

OFF HIGHWAY SUGGESTIONS

ALL TRIP SUGGESTIONS ARE WELL SIGNED AND MAPPED ON THE MOTOR VEHICLE USE MAP (MVUM). The MVUM has all the open roads on the Coconino National Forest. If the road isn't on the map, it is considered a closed road. Use of closed roads may result in a citation. Be aware of changing conditions after monsoon rains and winter weather. Always check ahead to be sure roads are open and passable. Stay on the roads and minimize damage when driving on wet, muddy roads.

Road Types

Graded and/or maintained roads – Forest roads that are dirt but are regularly maintained so that all vehicles and most drivers can easily handle them. These roads are typically 3-digit road numbers, but there are exceptions like FR 153 (Schnebley Hill Road) and FR 152 (Vultee Arch Road) which are both suitable only for high-clearance vehicles or ATVs.

Primitive roads FR with 4 numbers following (FR9551) – Typically these roads are very tough to navigate, may have boulder strewn wash crossings and or narrow roads with side drop offs.

Generally speaking, 3 or 4-digit road numbers followed by a letter indicate the more primitive roads or seasonal roads.

DRIVES

EASY: Suitable for all SUV-type vehicles and low skill ATV drivers. Roads are graded and maintained.

1. Highway 179 south under I-17 to FR-618 south, left on to FR-214 to top. Good turn-around is at the Historic corrals and cattle loader. Great views of Verde Valley, side canyon and San Francisco Peaks approximately 2 ½ hours total time from Sedona.
2. FR-152 (Boynton Pass Road) and FR-525 to Palatki (FR 795) and Honanki (ancient cliff dwellings and cave paintings). Avoid if Monsoon rain storms are looming as dry washes cross FR 525 in a couple of places. Dry washes can fill quickly during Monsoon storms.
3. Forest Road 525 (without a letter behind it) all way to Honanki. From Sedona, take 89A south approximately 10 miles to FR 525 on the right.
4. Visit Tuzigoot National Monument, then take the road less traveled on the return trip. See the Monument, then as you head back, watch for FR-131 on right (if you have crossed the river you missed it). Take FR 131 to Junction with FR-258 on the right and proceed over the pass around Skeleton Bone

Tank to a right hand turn on FR-761 (Bill Gray Road). South to 89A and left back to Sedona.

5. Robbers Roost (AKA Shaman's Cave). 89A West toward Cottonwood, right turn on to FR-525 to a left at FR-525C (about 3 miles), continue North on 525C to FR-9530 (about 7 miles). Lower clearance vehicles may have to park here and walk about 1 mile to the trail head. This road goes up the ridge to a large parking area on the left, where Robbers Roost trail starts on the right. That is the turn-around point. Use of 2nd gear is recommended on FR-9530 as one climbs, use of low and 2nd gear back downhill recommended. (Saves brakes).

MODERATE: Some use of 4 wheel high, cliffs and easier wash crossing, generally maintained with some bad spots, one-way narrow areas, and cliffs or not maintained in years but not too difficult. Fun for ATV drivers of moderate skill.

1. Both FR-152 to Vultee Arch TH and Schnebly Hill FR-153 fit this category. This road is used heavily by jeep tour companies as well as private vehicles. If you must go, go early (before 7:30 a.m.) to avoid the heavy traffic.
2. Blue Grade Road – H-179 South under I-17 to FR-618, turn left at the stop sign on 618 onto FR-689 N. Stay left at the junction of all roads on the right and go through a ranch gate. Be sure to close it. Continue N on 689 to Stoneman Lake Road (Paved) turn right to the Lake or left to the freeway I-17 on-ramp, continue right to FR-229 the Apache Maid Road to a right onto FR-620 to the Lookout tower. Best to use 2nd and low gears on the return down Apache Maid from the tower. Fantastic views from tower and road. Continue back way you came. About 3 plus hours.
3. From Stoneman Lake Road to FR-229 on the right is FR-644, a beautiful road to the end of FR-644 is an old gaging station and turnaround point. In July and August 644 has an abundance of wild flowers the first few miles, and a great view of Lee Mountain as one proceeds west to the gaging station. Approximately 4 hours duration.
4. H-89A toward Flagstaff, 1 mile past the Oak Creek Vista on the left is FR-535. Turn left onto FR-535 and travel West past all the campsites to FR-535A to Harding Point. There is a sign to Harding Point at the junction. Two miles is an overlook area enlarged and used by the Hot Shots during the Slide Fire, so there is plenty of parking. Park and look over West Oak Creek Canyon which is way above the West Fork Trail, a commanding view and shows some real fire scars. To continue two miles East on FR-535A from this point requires a trail rated vehicle. To return suggest at 89A a left turn (North) ½ mile and take FR-237 on the right. This takes one through the Kelly Canyon area and lots of camping areas. FR-237 continues on to I-17 at exit 333 South which they can take as the fast way back to Sedona.

