



A Complete Guide to Hiking to Havasupai Falls

How Do I Get a Permit for Havasupai?

Permits are released for the entire year on February 1 at 8 am Arizona time. There are about 100 permits available per day and they sell out quickly.

To increase your chances of getting one, make sure you create an account on the [Havasupai Reservations](#) page in advance. You'll need to be flexible with your dates, but if you find some available you can purchase up to 12 permits with each account.

Starting in 2024, the tourism office began offering a [presale option](#) where visitors can have early access to purchase tickets for an additional \$15 per permit.

If you are unable to secure a permit on opening day, there is a cancellations page where you can purchase permits that have been previously canceled. The page is located on your dashboard when you sign into your Havasupai Reservations account and is updated every day at 8 am Arizona time.

The current cost of a campground permit is \$455 per person for 3 nights. If you would like to stay in the lodge, each room sleeps up to four people and the cost is \$2,277 per room for 3 nights.

When is the Best Time to Go to Havasupai?

The best time to go to Havasupai depends on what you are looking for. If you want to swim in the waterfalls, then the summer months are the best time to go.

The water stays a chilly 70 degrees year-round so you'll want the air temperature to be warm enough that it is refreshing to swim and you won't freeze when you get out of the water.

The disadvantage of the summer months is that it is extremely hot when you are hiking and sleeping. Monsoon season also occurs from mid-June through September and flash flooding is a serious risk in the canyon.

If you aren't planning to swim, then the cooler months are a great time to visit. It is comfortable hiking weather, but it can get quite cold at night so you'll need to pack extra layers and warm sleeping gear which will add extra weight to your backpack.

Keep in mind that permits are available from February 1st through November 30th. The campground is closed to visitors in December and January.

I recommend going from May to the beginning of June or late September to early October. It is warm enough to swim, but not too hot to sleep or hike, as long as you plan to hike in the early morning hours.

How Do I Check In and Pick Up the Permits?

The person who purchases the permits for the group is the designated trip leader and is the only person who needs to check in for the group.

The trip leader must bring an ID when checking in and they will be responsible for filling out an entrance form and picking up the wristbands and bag tags for the whole group. Each person in your group will need to wear a wristband the entire time in the canyon.

Be sure to read ALL the information on the "Campground Terms & Conditions" link located on the dashboard of your Havasupai Reservations account prior to your trip.

Each member of your party is required to create an account, read the terms & conditions, and then print out and bring the Account Information Page.

Each person is also required to bring a printout of your campground reservation and a photo ID (unless you are a minor and do not have an ID). You will also need to print out the campground reservation confirmation code to display on the dashboard of your car.

There is a Havasupai Reservation boundary checkpoint about 5 miles from the trailhead where you will need to show the required paperwork. Security sometimes monitors the campgrounds and waterfalls as well to check for wristbands.

To pick up the permits, the trip leader will need to check in at the Grand Canyon Caverns Inn between Peach Springs and Seligman on Route 66 at Mile Marker 115. There is a sign at the front desk of the motel directing you where to go.

You can check in anytime between 8 am to 5 pm the day before your hike, or between 8 am and noon on the day of your hike.

I highly recommend picking them up the day before so that you can start hiking early in the morning. You are not permitted to sleep in your car at the trailhead, so I would book a room at the [Grand Canyon Caverns Inn](#) where the permit check-in is located.

The rooms are basic, but it is the closest motel to the trailhead which is still about 1 hour and 15 minutes away. The rooms sell out fast so I would book in advance. If they are sold out, there are a few different [hotel options](#) in Seligman an additional 25 minutes away.

If you have time, the [Grand Canyon Caverns](#) are actually a fascinating roadside attraction. These are the largest dry caverns in America and you can take an elevator 21 stories below ground to tour the caverns.

You can even dine in a subterranean restaurant at the Cavern Grotto, or sleep in an underground cave in the Cavern Suite. The cavern tours, restaurant, and suite are currently closed for repair work, check the site for updates.

The only dining option around is the Caverns Grill. We ordered burgers and they were surprisingly delicious and the portion sizes were generous. The grill closes at 8 pm so be sure to fuel up before your big hike the next morning!

Where is the Havasupai Trailhead located?

The Havasupai Trail begins at the Hualapai Hilltop Trailhead. It is about 1 hour and 15 minutes from the Grand Canyon Caverns Inn where check-in takes place.

The trailhead is about 4 hours and 15 minutes north of Phoenix and 3 hours and 40 minutes east of Las Vegas, where you'll find the nearest airports.

The Havasupai Indian Reservation is located in the Grand Canyon, but it is outside the boundaries of Grand Canyon National Park. If you are planning to visit Grand Canyon National Park while you are in the area, see our guide [How to Spend One Day at the Grand Canyon](#) for tips and recommendations.

