

Sedona Red Rocks [Sedona, AZ](#)

Sedona Red Rocks

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Most trails have fees. Check before you go.

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Sedona Red Rocks

From the website [Visit Arizona: Sedona](#), "From the very first glimpse of the glorious Sedona red rock landscape, visitors feel the majesty and mystery of a place sacred to its earliest prehistoric settlers. It's been said, "God created the Grand Canyon but He lives in Sedona." It is awesome yet it invites personal exploration.



Red Rocks and Blue Sky

Above plains and canyons soar brilliantly hued cliffs and rugged spires of sandstone sculpted by eons

of ocean tides and desert winds. It is a 25 square-mile enclave surrounded by vast stretches of national and state forestlands that make Sedona seem like a world apart.

Located two hours north of Phoenix, and 30 miles south of the Flagstaff peaks, Sedona's mild four-season climate and high desert terrain assure good year-round weather for vacationers and outdoor enthusiasts. Oak Creek Canyon, a spectacular 16-mile gorge with streams and waterfalls between sheer rock walls, beckons hikers, campers and fishermen. It has been termed by Rand McNally as one of the eight most scenic drives in America.

Nearly four million travelers visited Sedona last year, rivaling the Grand Canyon, just 2 1/2 hours north, as a world class destination. Yet the influx does not disturb the small-town ambiance that is part of Sedona's charm. Shopping plazas, gift boutiques, galleries and restaurants abound. Tlaquepaque—an Indian name meaning "the best of everything"—is modeled after a Mexican village, made up of quaint courtyards surrounded by specialty shops, galleries and restaurants." [Read more...](#)

March 28 to April 3, 2021: Marguerite and I stayed in Cottonwood, AZ rather than Sedona only because we didn't want to pay for the more expensive places to stay in Sedona. While Sedona is definitely impressive and we did nearly all our hiking in the surrounding areas, our cheapness "paid off" in more than just \$\$\$ - Sedona is crowded! Every day we got an early start and were on the trails no later than 8:00 a.m. and usually drove through or close by Sedona. The traffic in the mornings was not bad. Most hikes lasted between three and five hours. When driving through Sedona around noon, the traffic was often backed up for, literally, miles going into town, especially around the traffic circles. We were fortunate in that the traffic going out of town wasn't too bad.

[Cottonwood](#) is about a 30-minute drive from Sedona. We had no idea if Cottonwood was a good place to stay, but we discovered that [Old Town Cottonwood](#) is, frankly, awesome. There are breweries, pubs, wine tasting,

antique stores and some great restaurants. Old town is three or four blocks of fun. And there are nowhere near the number of tourists as Sedona. When we go back, we will likely stay in Old Town Cottonwood and drive the 30 minutes or so to the trailheads.

In Cottonwood, we stayed at the [The Iron Horse Inn](#). It had everything we needed, to include a small fridge and microwave. There is a courtyard to have happy hour and free Starbucks coffee, the bed was comfortable, and the AC worked. It was

quiet even though it is right on the road. Who could ask for more? I know many people do ask for more, but we can get by with fairly minimal amenities (we lived in a grass house for two years, so got used to not having a bunch of amenities). If you prefer a bit more, amenity-wise, this might not be for you. The only criticism is that the one-bedroom room we had was pretty tight; Marguerite called it "cozy." Next time, just to get a bit more elbow-room, we might get a two-bedroom.



First restaurant visit since Covid-19 pandemic. [Fojol Brothers](#)

Overview & Things to Consider

- **Main Attraction**: Beautiful rock formations, incredible vistas and chances to get away from the crowds to enjoy them (see the pics), hundreds of trails, great places to eat (the after-hike), Mountain biking is big and all the bikers are courteous and friendly, photo ops galore - see my photo links below.
- **Biggest Negative**: Crowded Trails. Expect to see people on nearly every trail. Remember, you hike here for the scenery, not the solitude. If you can, get to the trailheads early (before 8:00 am) and avoid the weekends. Longer hikes have fewer people. If you are fit, then you can get away from the crowds by taking longer hikes. 8 to 10 miles Loops thin out people pretty fast. Traffic in Sedona is very heavy starting around 11:00 a.m. or so. GO EARLY!
- **Best Season (IMHO)**: Spring and Fall. Summer can be very hot.
- **Fees**: Most trails have fees. [Check before you go.](#)
- **Parking**: Most parking lots fill up fast!
- Take plenty of water. It gets hot in the desert.
- Rattlesnakes begin to emerge from their winter naps in late April. Here is a [list of do's and do not's from healthline.com](#). We didn't see any snakes, but we talked to a ranger who said they would soon be emerging. Here is a [list of rattlers you might see in Arizona](#).
- Dress in layers. It is often chilly in the morning and hot in the afternoon.
- Take plenty of breaks and enjoy what you are hiking through. It's not a race.
- Check out [this website](#) for more Sedona info.

