



DAY HIKES NEAR THE GILA VISITOR CENTER

The following day hikes begin near the Gila Visitor Center and the Gila Cliff Dwellings. Each one will acquaint you with a different type of terrain and give you an enjoyable hiking experience. Remember to carry plenty of water, or purify the water you take from any wilderness source, by boiling, filtering or chemical treatment. Also, be aware that river crossings can be dangerous. Water depth and speed can change quickly at any time, but especially during thunderstorms. Always use caution, and do not attempt a crossing if you are unsure of its safety.

All of these hikes are in a Congressionally-designated wilderness area: therefore, signs, trail markers and trail maintenance levels are considerably more primitive than the interpretative trails outside of the wilderness. We recommend that you have a good topographic map and compass and know how to use both. This handout map is provided as a convenience – consider your trail navigational skills.

Pets are allowed in the wilderness but are required to be under the owner's control at all times. Please be considerate of wildlife and other users when deciding whether or not to bring your pet. You are responsible for their actions.

DAYHIKE #1: MIDDLE FORK AND WEST FORK TRAILS

Little or no ascent. The scenic trails along the Middle Fork and West Fork of the Gila River feature winding canyons with spectacular cliffs. Both trails have several river crossings per mile, so you will get your feet wet. To reach the trailhead of the Middle Fork Trail (#157), go to the far end of the Visitor Center parking lot, turn right, go a very short distance up the hill, and turn left into the parking lot.

The trailhead for the West Fork Trail (#151) is located next to the parking lot at the Cliff Dwellings, about 1.8 miles from the Visitor Center.

DAY HIKE #2: STOCK BYPASS LOOP FROM TJ CORRAL

Distance 4.5 miles; elevation gain 210 feet. Begin and end at TJ Corral Trailhead, about one mile from the Visitor Center on the road to the Cliff Dwellings. Take Trail #729 from the corral, but bear left onto the bypass trail when you reach the junction a short distance from the trailhead. Follow the bypass trail 2.75 miles to the junction with the West Fork Trail (#151) near the wilderness boundary. (The sign points to the Cliff Dwellings, .5 mile). Follow the West Fork Trail left (east) to the Cliff Dwellings parking lot. TJ Corral Trailhead is another mile further down the paved road.

DAY HIKE #3: LITTLE BEAR CANYON FROM TJ CORRAL

Distance 8.5 miles; elevation gain 630 feet. Begin and end at TJ Corral Trailhead, about one mile from the Visitor Center on the road to the Cliff Dwellings. Walk about two miles from the #729 trailhead to the top of the ridge between the West Fork and Middle Fork of the Gila River. At the junction with trail #164 (to the Meadows) continue straight ahead on trail #729 (to the Middle Fork) another two miles down Little Bear Canyon to the Middle Fork. Retrace your route to return to TJ Corral Trailhead. **CAUTION:** Flash floods can occur suddenly in Little Bear Canyon. Be extremely cautious when rain is threatening.

DAY HIKE #4: EE CANYON LOOP FROM WOODY'S CORRAL

Distance 8 miles; elevation gain 970 feet. Begin and end at Woody's Corral Trailhead, about one mile from the Visitor Center on the road to the Cliff Dwellings. Take trail #160 from the corral, for a moderate climb of about 3.25 miles, to the top of the ridge between the West Fork and Little Creek. At the junction, take trail #162 to the right (sign is in a tree, says "McKenna Park 14 miles") and follow it along the ridge for .75 mile to the junction with EE Canyon Trail. Turn right (sign says "West Fork") to descend through EE Canyon to the West Fork Trail, about 2 miles. Turn right (down river) about one mile to the Cliff Dwellings parking lot. There will be one river crossing. Continue along the paved highway one mile back to Woody's Corral Trailhead.

DAY HIKE #5: WEST FORK LOOP FROM TJ CORRAL

Distance 11 miles; elevation gain 1,300 feet. Begin and end at TJ Corral Trailhead, about one mile from the Visitor Center on the road to the Cliff Dwellings. Take trail #729 from the corral, for a moderate climb of about two miles to the top of the ridge. At the junction with The Meadows Trail (#164) turn left (northwest, to The Meadows) and follow the high ridge between the West Fork and Middle Fork of the Gila River about 4 miles. Scenic views are frequent, especially near the end of this stretch. At the junction of Trail #28, turn left (south, to "West Fork") for a steep, 3-mile descent to the West Fork Trail (#151). (NOTE: *The sign at the junction of trails 164 and 28 is fairly high on a tree, so be sure and look for it.*) Turn left (east) on the West Fork and go two miles back to the Cliff Dwellings parking lot. Continue along the paved highway one mile back to TJ Corral trailhead.

