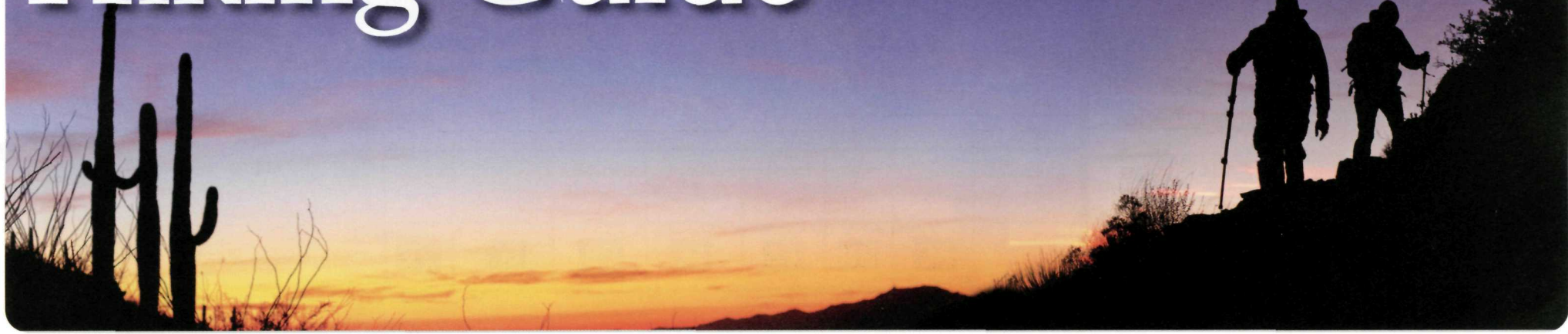




# Hiking Guide



## INTRODUCTION

Saguaro (sah-WAH-row) National Park's West District has a wonderful variety of over 40 miles of hiking trails for you to explore. This guide is intended to help you decide which of the trails will meet your needs, help you to have a safe visit, & inform you about park regulations.


## DECIDING WHICH TRAIL TO TAKE


### "I want to hike for 2 hours...4 hours...5 hours..."

The time it takes to complete a trail depends on how fast someone hikes, how many stops, the steepness of the trail, etc.. A very rough estimate of average hiking speed is 2 miles per hour; so dividing the trail distance by 2 will give you a rough estimate of your time.

### "I want an easy hike...strenuous hike..."

How easy or difficult a hike is depends on a hiker's physical condition, experience, etc. & is very subjective. For this guide we have delineated the trails as "Relatively Easy", "Moderate", or "More Challenging"

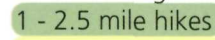
 = Relatively Easy - less than 300ft of elevation gain/loss & does not have steep inclines.

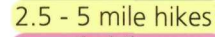
 = Moderate - gradual elevation gain/loss greater than 300ft, but less than 1000ft.

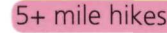
 = More Challenging, steeper trail sections with elevation gain/loss of over 1000ft.

### "I want a long...short...medium...hike"

Again, these terms are very subjective. For this guide, the trail suggestions have been broken down into three distinct categories:

 1 - 2.5 mile hikes

 2.5 - 5 mile hikes

 5+ mile hikes

*Nearby trails shorter than 1 - mile are shown in the general park brochure & are not addressed here.*

### Rough or Smooth?

All trails (except the paved accessible trail) are natural soil with some rough rock steps. Some steeper trails may have many steps. Many trails also have low lines of rock angled across the trail. These are called "water bars" & are periodically installed to slow & divert rain runoff to reduce the formation of gullies.

## HOW TO READ A TRAIL SIGN

Small (approx. 12") black metal signs mark the intersections of the trails. The UPPERCASE name at the top of the sign should be the trail on which the sign is located. The name & distance to the next junctions is usually shown below.

## GENERAL INFORMATION & PARK REGULATIONS

Hikers must remain on trails at all times. NO OFF-TRAIL USE IS PERMITTED. Hiking groups are limited to 18 people. Larger groups must be divided & remain separated.

