

The RVer's Guide to National Park Campgrounds

National Parks With Free Entry

Reservations, amenities, hookups, fees, park highlights, and more.



Insider Tip: Each national park website lists alerts for closures and other restrictions. Attractions, visitor centers, trails, campgrounds, and other points of interest may be temporarily closed or have other restrictions. Always research or call ahead first as reservation requirements and closures can change suddenly.



About This Guide

There are 16 national parks in the U.S. that don't charge entrance fees. This guide outlines how to visit each one and gives tips for those traveling with an RV. *Note that even if a national park doesn't charge an entrance fee, there may be transportation costs and other associated fees.*

Other Ways to Get Free Entry at National Parks

The National Park Service (NPS) announces **entrance-free days** for some national holidays and other celebrations each year. For 2022 there are 5 entrance-free days: Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday (January 17), the first day of National Park Week (April 16), the anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act (August 4), National Public Lands Day (September 24), and Veterans Day (November 11).

Frequent national park visitors can save big on entrance fees by purchasing an **America the Beautiful Annual Pass (\$80)**, which is valid at areas managed by the NPS, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The pass covers entrance fees for up to four adults traveling in the same vehicle. Passes expire 12 months from the month of purchase on the last day of the month. The pass can be ordered online, via phone at 888-275-8747, or purchased in person at many federal recreation areas.

In addition to the Annual Pass, the America the Beautiful Pass Series offers the following free or discounted passes:

-  4th Grade Pass
-  Military Pass
-  Senior Pass
-  Access Pass
-  Volunteer Pass

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Biscayne National Park, Florida

NPS.gov/bisc



Introduction to Biscayne National Park

While many people are familiar with Everglades National Park, they may be surprised to learn that South Florida is home to a second national park. Biscayne is not far from Everglades, but provides a completely different aquatic experience.

The park consists of a stretch of mainland south of Miami, plus most of Biscayne Bay and barrier islands, or keys, that are accessible only by boat. The visitor center is on the mainland. Biscayne is the largest marine sanctuary in the national park system, with Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean comprising 95 percent of its 173,000 acres.

With this in mind, the best way to fully experience the park is on the water. Visitors bring their kayaks, canoes, stand-up paddleboards, and snorkels to explore the calm and pristine waters of Biscayne Bay. Anglers set out from a nearby marina for fishing and lobstering. A park concessionaire offers a variety of guided tours that anyone can enjoy, from historical narration aboard a comfortable motorboat to ranger-led paddling and snorkeling expeditions.

Biscayne National Park is south of the Miami metro area, at the southern end of Florida. It's 34 miles from Miami's international airport, and 40 miles from the popular South Beach neighborhood. Biscayne is just 20 miles from the entrance to Everglades National Park, and 30 miles from the start of the Florida Keys. Orlando, Florida, is 270 miles away.

DANTE FASCELL VISITOR CENTER
9700 SOUTHWEST 328TH STREET, HOMESTEAD, FL 33033
305-230-1144

Biscayne National Park, Florida



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Kayaking, Canoeing, and Stand-Up Paddleboarding

Novices and experts alike can enjoy the unforgettable experience of paddling in Biscayne Bay, from the mangrove-fringed shoreline to Elliott Key and Boca Chita Key seven miles across the bay. Rentals are not available at the park, but you can bring your own or rent from a local outfitter and launch from the designated areas.

Jones Lagoon is a shallow location that's great for spotting rays, jellyfish, schools of colorful fish, and wading birds. Hurricane Creek is another popular place to hike among the mangroves. Both are accessible from the launching point on Adams Key. See the park website for safety tips and trail guides.

2. Guided Boat Tours

Getting out of the car and walking among Biscayne National Park Institute offers a wide variety of boat tours and ranger-led excursions for all ages and abilities. Note that tours are offered Thursday through Sunday only, some on a more limited basis.

For an active tour, the popular Small Group Snorkel Experience brings up to 12 guests out on the bay to visit one or more snorkel sites, depending on weather and optimal snorkeling conditions. Sites include a coral reef, mangroves, and even a shipwreck.

The Heritage of Biscayne Cruise is appropriate for everyone, with a guided tour by comfortable motorboat that also stops at a beach at one of the keys.

History buffs will enjoy the Stiltsville Guided Historic Tour from Deering Estate, for an opportunity to see the estate's lighthouse up close, and learn about the intriguing history of the houses built on stilts in the bay, as well as the history of this part of Miami and northern Biscayne Bay.

See biscaynenationalparkinstitute.org for details on pricing, schedules, and reservations. Private tours are also available.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Biscayne is a national park that can truly be visited year-round. December through April is ideal for mild and dry weather, but it's also South Florida's busiest season. While Biscayne flies surprisingly under the radar given its proximity to Miami, it's best to make your campground and boat tour reservations in advance, especially if you're visiting over the holidays.

The summer is hotter, humid, and brings scattered thunderstorms. A summer visit can still be a great experience if you pay close attention to the weather and avoid the direct afternoon sun. Keep in mind that hurricane season is June through November.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Leashed pets are allowed on the grounds surrounding the visitor center and in the developed areas of Elliott Key. They are not allowed on the other park islands.