Trails & Adventures

3/29/21: [Hike Oak Creek: West Fork Trail](#)

- 6.5 to 8.0 miles roundtrip
- Easy to Moderate
- Some websites have it marked as moderate, but that is probably because of the many stream crossings (you will probably get your feet wet), which can make it a bit difficult if the stream is full.
- Family Friendly (stream crossings)
- Heavily Trafficked
- "A very pleasant and easy hike."
- We started the hike at 8:00 and got back to the car about noon and there were still parking spots available, but not many.
- Trailhead Coordinates: 34.991, -111.743
- Elevation: range: 5282' to 5570', gross: +730' -556'
- [Driving Directions](#)
- [Trail Map](#)
- [Geospatial PDF](#)
- [Search this Trail](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Arizona State Resources](#)
- [Coconino National Forest](#)
- [Alltrails.com info](#)

Rod's Notes: I am sure glad we got there early. We didn't see many people on the way out, but was wall to wall people on the way back. Hike all the way to the end of the trail. A large cairn marked the end of the trail and if you go further, you are going to be wading. Some people continue the hike, especially backpackers.

We met one man on the way back that told us that he had done this trail many times and that it was the "creme de la creme" of Sedona hiking. I definitely thought it was a nice hike, but was also disappointed to here that this was the best hike we were going to do, at least according to this man. While a nice hike, especially to start out our week of hiking, I would disagree that it is the "creme de la creme." I preferred the other hikes, probably because they had better views and more unique scenery. IMHO.

Marg's Notes: Got up early, 5:45, to get ready for hike. Drove to West Fork Trail about 45 minutes away. North of Sedona. It was very chilly when we left! I wore my down jacket & gloves but also shorts! Started hike at 8:00 am. Hiked along a creek (Oak Creek) the whole way. We crossed it 13 times each way. The first crossings were a bit slick due to frost. A nice out & back that was about 8 miles. Pretty crowded on the way back. Lasagna for dinner.

We also hiked the [Jail trail](#) in Cottonwood before dinner. Nice walk along Verde River. 1.9 miles roundtrip.

More Pictures as if folks can't get to the website. See more pictures below. (with a link to more pictures from each day's hike – only the good ones)



Verde River on the [Jail trail](#)

3/30/21: [Hike Munds Wagon, Cow Pies and Hangover Loop Trail](#)

- 8.0 to 9.0 miles loop
- Moderate to strenuous, depending on your balance.
- The Hangover Trail has a few steep drops, but the trail has plenty of room and good boots will help you stick to the rock.
- Moderate to heavy traffic.
- "Big views and lots of variety." "Wall-to-wall beautiful." This was Marguerite's favorite hike of our week stay in 2021 but it took its toll on her: "You better believe we're having beer!"
- We hiked counter clockwise, going up the Munds Wagon Trail to the Cowpies intersection, and followed that to the Hangover Trail. This is a lolly-pop loop.
- We started about 8:00 and saw few people initially but saw more as the day progressed. There is a lot of dune buggy traffic on Schnebly Hill Road ferrying tourists up and down the valley. You will hear that traffic nearly the whole hike, but you get used to it; you are there for the scenery.
- Elevation: range: 4455' to 5283' gross: +2062' -2071'
- [Driving Directions](#)
- [Trail Map](#)
- [Geospatial PDF](#)
- [Search this Trail](#)
- [Photos](#)
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- [Alltrails.com info](#)



Early stream crossing

Rod's Notes: This was a beautiful hike. Again, very happy that we got an early start. Still, we met several people later in the day as the crowds hit the trail. All three parts (Munds Wagon, Cow Pies and Hangover Trails) had their unique contributions to the hike. Hiking counter-clockwise, we paralleled a pretty stream all the way up the Munds Trail before taking the Cow Pie Trail. I wondered why they called it Cow Pie and discovered that the rock formations look like huge cow pies. I am glad it wasn't because a bunch of cows left real cow pies along the trail.



We followed Munds Wagon TR to Cow Pies.

Cow pies on the left. Easy to lose the trail. GPS is nice.