The unpaved roads are open to vehicles from dawn to dusk. Hiking at night is allowed but vehicles may not be at trailheads along the dirt roads. *Note that King Canyon & El Camino del Cerro trailhead parking areas, although on paved roads, are on country property & are closed from dusk to dawn.*

Pets must be on a leash at all times. Pets are not allowed on trails, except for the paved Desert Discovery Trail. Pets may be walked along the roads & are allowed in the picnic grounds (except Mam-A-Gah). The dirt roads are great places to walk your pet as they are less likely to get into cacti or encounter wildlife.

Bicycles must remain on designated roadways at all times.

## HIKING SAFETY



### PLAN YOUR TRIP -

Always tell someone where you are going & when you will return. Stick with your itinerary, & let them know when you have safely returned.

### HIKE EARLY -

In summer, it can be very hot & dry. Plan to do your hiking in the early morning when it is cooler. During the hotter summer months, make sure to be back to the trail head by 10am. As well, if the forecast estimates temperatures over 110 °F, abort your hiking plans for the day. Hiking when it is hot can be dangerous, even deadly!



### CARRY PLENTY OF WATER -

Water is available only at the visitor center. No other water is available in the park. One gallon of water per person, per day is the absolute minimum that should be carried. However, studies suggest that one should consume 1 liter of water PER HOUR PER PERSON while hiking in the heat. WHEN THE WATER IS HALF GONE, TURN AROUND. DO NOT RATION YOUR WATER...A smart tip is to drink some type of electrolyte beverage while hiking. Excess loss of electrolytes can lead to health risks such as heat exhaustion, hypotension, etc.



### BE AWARE OF ANIMALS -

Be aware of rattlesnakes. NEVER PLACE YOUR HANDS OR FEET WHERE YOU CANNOT SEE THEM. If a rattlesnake is encountered, give it space & do not attempt to catch, move, or touch it at all. Be aware of bees going into an out of a cavity in a saguaro, tree, or other nook - honeybees in the Sonoran Desert are "Africanized" & will defend their hives aggressively. If a bee should begin "bumping" you, that is a sign you are too close to a hive. Be aware of any animal that is not behaving in a normal manner. No healthy animal will approach you. Do not interact with any animal that appears injured, sick, or otherwise "not normal."

### DRESS PROPERLY -

Good closed-toed hiking shoes, loose fitting natural-fiber clothing, a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, & sunscreen are a must for the desert climate. Desert temperatures can reach over 90 °F, & drop below 50 °F in one day. Summer temperatures can reach 125 °F in some locations.



### WATCH THE WEATHER -

Watch, or listen, frequently to weather reports on a radio or a cell phone app. Avoid deep canyons & dry river beds during stormy weather. Also, do not hike on top of exposed peaks or ridges during a storm. If heavy rains occur, move to high ground immediately. Flash floods can be caused by heavy rain - it may not be raining where you are, but water can come down the canyon in a hurry!



### DEFENSIVE PLANT LIFE -

Most plants are armed with spines or thorns. Stay on the trail, & watch where you are going. Cholla cacti are known for their spines that easily stick to any animal or person who brushes against it. The best tool for cholla removal is a regular pocket comb; which can be used to get between the cholla & you, & flick it away from the body.









## HIKING IN THIS AREA

### VERTICAL CLIFFS SHORT LOOP

**Start at: A-5 Distance: 2.6mi** 

Take the Belmont trail --> Vertical Cliffs trail --> Veteran's trail --> Animal Wash trail --> Belmont trail --> A-5

### VERTICAL CLIFFS LONG LOOP

**Start at: A-5 Distance: 3.9mi** 

Take the Belmont trail --> Vertical Cliffs trail --> Abington trail --> Veteran's trail --> Animal Wash trail --> Belmont trail --> A-5

