak itself is 6,323ft with a 2,000ft elevation gain from the trailhead. The best time of year for this hike is mid-Fall to mid-Spring. Summer temperatures can easily rise above 110 degrees making this hike potentially dangerous.

The bird's eye view from the summit is a huge part of the reward. From that vantage point you can view parts of at least 7 major wilderness areas:

1. **Red Rock Canyon:** Nearly all points from **White Rock Mountain** on the North end to the **Calico Hills**, to the **visitor center** and beyond to Blue Diamond Mountain. You can even look down to see your car parked at the Sandstone Quarry parking area almost immediately below.
2. **Rainbow Mountain Wilderness:** The entire span of the colorful Rainbow Mountain Wilderness bordering the West side of Red Rock Canyon is visible, all the way to **Potosi Mountain** just beyond at the Southernmost point of the Spring Mountains.
3. **La Madre Mountains Wilderness:** Totally visible are the **Keystone Thrust cliffs** on the North side of Red Rock Canyon in the **La Madre Mountains Wilderness** including **La Madre, El Padre and El Bastardo mountains**.
4. **Mt. Charleston Wilderness: Griffith Peak**, one of the highest peaks in the Mt. Charleston Wilderness is visible to the Northwest.
5. **Lake Mead National Recreation Area:** On a clear day Lake Mead can be seen, along with **Fortification Hill** on the Arizona side and other points.

6. **Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area**: It takes some scrutiny to pick out individual points in Sloan Canyon, but if you're familiar with the area, you can see it to the South.
7. **Muddy Mountains Wilderness**: A little to the left (Northeast) of **Frenchman Mountain** and **Sunrise Mountain** the trained eye can see the Muddy Mountains.

In addition to the above there are numerous wilderness areas beyond, especially to the far East all the way to the Grand Canyon area and all points between.

Then there is the spectacular view of the Las Vegas Valley and world-famous Strip.

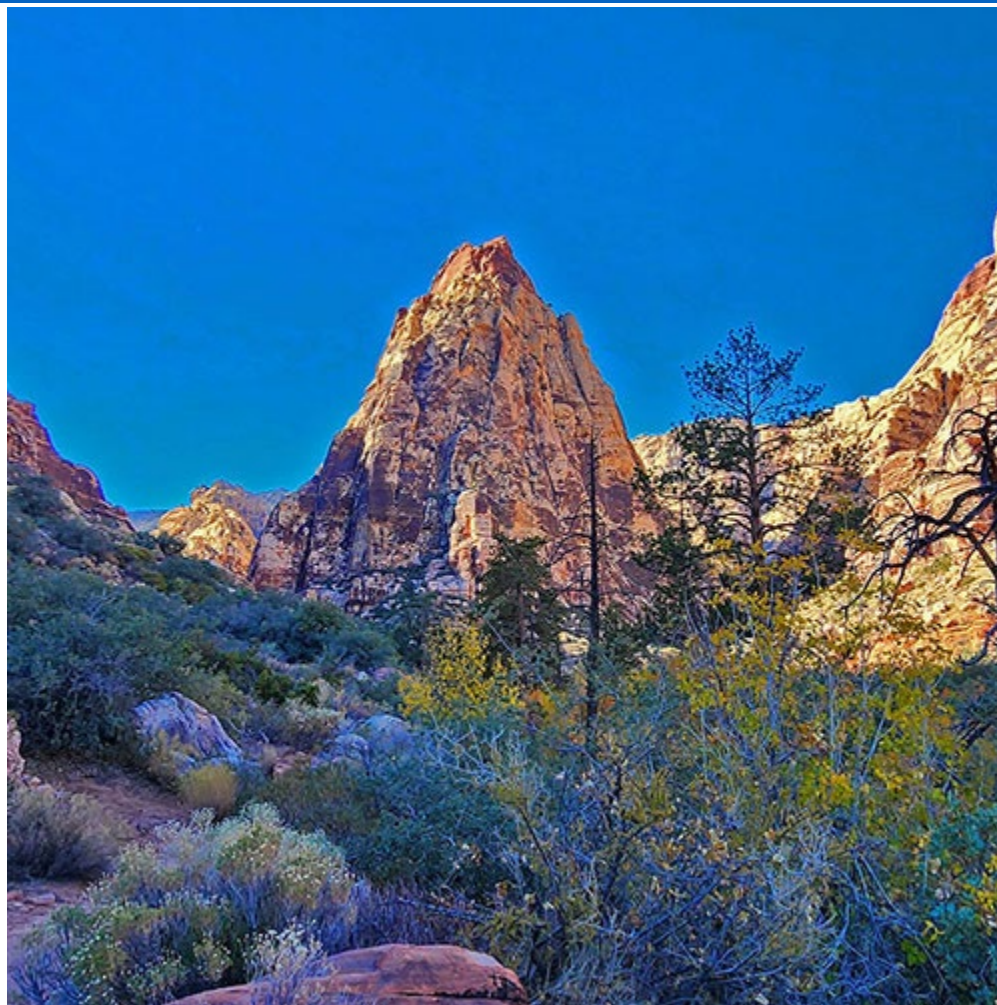
By the way, below you and to the East are the **Calico and Brownstone Basins** with **Damsel Peak (Pincushion Peak)** prominent along with additional, lesser-known **upper Calico Hills** below in the basin.

Alternate Ridge Route: I refer to this as "**Turtlehead Peak with a Twist**". The main trail ascends through a canyon, which has its own stark desert beauty. However, you're in a canyon with high walls on either side and your forward view limited to the hill ahead. In the above link I describe an alternate summit route along the ridgeline above and to the North (left). This route is more challenging, with some light class 3 rock climbing in places, but in terms of scenery, it's like being on a mountaintop the entire way!

Rattlesnakes on the Turtlehead Peak Trail?

Finally, are there rattlesnakes on the Turtlehead Peak trail and alternate ridge route? I'm told they are there, so be on the watch. However, my own experience is that in 6 years of hiking, rock climbing and sometimes wading through tall brush throughout the greater wilderness area within 150 miles of Las Vegas, I've never seen or heard a rattlesnake! Not even once! No mountain lions. I did once lift a rock to reveal a baby scorpion. But you never know, so don't quote me if you have a different experience. Most likely, the wildlife is more afraid of you than you are of it. And they're better at hiding their location than you are at finding or stumbling upon them.

Pine Creek Canyon Loop & Fire Ecology Trail



The Spectacular Mescalito Pyramid Formation Divides the North and South Branches of Pine Creek Canyon



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Pine Creek Canyon Loop offers a huge reward for this very easy 2.5-mile round trip from the trailhead. As you traveled around the scenic drive on your way to this trailhead, you could not fail to note the stark arid desert environment. In Pine Creek Canyon, you're in an entirely different world. The power of water to transform a desert is evident. You're suddenly in a lush pine forest.

And you're following a pleasant creek bed as you walk among the spectacular Jurassic sandstone cliffs of the [Rainbow Mountains](#). In the middle of the canyon there stands the towering Mescalito Pyramid formation dividing Pine Creek Canyon into two branches: North (to the right) and South (to the left). Look back often as you ascend Pine Creek Canyon to see expanding views of Red Rock Canyon.

With cliffs on your right at the base of [Bridge Mountain](#), cliffs on your left at the base of [Juniper Peak](#) and Mescalito Pyramid in the midst of the canyon, this has got to be a premier world-class rock climbing destination. Bring your binoculars to view, on most days, rock climbers scaling the impossibly high, vertical cliffs of Mescalito Pyramid and Bridge Mountain.