We had a snack where the Cow Pie trail joins Hangover Trail. Again, the way my mind works, I was totally wrong about why they call it Hangover Trail. Of course, I thought perhaps it was that some drunken cowboys were up here, camped, drank their dinner and had bad hangovers the next day. Nope, wrong again. It is because there are a bunch of steep slopes and ledges that *hang over* deep ravines. Those hang overs make the trail a double black diamond for mountain bikers but as long as you have good boots to grip the stone, hiking is not really a problem. However, if you are afraid of heights then you might want to avoid this part of the trail. The out and back to the Cow Pies/Hangover junction is a great hike.

Marg's Notes: Got ready night before so we could head out earlier & were on the trail by 7:50. Chilly again, but not quite as cold. First part of hike went along beside the Munds Wagon Road. Lots of 4wd buggies so a bit noisy, but the trail was nice & wooded. After about 2 miles we joined the cow pies trail & climbed a bit. The view from the Cow Pies was fantastic. We had a bar there then joined the Hangover Trail. This climbed over & up lots of rocks, a few narrow places but not that bad. Met lots of nice people. Turned a loop & headed back thru forest. Ended by going out same trail we came in on. Went 9 miles! I was really tired when we got back Took a nap! Went to [Belfry Brewery](#) for dinner: Beer, potato & cheese thing & hummus & Beer!



Right: Ledges and sharp slopes give the Hangover portion of the loop its name. Yes, I would think you need to be a good biker to maneuver this part of the trail.

Below: Looking back towards the Cow Pies from the Hangover Trail. See the cow pies?

Bottom: Snack break at Cow Pies/Hangover Junction.



3/31/21: [Hike Fay Canyon & Fay Canyon Arch](#)

- 2.6 to 3.2 miles roundtrip
- Easy to moderate
- The hike up to Fay Canyon Arch (makes the hike moderate but is not a required part of the hike) is steep but doable with children. Take your time as it is only about 1/10th mile to the arch. You can hike beyond the end of Fay Trail (marked by an end-of-trail sign) by climbing up and around the rocks. Fewer people do this because it is a little steep. Again, just take your time and you should be fine, even with children.



Go beyond the 'end of trail' sign for few people and beautiful view down Fay Canyon.

- Family Friendly
- Heavily trafficked
- Trailhead coordinates: 34.901917, -111.857917
- Elevation range: 4590' to 4884', gross: +441' -242'
- [Driving Directions](#)
- [Trail Map](#)
- [Search this Trail](#)
- [Coconino National Forest](#)
- [More State Resources](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Alltrails.com](#) info: [Fay Canyon](#) and [Fay Canyon Arch](#)

Rod's Notes: We were the only ones at the Fay Canyon Arch. Probably because we got an early start and likely because the trail to the arch is hard to see. The arch itself is very difficult to see unless you actually go up, stand under it and see that, yes indeed, it is an arch. We took a lot of pictures. This is a gorgeous little canyon and if you just do the out and back without coming up to Pinnacle Lodge then it is extremely easy.

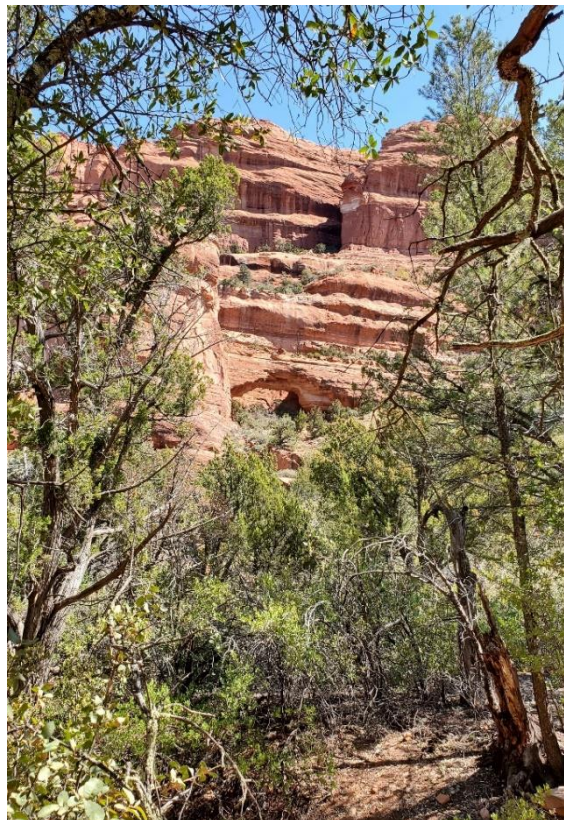


Fay Canyon Arch from Fay Canyon Arch. Yep, it's an arch.

