

# HIKING TRAILS

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PHOENIX — Looking for a way to see all the beauty the Arizona desert has to offer? Check out this list of different trails around the Valley and what each one brings. Before you go, be sure to bring plenty of water. The city of Phoenix recommends heading back to the trailhead before you drink half of your water.

## Hole in the Rock Trail – Papago Park

**WHY GO?** It has great views for pictures and is a short, easy trail. It's located northeast of Phoenix Sky Harbor, close to Loop 202 Red Mountain.



**WHAT:** "The Hole-in-the-Rock Trail is a very short natural dirt and step path that wraps around Hole-in-the-Rock Butte to a large viewing hole in the butte. This short trail wraps around Hole-in-the-Rock Butte to a large wind-eroded hole. This very popular trail guides users to a large hole in the butte where visitors can look over the Phoenix metropolitan area," according to the city of Phoenix website.

The trail is rated "easy" at just 0.2 miles with an elevation change of 200 feet.

Parking/entrance hours:

East of Galvin Pkwy: 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.

West of Galvin Pkwy: Sunrise to Sunset

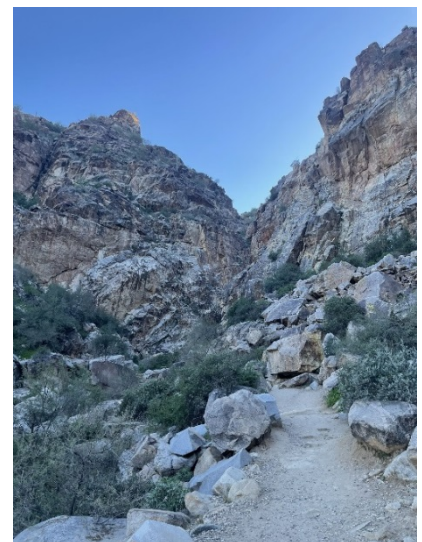
Trail hours: 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. Entry is free.

View the [park map](#).

## Waterfall Trail - White Tank Mountain Regional Park

**WHY GO?** It's a family-friendly trail with the first half being accessible for wheelchairs or strollers. It's an opportunity to view petroglyphs, and if you're able to go after it rains, you may be able to see water flowing down the waterfall. It's located in the West Valley, just west of Loop 303.

**WHAT:** A [self-guided hike outline](#) is available, filled with information about the petroglyphs, plants and wildlife that you may see along the way. The guide also provides more information about the waterfall itself: "The waterfall you see is actually fed by two more waterfalls above. These are strictly off-limits, as the signs say. The pools in the above falls are twice the size of the one you are standing at so it takes a lot of rain over a long period of time to fill these pools in order for the water to flow over the edge. That's why the waterfall rarely runs."



"The trail is rated "easiest" at 0.9 miles (1.8 miles round-trip).

Park hours:

May 1 to October 31 - 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

November 1 to April 30 - 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

Entry is \$7 per vehicle, or \$2 per pedestrian or anyone entering via bicycle or horseback.

View the [park map](#).

### **Wind Cave Trail - Usery Mountain Regional Park**

**WHY GO?** It's a difficult trail for those looking for a bit more of a challenge, complete with a cave at the end of the trail. It's located east of Mesa, near Loop 202.

**WHAT:** "The trail is in fairly good condition, but is rather rocky and steep, making for a strenuous climb. After a rain, travel can be even more difficult. The trail alternates between steep sections and sections of decomposed granite. Both require careful attention to footing," according to the U.S. Forest Service website.



The trail is rated "difficult" at 1.5 miles (3 miles round-trip).

Park hours:

May 1 to October 31 - 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

November 1 to April 30 - 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

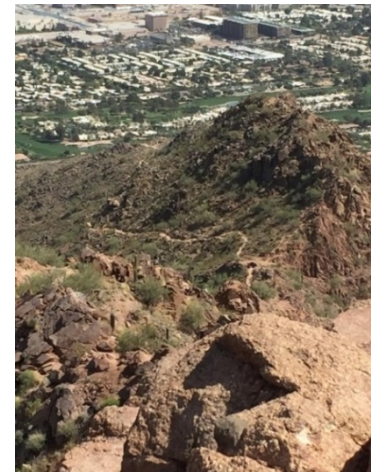
Entry is \$7 per vehicle, or \$2 per pedestrian or anyone entering via bicycle or horseback.

