

Madera Canyon

Discover the wonders of this wooded canyon tucked at 5,000 ft. in the Santa Rita Mountains. A paved road, creekside picnic areas, and many hiking trails make this a perfect year-round recreation destination—less than one hour from Tucson.

Know before you go



DAY USE FEE AREA:

Scan the QR code or visit www.recreation.gov to buy a digital pass for day-use sites in Madera Canyon, or buy one on site with cash or check.



PETS: Pets are permitted, but must be leashed in or near developed recreation sites. Please pick up pet waste.



WATER: Drinking water is available at the Proctor and Madera Picnic Areas and at Bog Springs Campground.



ROAD INFO: Madera Canyon Scenic Drive (FR 62/70) is paved. Please drive slowly: watch for hikers, cyclists, and wildlife.



SEASONS: Year-round. Be prepared for extreme heat and monsoon storms during summer and cold weather in winter.



CARE FOR THE CANYON: Please help protect wildlife habitat and prevent erosion by staying on official, designated trails.



WILDLIFE: Watch wildlife from a distance for their safety and yours. Please refrain from collecting plants or insects.

Attractions



A PARADISE FOR BIRDS and BIRDERS

More than 250 species of birds occur in Madera Canyon, including rare tropical migrants, like the elegant trogon, and 15 species of hummingbirds. Spring, late summer, and early fall are best for viewing many species, but birding is excellent at various elevations year-round. [Friends of Madera Canyon](#) posts bird lists and other information. See the Birding Best Practices on the next page.



WATER, WILDLIFE, and WILDERNESS

The rocky summit of 9,453-ft. Mount Wrightson crowns the Santa Rita Mountains, one of southeastern Arizona's Sky Island mountain ranges. The [Mount Wrightson Wilderness](#) encompasses 25,260 acres, including the headwaters of Madera Creek, which flows intermittently through the canyon. Many trails lead into this rugged wilderness.

Activities

Hiking	Hiking is one of the best ways to experience the wonders of Madera Canyon. A variety of trails offers a range of options for hikers of all ages and abilities. Refer to the map and trail descriptions on the next page. Please stay on designated trails and pack out all trash with you.
Picnicking	Four picnic areas offer interpretive exhibits and access to trails. Amenities include tables, grills, vault toilets, and a group site at Whitehouse. Drinking water is available at Proctor and Madera Picnic Areas. Dispose of all trash in bear-safe trash receptacles. Reservations: No. First-come, first-served sites only. Hours: 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Fee: Day-use fee required
Camping & Cabins	Bog Springs Campground (Fee required): 13 first-come, first-served sites for tents, campers, or trailers. No hookups. Amenities include drinking water, picnic tables, fire rings, pedestal grills, bear boxes, and vault toilets. Pay with cash or check on site. Pets must be leashed. Proctor Road Dispersed Camping Corridor (Free): Limited site availability. No amenities. Pack out all trash. Refer to the Nogales Ranger District Motor Vehicle Use Map and please follow the dispersed camping best practices . Kent Springs Cabin: This historic, restored US Forest Service cabin is perched among trees overlooking Madera Creek. The two-bedroom cabin sleeps up to eight people. Find more information and make reservations up to 6 months in advance at www.recreation.gov . Santa Rita Lodge: This privately owned lodge offers accommodations, as well as a patio and gift shop that are open to the public.
Wildlife Viewing	Madera Canyon is home to an incredible diversity of wildlife. Common inhabitants include Coues white-tailed deer, Gould's turkey, black bear, coatimundi, and many species of bats, birds, and reptiles. Always observe wildlife from a distance and please keep pets on a leash. Best Birding Spots: Madera Nature Trail, the feeders at Santa Rita Lodge, the Carrie Nation Trail in spring, and Mt. Wrightson in summer

BIRDING BEST PRACTICES

VIEW FROM A DISTANCE
If your presence appears to disturb birds or other wildlife, go elsewhere.













AVOID ACTIVE NESTS
Parent birds will be alarmed if you get too close to their nest or young.

