Read this First

Please do not talk. You will appreciate the lack of voices when you are walking the labyrinth.

People built labyrinths in ancient Egypt, India, Greece, South America, North America (including Hopi & Tohono O’odham), and in European cathedrals. A labyrinth is not a maze, in that there are no choices along the single path that leads in to the center and back out. The intent of a labyrinth is not to confuse the walker, but to slow the mind and engage in a walking meditation.

The developers of the first labyrinths may have considered labyrinths as analogs for the journey of life. Perhaps the inward walk represented birth and life to adulthood (or some other life stage) and the outward walk was an analog for old age, death, and rebirth. Or perhaps they had other ideas – we don’t really know. Enjoy your walk without worrying about whether your interpretation is “correct.” Or experience your walk without interpreting it at all…

The Flagstaff Community Labyrinth uses a pattern recorded (and perhaps designed) by Sigmund Gossembrot of Augsburg, Germany in 1480[[1]](#footnote-1). This installation of the Gossembrot labyrinth is made of about 15 tons of lichen-covered lava boulders, all gathered within 200 ft. The rock is andesitic basalt, part of a river of lava that flowed about 1 million years ago from the vicinity of downtown Flagstaff and ended here. On your way here on the Arizona Trail, you walked past the advancing front of the flow. The other side of the canyon is Kaibab limestone (the white rock you see across the canyon).

The lichen (the thin coat of dull green or orange on most of the rocks) and mosses (the thick, dark green mat growing on a few rocks in shadier locations) are alive. They make interesting patterns as they grow on the rocks.

The path length of the labyrinth is a quarter mile (round trip). Most people take about 20 minutes to walk to the center, reflect a few minutes, and walk back out. Most people find that the walk out feels different than the walk in. You can, of course, get bored and quit at any time, or you might be abducted by aliens, in which case you will not walk out.

Please visit the labyrinth again. *Every walk will feel different.* You can bring beads, seashells, or other bling to leave at the labyrinth. If you feel a trinket (smaller than your pocket) was left here especially for you, take it.

If you appreciate the labyrinth, please “pay it forward” by manifesting love and beauty to all.

Please keep this space – and all open spaces – trash-free. You can walk or bike the FUTS east from here for miles without crossing a road. The 1st mile may be the prettiest mile in Flagstaff.

P**lease: Only one person at a time should advance to the table at the entrance to the labyrinth.** If you are waiting at the bench for a while, you can read comments of previous visitors on your smartphone or tablet (www.flagstafflabyrinth.com), or you can write comments in the book.

1. The Gossembrot pattern was taped on a plaza in Germany for a few days in 2012, and it has been printed on canvas for temporary indoor use, but this is the only known ~~permanent~~ long-lasting installation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)