



# SAFETY FIRST: HIKING IN THE SONORAN DESERT



Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert is a hiker's paradise, with more than 350 total miles of trails in the region, including 235 miles of shared-use trails in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. But as beautiful as our desert is, it's also a challenging environment so preparation is key for exploring it safely!

## BRING WATER

Hydrate before hitting the trail and bring more water than you think you'll need for everyone in your party, including pets. Drink water as you hike (don't wait until you're thirsty), and when half of your water is gone, turn around and head back to the trailhead.

## CHECK THE WEATHER

Know the forecast for the entire time you'll be out and avoid hiking in temperatures above 90° F (32° C). If it rains, don't take shelter in washes or low-lying areas as they will flood quickly.

## PROTECT YOUR PETS

Carry plenty of water for your pet. Don't take your dog on the trail if it's not used to hiking or if temperatures are forecast to exceed 90° F (32° C) at any time during your hike – the desert heat can kill your dog with little to no warning. Dog boots will protect paws from sharp rocks and cactus spines.

## KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Scottsdale trails are difficulty-rated using the symbols below. Choose a hike that matches your abilities, experience and overall health. All trails are ranked one difficulty level higher when temperatures exceed 90° F (32° C).



## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Closed-toe hiking or athletic shoes, long-sleeved shirts and long pants in light colors, and a wide-brimmed hat provide the best protection from sun and thorny desert plants. Remember your sunscreen!

## BUDDY-UP

Hike with others if possible. If hiking alone, tell someone which trail you are hiking, your starting point and when you expect to return.

## STAY ON THE TRAIL

Doing so keeps you on course, protects the desert's delicate ecosystem, and helps you avoid natural hazards like cacti, snakes and unstable terrain. Staying on the trail also helps first responders find you if an emergency arises.

## THINGS TO BRING

- Water
- Sunscreen
- Fully charged cell phone
- Healthy snacks
- Trail map
- Emergency whistle



### CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN: KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Camelback Mountain's extremely difficult trails offer magnificent scenic views. But each year, dozens of people suffer heatstroke and injuries while hiking Camelback and need to be rescued. Don't attempt these trails unless you're an experienced hiker in excellent health, and never in temperatures higher than 90° F (32° C). **Note:** Camelback Mountain's Echo Canyon and Cholla trails, as well as Phoenix's Piestewa Peak Trail, close from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. during excessive heat warnings.