At the end of Fay Canyon Trail, we continued past the end of trail marker to a stunningly beautiful, stunningly quiet and peaceful huge cavern-like entrance of a cliff. Many people were congregated at and just beyond the

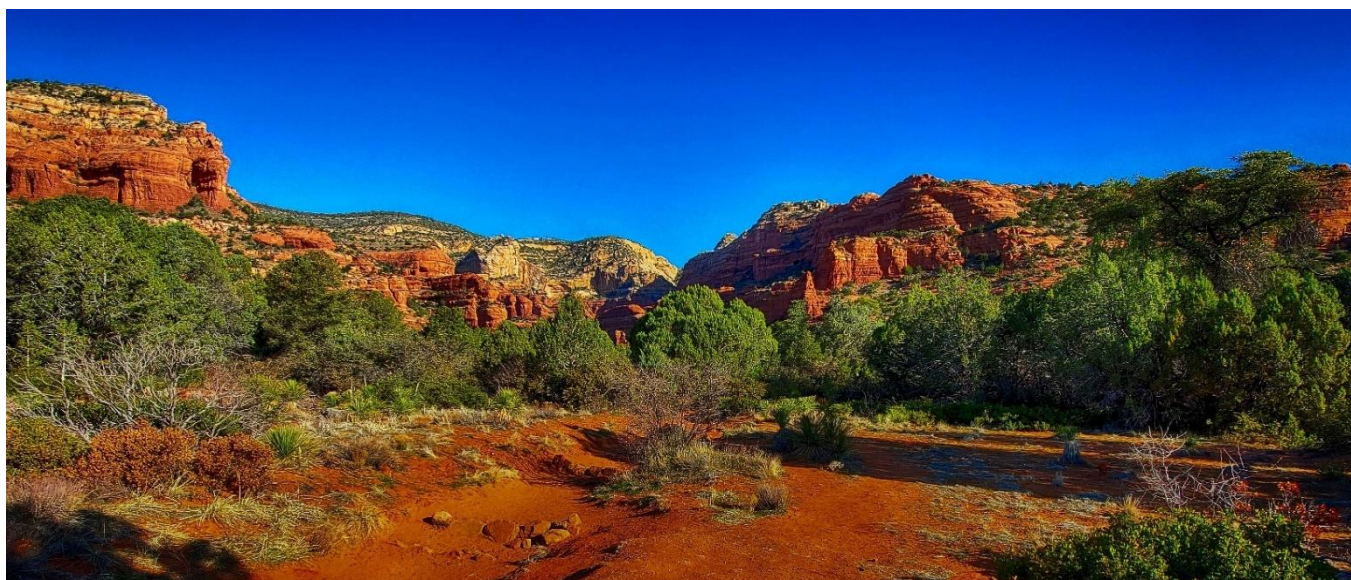
end of trail marker. But fewer go into the canyon beyond, so you can find some peace and solitude if you climb about 100 yards further.

Marg's Notes: Easy day. Still left early. Fay Canyon and Pinnacle (Fay Canyon) Arch. Even tho this was supposed to be easy, Rod had us climb up 500 ft. in 0.1 mile! Nice easy hike along a creek bed, then took a side trail up to Pinnacle Arch. It was quite a climb but worth it for the view! Had a bar & H₂O up there. I didn't feel well at the top. After a rest we went back down and finished along main trail. Continued to end but wen on past! Fairly easy hike after climbing up some rocks. Stopped in a concave space in rock wall for another bar & beautiful view. Came back to room & had lunch in the courtyard. Then a nap! Then, I did all my writing up!



Fay Canyon Arch from main trail. Hard to see that there is an arch there.

Left: Us from Fay Canyon Arch.



Fay Canyon from near the trailhead

4/01/21: [Cathedral Rock Loop: Hiline and Templeton Trails](#)

- 8.0 miles loop
- Moderate
- This hike has some marginally challenging up and down but it is well worth it. You should be in good shape to tackle this hike
- Moderate to heavy traffic. Especially heavy at Templeton Trail/Cathedral Rock Trail intersection.
- "Wall-to-wall beautiful!"
- Trailhead coordinates: 34.807306, -111.769694
- Elevation range: 3970' to 4648' gross: +1323' -1322'
- [Driving Directions](#)
- [Trail Map](#)
- [Search this Trail](#)
- [Coconino National Forest](#)
- [More State Resources](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Alltrails.com Info](#)

Rod's Notes: We started at about 7:15 to beat the heat which is supposed to be in the 80s today or high 70s anyway. We are the only ones on the trail right now (first half-hour or so) although there were other cars in the parking lot so they must be ahead of us.