The trailhead is in a remote location, so be sure to gas up before you go. If you are coming from Las Vegas, Kingman is the closest city and Peach Springs has the closest gas station. If you are coming from Phoenix, Flagstaff and Williams are the closest cities and Seligman has the closest gas station.

The parking lot is rather small to accommodate so many vehicles, so you may have to park alongside the road. Restrooms are located at the top of the trail. These are the only restrooms for the next 8 miles, so make sure you go!

What to Expect When Hiking the Trail to Havasupai

From Hilltop, the trail to the Supai Village is 8 miles. It is an additional 2 miles from the village to the campground, so 10 miles total.

If you are hiking in the warmer months, you will want to start your hike early in the morning to avoid hiking in the heat. We left our room at Grand Canyon Caverns Inn at 3:30 am and were on the trail by 5 am and it was perfect.

The beginning of the trail is down a series of steep switchbacks with uneven terrain. I recommend using [hiking.poles](#) to help reduce the impact on your knees and to keep your footing over the loose rocks.

The switchbacks are about a mile long, but the trail continues downhill for approximately another 1/3 mile. Once you reach the bottom, it is relatively flat for the next 6 1/2 miles or so until you reach the Supai Village.

I was pleasantly surprised at how beautiful the trail was, especially in the early morning light. I was initially dreading the hike, but I just put on an audiobook and cruised along and it was actually pretty enjoyable.

If you do wear earbuds to listen to music or an audiobook, only put one side in so that you can keep an ear open to listen for rattlesnakes or a mule pack coming up from behind.

Rattlesnakes are common in the canyon, so always stay alert. The mules will also run you over, so be sure to watch out for them and step to the side of the trail to let them pass.

The trail down is not too difficult since it is mostly flat, but it is a lot of mileage which will make your legs sore if you're not used to long hikes. Try to fit in some longer hikes prior to your trip in order to help strengthen your legs and get them used to it.

The trail back up will obviously be more challenging. It is uphill for the first two miles from the campground to the village, and the last mile or so of switchbacks is pretty tough.

I would just plan to leave early enough that you can hit the switchbacks before it gets too hot. We left the campground at 3:30 am and were out of the canyon before 7:30 am. We had shade the entire time and finished the hike before it got too hot.

If you are nervous about the hike, there is an option to take the helicopter in and out. The cost is \$100 per person per trip. You can not reserve the helicopter in advance and it doesn't run consistently every day. The locals also get priority and there is no guarantee that you will be able to secure a seat, but it is worth looking into.

Another option that will help make the hike a little easier, is to [reserve a mule](#) to carry your packs. The cost is \$400 roundtrip and they can carry up to 4 bags with a maximum weight of 32 lbs per bag. Click the link for all the details and restrictions.

Just keep in mind that you will still need to carry your bags from the drop-off point near Havasu Falls to your campsite. This can be up to a mile, but there are wheelbarrows available to use.

The bags will also arrive down at camp around noon and back up at the top around noon (the time varies). If you do plan to use the mules, you won't be able to set up camp until they arrive. If you hike out early on your last day, you may also have to wait for your bags at the top for a few hours before driving home. Just a few things to consider.

If you do plan to use the mules, be sure to still bring a day pack to carry water and snacks. It is recommended that each hiker carry one gallon of water. We each carried 2 of these [water bladders](#) in our backpacks and added [electrolyte powder](#) to the water to help prevent dehydration.

Supai Village

After 8 miles, you'll come to the Supai Village. Photos and videos are not allowed in the village out of respect for the locals.

It is so fascinating to see an entire village complete with homes, a school, a police station, churches, a motel, a store, and a cafe built at the bottom of such a remote canyon. The logistics of just hauling in the building materials is mind-boggling!

If the [cafe and store](#) are open, it's a great place to grab a snack and drink while you take a little rest break.

The cafe sells burgers, fries, and Navajo Tacos. The store is similar to a gas station convenience store with a selection of snacks, drinks, and ice cream, along with a few essentials. They do accept credit cards with a minimum purchase of \$10. There are also outdoor restrooms adjacent to the store.

If you made reservations to stay at The Lodge instead of the campground, it is located in the Supai Village. It is only an 8-mile hike to The Lodge, but you'll be hiking a lot further each day

if you want to visit the waterfalls.

Upper Falls

The last two miles from the village to the campground are mostly downhill. After about a mile, you will pass the Upper Falls on the left side of the trail.

Fifty-foot Falls is the first of this series of waterfalls. If you want to cool off with a little dip, you'll need to scramble along a path down the hill, then wade through waist-deep water to reach the falls.

It is a beautiful set of waterfalls stretching across the face of the cliff. You can swim under and even behind these waterfalls. There is a small rock island where you can keep your packs while you swim.

If you follow the path downstream along the river's edge, you'll reach Little Navajo Falls. This little oasis is surrounded by water flowing down from all the surrounding cliffs. It's a peaceful area that isn't nearly as crowded as the other waterfalls.