You may be tempted to head off-trail further up into the canyon to the North or South. There is a split-off rock climber's approach trail that will take you a way into the North canyon. However, you're soon likely to be stopped by thick brush, boulders and ledges. The South canyon looks a bit more friendly...just a bit. But be prepared to wade in the creek at some point.

You'll also pass a couple trailheads: [The Knoll Trail](#) branching off to the South along the base of the Rainbow Mountains and [Dales Trail](#) branching off to the North.

Back to the Pine Creek Canyon Loop Trail: There are many places along the way to enjoy a family picnic and a dip in the creek amid the beautiful pines and ever-present bird songs.

[The Fire Ecology Trail:](#)

Watch for a small .6-mile loop trail splitting off to the left not far below the Pine Creek Canyon Trailhead as it winds through a landscape of charred trees and ash. This is The Fire Ecology Trail, an interpretive route demonstrating the important role of fire in the ecology of the region, as well as the ways in which fire has shaped the landscape over time. You'll learn about the different types of fires that occur in the area, the conditions that lead to wildfires, and the ways in which plants and animals have adapted to survive in the wake of a fire.

The area traversed by The Fire Ecology Trail is actually a controlled burn created to study the effects of fire in the canyons of The Rainbow Mountains along with the recovery process over the years following a fire.



Interpretive Sign on The Fire Ecology Trail

The best time of year for adventures in Pine Creek Canyon is mid-Fall through mid-Spring. Summer temperatures can easily exceed 110 degrees.

Day 5

Ice Box Canyon

(Beautiful, peaceful forested canyon at the Eastern base of the Rainbow Mountains leading to a spectacular waterfall. This is more challenging than Lost Creek Canyon from Day 1, yet not as challenging as the other Rainbow Mountains Eastern base canyons. It's a great 2nd deep canyon experience.)

Total Mileage Day 6

2.6 Miles Round Trip – Many Obstacles to Navigate

The goal for Day 6 is to expand your Rainbow Mountains Eastern base-canyon navigation skills while recuperating from the more extensive adventure on Day 5.

Ice Box Canyon



Seasonal Waterfall at the Upper End of Ice Box Canyon



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Ice Box Canyon is one of the most popular hikes in Red Rock Canyon, Nevada. If this is your first time navigating one of the canyons at the base of the Rainbow Mountains, Ice Box Canyon is a great first experience. You'll get a good introduction to the brush, boulders, ledges and streams you'll encounter in the other canyons at the base of the Rainbow Mountains. The other canyons are far more challenging.

If you want to ease into navigating the canyons on the Eastern Base of the Rainbow Mountains, here is a progression from least to most difficult:

1. [Lost Creek Canyon](#)
2. [Ice Box Canyon](#)
3. [Juniper Canyon](#)
4. [Oak Creek Canyon](#)
5. [First Creek Canyon](#)

If you take the above canyons from 1 to 5, by the time you successfully navigate #5 you'll have the skills necessary to navigate any canyon at the Eastern base of The Rainbow Mountains!

Ice Box Canyon is a great introduction because the pathway through the canyon to the upper falls is fairly distinct. There are high water level routes on either side above the stream. The ledges you'll encounter are very tame compared to the challenging ledges you'll experience in the other canyons. Yet, Ice Box Canyon will give you a taste of the challenges ahead in the other canyons.

The water level is highest in the early Spring, making the creek sing and the waterfalls at the summit perform at their most spectacular level. In addition, the brush is not quite as thick in the early Spring as it will be later in the Summer and Fall after having spent those months growing.

Get to the trailhead early in the morning if you don't want to spend time waiting for a parking spot. The trailhead parking area fills up fast. I arrived a little before 7am and was the first car in the trailhead parking area. When I left later in the day around 2pm, there was a line of cars waiting for my parking spot!

As you approach Ice Box Canyon you'll immediately notice the lush vegetation that is such a contrast to the stark arid surroundings in the center of Red Rock Canyon. Near the canyon opening you find yourself in a beautiful pine forest.

The trail to the canyon opening is easy enough to navigate, though be careful as you cross over rocks on the trail. The rocks are covered with a thin film of sand which makes them slick. It's very possible to twist an ankle in this area. If it has rained in the previous 24 hours and the rocks are wet, forget it! Every rock and boulder has the surface of an ice-skating rink!

At the opening of the canyon the trail descends to the creek at the canyon base. Now those slick rocks become boulders you'll need to scale in order to proceed. It's possible, even at high water level, to pick out a route that keeps your feet dry. My feet were still dry when I arrived at the falls in the upper canyon and dry when I later emerged from the canyon. It's a little tricky, but wet shoes on those slick rocks can create a hazard.

Pause often to listen to the singing creek as it tumbles over the rocks and boulders. In the background there is the sound of birds adding to the orchestra. It's an incredibly beautiful and peaceful scene. Of course, if you're in the canyon later in the day there may be a lot of people noises...so the earlier the better.

At high water times, watch for dry passageways, mostly to the upper left. However, you'll need to cross over the creek a few times to find the best passageway on the opposite side.

Just before the canyon summit there is a class 3 ascent, but it's not too difficult. Just be careful and take your time.

At the summit of the canyon there is a spectacular double waterfall. This is a good place to stop, unless you're an experienced rock climber. I witnessed a couple hikers successfully scale the cliff to the top of the lower waterfall, then spend a lot of scary moments trying to descend back to the base of the fall. The rock face there was steep, and there was a lot of exposure to a potentially dangerous fall to the lower level. They made it, but it was "touch and go", and at one moment one of the hikers actually began to slide on the steep rock face. Fortunately, the other hiker, who was below, caught him, preventing him from sliding off the edge of the cliff! The rocks were dry that day.

The return trip back down the canyon can be easier and quicker, aided by memory of the route and, in some places, by the fact that the route just seems clearer in the downward direction. One note: Don't miss the ascent back to the main trail on the left side of the creek at the canyon opening. If you miss that, you'll end up spending a lot more time navigating another eighth to a quarter mile of wet rocks, flowing water and brush. However, if you want to experience that additional creek navigation, knock yourself out!

Background Information on Ice Box Canyon

Ice Box Canyon is located in the Western area of Red Rock Canyon, about 17 miles from downtown Las Vegas. It is a narrow slot canyon that is characterized by tall, rocky walls that provide shade and keep the canyon floor cool even on hot summer days. The canyon gets its name from the icy-cold water that flows through it, which comes from melting snow and ice that collects in the higher elevations of the Rainbow Mountains above.

Ice Box Canyon Hiking Trail

The hiking trail through Ice Box Canyon is approximately 2.6 miles round trip, with an elevation gain of about 800 feet. The trail is rated as moderate to difficult, with some steep sections and scrambling required in certain areas. The hike typically takes about 2-3 hours to complete.

Sights Along the Ice Box Canyon Hiking Route

The trailhead is located at the Ice Box Canyon parking lot, and from there, hikers will follow a well-marked trail that leads into the canyon. Along the way, you will pass through a variety of desert landscapes, including yucca, Joshua trees, and various cactus species. As the trail descends into the canyon, the walls close in and the scenery becomes more dramatic, with towering rock formations and lush vegetation. Along the way, you will encounter several small waterfalls and pools, which make for a refreshing break on a hot day.

Day 6

Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails

(An amazing 16-mile round trip experience of both Red Rock Canyon and the Rainbow Mountains that border the West side of the Canyon.)