This trail gives you everything from hiking through little Manzanita, pine and juniper groves, to riparian forest, to desert and mountains, to stunning views. This hike also has some serious up and down, but it is well worth it. Eight miles of wall to wall beauty again just like the Munds, Cow Pie and Hangover trail.

This was my favorite hike of our Cottonwood/Sedona 2021 trip because of the



This was picture day for Rod. Clouds, rocks, trees, blue sky, cacti, water and all the goodness of the hike worked magic. A real photographer with a real camera could get some incredible photos. Check out [more photos here](#).



variation in scenery. I particularly liked walking along the flat stone near the top of the trail. My best photos came from this hike. See the photos.

Marg's Notes: Cathedral Loop Trail ~4 hours. Started early again ~7:10. Nice day & not as cold. Really enjoyed the hike. Lots of different ecosystems. From desert to riparian forest. Very nice river a bit more than ½ way around. We went counter clockwise. Lots of people climbing up to Cathedral Rock so we just kept going. 8.5 miles! Warm towards the end.

[Smelter Town Brewery](#) & [Main St. Cafe Pizza](#) in Old Town [Clarkdale](#). Fun!

Rod again: Yes, the Smelter Town Brewery & Main St. Café were great! You can take your pizza into the Brewery, as the brewery doesn't have food. The brewery even has a menu for the café. And the folks from the café will deliver the pizza to you in the brewery. Very nice. The pizza was awesome, and the beer was also great. I am torn between this and Fojol Bro's for best eating experience of the trip. Call it a tie; do them both.



4/02/21: [Brins Mesa Loop](#)



- 5.5 miles loop – clockwise
- Moderate
- The hike up to Soldier Cave is steep (and rather difficult to find the cutoff point), which makes the hike more moderate than easy.
- Heavy traffic, especially between parking lot, 7 Sacred Pools and Soldier Cave.
- We started at about 7:25 to beat the heat and the crowds. We succeeded on the heat, but it was crowded nearly from the get-go. Many people miss the cutoff for Soldier Cave. Keep an eye out for a small path and a wilderness sign. That is your trail if you want to do the out and back to Soldier Cave.
- Elevation range: 4485' to 5102' gross: +975' -976'
- Trailhead coordinates: 34.888000, -111.768694
- [Driving Directions](#)
- [Trail Map](#)
- [Search this Trail](#)
- [Coconino National Forest](#)
- [Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness](#)
- [More State Resources](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Alltrails.com Info](#)



Rod's Notes: The 7 Sacred Pools are pretty and unique. But there were so many people on the trail, that it made it less enjoyable than it could be. Get there at daybreak would be my advice. Hiking clockwise, there is a small mesa about 4 miles into the hike. Take one of the small trails off the main trail and climb the mesa for a beautiful 360 view. [See the map, "Small Mesa for a 360 view."](#)

Marg's Notes: Soldier Loop, 7 sacred pools, Soldier Cave. 6.5 miles. 3 hours & 15 minutes. Hit the trail early again, 7:15. Rod cleverly [she called me "clever" 😊] found an alternate trailhead down a dirt road! Still crowded but plenty of parking early. Went clockwise today. More beautiful views. Found trail to the cave easily. Not too hard a climb. Beautiful. More great pics! Climbed a small mesa on the way back around. It was very crowded at the Soldier trailhead! Reached it ~8 a.m. when parking lot opened.



From the 7 Sacred Pools

Lasagna & salad / pack.



Views from Soldier's Cave (left) and The Small Mesa (below).



Did You Know

Munds Wagon Trail history

This historic trail follows one of the first and most popular cattle trails out of the Sedona area. Upgrading of the trail began in 1896, but its completion as a wagon trail awaited the work of pioneer J.J. Thompson, funded by Coconino County, in 1902. It was known as the Munds Road and later as the Schnebly Hill Road. [More history...](#)

Ocotillo (ouch!)

[Per the U.S. Forest Service](#), "What are those plants on desert hillsides that look like bunches of spiny crooked dead sticks? They are ocotillos (pronounced oh-koh-TEE-yohs), one of the most curious and unique plants of the southwestern United States. Despite their funny looks, ocotillos are common and adaptable desert plants. They grow throughout the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts from southeastern California to western Texas and south into Mexico. They grow at elevations from sea level to 6,700 feet, in a variety of soils, and associated with a variety of other plants."

