The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) stretches nearly 800 miles from the U.S. border with Mexico to Utah, connecting diverse mountainous, canyons, wilderness, history, communities, and people. The AZT has something for everyone, from nature and challenging wilderness to easily accessible passes near many gateway communities. This trail showcases Arizona’s diverse vegetation, wildlife, scenery, and history in a way that provides a unique and unparalleled Arizona experience.

Eighty-five percent of the AZT is on federal land. The Trail crosses national monuments and museums, national parks, national forests, Bureau of Land Management land, and state and county lands, which are managed by county governments or the Bureau of Land Management. Community and municipal governments also manage portions of the Trail on their own lands. A small amount crosses private land.

The Arizona Trail is divided into 43 sections beginning in the south with the Hearne Mountains Passage and ending in northern Arizona with the Bearhead Mountains Passage. Descriptions of trail passage, and access points, can be found on the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) website at arizona.org.

Scenery and Nature
The AZT traverses wild, rugged, and primitive environment. Hikers must hike at their own risk. There is an abundance of wildlife along the AZT. There is a high probability of encountering wildlife along the trail. Be aware of natural hazards in your area of the trail.

In the western United States, Arizona is bordered by the Mogollon Rim to the north, the Basin and Range Province to the west, and Desert Southwest to the south. Lava flows.

Layers. In this province you will also find San Francisco Peaks, the Green River Fault, the Colorado Plateau, and the Kaibab Plateau. The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) stretches over 800 miles from the U.S. border to the Utah border.

The Arizona Trail is designed as a national scenic trail by Congress in 1985 and is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service. Other partners in the management and protection of the trail include the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, Arizona State Parks, the Arizona Trail Association, and several counties and municipalities.

Water
Think before you drink! No matter how clear or pure streams water looks, it is likely to contain water-borne parasites and microorganisms that can cause discomfort and sometimes serious illness. Pack your own water or boil water you find and/or purify it with chemical treatment. Carry more than you need. Always carry two water filters in case your electronic navigation system fails. No water-borne parasites and microorganisms are resistant to chlorinated water, especially in cold weather.

Heat Exhaustion/Hot Strokes
Heat exhaustion is a temporary condition caused by excessive sweating and fluid loss that occurs when your body temperature rises to 96°F (35°C). Heat stroke is a more severe form of heat injury and occurs if your body temperature rises to 104°F (40°C) or higher. Shivering requires emergency treatment and can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys, and muscles. Know the symptoms and take proactive measures.

Storms
Unfortunately, the mountainous, lightning-prone terrain is often in the summer monsoon season. Summer storms can occur at higher elevations.

Flash Floods
Possible during the summer monsoon season, flash floods can happen when thunderstorms are occurring almost anywhere. Avoid hiking or camping in thunderous (or thunderstorms), especially when flashfloods are triggered by downpours. Do not try to cross a flooded wash or your vehicle under any circumstances. Check the weather before heading out on www.weather.gov.

Lightning
Stay low when outdoors – lightning hits the tallest object. Avoid elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges, or peaks. If caught in an open field, seek a low spot and crouch with your feet together and head low. Lightning is most likely to occur during the afternoon in the summer monsoon season.

Hypothermia
Snow and cold in trail is possible along the entire length of the AZT. Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but can occur even at cool temperatures above 40°F (4°C) as you become chilled from wind, snow, or exposure in cold weather.

Wildlife
There is an abundance of wildlife along the AZT. AZT wild animals may be trained with vaccine and treated. If you are planning to hike, check with the nearest land management agency for information on local wildlife. Know how to be safe in wild country.

National Scenic Trails
Growing conservation ethic and a desire to access the nation’s unspoiled outdoor spaces led Congress to pass the National Trails System Act in 1968. Today, this system consists of 11 national scenic trails, including the Arizona Trail. There are also 19 national historic trails and more than 800 national recreation trails. For more information visit www.nps.gov/trails/day Use A National Scenic Trail.

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We Need Your Help!
From its inception, dedicated volunteers have played an important role in building the AZT to life. Volunteers connect with other outdoor enthusiasts through the AZT, helping to build and maintain the Trail. For more information on how you can preserve the Trail for future generations, please contact the ATA.

"Along the Arizona Trail a reverence and peace you’ll know Through deserts, canyons, and mountains.
From Utah to Old Mexico - a portion of a longer poem by Dale Shewalter, Father of the Arizona Trail

"The Arizona Trail is an incredible testament to choice, to life, and finding a way no matter what difficulties. I’m glad I walked the journey, I’ll always remember how breathtaking the sights, the majestic mountains, and the overall sense of peace it brought me. I know it’s a hike, but I’m glad I did it. -Mike Buckley
Exploring the Trail

LEAVE NO TRACES.

These can be obtained at land.az.gov/natural-Arizona National Scenic Trail on State Trust Land. The Arizona State Land Department is required for camping in Grand Canyon and Recreation passes or fees may be needed for some natural resources. Learn more at www.lnt.org.

Always check with the local agencies for trail area specific requirements.

Regions of the Trail

The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) passes through awe-inspiring landscapes and diverse biological communities across the State of Arizona, providing amazing experiences for Trail visitors. The 12 natural basin communities found along the AZT support more than 4,000 plant species. This creates an unparalleled opportunity to enjoy and study Arizona’s plant life.

To aid in the description of its scenery, the AZT has been divided into four general regions based upon scenic character zones.

Sky Islands

Found in southern Arizona, this area provides striking contrasts. Mesas and pinnacles rise above an ocean of broad desert plains, forming a sunset stage. You will experience continuous diversity by climbing from the desert into mountains reaching 9,000-15,000 feet in altitude. As the broad desert plateaus and mountains that result in an incredible range of landscapes and plant and animal life.

Arizona Sonoran Uplands

This region provides a transition between the Sonoran Desert and the western, cooler high country to the north. It encompasses the heavily dissected mountainous area between the Mogollon Rim and the Verde, Gila, and Salt River canyons. Landforms vary from desert plateaus and hills to broad plains and mountains. Several vegetation and more than perennially major watercourses include the Verde and Salt rivers.

Volcanic Field & Ponderosa Pine Plateau

This region is defined by two areas—Plateau County and the San Francisco Volcanic Field. The Ponderosa Pine Plateau extends from the Mogollon Rim to the southern edge of the volcanic field. The area is pierced by the San Francisco Peaks, which reach a height of 12,000 feet and are sacred to many Native American tribes. The volcanic field then extends north to the Coconino Plateau.

Plateaus and Canyons

This area of high, broad plateaus is separated by the Grand Canyon, which ranges from 5 to 10 miles wide and 3,000 to 7,000 feet deep, and was formed by the Colorado River. The path of the river is often vertically eroded by erosion. The Kaibab Plateau is the north reaches over 8,000 feet. This high back plateaus is tilted and gradually declines over the course of 100 feet across the San Francisco Gorge, which is at approximately 5,000 feet.

These are some of the most unique and interesting landscapes in the country—America’s backcountry. Visit land.az.gov/natural-Arizona National Scenic Trail on State Trust Land. The Arizona State Land Department is required for camping in Grand Canyon and Recreation passes or fees may be needed for some natural resources. Learn more at www.lnt.org.

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