Alternate Adventure: Keystone Thrust Summit

(Here's your opportunity to climb to the summit of those spectacular cliffs you see on the North end of Red Rock Canyon. This is a very challenging 15-mile round trip.)

Alternate Adventure: Juniper Peak

(Approximate 9-mile round trip to the summit of one of those colorful Jurassic era Rainbow Mountain Peaks. I have not yet completed the final summit approach, but document the route up to that point. I've added this adventure here due to its popularity.)

Total Mileage Day 5

16-miles RT for The Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails

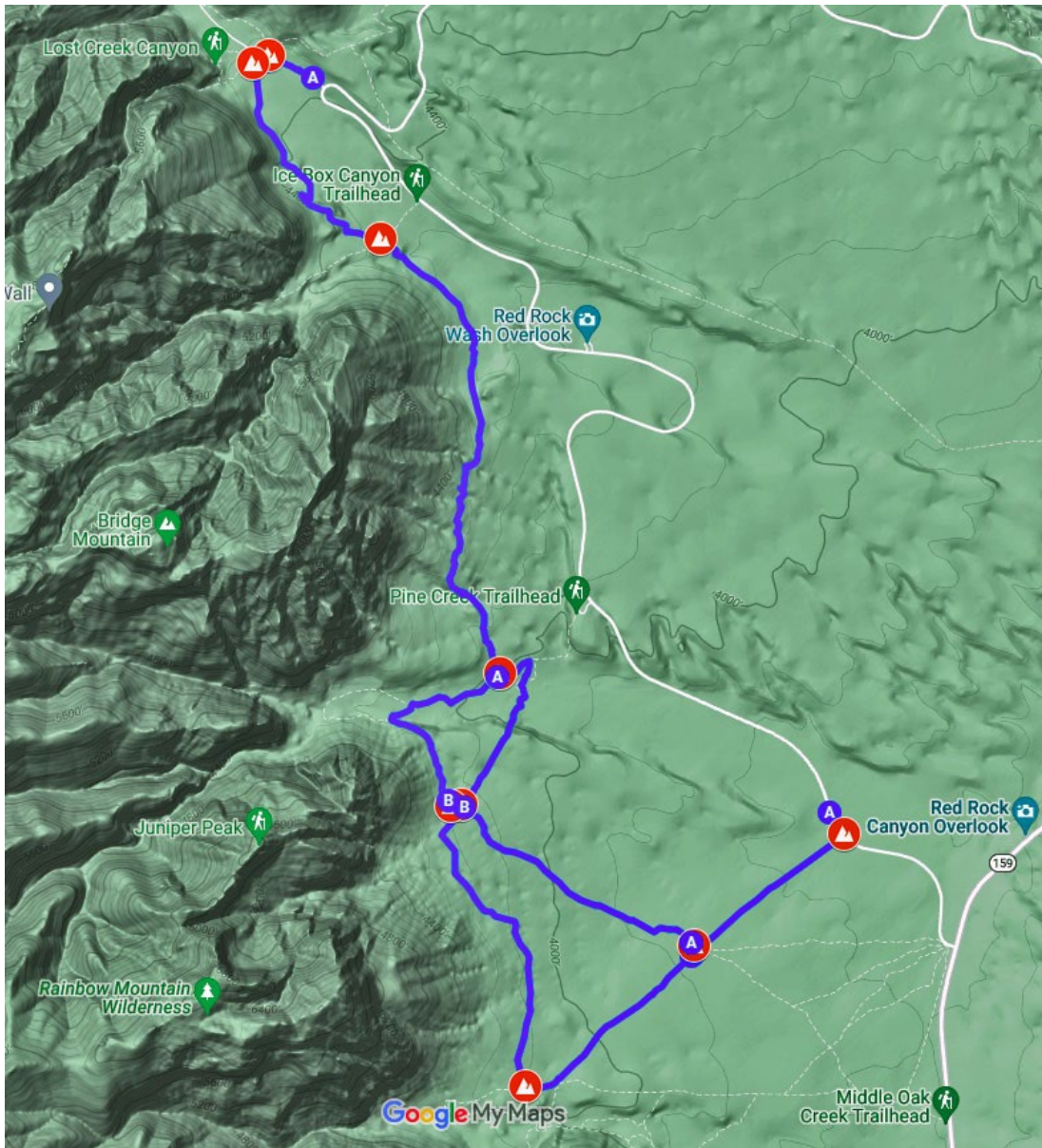
Alternate: 15-miles for the Keystone Thrust Summit or 9-miles for Juniper Peak

The goal for Day 5 is to experience a light level of rock climbing (class 3), some wilderness navigation challenges and greater expansive views of Red Rock Canyon and much of the surrounding wilderness in Southern Nevada. You'll also push your endurance limit further than you have in the previous days.

Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails



Artistically Constructed Stairway on The SMYC Trail



(Click image above to view interactive map. Requires internet connection.)

From South to North, The Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails include:

- **The Arnight Trail** A 1.2-mile short-cut split off of the Knoll Trail to the Oak Creek Canyon Trail.
- **The Knoll Trail** 1.9-mile trail with an approximate 50ft elevation gain running between Pine Creek Canyon and Oak Creek Canyon further South.
- **Dales Trail** 2.2-mile trail with an approximate 400ft elevation gain running between Ice Box Canyon and Pine Creek Canyon to the South

- [**The SMYC Trail**](#) 2-mile trail with an approximate 200ft elevation gain running between the lower Willow Spring parking area and Ice Box Canyon

Taken together, these trails offer the experience of hiking along the Eastern base of the Rainbow Mountains all the way between Oak Creek Canyon on the Southern end to the Willow Spring area on the Northern end. It's an amazing experience of both Red Rock Canyon and the Rainbow Mountains that border the West side of the Canyon.

I like to take these trails from South to North because most of the ascent is encountered in the beginning and there's more downhill on the return trip when you're tired. Follow the links above for videos, maps and details on The Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails.

As you begin heading North on The Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails, you want to choose either The Arnight Trail or The Knoll Trail as your initial trail. Both are described below along with some factors to help you in making your selection. A great way to take in both trails is to head North beginning with The Knoll Trail and on the return trip take The Arnight Trail. The trail connections may be easier to discover and navigate using this strategy.

Arnight Trail

The 1.2-mile Arnight Trail and the 1.9-mile Knoll Trail (longer and closer to the base of The Rainbow Mountains) in Red Rock Canyon are the Southernmost of four trails making up a route along the Eastern Baseline of the Rainbow Mountains from Oak Creek Canyon to Willow Spring.

The Arnight Trail runs between The Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead and Juniper Canyon where it connects with The Knoll Trail, which continues North to Pine Creek Canyon.

The Southern Arnight Trailhead is located at The Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead, the last stop on The Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive. The Arnight Trail creates a diagonal shortcut to an intersection with The Knoll Trail at Juniper Canyon. For this reason, it is the most direct approach route for adventurers seeking to summit Juniper Peak or to scale the Eastern cliffs of

Rainbow Mountain and the Southern "Brownstone" cliffs of Juniper Peak. In addition, The Arnight Trail offers a nice downhill stretch back to the trailhead after any of the above adventures.

Juniper Peak is perhaps the most popular climbing destination in the Rainbow Mountains. For this reason, it's important to get to the Arnight trailhead early if you're looking to find a parking space and to avoid the congestion on the route to the summit.

Knoll Trail

The 1.9-mile Knoll Trail runs between the opening of Oak Creek Canyon and Pine Creek Canyon.