From This is Tucson, 10 ocotillo facts:

1. Their name in Spanish means "little torch"
2. It has a bunch of weird nicknames: Flaming Sword, Jacob's Staff, Desert Coral, Candlewood, Vine Cactus, and Coachwhip.
3. Hummingbirds are their BFFs
4. Speaking of food, you can eat the flowers too
5. Ocotillos put on a show every spring
6. Ocotillos are pros at conserving water
7. Don't call them a cactus
8. Ocotillos can grow up to 20-feet tall and live almost as long as a human!
9. You can build a living fence with ocotillo
10. A Tucson florist made a life-size replica plane out of ocotillo in 1927

Who lived in the Sedona Red Rocks and when?

People have been drawn to this area for thousands of years. Spear points and rock art provide clues about people who hunted and lived in this area called *mad wii jah wiipuka bak* (homeland) by the Yavapai.

Around 1,400 years ago, a group of people that archaeologists refer to as the Sinagua lived as family units in pit houses. The Yavapai refer to these people as "pahtyan" meaning "ancient ones." They experimented with

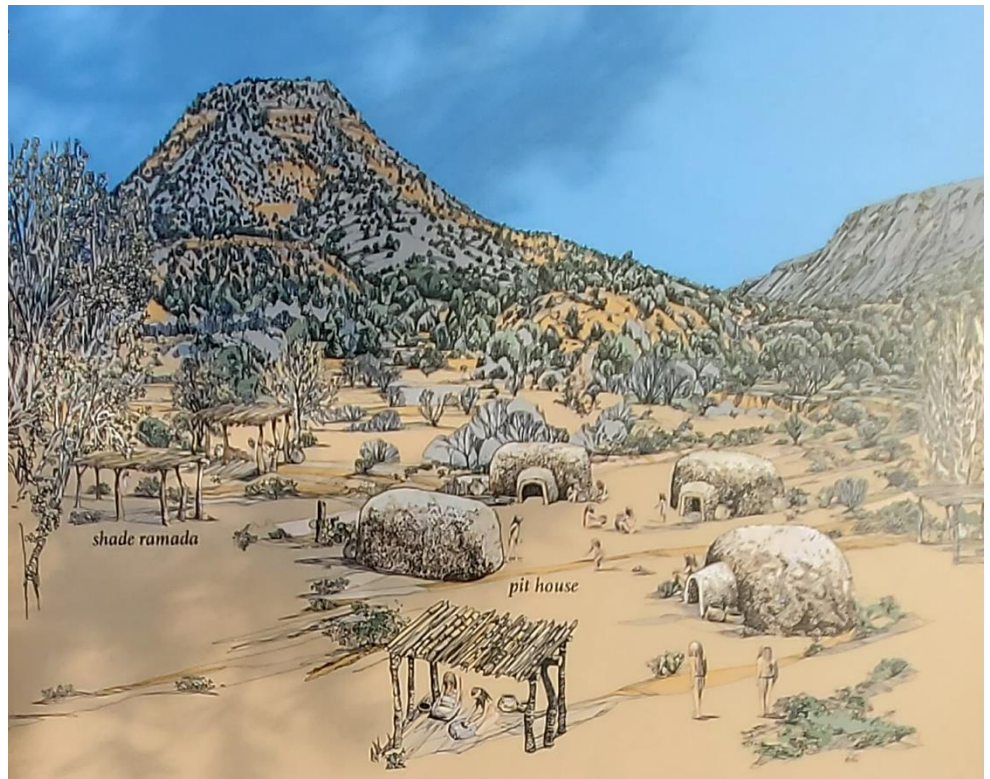


Ocotillo (not a cactus) & Prickly Pear Cactus on Cathedral Loop Trail.

agriculture, but also relied on foraging. Eventually they expanded their agriculture to include corn, squash, beans, and cotton. About 88 years ago, they shifted to village life at structures built high in cliff walls, like Montezuma Castle, Honanki, and Palatki. The Sinagua left the Verde Valley around 1425.

Bands of Wipukapaya Yavapai were probably living in the Verde Valley before the Sinagua left. Dil zhe'e Apache moved in some time later. Both groups moved regularly to hunt game and gather plants to be used for food, clothing, baskets and medicine.

