



Forest Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Coronado National Forest, Santa Catalina Ranger District | RG-R3-05-36 | Revised March 2025

Tanque Verde Falls

New trails and amenities at this popular recreation destination invite visitors to experience the stunning desert, beautiful rock formations, and seasonal creek and waterfalls of Tanque Verde Canyon.

Know before you go

- P AMENITIES:** Three parking areas offer access to trails. The Middle Tanque Verde Trailhead offers toilets, picnic tables, and ramadas.
- ROAD INFO:** Redington Road is dirt and bumpy, but is suitable for most passenger vehicles up to Tanque Verde Falls.
- DOG FRIENDLY:** Pets are permitted. Please use a leash near other visitors and always pick up and pack out pet waste.
- WATER:** No drinking water is available. Bring plenty with you. Natural water sources must be purified before use.
- SEASONS:** Year-round. Extreme heat, venomous wildlife, and flash floods are common in summer, but are possible all year.
- FLASH FLOOD DANGER:** Check the forecast and radar apps! Distant storms upstream can cause flash floods at the falls.
- PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT:** Help care for the canyon by packing all trash out with you, including fruit peels and cores.
- CAMPING:** Camping is prohibited at all parking areas and within 650 ft. of the road. Dispersed camping is allowed beyond mile 4.6. Always follow the [Dispersed Camping Best Practices](#).

Attractions



TANQUE VERDE FALLS

Tanque Verde Creek cuts through the saguaro-studded slopes and banded gneiss and granite of Redington Pass, creating a series of seasonal pools and waterfalls. View the 80-foot-tall Tanque Verde Falls from the Rim Trail Overlook. Additional pools and smaller waterfalls can be viewed from the Lower and Upper Tanque Verde Trails and the Central Canyon Access Trail.



SONORAN DESERT

The rolling hills above Tanque Verde Falls are part of the the Sonoran Desertscrub biotic community. Hike through a forest of saguaros, ocotillo, prickly pear, mesquite, and palo verde, and watch for resident wildlife including lizards, roadrunners, hawks, white-tailed deer, javelina, and other unique desert species. Spring is an excellent time to visit to see the desert in bloom.

