

Grand Canyon National Park's Ranger Audio Tour Stop # 11 **Mule Corral**

Welcome to Grand Canyon National Park's park ranger cell phone tour.

“Most every morning at Grand Canyon National Park, the Round Corral at the head of Bright Angel Trail is a might popular spot. This is where mules, wranglers, dudes, and spectators meet as the day's adventure down the Bright Angel Trail begins.”

So writes Karen Taylor in her book, *Grand Canyon's Long-Eared Taxi*. It is an adventure, sitting on the back of a mule, riding the trail as miners once did back in the late 1800s. Miners would load up these sturdy animals carrying tools, sleeping gear and groceries down the steep trails. When mining was no longer profitable, and more people began to visit the canyon for recreation, the idea of mule tours began. Captain John Hance was one of the first to profit from guiding visitors into the canyon. His tours described the geology, wildlife, and told many a story or two, mostly tall tales.

Today's mule rides offer much the same adventure, echoing the oral history passed down from guide to guide. “These mules are remnants of the old frontier,” says Wrangler Casey. They are hardworking, trustworthy, and not afraid of the edge. Each mule has to go through about one year of training before they are allowed to carry passengers. If you'd like to see these long-eared taxis, stop by the corral in the morning between 7:00 and 8:00 am just before they head down the trail, or meet them as they come up late in the afternoon around 3:30 or 4 o'clock. Visitors are welcome to stop by the mule barn next to the train tracks to ask questions and view the mules and trail guides at work.