They lived in temporary structures, called oways (or wickiups), constructed from a frame of ben branches covered with brush and grasses. Yavapai and Apache people continue to live in this part of Arizona.



What is a **Mesa**?

Per [National Geographic Encyclopedia](#), "A mesa is a flat-topped mountain or hill. It is a wide, flat, elevated landform with steep sides.

Mesa is a Spanish word that means table. Spanish explorers of the American southwest, where many mesas are found, used the word because the tops of mesas look like the tops of tables.

Mesas are formed by erosion, when water washes smaller and softer types of rocks away from the top of a hill. The strong, durable rock that remains on top of a mesa is called caprock. A mesa is usually wider than it is tall.

Mesas are usually found in dry regions where rock layers are horizontal. The Grand Mesa in the U.S. state of Colorado, considered the largest mesa in the world, has an area of about 1,300 square kilometers (500 square miles) and stretches for 64 kilometers (40 miles)."

7 sacred pools & Soldiers Cave

A good article on the history (and pre-history) of the area: [WESTERNERS TRACK THE HISTORY OF SOLDIERS PASS](#).

Per [top-ten-travel-list.com](#), "Seven Sacred Pools is a series of 7 natural pools which descend down the natural rocks. According to Red Rock Western Jeep Tours Operation Manager Randy Rohlf, these pools were considered sacred by the Apaches and Yavapai as the pools were considered a valuable source of drinking water year-round in a barren desert, and in addition, a sign of life and a means of attracting wildlife to the area."

Cairn: [Here is a good article](#) by LiveScience.com on just what the heck cairns are. “Rock cairns are human-made stacks, mounds or piles of rocks. They take different forms and have been built by cultures around the world for many different purposes. Cairns may serve as monuments, burial sites, navigational aids (by land or sea), or ceremonial grounds, among other uses. They may stand alone, in clusters, or in a network of related cairns; for example, as trail markers in a park.”



These cairns, made for no particular purpose that I can tell, are good representations of cairns you might see marking your way.

For our purposes (at least for this website) cairns are small rock stacks that people (sometimes forest service and sometimes just regular hikers)

make to mark the way. “The way” typically includes helping you navigate when the trail is not obvious, such as over rocks and rocky areas, and to mark a turnoff to a point of interest, like Soldier’s Cave.

Sometimes people build cairns for the fun of it, which can be confusing to hikers searching for the correct trail. Don’t do that in the wild. Also, parents, don’t let your children tear down cairns – just leave them alone. I met a man on the Fay Canyon Trail who was looking for the Fay Canyon Arch cutoff. I told him to look for a cairn to the side of the trail. He said that a parent had let their children push over all the cairns so that that cairn was probably no longer there. And, yep, when we passed the cutoff on our way back to the car, the cairn had been destroyed. I put it back up. Parents, teach your children to be non-destructive, please.

The Story of the Red Rock in Sedona

From the [Orchard Canyon website](#): Before the red rock was turned into rock, it was all soft mud and sand. Over a 320 million year period changes in nature helped transform the sand and mud into something more beautiful than we could have imagined. Sea levels rose and fell during this time and with each rise and fall mud was added. During the sea level rise the mud would be washed in and then when it receded the wind brought in layers of sand. After years of this happening over and over again, the sediment was lithified (transformed) into hard rock.

The hard rock had a thin layer of iron oxide that was caused by chemical weathering of natural minerals. The process of the iron oxide weathering turned the rock its signature red color. At one point there was 1,900 feet of red rock covering Sedona. While we know how the red rock got there, how it was formed into beautiful natural sculptures is another story.

Oak Creek began to form and over time the other rivers in the area began to erode and break up the rock. The rivers would carry parts of the rock out to the ocean and leave behind red rock formations that we love today. When we look at the red rock formations we are actually looking at natural erosion taking place right before our eyes. Oak Creek, for example washes sand over the rock, smoothing it out like with a natural polishing type process. The sand also cuts a smooth groove through the rock that visitors float in during the hotter months of the year!

What is a Vortex?

[From the Visit Sedona website](#): Sedona vortexes (the proper grammatical form ‘vortices’ is rarely used) are thought to be swirling centers of energy that are conducive to healing, meditation and self-exploration. These are places where the earth seems especially alive with energy. Many people feel inspired, recharged or uplifted after visiting a vortex.

Although all of Sedona is considered to be a vortex, there are specific sites where the energy crackles most intensely. The four best known Sedona vortexes are found at Airport Mesa, Cathedral Rock, Bell Rock and Boynton Canyon—each radiating its own particular energy. Some are thought to produce energy flowing upward while at others the energy spirals downward, entering the earth.