### ABINGTON SHORT LOOP

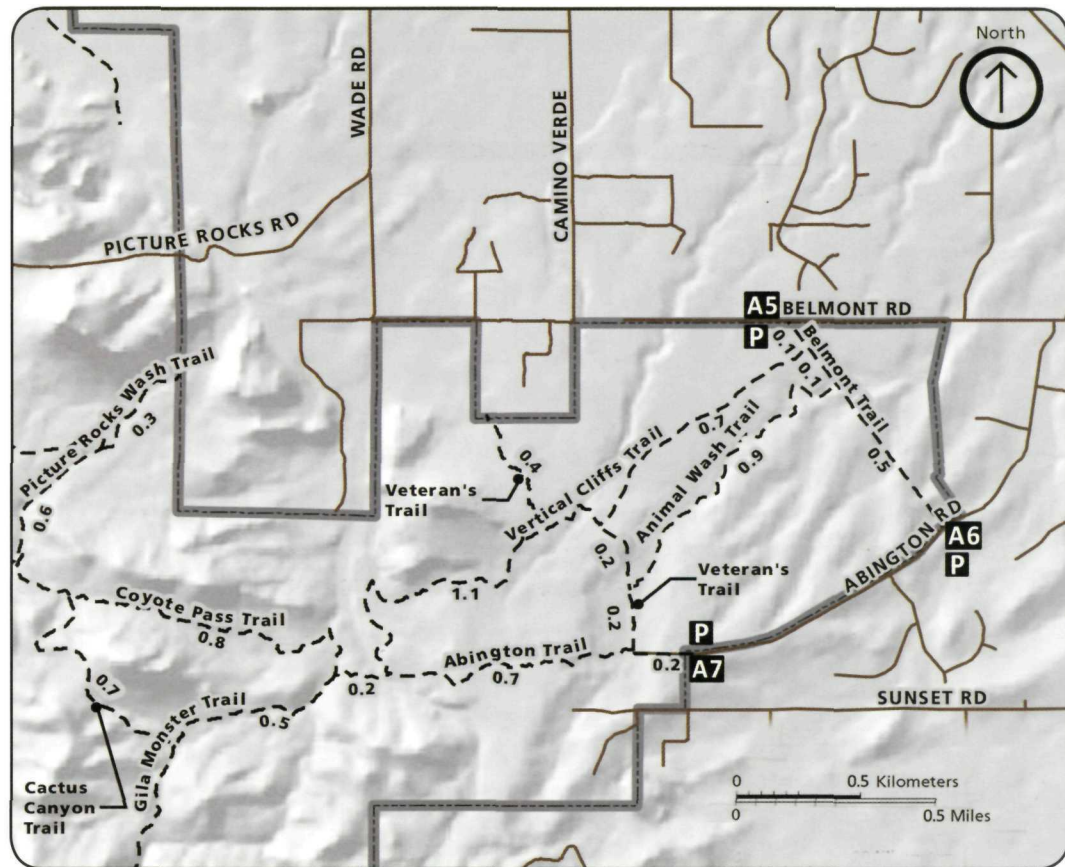
**Start at: A-7 Distance: 2.4mi** 

Take the Abington trail --> Vertical Cliffs trail --> Veteran's trail --> Abington trail --> A-7

### ABINGTON LONG LOOP

**Start at: A-7 Distance: 4.9mi** 

Take the Abington trail --> Gila Monster trail --> Cactus Canyon --> Coyote Pass --> then follow the rest of the ABINGTON SHORT LOOP (described above).

