

# Vacation Destinations: The Grand Canyon Skywalk



This is the time of year when folks begin planning vacations, and GAWDA Edge is here to help. Throughout the summer, we will offer destinations where you will find plenty to see and think about—and have fun at the same time.

This month's spot is the **Grand Canyon Skywalk**, an engineering marvel located at Grand Canyon West that offers guests a literal bird's-eye view of the canyon. (Grand Canyon West is a collection of attractions spreading across more than 9,000 acres of the Hualapai Indian Reservation in northwest Arizona. It is 240 miles away from Grand Canyon Village, the visitor hub for Grand Canyon National Park's famed South Rim.)

The Skywalk opened to tourists in spring 2007, and already millions of visitors have experienced the massive, horseshoe-shaped steel and glass structure. Jutting 70 ft. beyond the canyon's edge and 4,000 feet above the Colorado River, the Skywalk offers a virtually unobstructed view of the canyon through 60-in. glass walls and a 3-in.-thick floor composed of layers of heat-strengthened industrial glass.

Learn more about The Grand Canyon Skywalk and Grand Canyon West at [www.destinationgrandcanyon.com](http://www.destinationgrandcanyon.com).



The frame of the Skywalk consists of welded carbon steel box girders that are 2 in. thick, 6 ft. long and 2.5 ft. wide. During construction, the girders arrived in 40-ft. sections that were sub-[arc welded](#) on site. Three oscillating dampers made of 3,000 lb. steel plates inside hollow bridge beams serve as shock absorbers to neutralize vibrations from foot traffic and wind gusts.

The structure was engineered to support the weight of more than 70 fully loaded jumbo jetliners (over 70 million lbs.), tolerate winds of up to 100 miles per hour and withstand an 8.0 magnitude earthquake 50 miles away. More than a

million lbs. of [steel](#) went into building the Grand Canyon Skywalk.

The Skywalk itself is remarkable, but the process used to move the completed structure into place beyond the canyon edge is truly impressive. To accomplish this, the assembled Skywalk—with glass floor in place—was lifted by jacks and set on a bed of pipes that, through a system of pulleys and cables, were used to roll the curved section of the structure past the cliff edge. Once in place, the Skywalk was anchored to the limestone ledge with more than 80 steel rods drilled 46 feet into the ground.