The Southern portion of The Knoll Trail is seldom traveled since there are more direct routes to its destination points. For example, if you're heading to Juniper Peak from the Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead, the Arnight Trail will get you there faster. If you're heading into Oak Creek Canyon from the Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead, you do not need to take The Knoll Trail. In fact, The Knoll Southern Trailhead is about a mile from The Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive and a half mile from The Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead. It's out of the way from every access point on The Scenic Drive. For this reason, you must specifically want to be on the Southern stretch of the Knoll Trail to end up there.

And, that remoteness is actually a benefit. The Southern stretch of The Knoll Trail is peaceful and offers a close-up immersion along the base of Rainbow Mountain to the Juniper Canyon area. And there are spectacular views of Mt. Wilson, Rainbow Mountain, Juniper Peak and the entire Red Rock Canyon and surroundings throughout the entire span of the Southern stretch of The Knoll Trail.

The Knoll Trail from Juniper Canyon to Pine Creek Canyon is more heavily traveled due to the passage of hikers and rock climbers originating from both the Oak Creek Canyon and Pine Creek Canyon Trailheads.

Dale's Trail

Dales Trail is the second Northernmost trail of the four Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails. It runs between Pine Creek Canyon and Ice Box Canyon along the Eastern base of Bridge Mountain. Of the four trails Dales Trail is the longest at 2.2 miles and is the only trail featuring resting benches (there are 2, but one is falling apart!).

Some interesting features of Dales Trail are:

1. There are five canyon crossings along the way, the first being rather substantial.
2. The first canyon crossing North of Pine Creek Canyon features a premier bouldering location for rock climbers. Boulderers will just need to take a left at the base of this canyon and head upward along a faint trail to the base of the Bridge Mountain cliffs where there is a series of great bouldering ledges.
3. It appears there might be a way up the Eastern side of Bridge Mountain (closer to Ice Box Canyon) that could take you to that hidden forest you see from a distance when looking at Bridge Mountain.
4. On this second Saturday in April after an uncommonly wet Winter the creek running out of Ice Box Canyon was running pretty strong, creating a peaceful sound with I recorded and placed on the "Water in the Desert" page of LasVegasAreaTrails.com
<https://lasvegasareatrails.com/water-in-the-desert/>
5. Along the way there are spectacular views of Red Rock Canyon including Blue Diamond Hill, an opening into The Las Vegas Valley, The Calico Hills, Turtlehead Peak, the cliffs of the La Madre Mountains, White Rock Mountain and the Willow Spring area in Red Rock Canyon.
6. Finally, by taking this trail from South to North it's pretty much downhill on the return trip, and the canyon crossings are much less dramatic. This is because the North side of the Canyon crossings is much higher than the South side, and when you're heading South on the return trip this creates a lot more downhill terrain!

The terrain on the Dales Trail seems more arid than on the Arnight, Knoll and SMYC trails. And, note that shortly before crossing the creek at Ice Box Canyon Dales Trail momentarily disappears. Take the middle of three

brush-choked options to reach the creek, and you'll soon see a sign that will reassure you that you're still on Dales Trail!

SMYC Trail

This beautiful 2-mile trail is the Northernmost of a series of trails running along the Eastern base of the Rainbow Mountains in Red Rock Canyon between Ice Box Canyon and Willow Spring.

The SMYC Trail is relatively easy and gradual with only two high points to ascend. There are artistic red rock stairs to assist in the ascent. Both high points provide a grand overlook view of Red Rock Canyon.

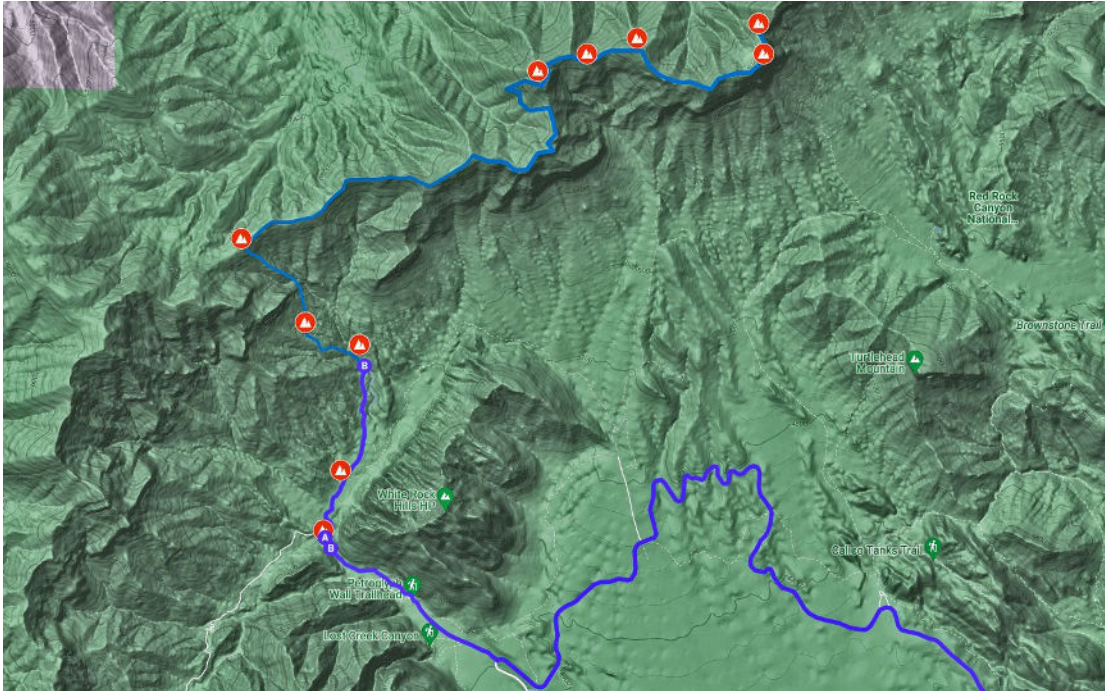
SMYC stands for "Spring Mountains Youth Camp", which is a long-term correctional facility for young men. The men of the SMYC partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to create this very nice trail.

If you started along The Rainbow Mountains Eastern Baseline Trails from The Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead, once you arrive at Willow Spring, your return trip is mostly downhill! If you began heading North on The Knoll Trail you might end your return hike on The Arnicht Trail.

Alternate Adventure: Keystone Thrust Summit



White Rock Mountain Viewed from The Keystone Thrust Summit Cliffs



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

This Keystone Thrust Summit route is the easiest route to the summit of those spectacular La Madre Mountains cliffs you see on the Northern boundary of Red Rock Canyon. It is entirely class 1 and 2 climbing (no hands necessary to maintain stability). There is one brief 20-30ft class 3 rock climb halfway up the cliffs, but it is not too difficult.

Additional benefits of this approach to the Keystone Thrust Summit:

1. Great parking area at Willow Spring picnic area.
2. Start out on very good trails.
3. Ascend through the La Madre Spring area and enjoy the [sights and sounds of year-round flowing water](#).
4. Visit an historic miner's cabin
5. Touch 3 major wilderness areas: [Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area](#), [Rainbow Mountain Wilderness](#) and [La Madre Mountains Wilderness](#)
6. Experience spectacular views of Kyle Canyon, Red Rock Canyon and the Las Vegas Valley

Major reference points visible from the summit cliffs include:

- [White Rock Mountain](#)
- [Bridge Mountain](#)
- [Northern Rainbow Mountains Upper Crest Ridgeline](#)
- [Blue Diamond Hill](#)
- [Calico Hills](#)
- [Turtlehead Peak](#)
- **Las Vegas Valley and The Strip**
- **El Bastardo Mountain**
- [El Padre Mountain](#)
- [Angel Peak](#)
- [Mummy Mountain](#)
- [Fletcher Peak](#)
- [Harris Mountain](#)
- [Griffith Peak](#)

There's a lot more. This was the short list!