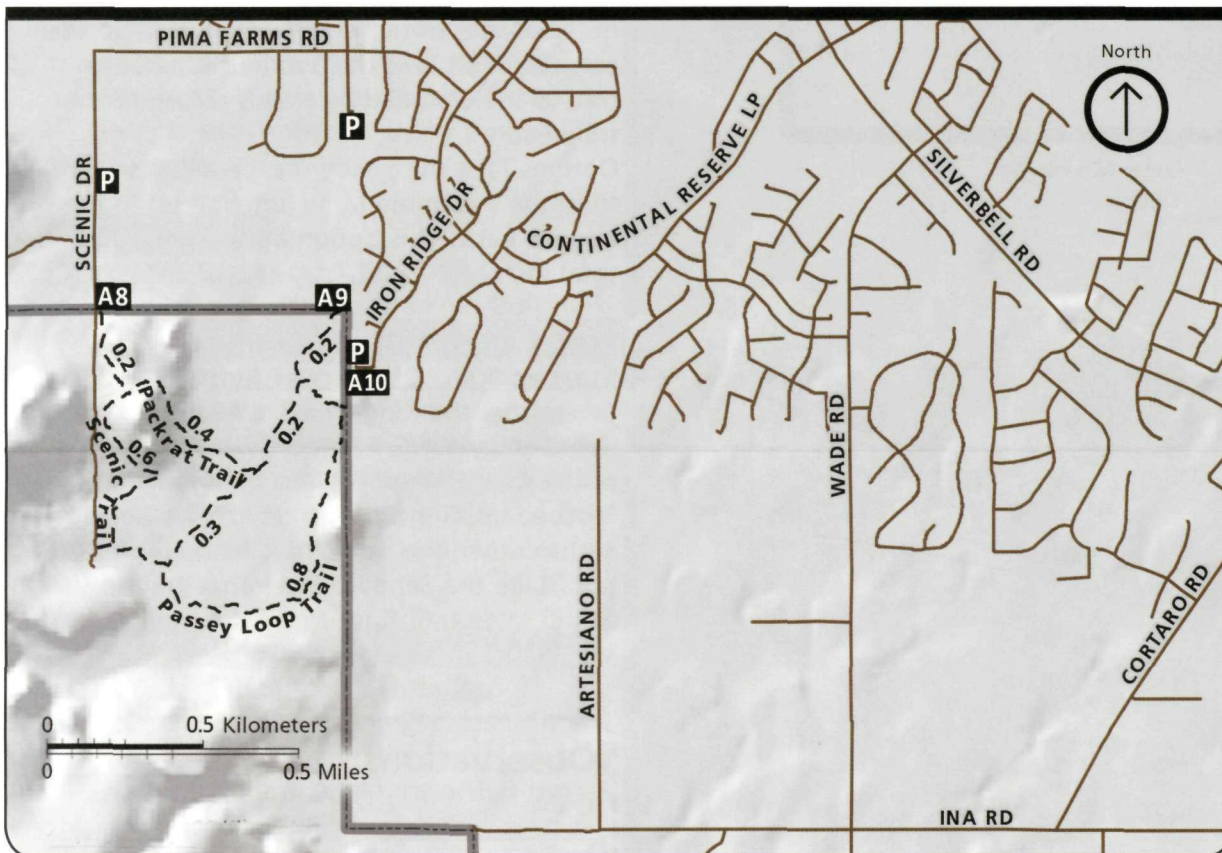


## PARKING IN THIS AREA

**A-5 North Belmont Access** - Go west about 1.2 miles on Belmont Rd. off Silverbell Rd. You will see a gated road on your left, park in the area in front of the gate. This gated road is an access road along natural gas pipelines & power lines, & this is the Belmont trail.

**A-6 South Belmont Access** - Go southwest on Abington Rd. off Belmont Rd. about 0.6 miles. On your right will be a pullout area, a gated dirt road, & a trail sign by Pima County. Park here, then walk 0.1 miles up hill to park access point. This is the southern end of the Belmont trail.

**A-7 Abington Road Access** - Go southwest on Abington Rd. past A-5. At about 1.1 miles you will see a small turnout on your right with a "no outlet" sign. Park here, walk up the road about 0.2 mile to the park access point, A-7.