Havasu Falls

Just before the campground, you'll come around the bend and catch your first glimpse of the iconic Havasu Falls.

"Havasupai Falls" refers to all of the waterfalls within the Havasupai tribal lands, but Havasu Falls is the most well-known of all the waterfalls.

The vibrant blue waterfall stands in stark contrast to the surrounding red rocks and pops of green foliage. It truly is breathtaking to witness it in person.

There is a frybread stand at the top of the waterfall. The hours are unpredictable, so if it is open you definitely need to stop! The frybread is unbelievably delicious, and almost worth the 10-mile hike alone!

They only accept cash and prices vary from \$16 for a beef Navajo taco to \$10 for a sweet frybread. You'll want to stop a few times during your trip, so be sure to bring enough cash.

Once you're at the bottom of the falls, you can jump in and take a refreshing swim. There is even a little hidden cave that lets you get right behind the waterfall.

Just downstream from the waterfall is a picturesque swimming hole with small tiered

waterfalls, it's one of our favorite spots.

Havasupai Campground

The Havasupai Campground stretches about 1 mile from the bottom of Havasu Falls to the top of Mooney Falls.

Campsites are available on a first-come first-serve basis and cannot be reserved in advance. The campground accommodates up to 350 people per night.

The sites are spread along the banks of Havasu Creek and are in close proximity to each other. You can snag the first campsite you come to, but the most scenic campgrounds are after the second and third bathrooms. We found the dreamiest campsite just after the third bathroom and across the creek.

There are certain advantages and disadvantages of where you stay in the campground. If you stay at the beginning of the campground, you will be the closest to the freshwater spring.

Fern Spring is the only source of drinking water in the canyon. We didn't filter the water and were fine, but just after our stay in June 2024, there was a mysterious illness that plagued hundreds of people in the campground.

The source has not been identified, but there is a good chance that the drinking water was contaminated. It would be best to use a [water filter bag](#) for the spring water just to be safe.

If you are staying further from the spring, you will want a [collapsible water cube](#) to store water at your campsite for cooking and drinking. Wheelbarrows are located throughout the campground and are helpful to carry the water jug back to your camp.

If you stay at the beginning of the campground, you will also have a shorter hike in and out. If you stay at the end of the campground, it will add almost another mile onto each leg of your trip.

However, if you stay at the end of the campground you will have a shorter hike to Mooney Falls, Beaver Falls, and the Confluence.

There are 3 sets of bathrooms located along the path through camp. Each one has 3 toilets, so with 9 toilets between roughly 350 campers, you can expect to sometimes wait in line and for the toilet paper to run out. Be sure to bring your own toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

There are no shower facilities, so if you plan to wash off in the river only use biodegradable soap like [Campsuds](#).

Mooney Falls

Mooney Falls is located just after the end of the campground. It is a bit of an adventure to reach the base of the falls.

You'll need to squeeze through a rock tunnel and then carefully navigate down a steep cliff using the help of chains. The powerful mist makes everything slippery, so be sure to go slow and always maintain three points of contact while going down.

Mooney Falls is the largest of the Havasupai waterfalls. It is nearly 200 feet tall, which is about twice the size of Havasu Falls. The thundering blue waterfall is absolutely incredible and will leave you awestruck.

You can swim in this waterfall as well, and there is even a rope swing at the mouth of the river.

Beaver Falls

Beaver Falls is my personal favorite waterfall. To reach it, you'll need to hike about 2 miles from Mooney Falls.

The trail is stunning as you cross over the river several times, hike through a vine-covered valley nicknamed "the jungle", walk through a tunnel to the "Lone Palm" oasis, and climb up and down several ladders.

When you finally catch your first glimpse of the picturesque multi-tiered waterfall, it will take your breath away.

It's the perfect spot to relax and swim without a care in the world. I recommend coming early in the morning or later in the afternoon to avoid the crowds.

The Confluence

The Confluence is another 5 miles or so down the river from Beaver Falls. This is where the blue water of Havasu Creek intersects with the muddy water of the Colorado River.

We didn't make it down there, but I have heard it is an amazing hike and well worth it. Next time!

Final Thoughts on Hiking to Havasupai

I did this trip with my 15-year-old son and it is a trip we will always remember!

It is such a special place filled with so much beauty. The waterfalls are the main attraction, but I couldn't get over just how beautiful the entire canyon is.

If you do plan to visit, just make sure you are fully prepared with the proper equipment and supplies and are physically fit enough to handle the hike.

As always, practice Leave No Trace and do your part to preserve the natural beauty. You will need to pack out all of your garbage, so be sure to bring a garbage bag with you. You are a guest on the Havasupai tribal lands, be sure to be respectful so that they will continue to invite visitors in the future.