Read more about Vortexes and where to find them [here](#).

Resources

Home for the week

[Old Town Cottonwood, AZ](#)

Old Town Cottonwood is only three or four blocks long, but it is a real gem. Food, drink (beer and wine tasting), music, and great people. It is somewhat touristy, but nothing like Sedona. We chose wisely when choosing to stay here.

[The Iron Horse Inn](#)

The Iron Horse Inn in Old Town Cottonwood was “cozy,” to quote Marguerite. The single queen room we had was small, but we had a fridge and microwave. Along with our cooler, we had all we needed to make easy meals. Everything is a little smaller than most places we stay, but if we wanted to stretch our wings a bit, then all we had to do was go out into the courtyard with our popcorn and beer/wine. I would most definitely stay here again.

Towns and Places

[Clarkdale, AZ](#)

A neat little town where we had dinner one night. About a 15 minute drive from Cottonwood. We had dinner at [Smelter Town Brewery](#) and [Main St. Cafe Pizza](#).

[Sedona, AZ](#)

The Sedona Visitor Website is very good. If you plan to visit, you should [take a look](#). Also, it has a [very nice trail finder](#).

Frankly, I was not a fan of Sedona. It has all kinds of things to do around it, guide services, restaurants and, I presume, a bunch of other cool stuff – bike riding looking very popular. But for me, it was just **way too crowded**. Traffic circles are used to control traffic. I don’t think they do a very good job, but perhaps it is better than before they had them. Still, traveling through Sedona on most days after a hike, starting at about 11:00 a.m. (or maybe earlier, but we were on the trails then) it seemed to be wall-to-wall cars for miles around those traffic circles – even on the weekdays! Unfortunately, that is the impression I

have of have of Sedona – wall-to-wall cars. I will avoid it like the plague, except to travel through it to get to my hikes, and I will do that as early as possible. Stay in Cottonwood.

Food & Drink

[The State Bar](#)

Our first night in Cottonwood. Had a beer, talked to a couple of locals and just relaxed. A nice place to get a beer and just hang out.

[Fojol Brothers](#)

Wow! Probably the best (or at least most unique) place we ate. Again, this was our first night in Cottonwood after getting a tip from the guys at The State Bar. All vegetarian food. Live “band” – one guy playing the keyboard and singing, but he was very good. More food than we could eat so we had leftovers one night. Highly recommended and probably, the best place we ate the entire trip, although all the other places were good.

[Belfry Brewery](#)

A big place on the corner. Many people, very popular. A good place to get food and drink. And the beer was very good.

[Smelter Town Brewery](#)

[Main St. Cafe Pizza](#)

As I said above, the Smelter Town Brewery & Main St. Café were great! You can take your pizza into the Brewery, as the brewery doesn't have food. The brewery even has a menu for the café. And the folks from the café will deliver the pizza to you in the brewery. Very nice. The pizza was awesome, and the beer was also great. I am torn between this and Fojol Bro's for best place eating experience of the trip. Do them both.

[Merkin Vinyards](#)

We stopped at the Merkin Vinyards tasting room in Old Town Cottonwood to...uh...taste wine. Honestly, we were not particularly impressed, nor were we unimpressed. It's wine. The cool thing about Merkin Vinyards is that the vineyards are owned by the lead singer of [Tool](#), [Maynard James Keenan](#). I like tool! Many folks won't, but I like weird rock-&-roll.

Hiking Resources

[My Alltrails.com search](#)

You can modify this to your liking

- Difficulty: Easy or Moderate
- Length: Under 10 miles
- Rating 4+ stars
- Hiking

[Sedona Visitor Site Trail Finder](#)

Dang! This is pretty cool. I did not have this when we went on our 2021 trip. I guess I will have to go back.

[Planet Ware: 9 Top-Rated Hikes in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area](#)

[Hike Arizona](#)

A good site to find trails. The interface could use an upgrade, IMHO. However, I used it on the 2021 trip and I would use it again.

[The Outbound Collective: The Top 25 Hikes in Arizona](#)

More Resources

[Visit Arizona: Sedona](#)

Most trails have fees. [Check before you go.](#)

Rattlesnakes

- [list of do's and do not's from healthline.com](#)
- [list of rattlers you might see in Arizona](#)

[FAQ Sedona](#)

[Coconino National Forest](#)

[Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness](#)