## HIKING IN THIS AREA

### SCENIC/PASSEY/PACKRAT LOOP

**Start at: A-8 Distance: 1.7mi** 

A short, scenic loop with spectacular views of Safford Peak, also northwest of Tucson. Some climbing involved, but short & not too strenuous. Take the Scenic trail --> Passey Loop trail --> Packrat trail --> Scenic Loop --> A-8

### PASSEY LOOP TRAIL

**Start at: A-9 Distance: 1.6mi** 

This flat trail in the northwest part of the Park is easy, & travels through typical desert vegetation. It can also be accessed from A-10.

## PARKING IN THIS AREA

**A-8 Scenic Drive Access** - Take Pima Farms Rd. west from Continental Reserve Loop to its end at Scenic Drive; turn left, go about 0.2 miles to a paved circle (just beyond the driveway of 8230). Park here, DO NOT PARK IN/NEAR SANCTUARY COVE. After parking, walk another 0.2 mile south to the park access point.

**A-9 Sand Dune Place Access Parking** - Take Pima Farms Rd. west to Sand Dune Place, turn south, & go to the end. Park in the circle, DO NOT BLOCK ANY DRIVEWAYS. Walk south on the trail from the large boulder along the fence line. Stay on the trail; the areas east & west of the trail are private property. The park access point is about 0.37 miles south of the parking area.

**A-10 Thelon Court Access Parking** - Take Iron Ridge Rd. southwest from Continental Reserve Loop. Thelon Court is the last cul-de-sac at the end. Park along the railing, DO NOT BLOCK ANY DRIVEWAYS. Follow the park fence line south about 415 feet to the park access point.

## General Weather Information

Average Maximum and Minimum Monthly Temperature

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max	64° F	68° F	72° F	81° F	89° F	99° F	98° F	97° F	94° F	84° F	73° F	65° F
Min	38° F	40° F	44° F	50° F	57° F	67° F	74° F	72° F	67° F	57° F	45° F	39° F

Sunrise and Sunset Times for Tucson, AZ (Mountain Standard Time, GMT-7)

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st	7:25/5:30	7:17/5:57	6:51/6:21	6:12/6:43	5:38/7:04	5:18/7:25	5:21/7:34	5:39/7:21	5:59/6:49	6:18/6:10	6:41/5:35	7:07/5:19
5th	7:25/5:33	7:14/6:00	6:46/6:24	6:07/6:46	5:35/7:07	5:17/7:27	5:23/7:34	5:42/7:18	6:01/6:44	6:20/6:05	6:44/5:31	7:10/5:19
10th	7:25/5:37	7:10/6:05	6:40/6:28	6:02/6:48	5:30/7:10	5:17/7:29	5:25/7:33	5:45/7:13	6:05/6:37	6:24/5:58	6:48/5:28	7:14/5:19
15th	7:25/5:41	7:06/6:09	6:34/6:31	5:55/6:53	5:26/7:14	5:17/7:31	5:28/7:31	5:48/7:08	6:08/6:31	6:27/5:52	6:53/5:24	7:17/5:21
20th	7:23/5:46	7:01/6:13	6:27/6:35	5:49/6:56	5:23/7:17	5:18/7:33	5:31/7:29	5:51/7:03	6:11/6:24	6:31/5:47	6:57/5:22	7:20/5:23
25th	7:21/5:50	6:55/6:18	6:21/6:38	5:40/7:00	5:21/7:21	5:19/7:34	5:34/7:26	5:55/6:57	6:14/6:17	6:35/5:41	7:02/5:20	7:22/5:25
30th	7:10/5:55		6:14/6:42	5:39/7:03	5:19/7:24	5:21/7:34	5:38/7:23	5:58/6:51	6:17/6:11	6:39/5:36	7:06/5:19	7:24/5:28

Arizona, except for the Navajo Nation, does not observe Daylight Savings Time. Please note that sunrise and sunset times are approximate and will vary slightly from year to year.

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911 FIRST; THEN CONTACT A RANGER.**  
**IF YOU SEE CRIMES AGAINST PARK RESOURCES CALL 1-800-637-9152.**



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Western National Parks Association  
12880 North Vistoso Village Drive  
Tucson, AZ 85755