

## Grand Canyon National Park's Ranger Audio Tour Stop # 8 **South Kaibab Trail**

The South Kaibab Trail, built in 1924 and 25, has long been a reliable route to reach the Colorado River. During a time when park service access to the Bright Angel Trail was difficult, this trail was blasted directly out of the Grand Canyon strata and designed to be the main access to the bottom of Grand Canyon. Once built in competition with the then privately owned Bright Angel, these corridor trails now compliment each other to provide access to the bottom of Grand Canyon.

Thousands of people use the South Kaibab to access Phantom Ranch and Bright Angel Campground on the canyon floor because it is a shorter trail than the Bright Angel. Hikers may choose to descend the 5000 feet into Grand Canyon's depths along the six and half miles of trail here, saving the nine and a half mile hike along the Bright Angel for a gentler climb out of this gorge.

As the South Kaibab follows ridges along its descent, there are commanding, wonderful views. The tradeoff for such amazing vistas is the lack of shade and available water - both important commodities when hiking in the desert during hot summer months. Our corridor trails are wide enough for regular mule traffic, carrying people and goods up and down the trail daily. Despite the beauty of this trail, there is potential danger for the unprepared hiker.

Hiking even a short stretch of trail below the rim is perhaps the only way to truly grasp the immense scale of Grand Canyon - but only for the hiker equipped with water, plenty of salty snacks, sturdy shoes, and sun protection.