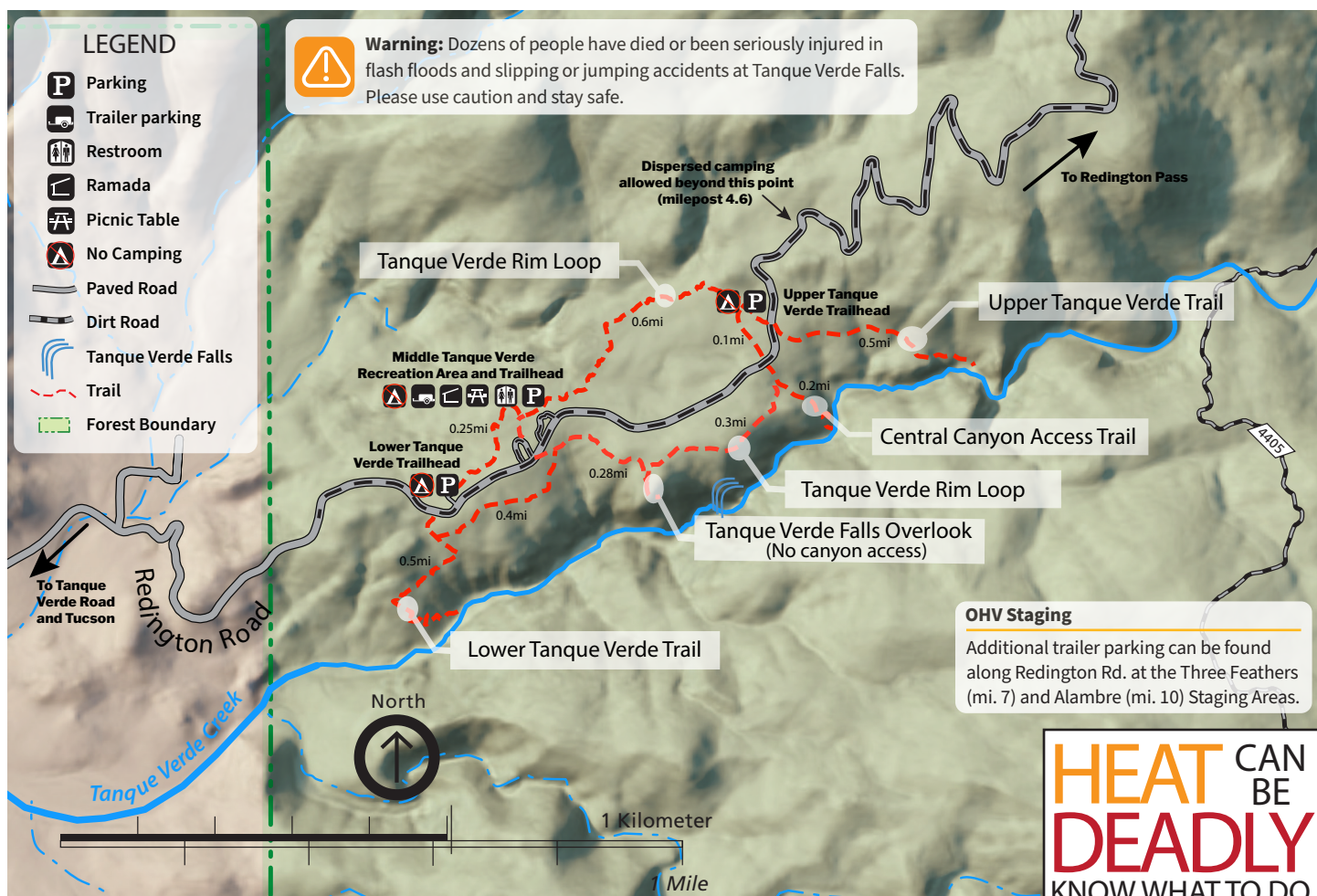
Activities

Hiking	New and improved trails offer options for hikers of all ages and abilities. While most trails are short, the three trails that lead into the canyon are steep and rocky. The Rim Trail and Overlook offer excellent views of the creek and falls. There is no trail into the canyon from the Overlook, and there is no trail along the creek. See map and trail descriptions on the next page.
Picnicking	Ramadas at the Middle Tanque Verde Recreation Area offer shaded tables to enjoy a picnic in the desert, or carry a picnic with you into the canyon.
Canyon exploring	The Rim Trail and Overlook offer excellent views of the canyon and the best view of Tanque Verde Falls. Check weather and radar apps before your visit! Do not enter the canyon when rain is predicted; distant storms can cause flash floods even when the sky is blue at Tanque Verde Falls. There is no trail into the canyon from the Overlook, and there is no trail along the creek. Be aware that bedrock and boulders in the canyon are extremely slippery even when dry. Avoid jumping or diving into pools; shifting boulders and fluctuating water levels make it unsafe and potentially deadly. Warning: Dozens of people have died in flash floods and slipping or jumping accidents at Tanque Verde Falls. Please use caution and stay safe.
OHV staging	The Middle Tanque Verde Recreation Area provides a staging area with parking for trailers. From here, Redington Road winds for 24 miles through desert and grassland until it connects with Cascabel Road in the San Pedro Valley. Numerous Forest Roads branch off from Redington, offering endless OHV riding options. Always stay on designated motor vehicle routes. Refer to the Santa Catalina Motor Vehicle Use Map . NOTE: There is additional trailer parking along Redington Road at the Three Feathers Staging Area just beyond mile 7 and the Alambre Staging Area at mile 10.

EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911

SANTA CATALINA RANGER STATION: (520) 749-8700

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Tanque Verde Canyon and Dangerous **FLASH FLOODS**



Upper Tanque Verde Creek is fed by springs, rain, and snowmelt from 40 square miles of slopes and tributaries in the Santa Catalina and Rincon Mountains. While stretches of the creek are dry during parts of the year, even small, isolated, and distant storms can cause the creek to fill rapidly. Since the water doesn't have time to soak into the ground, it rushes in a torrent, forceful

enough to move trees and boulders, through the canyon. Clouds building in the upper stretches of the watershed are not visible from Tanque Verde Falls.

Each year, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA) is called to save people stranded by high water or swept away in flood waters. **PLEASE** don't let this happen to you! **Before entering the canyon, check weather and radar apps for past, present, and predicted storms. Flash floods can occur minutes or hours after rain. Do not enter the canyon if there is storm or flood risk.**

HEAT CAN BE DEADLY
KNOW WHAT TO DO

HEAT EXHAUSTION

SYMPTOMS: Dizziness Thirst Weakness Nausea Muscle cramps

ACTION: Move to a cooler area, loosen clothing, and sip cool water. Watch for signs of heat stroke.

HEAT STROKE

SYMPTOMS: Dizziness Confusion Losing Consciousness

ACTION: CALL 911
Move person to a cooler area, loosen clothing and remove extra layers, and cool them with water or ice

Multiuse Trails

Share the trail. Open to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Communicate and be courteous with other users.
SAFETY: Never enter the canyon during high water or when there is a risk of flooding.

Lower Tanque Verde Trail	0.5 mi. (one way)	This trail starts at the lower trailhead and descends switchbacks to the creekbed. Use caution navigating the smooth bedrock and boulders at the end of the trail; they are slippery even when dry. There is no trail along the creek in the canyon. Elevation gain to climb out of canyon: 280 ft.
Tanque Verde Rim Loop	2-mi. loop	This scenic trail meanders through a forest of saguaros, ocotillo, prickly pear, and palo verde while offering excellent views of the canyon, desert, Rincon Mountains, and Tucson. The trail connects all three parking areas north of Redington Road. The segment south of Redington Road skirts the canyon rim and leads to an overlook with a not-to-miss view of Tanque Verde Falls. *Use this trail instead of canyon trails when there is flood risk! *Great at sunset and in spring when wildflowers bloom
Central Canyon Access Trail	0.2 mi. (one way)	This short, steep, and rocky trail drops into a narrow section of the canyon between the lower and upper falls. Be extremely careful around the rocks and pools above the falls: don't slip! Elevation gain to climb out of canyon: 120 ft.
Upper Tanque Verde Trail	0.5 mi. (one way)	This trail winds through the desert and descends a series of stone steps into an area of the canyon above Tanque Verde Falls with rocky ledges and seasonal pools and sandy beaches. Elevation gain to climb out of canyon: 120 ft.

This site is managed in partnership with the Friends of Redington Pass.

www.friendsofredingtonpass.org