Beginning at the Willow Spring upper parking area, start by hiking to the Miner's Cabin at the summit of La Madre Spring as you did on Day 3.

Once you've reached the Miner's Cabin look up toward the cliffs above to scope out the route to the summit. You'll see a canyon below to your right (East): Not a good choice. You'll also see a ridge above to your left (Northwest): Bingo! This ridge is your route to the summit of the cliffs.

As you leave the Miner's Cabin, at first you will not see a trail. Look around, continue in the logical direction up the ridge and a faint trail will appear. Focus on staying toward the center of the ridge. The center is evident because there is a drop-off to either side. The ridge is wide so there's no real exposure to a fall, and as you stay on the logical ridge center route, that faint trail will appear, disappear and reappear all the way to the cliff line summit.

About mid-way to the summit there is a brief, challenging class 3 rock climb over a rocky bluff. However, the entire route with the exception of that stretch is entirely class 2.

Quick Climbing Level Definitions:

- **Class 1** is relatively level.
- **Class 2** can be steep, but not enough to require use of both hands and feet.
- **Class 3** is a rock scramble requiring the use of both hands and feet.
- **Class 4 and above** are best done with experience and technical rock-climbing gear.

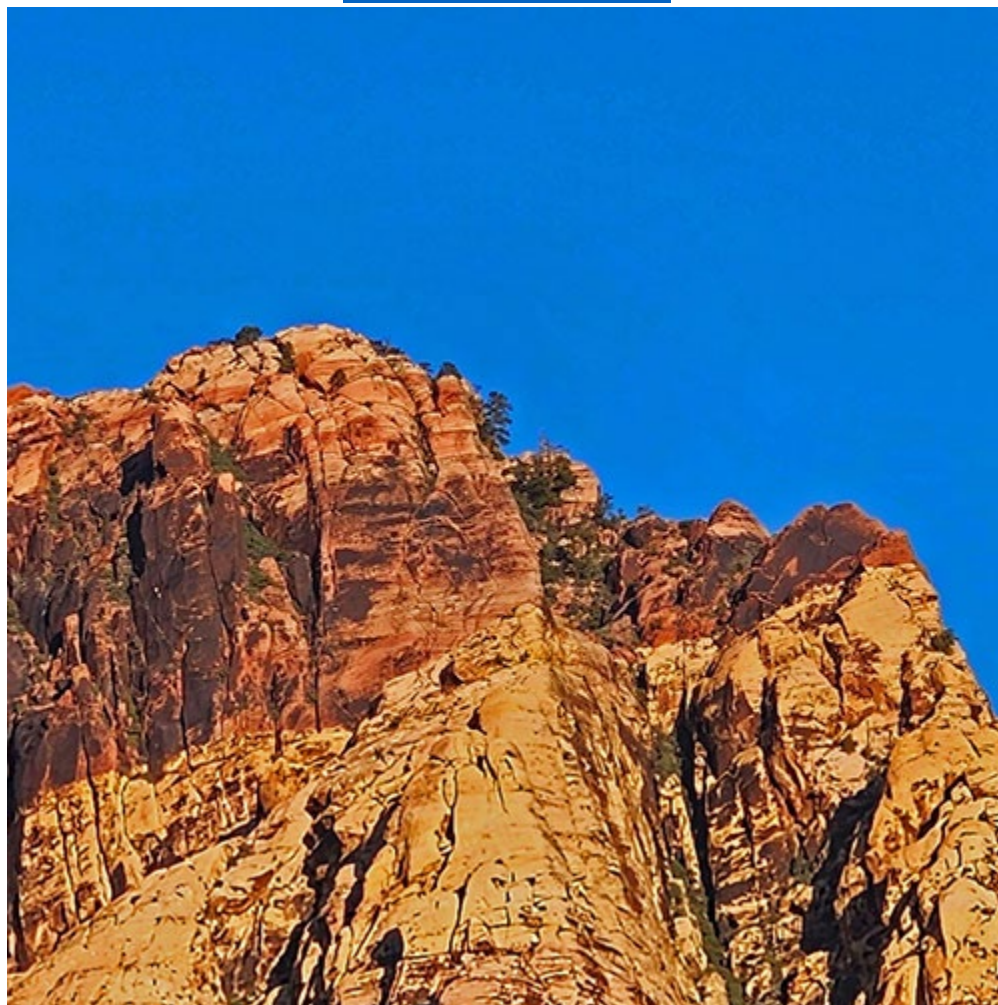
The point is that this route will take you to the summit of the La Madre Mountains cliffs with only one brief class 3 scramble!

Above the class 3 bluff, it's just a matter of winding your way to the cliff line summit. There are abundant cairns to mark the way. One caution: Always be aware of the return trip route. Look back often to see how the return route will look. Otherwise, you risk getting to the cliff line summit and forgetting how to descend back to the Miner's Cabin. That stretch above the rocky bluff can be confusing on the way down and a wrong turn could lead you to a drop-off. If it's after sunset, you could be in big trouble!

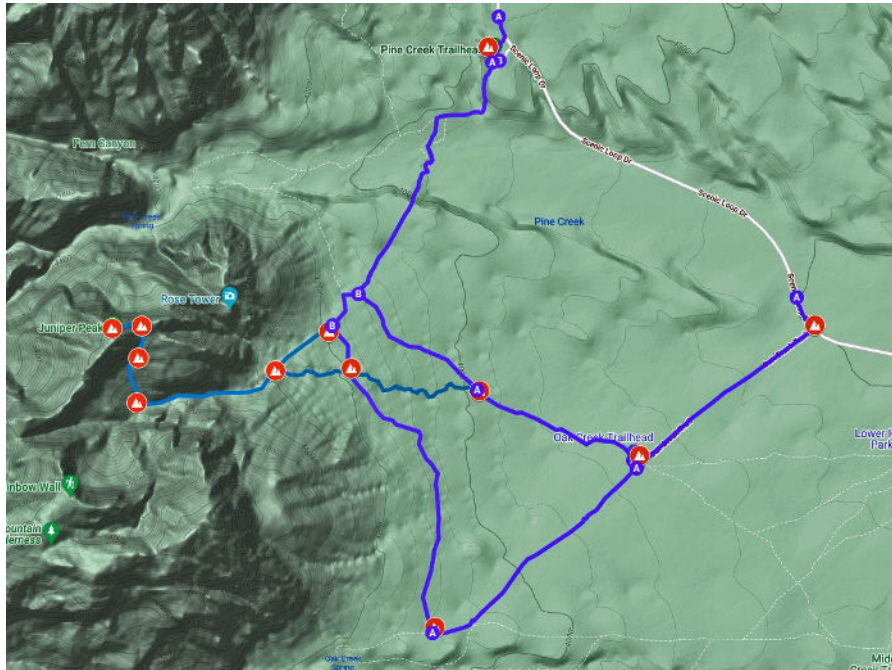
Once on the summit of the La Madre Mountains cliffs, it's very easy to continue along the cliff line a few miles to the East. The terrain on the other side of the cliffs is much more gradual. Along the way you'll see Red Rock Canyon and Turtlehead Peak far below. Further on you'll find yourself looking down on Calico Basin. It's like being on a mountain top the entire way. Just be careful to note your descent point (the place where you first summited the cliff line. This descent point is perhaps the only non-technical way back to the base of the cliffs. It's amazing how, on the way back along the cliff line, that descent point can disappear! Note it well!

