



SAFETY FIRST: HIKING IN THE SONORAN DESERT



Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert landscape is a hiker's paradise. There are more than 320 total miles of trails in the region, including 200+ miles of shared-use trails in Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. While the fresh air, sunshine and picturesque terrain are inviting, preparation is imperative to safely explore Scottsdale's backyard.

HYDRATE

Be sure you're well hydrated before hitting the trail and bring along more water than you think you'll need for everyone in your hiking party, including pets. In general, bring at least one quart per person for short hikes (less than two hours) and a minimum of one gallon per person for longer hikes.

CHECK THE WEATHER

Daytime temperatures in the desert rise quickly, particularly during the summer. Know the forecast for the time you'll be hiking and avoid hiking in temperatures above 90° degrees Fahrenheit (32° C). If you get caught in one of our rare desert rainstorms, do not take shelter in washes or low-lying areas as they will flood quickly.

PROTECT YOUR PETS

You wouldn't hike the desert barefoot – don't make your dog do it! Foot protection for your pet will help avoid painful injuries from sharp rocks and cactus spines. Also, carry plenty of water for your pet, keep your pet on a leash at all times, and remember that pets have physical limits, too. If your pet is not used to hiking, it's probably best to leave your pet at home or at your hotel.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Choose a hike that matches your abilities and experience. All trails in Scottsdale are ranked by difficulty. Inexperienced hikers will do best on trails rated "Easy." Trails rated "Difficult" or "Extremely Difficult," such as Camelback Mountain's summit trails, should only be tackled by experienced hikers who are in very good health.



PACE YOURSELF

If you become fatigued while hiking, stop, rest, drink plenty of water and turn back toward the trailhead as soon as you feel able. And don't hesitate to ask a fellow hiker for assistance – most are friendly and more than willing to help!

STAY ON THE TRAIL

Always bring a trail map to keep you on course and stay on the designated trail. Doing so not only helps you avoid natural hazards such as prickly cacti, snakes and unstable terrain, it also helps protect the desert's delicate ecosystem. If an emergency arises, staying on the trail will allow help to find you as soon as possible.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Closed-toe hiking or athletic shoes are a must for traversing rugged desert trails. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants offer protection from the sun and heat, as well as prickly desert plants. Other musts include a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and plenty of sunscreen.

BRING YOUR CELL PHONE

A fully-charged cell phone can be a lifesaver, allowing you to call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency. If you're hiking alone, be sure to tell someone which trail you're taking and when you expect to be back. As you hike, make note of the trail markers, which can allow rescuers to find you as soon as possible.

By following these tips, you'll help ensure that your Scottsdale hiking experience is both fun and safe! To download or request our Scottsdale Hiking & Trail Guide, visit ExperienceScottsdale.com

