



Many visitors to the Grand Canyon would like to take one of those picturesque mule rides down from the South Rim to the bottom of the Canyon. It is a great adventure, but visitors can't just go over to the corral at Bright Angel and join the parade that day.

It requires a reservation made at least six months in advance, and for summer vacation times, it may take a year or more to get on the list. For information, call 1-888-297-2757. Another note of warning. Many people get their names on the waiting list, and show up hoping there will be cancellations. That doesn't happen often, so your best bet is to plan your Grand Canyon trip after you have a definite mule ride reservation.

The seven-hour Plateau Point rides depart daily from the Stone Corral at the head of Bright Angel Trail. The mules, who have amazing skills of staying on the skinny trail, proceed downward to Plateau Point. The ride offers thrilling views of the Canyon, as well as the eventual destination, the Colorado River 1,300 feet below. At the end of the downward part of the ride, a box lunch is provided while the mules rest. The single day ride price is about \$154 per person.

Some brave riders sign up for the two-day adventure, which includes an overnight stay at bunkhouses in the rustic Phantom Ranch, at the bottom of the Canyon, near the Colorado River. Overnight rides start at \$420 per person.

Not just anyone can go on the mule rides. The restrictions are specific, and no exceptions are allowed. Mule riders can't weigh more than 200 pounds fully dressed. No little kids are permitted, and everyone must be at least 4 feet 7 inches tall, needs to speak and understand English and must be in good physical shape.

Riders should not be afraid of heights or those big mules. Oh, and sorry ladies in a certain condition. No pregnant riders. All that bumping along could induce a new rider to enter the world at a dramatic moment halfway down the Grand Canyon.

Many visitors to the Grand Canyon would like to take one of those picturesque mule rides down from the South Rim to the bottom of the Canyon. It is a great adventure, but they can't just show up at the corral at Bright Angel in their cowboy outfits that morning and join the trek.

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