It is recommended that you engage in this adventure with someone who has previously covered this route, or that you have advanced wilderness navigation skills.

Juniper Peak



Juniper Peak Final Summit Approach



[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map from Pine Creek Trailhead.\)](#)

Juniper Peak is the most popular summit destination in the Rainbow Mountains due to the convenient location of trailheads right on The Redrock Canyon Scenic Drive. Another reason for Juniper Peak's popularity is that hikers can make the summit without the need for advanced rock-climbing skills and gear. The entire route to Juniper Peak does not exceed the "class 3" skill level, meaning that while you will need to use both hands and feet to scramble over obstacles during the ascent and descent, you do not need ropes and there is no hugely, scary significant exposure to a fall, depending on the route you take (i.e. the route outlined here).

However, if you have never encountered canyon navigation on the Eastern base of the Rainbow Mountains or a similar terrain, and if you have never scrambled on Jurassic sandstone, you might first ease yourself into those challenges. For example, scramble in the Calico Hills for practice and navigate Lost Creek Canyon and Ice Box Canyon before your encounter with Juniper Canyon.

Due to the complexity of this route, I'm dividing it into 2 stages:

1. Locating and Navigating Juniper Canyon
2. Juniper Peak Base Cliffs and the Final Summit Approach

Note: As of the writing of this article I am still exploring and documenting the final brief distance from the upper edge of The Brownstone Cliffs to Juniper Peak Summit.

Locating and Navigating [Juniper Canyon](#)



View Down Juniper Canyon from Canyon Summit

During this stage of your Juniper Peak adventure, you will navigate through Juniper Canyon from its base at the Arnright and Knoll Trails to the upper end of the canyon where you're at the final summit approach to Juniper Peak. This stretch includes navigating the brush, boulders, ledges and multiple route choices you will face in Juniper Canyon.

Juniper Canyon can be confusing, challenging and fun. Many first-time Juniper Peak attempts have ended up short of the summit due to the challenges in Juniper Canyon. But in this video we not only document the route through Juniper Canyon, but at the upper end of the canyon we observe climbers taking the next stretch near the final approach to the summit.

There is no Juniper Canyon Trailhead. The two trailhead approaches to Juniper Canyon are:

1. **The Arnight Trail from the Oak Creek Canyon Trailhead.** Learn more about that trail here: <https://lasvegasareatrails.com/arnight-trail-red-rock-canyon-nevada/>
2. **The Knoll Trail from the Pine Creek Canyon Trailhead.** Learn more about that trail here: <https://lasvegasareatrails.com/knoll-trail-red-rock-canyon-nevada/>

I prefer **The Arnight Trail** as it seems more direct, the return trip when you're tired is downhill all the way and the trailhead tends to be less crowded than The Pine Creek Canyon Trailhead. However, both trailheads will get you to Juniper Canyon.

Taking The Arnight Trail from Oak Creek Canyon, when you get to Juniper Canyon, watch for an unmarked trail splitting off to the left and heading up Juniper Canyon (There is an Arnight Trail sign at that junction). Continue up lower Juniper Canyon on this good trail until you arrive at a huge boulder I refer to as "*The Juniper Canyon Landmark Boulder*". Squeeze under the left side of this boulder and cross to the right (North) side of Juniper Canyon where you will connect with a trail marked by cairns continuing up the North side of the canyon.

You're heading toward the narrow opening up the canyon between Rainbow Mountain to the left (South) and Juniper Peak to the right (North). As you near that opening, the cairn-marked trail will descend into the base of

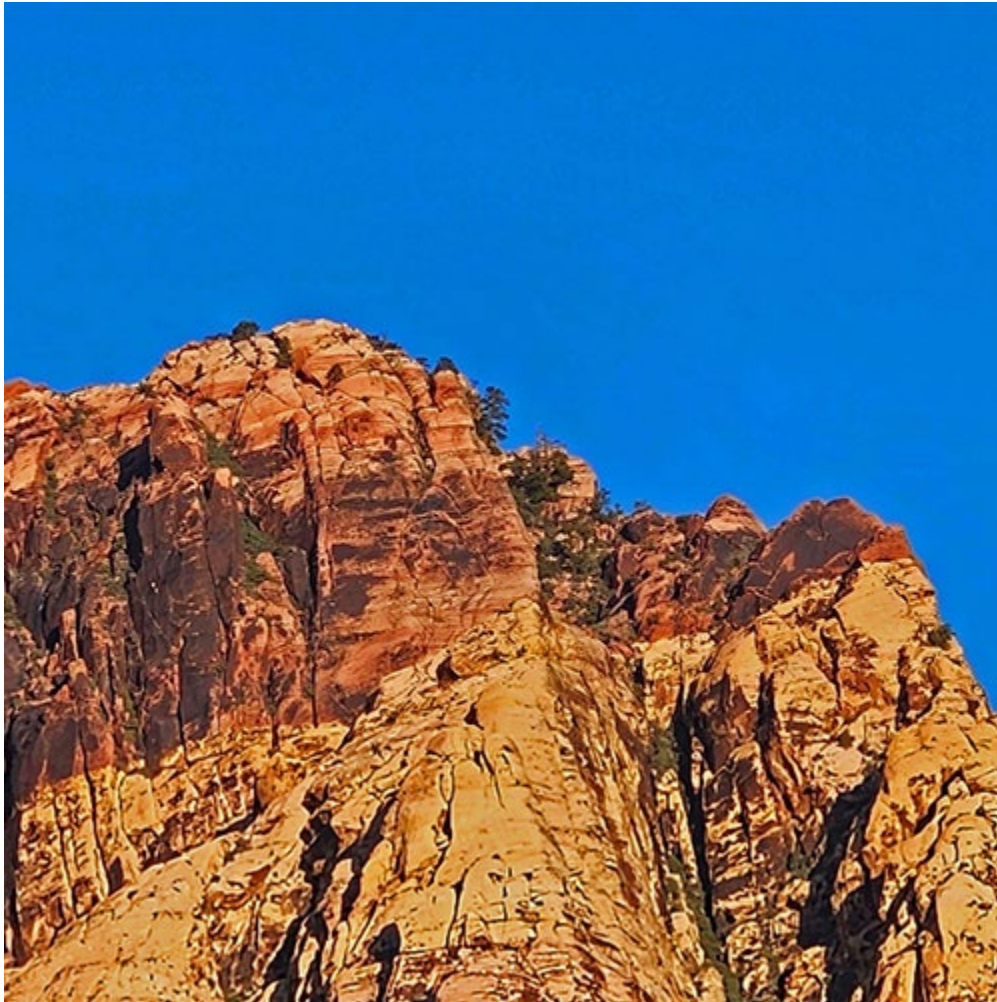
Juniper Canyon where you will begin to navigate thick brush, boulders and ledges. It's challenging. Take your time, be careful and follow the cairns.

About a thousand feet through the canyon opening take a red rock bypass trail up over a ridge on the South (left) side of the canyon. Descend that ridge and cross over to the North side where you will ascend a boulder field. This video ends near the top of the boulder field.

The final summit approach involves ascending a white sandstone slope at the top of the boulder field, taking a right and hugging the base of the high red rock cliffs below Juniper Peak (The Brownstone Wall Cliffs), ascending to a "V" at the upper end of The Brownstone Wall, taking a left and continuing to Juniper Peak Summit. I'll document that final summit approach in another video soon.