View the [park map](#).

### **Camelback Mountain**

**WHY GO?** For those looking for a challenge, Camelback Mountain is home to two of the most difficult trails in Maricopa County: Cholla Trail and Echo Canyon Trail. It's located northwest of Old Town Scottsdale.

**WHAT:** Cholla Trail and Echo Canyon Trail come together at the summit of the mountain. Cholla Trail is said to be less strenuous than the Echo Canyon Trail, but longer and still very difficult. Both trails are very steep and rocky. "Echo Canyon Trail is one of Phoenix's premier hiking destinations, and regularly is named a top national destination for avid and experienced hikers," according to the city of Phoenix website. Due to the difficulty of the trails, the city emphasizes the importance of being prepared before hitting the trail. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Phoenix's ["Take A Hike. Do it Right"](#) guidelines. Both trails are rated "extremely difficult."



Cholla Trail is 1.5 miles (3 miles round-trip) with an elevation change of 1,420 feet.  
Echo Canyon Trail is 1.14 miles (2.28 miles round-trip) with an elevation change of 1,400 feet.

Park hours:

Sunrise to sunset.

Entry is free.

View the [park map](#).

### **East & West Skip Rimsza Paseo - Phoenix Sonoran Preserve**

**WHY GO?** It's a paved trail that is family-friendly and wheelchair accessible. It's located in north Phoenix, north of the Interstate 17 and Loop 101 junction.

**WHAT:** "This trail is great for families and the elderly as it has a very gradual incline, not even noticeable, and has good views of the area," according to the city of Phoenix website. While marked as two different trails, both eventually meet. Both trails are rated "easiest."



East Skip Rimsza Paseo is 1.9 miles (3.8 miles round-trip), an elevation change of 37 feet.  
West Skip Rimsza Paseo is 3.1 miles (6.2 miles round-trip), an elevation change of 15 feet.

Parking and entrance hours:

5 a.m. - 7 p.m. Trail hours: 5 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Entry is free.

View the [park map](#).

### **Pipeline Canyon Trail - Lake Pleasant Regional Park**

**WHY GO?** It's a lakeside trail with camping opportunities in the park, located northwest of Phoenix, off of SR 74.

**WHAT:** Located on the west side of the park, the trail is complete with a view of the lake. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation website says a floating bridge has been installed to connect the trail during high water levels. The trail is rated "moderate" at 2 miles (4 miles round-trip).



Park hours:

May 1 to October 31 - 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

November 1 to April 30 - 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily



Entry is \$7 per vehicle, \$4 per motorized watercraft, \$2 per non-motorized watercraft. [Click here to read more on camping fees.](#)  
View the [park map](#).

### **Hidden Valley Trail via Mormon Trail - South Mountain Preserve and Park**

**WHY GO?** It's a trail that's moderately difficult but offers lots of unique features. Located in south Phoenix, south of Sky Harbor International Airport.

**WHAT:** "At the west end of Hidden Valley there is a 'Fat Man's Pass' and naturally smooth rock 'slide.' Follow the wash trail to a small cliff and the wash and trail turn left to exit back onto the National Trail after a 'natural tunnel,'" according to the city of Phoenix's website. There are also some petroglyphs along the Mormon Trail.

The trail is rated "moderate/difficult" at 2.2 miles.

Parking/Entrance:

5 a.m. to 7 p.m., trails are open through 11 p.m.

South Mountain also has an event called "Silent Sundays" in which Summit Road is closed to motor vehicles and the roadway is reserved for non-motorized activities.

Every fourth Sunday, the event goes from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Any other Sunday of the month, the event goes from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Entry is free.

View the [park map](#).



### **Maricopa Trail system**

**WHY GO?** Can't make up your mind? This trail system gives you options all around the county!

**WHAT:** "The Maricopa County Regional Trail System includes over 300 miles of existing trails that ring the County... The trail system links to all of Maricopa County's regional parks by traversing 15 separate municipalities," according to the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation website. The Sun Circle Trail is a smaller loop that goes through Phoenix and the surrounding cities. Some of the Sun Circle Trail overlaps with the Maricopa Trail.

Segments that are located in regional parks adhere to park hours and entry fees.

An [interactive map](#) provides information on the difficulty and distance of each segment of the trail.