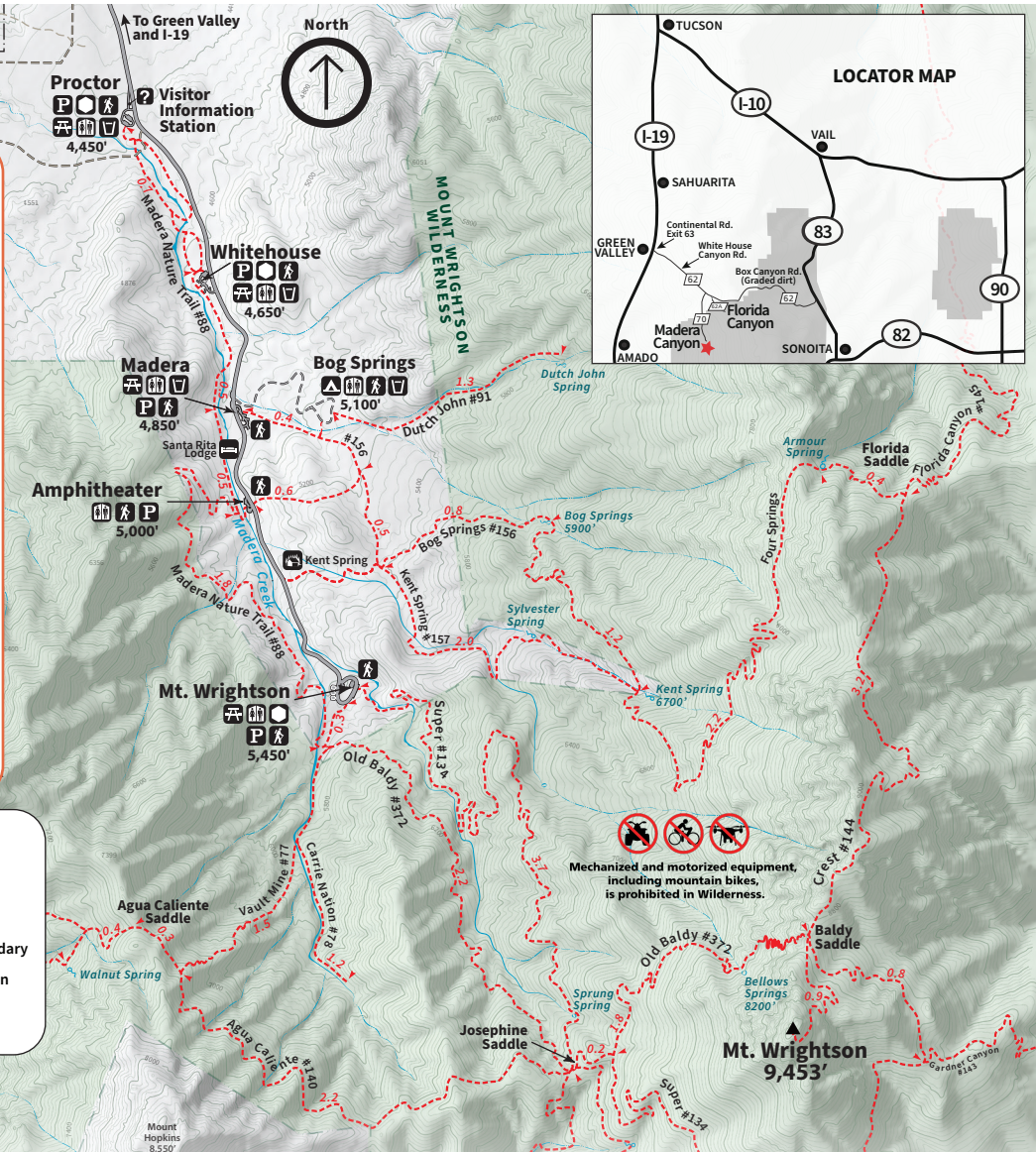
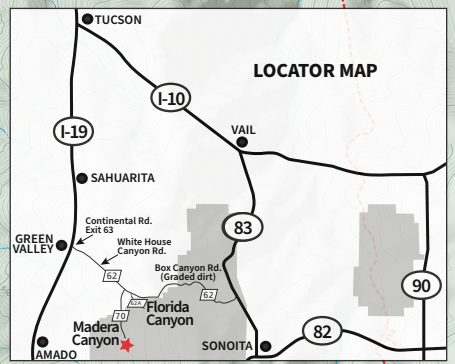
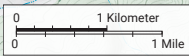
DO NOT PLAY BIRD CALLS
Calls alter bird behavior and can cause undue stress.