The slide show, video and detailed description for [Juniper Canyon on Las Vegas Area Trails](#) will take you through Juniper Canyon step-by-step in more detail.

Juniper Peak Final Summit Approach



Final Summit Approach to Juniper Peak

Juniper Peak Fast Facts

The hike to Juniper Peak is a strenuous 7.5-mile round trip that climbs over 3,000 feet in elevation.

The peak is composed of frozen sand dunes from the Jurassic Era. As you navigate Juniper Canyon, you'll be scrambling over Jurassic Era sand dune boulders that have previously fallen from the cliffs above.

As you approach the peak, the trail becomes steeper and more challenging, with some exposed sections and scrambling required to reach the summit.

However, Juniper Peak may be summited without advanced rock-climbing experience or gear...the entire route is "class 3". It is recommended that

you wear rock climbing shoes designed to maintain traction on the type of surface and incline you will encounter during the final summit approach.

It is also recommended that you engage in your adventure through Juniper Canyon and on to Juniper Peak with someone who has covered this route previously.

Previously I described the route to Juniper Canyon summit and the white sandstone ledge. We ended at the top of the red boulder field just below the sandstone ledge.

One stage of the journey remains: The Final left turn at the upper edge of The Brownstone Cliff base for the summit approach.

I can get you to that final left turn for the summit approach, though I'm still in the process of completing the final summit approach. The summit approach stretch will need to be an upcoming revision.

[Brownstone Cliff Base Stretch](#)

The route along the edge of the sandstone ledge seemed a little too exposed to me, so I decided to search out a less exposed route higher up along the base of Brownstone Wall. Follow the link above for the video and more detailed description.

Brownstone Wall is that long cliff to the left above the sandstone ledge.



Pictured: Sandstone Ledge with Brownstone Wall to the Left

Once you reach the sandstone ledge, you're confronted with a boulder. The traditional exposed route heads around the right side of the boulder along a pretty substantial drop-off. So, I experimented with an alternate route that ascends to the left of the boulder and on up along the base of Brownstone Wall. There is little exposure, though the ascent is steep. There are some use trails, possibly approach routes for rock climbers who intend to scale the Brownstone Wall cliffs. The good news is that if you ascend toward Brownstone Wall and angle more along the base of those cliffs, you'll meet up with the main Juniper Peak summit route without facing any significant exposure along the way. Signs you've reached the summit route are the re-appearance of cairns marking the way.

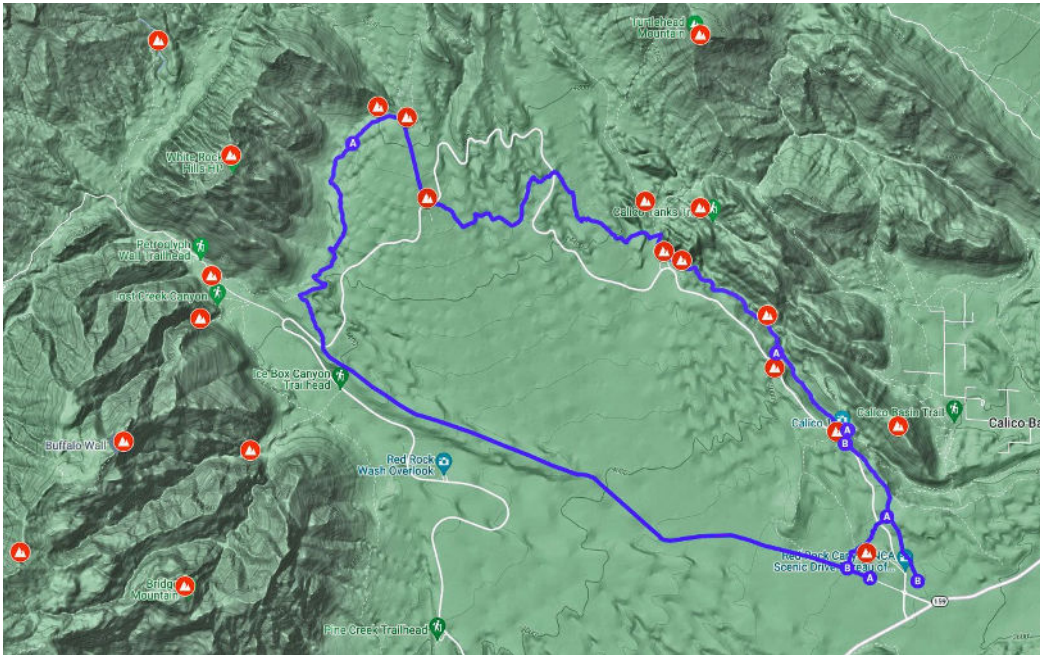
Day 7

Grand Circle Loop ...

The goal for Day 7 is to review and pull together all your experiences in Red Rock Canyon during Days 1-6, transforming them into unforgettable memories.

Grand Circle Loop





[\(Click this link or map image above for interactive map.\)](#)

Now that you've spent six days exploring Red Rock Canyon, you're ready for this spectacular final Day 7.

The Grand Circle Loop is an 11.3-mile trail that makes a grand circle of Red Rock Canyon. Like the Scenic Drive, the Loop is a great summary overview of Red Rock Canyon. Only, this time, you're taking it at the slower pace of a walk, up close and personal. On the loop you will pass by the locations of your adventures during the prior six days, recalling the sights and experiences of those adventures. In the process, your awareness of Red Rock Canyon will expand from a series of individual adventures to an interconnected wilderness. In addition, you'll experience new sights and points of interest.

The Grand Circle Loop begins at the far left (West) end of the Visitor Center's employee parking area. You'd miss the trailhead if you didn't know it was there. Assuming you're taking the Loop in a clockwise direction, your first experience is a series of drawings lining the first couple hundred feet of the trail displaying. Each drawing is an image of one of the most common plants or animals to be found in Red Rock Canyon. By this time, you may recognize a few!

Up to this point, all your adventures have been around the edges of the canyon. Now, you'll pass into the massive wash that cuts through the center of Red Rock Canyon. Up close, the wash is far more impressive than at a distance as you view 30-40ft vertical walls of sediment carved by successive raging floods.

As the Loop turns and ascends North toward White Rock Mountain, you're passing along the base of the colorful Rainbow Mountains. You're likely to recognize some of the canyon openings you visited earlier: Pine Creek Canyon, and further North, Ice Box Canyon. From a distance you can see further up each canyon and beyond that to the Rainbow Mountains Upper Crest Ridgeline. These larger views were not visible during your earlier adventures in the canyons.

Now, you've arrived at the Southern base of White Rock Mountain near the Willow Spring trailhead area where you experienced Lost Creek Canyon, the Petroglyph Wall and the trail to La Madre Springs and the Miner's Cabin.

Remember your adventure around the White Rock Mountain Loop? Now you'll take that loop along the Southern base of White Rock Mountain to the Keystone Thrust trailhead, another recent adventure. After this, continue all the way to the Sandstone Quarry trailhead area where you embarked on the Calico Tanks and Turtlehead Peak adventures.

Now come a unique, new discovery. From the Sandstone Quarry, you'll circle around to the South along the upper base of the Calico Hills. From this close-up perspective the brilliant Aztec red coloring of the towering Jurassic sandstone cliffs dwarfs everything at their base, including you! As you descend Red Rock Canyon heading South, you're in for an unexpected surprise. About mid-way along the base of the Calico Hills there is a huge boulder covered with ancient petroglyphs! This boulder does not appear on maps, so you need to be on the Loop trail to discover it. Suddenly, there it is!



