



Rainbow Bridge South Trail Guide



Permits are required from the Navajo Nation for hiking and camping along this trail. Please note: there is no camping permitted within the boundaries of Rainbow Bridge National Monument. Make sure you know your location when you camp. Prior to making your plans please call the LeChee Chapter House (928-698-2800) south of Page, AZ or the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department in Window Rock, AZ (928-871-6647) for permits. For additional information go to the following web site: <http://www.navajonationparks.org/permits.htm>

Hiking this trail is not recommended during the cold and wet conditions of the winter months nor during the heat and flash flooding of the summer months. Typically the best months to complete this hike are March through Mid-May, and October and November.

To reach the South (Rainbow Lodge) Trailhead from Page, AZ

Driving Instructions

- At the intersection of Hwy 98 and Coppermine Rd (Big Lake Trading Post), take Hwy 98 East 51.1 miles to the Inscription House Trading Post turnoff (Navajo Rt 16).
- Take Navajo Rt 16 25.1 miles on pavement and 5.4 miles on dirt to the Navajo Mountain Trading Post fork - bear left and drive 4.6 miles to another fork.
- At the fork, which has a Pinon pine post with IL license plate nailed to it, bear right, drive 0.7 miles to the Navajo Mountain water tank filling area - keep going straight - the track no longer resembles a road and you will need to engage your 4WD. From here it is 1.4 miles to the ruins of the Rainbow Lodge and the Rainbow Bridge Trailhead.

Trail Description

The following information has been compiled from an archival NPS trail guide and hikes completed in October, 2003, May, 2004, and April 2008. Mileages are approximated via usage of archival trail guides and through accounts of trail hikes. Hiking times will vary, between nine and twelve hours. In this guide miles and hiking times have been modified and may not reflect posted mileages along trail. Hiking times assuming a nine hour hike are included with the exception of the section of trail through Redbud Pass. There has been significant *spalling* or rock falls in Redbud Pass since 2004. There are more boulders and drop-offs to maneuver over, thus hiking times through that section will likely be slower than previously recorded. It is recommended that this hike be planned as a two-day trip for all but the most experienced hikers.

The South trail, beginning at the Rainbow Lodge ruins, is not maintained. It is the steeper, rougher trail of the North and South trails. The trail is marked mainly with stone cairns and iron pipe mile-posts. Water is not available for the first eight to nine miles of this hike. The only route signs are at Redbud Canyon, Redbud Pass and Echo Camp.

Mile	Time (hr:min)	Trail Notes
0.5	--	Rainbow Lodge Ruins – trail begins at a rock cairn beyond cabin sites - elevation 6300 feet. Trail follows southwest side of Navajo Mountain – goes into and out of 3 canyons – several side trails, with main trail keeping to the right. No water – pinon, juniper cover.
2.5	1:10	Horse Canyon, second of three to be crossed
3.5	2:45	Mile-post
	3:20	High Camp - no water
	3:30	Mile-post
6	3:35	Yabut Pass ("Sunset Pass" inscribed in rock) – spectacular view into Cliff Canyon – 1600 foot drop in first 2 miles – hikers should keep a wary eye on the trail throughout this steep descent from Yabut Pass and healthy knees should be considered a requisite to hiking this section of trail.
	4:15	Mile-post
8	4:45	Cliff Canyon – elevation 4800 feet
	4:55	Mile-post
	5:30	Mile-post
9	5:35	First Water Campsite – pit toilet and garbage pit are full. Usually water here – some shade, good bedding, no firewood.
11	6:05	You have followed the stream to this junction with Redbud Canyon – Cliff Canyon turns slightly left. Confusing confluence of canyons; if you don't find the cairns, navigate toward a very large arch-shaped alcove high on a canyon wall to the left ahead. Redbud Pass is marked by a rock cairn on the right and route sign.
	6:30	Mile-post
11.4	6:40	Redbud Pass blasted by Wetherill/Bernheimer in 1922 and named by them – see inscriptions. Trail improvements by NPS, May 1957. Significant rock falls in last four years have obstructed the trail.
12.4		Redbud Creek comes in from your right, you tend left.
13.3		Intersection with the North (Navajo Mountain Trading Post) Trail – Bridge Creek, continue downstream.
	7:15	Mile-post
	7:30	Second Water Campsite – shade, usually water here.
15.1	9:00	Gate – please close.
15.2	9:05	Echo Camp – spring at campsite – nearest campsite to Rainbow Bridge National Monument.
16.0	9:15	Rainbow Bridge – please avoid re-vegetation areas.
17.2		Rainbow Bridge Docks, toilets but no running water, accessible by boat only.

Trail Notes compiled by NPS Interpreter Chuck Smith with revision of trail notes from Kirk Robinson, Spring 2008 - Summer 2004