MODERATE PLUS: Similar to moderate but a bit more challenging.

5. FR-535 West beyond Harding Point goes all the way out to FR-538 and Secret Canyon Overlook. (an area where Loy Canyon Trail ends and Upper Secret Mountain Trail converge). Best not to go during Monsoons as the lava based road turns to mush up on top and knowledge of skidding through mud is required during and after Monsoons. FR-535 west past Harding point to a rutted FR-9024 to FR-538 all the way to the end. All day trip about 20 miles out to the point, so take a picnic and have plenty of gas.
6. H-179 South to Beaverhead Flat Road on the right (County 78). Six miles to the stop sign on County Road 30. Cross over 30 onto FR-119A. (At the very start is a staging area for ATV's) so just continue traveling South. Continue on 119A to the paved road and continue East to the I-17. ATVs can return to the staging area at the beginning of 119A on FR-9235F, which is a really tough road in places. Trail rated vehicles with a very skilled driver can handle this way back to highways 30-78 intersection. (I myself prefer the I-17 route back)!
7. Highway 179 South to right onto H-78 to a right onto FR-120A to the end of 120A, straight to FR-9960 gives a great view of the Turkey Creek area and Sedona from the House Range. An out and back is preferable for 4-wheel drivers, ATV's can return to H-78 by utilizing 9960A which runs into FR-9952 and stay on FR-9952 until H-78. For ATV's this area can be accessed by Highway 30 from the staging area on the right just before reaching Cornville. That is the beginning of FR-9205K and 9204Y to the top and FR-9552. Great area to explore in an ATV.

DIFFICULT: REQUIRING SKILL OF LOW/LOW GEARS, AND SKILLED ATV DRIVERS. Rocky, boulder strewn roads, cliffs, bad climbs and descents. Severe wash crossings with deep gorges and steep climb-outs. True test of off road driving skills.

Test your skills and gears on these roads. Requires knowledge of compound low and low gears, crawl speed etc. Great for very skilled ATV drivers.

1. (My personal favorite for testing a Wrangler Rubicon), Take directions to Robbers Roost on FR-525C, but continue just past FR-9530 to FR-9524 on the left. Shift into 4-wheel low at the start. This is three miles of compound low gear and rock crawl across to the junction with Fr-761A. A left hand turn back to the North will proceed to Sugarloaf Mountain and fantastic views. No need for 4-wheel low on this road, just knowledge of gearing and 4 high. A right turn going Southeast will return back to graded 761 (Bill Gray Road) and sanity. These roads show well on the *Beartooth* Sedona HIKING map.

2. H-179 to FR-618 South to FR-9201J a seasonal road which is locked at the gate in the winter. Continue up FR-9201J to the top. Views are great, but usually the driver can't look because the road is really bad. Four wheel low gears REQUIRED to make it to FR-214, nasty cliffs on the way up and places where one isn't sure they are on the road on top. This connects with a right onto FR-214 and an easy graded out back to 618.
3. H-179 South to FR-618 to FR-618C on the right about 7 miles south. This is across Wikiup Mesa to a beautiful canyon overlook. To travel down the cliff beyond the overlook is treacherous, but doable. There is no out in Verde Valley and one must come back up the cliff or abandon his vehicle. It is 8 miles to the overlook for a total of 16 miles. Better for ATVs, as Jeeps and FJs will get scratched up from the creosote bushes.
4. H-179 South to FR-618 to a left at the stop sign onto FR-689. At the first junction Go RIGHT (This time do not go through the ranch gate) onto FR-645A and hold on. Difficult, boulder-strewn dry wash crossing and steep climb to the top. Proceed northeast and stay on FR-645A to FR-644H on the left and continue North on FR-644D which is on the left or East and continue out FR-644 East until a left onto FR-229 to Stoneman Lake Road and a left back to I-17. Great for advanced Off-roadies and skilled ATV's.

There are many more choices, but these are really scenic and have all been tested by a woman driver.

Map choices available for purchase to augment the free Motor Vehicle Use Map.

Beartooth Publishing Sedona HIKING map. The west side of the map clearly shows forest roads to Robbers Roost Area, Tuzigoot NM area, and all roads connecting to FR-525, FR-761 and FR-152.

National Geographic MOGOLLON RIM MUNDS MOUNTAIN MAP 855. Areas around Stoneman Lake and FR-618.

National Geographic Flagstaff/Sedona area Map 856. Areas north on 89A, FR-535 to Secret Mountain, Harding Point etc.

National Geographic Sycamore Canyon Verde Valley Map 854. Helps with the House Mountain area as well as the Robbers Roost area.