Petroglyph Boulder at the Base of The Calico Hills on The Grand Circle Loop



Petroglyph Boulder at the Base of The Calico Hills on The Grand Circle Loop

Beyond the petroglyph boulder, ascend for a bit into the lower Calico Hills, then descend to the area below the Calico I parking area. You may have unknowingly stumbled upon this part of the Loop trail on your first day playing around in the Calico Hills. Another memory!

Finally, ascend to the Calico I parking area, cross the Scenic Drive and head for the Visitor Center and the conclusion of The Grand Circle Loop. If days 1-6 were the class, The Grand Circle Loop is the final exam!

Conclusion

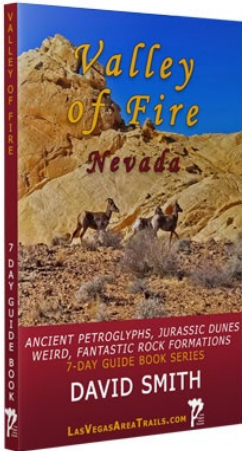
Red Rock Canyon in Nevada is a compact major wilderness area filled with incredible adventures able to engage you for years, let alone for the seven days outlined in this book. And here's the amazing thing: You can stand in one place within Red Rock Canyon and, from that vantage point, view most of your wilderness adventures! Where else among the great wilderness areas on earth is THAT possible?

If you are planning a visit to Red Rock Canyon and want to preserve your memories, there are several ways to do so:

1. **Take Photos:** Bring your camera or smartphone to capture the beauty of the park. Take photos of the stunning rock formations, colorful canyons, and unique flora and fauna.
2. **Keep a Journal:** Take notes of your experiences in Red Rock Canyon. Write down your thoughts and feelings about the natural surroundings, and record any special moments or encounters with wildlife.
3. **Collect Souvenirs:** Bring home a piece of the park with you by collecting souvenirs like postcards, t-shirts, or other memorabilia from the visitor center or Red Rock Canyon store (not from the canyon's natural areas!).
4. **Create a Scrapbook:** Use your photos, journal entries, and souvenirs to create a scrapbook that documents your trip to Red Rock Canyon. Include captions and descriptions to help you remember the details.
5. **Share your Memories:** Share your photos and stories with family and friends, and post them on social media. This will not only help you remember your trip, but also inspire others to visit Red Rock Canyon and experience its beauty.

Remember that preserving your memories is not just about capturing the sights and sounds of Red Rock Canyon, but also about cherishing the experience and the memories you created there for years to come. Enjoy!

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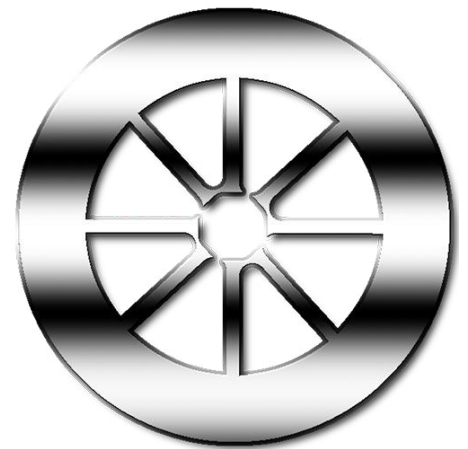
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About the Author

David Smith and Las Vegas Area Trails Overview

David Smith is the creator of LasVegasAreaTrails.com, his *Journalistic Legacy Website* started in 2018.

At least 3 unique, probably unrepeatable, factors have come together to bring about LasVegasAreaTrails.com:

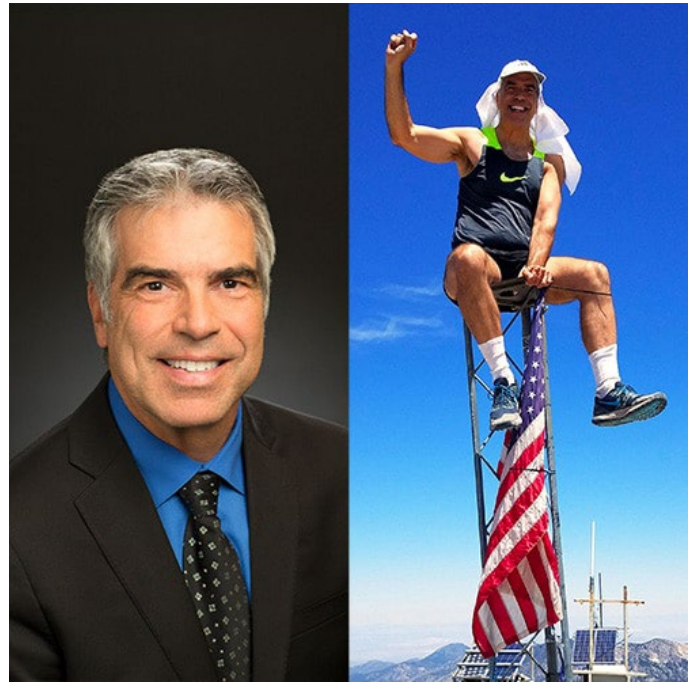
1. David Smith's life-long love and experience of the wilderness.
2. David's profession as a web designer, writer, speaker, business consultant and internet marketer.
3. Home base of Las Vegas, surrounded by wilderness areas.

David Smith's Life-Long Love and Experience of the Wilderness

When David Smith was a child, his parents took him regularly to wilderness areas in the Pacific Northwestern U.S. and once yearly to Death Valley, California during Spring Break. David used the Death Valley opportunity to wander the wilderness around Furnace Creek Ranch and later extended his wanderings to much longer excursions. Some of these childhood wanderings are documented in the "[Death Valley in a Day](#)" page of this website. Curiously, to this day a typical adventure on Las Vegas Area Trails is basically the same type of exploration and discovery David experienced in Death Valley as a child.

Highschool Years

During these years David spent entire days cycling from Portland to the Columbia Gorge.



College & Graduate School Years

David attended The University of Evansville in Indiana and took advantage of those years to explore the terrain in the Midwest. At one point he rode a bicycle from Indiana to Oregon, passing through the wilderness areas of Yellowstone Park and Northern Idaho along the way.

David received his M-Div degree at Fuller Theological Seminary in Southern California and during those years explored the Angeles Crest Mountains and the terrain of Southern California by bicycle and trail running.

Adult Years in Oregon and Connecticut

During these years David more extensively explored the Pacific Northwest and began a one-day weekly wilderness exploration practice. Later, when he moved to Connecticut, he began to take his one-day weekly exploration routine into the wilderness areas of Connecticut (There are a few great wilderness areas in that small state!) and the Hudson Valley of New York with Minnewaska being a favorite.

During this time David began a business as web designer, marketing writer and business consultant with the hidden goal of one day using these skills to document the wilderness...somewhere!

2016 Move to Las Vegas

In 2016 David moved to Las Vegas. He immediately noticed the city was surrounded by mountains! And there were numerous State and National Parks within a day's drive...Death Valley only 90 minutes away! So began David's weekly Las Vegas area wilderness wanderings.

In 2018 everything came together as David launched LasVegasAreaTrails.com with the first weekly adventure being...you guessed it...[Death Valley in a Day](#)! He then continued doing what he'd done for years: Conducting one-day weekly excursions into the wilderness. Only, the new element was documenting and preserving these excursions on the web.