BIRD IN SMALL GROUPS
Minimize movement and noise to avoid startling birds.

STAY ON DESIGNATED TRAILS
Help protect habitat. Step aside when observing to avoid blocking the trail.

LEASH PETS OR LEAVE AT HOME
Prevent pets from chasing or barking at wildlife or other visitors.

-  Trailhead
-  Drinking Water
-  Campground
-  Picnic Area
-  Bathroom
-  Educational Ramada
-  Paved Road
-  Dirt Road
-  Forest Boundary
-  Wilderness boundary
-  USFS Rental Cabin
-  Private Lodging



About Madera Canyon

People have inhabited the canyons and foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains (known as *Ce:wi Duag* or “long mountain” to the Tohono O’odham) for thousands of years. Many tribes maintain spiritual and cultural connections to this landscape today.

Settlers, ranchers, and miners moved into the area in the late 1800s. Lumber was needed to support their operations, as well as the

growing towns of Tucson and Tubac, and a commercial lumber camp was established in the canyon. (*Madera* means “wood” in Spanish.) The surrounding grasslands provided range for cattle, which at the time outnumbered people in southern Arizona. In the early 1900s, many prospectors dug mines on the slopes of the canyon, though little ore was ever found here. Some trails in the canyon

are named after these early mines and settlers. Madera Canyon drains the north side of the Santa Rita Mountains, which rise nearly 6,000 ft. from desert grassland to mixed-conifer forest, like a forested island in a desert sea. Cooler and wetter conditions in the canyon and at higher elevations create habitat for many unique species of plants and animals not found in the surrounding desert.

Hiking Trails

Safety: Be prepared with plenty of water, sun protection, and extra layers. Watch for poison ivy. If it has leaves of three, let it be!



Madera Nature Trail #88	Easy to moderate	This trail extends from Proctor to the Mt. Wrightson Picnic Area. Enjoy benches and signs about the canyon, as well as access to picnic areas and bathrooms along the route. Lower 1.75 mi. are relatively flat; upper 1.75 mi. climb a ridge and offer great views. Distance: 3.5 mi. (one way) Elevation gain: 1,000 ft. Use: Heavy Accessibility: 0.1 mi. from Proctor is paved *Great for birding*
Dutch John Trail #91	Easy to moderate	This trail starts at the campground and climbs through a forest of oaks into Dutch John Canyon where water and the shade of sycamores and junipers provide a nice place for a picnic. Distance: 1.5 mi. (one way) Elevation gain: 1,000 ft. Use: Light
Bog Springs Trail #156	Moderate to difficult	This trail starts near the campground and climbs through forest to Bog Springs. Turn around there or continue to climb 700 ft. over 1.2 mi. to Kent Spring and make a loop. Distance: 1.9 mi. (one way) Elevation gain: 1,000 ft. Use: Moderate
Carrie Nation Trail #78	Moderate	From the Mt. Wrightson Trailhead, walk toward the Old Baldy Trail but stay straight to continue on Carrie Nation. The trail follows the creek and ends at an abandoned mine. Distance: 1.5 mi. (one way) Elevation gain: 1,200 ft. Use: Light *Great for birding*
Summit Trails	Difficult	The popular Old Baldy #372 and Super #134 Trails start at the busy Mt. Wrightson Trailhead and lead to Josephine Saddle and Mount Wrightson. Loop options available. Distance: up to 6 mi. (one way) Elevation gain: up to 4,200 ft. Use: Heavy