If you're planning on getting out on the water, leave your pet behind in the comfort of your RV, or ask your RV park for information on local kennels.

Biscayne National Park, Florida



INSIDER TIPS

Before you head out on the water, spend some time at the visitor center to enjoy the excellent displays about the unique ecosystems in Biscayne Bay, including films, an underwater diorama, and an impressive collection of shells.

The visitor center nature trail is easy and accessible, less than a mile round trip through mangroves, and ends at a bird sanctuary. Depending on the season and time of day, visitors can spot white ibis, cormorants, turkey vultures, and the elusive mangrove cuckoos, among many other species.

There aren't many food options once you're off the main highway, so it's a good idea to bring a picnic lunch and snacks plus plenty of water if you're planning on visiting the park for a few hours.

For scuba divers, the Maritime Heritage Trail offers an incredible opportunity to see six shipwrecks, mapped and marked by mooring buoys. Access to the sites is by boat only; see the park website for more information.

For families, especially those with small children, the adjacent Homestead Bayfront Park, a Miami-Dade County park, provides a lagoon swimming beach with lifeguards and playgrounds for a fun and safe time in the water after visiting the national park.



RV CAMPING IN BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping in Biscayne National Park. The park offers two developed campgrounds for tents on Elliott Key and Boca Chita Key, reachable by boat only. See the park website for more information.



Biscayne National Park, Florida

Featured Campgrounds Outside Biscayne National Park

Given its proximity to the Miami metro area, there are not as many campground options near Biscayne as one might expect. The RV parks in the gateway city of Homestead, Florida, are not world class, but they are the closest and most convenient options for a night or two, with full hookups and amenities, plus shopping, dining, and cell phone service.

Homestead is also the gateway to Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys. National forest campgrounds north of Everglades are farther from Biscayne, but could be an option for RVers looking for a more economical stay in a natural setting. (See the Everglades guide for recommendations.) Alternatively, Key Largo, Florida, provides the opportunity to stay overnight in the Keys while visiting Biscayne National Park. Below is a mix of public and private campgrounds, arranged by distance from the park's visitor center.



RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS LESS THAN 20 MILES FROM BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

Southern Comfort RV Resort

socorv.com

305-248-6909

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Call 305-248-6909.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Over 200 sites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Amenities include restrooms, showers, laundry, a pool, a rec hall, a tiki bar, and outdoor games.

COST: \$60 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Weekly and monthly rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed, dog size and breed restrictions apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Full hookups and amenities with a central location in Homestead, convenient to Biscayne and Everglades National Parks, the Keys, and Miami. Located 10 miles from the Biscayne visitor center.

Miami Everglades RV Resort

rvonthego.com/florida/miami-everglades-rv-resort

305-233-5300

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit rvonthego.com/florida/miami-everglades-rv-resort or call 305-233-5300.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Over 250 sites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Amenities include restrooms, showers, laundry, a pool, a clubhouse, mini golf, and outdoor game courts.

COST: \$70 to \$100 per night, depending on date and site type.

MAXIMUM STAY: Monthly stays and rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The campsites in this Thousand Trails resort are close together, but surrounded by extensive amenities, walking trails, and lush, well-maintained grounds. Convenient location in a peaceful setting, 15 miles from the Biscayne visitor center.

Biscayne National Park, Florida

Larry and Penny Thompson Park

miamidade.gov/parks/larry-penny.asp

305-232-1049

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Call 305-232-1049.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 240 sites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include restrooms, showers, laundry, a camp store, and lake beach access.

COST: \$34 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed at RV sites. Pets are not allowed in the tent camping area.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This county park is a great option in the Miami area for an economical stay with full hookups, in a natural setting and central location. Located 15 miles from the Biscayne visitor center.

RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS LESS THAN 35 MILES FROM BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

Long Pine Key Campground, Everglades National Park

flamingoeverglades.com/camping

855-708-2207

SEASONALITY: Open November through April.

RESERVATIONS: Visit flamingoeverglades.com/camping or call 855-708-2207.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 50 tent sites and 100 RV sites. Most RV sites can fit rigs up to 35 feet, and about half are suitable for over 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Restrooms, solar-heated showers, potable water, dump station.

COST: \$35 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed in the campground but not on trails.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: You can't camp in Biscayne National Park with your RV, but you can stay overnight in another national park nearby. Located just inside Everglades National Park, with access to amenities in the town of Homestead, 25 miles from the Biscayne visitor center.

Keys Palms RV Resort

keyspalmsrvresort.com/home/home.php

305-440-2832

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reservations.keyspalmsrvresort.com or call 305-440-2832.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 30 big rig friendly sites, some backing up directly on the water.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Amenities include a waterfront pool and spa, water and beach access, a clubhouse, laundry, a gym, and a dog park.

COST: \$115 to \$175 per night, depending on season and site type.

MAXIMUM STAY: Monthly stay and rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Two pets per RV are allowed; dog breed restrictions apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: If you have a few nights, consider relaxing in comfort at this waterfront RV resort on Key Largo. Tour the Keys and Biscayne National Park, 33 miles away.

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/john-pennekamp-coral-reef-state-park

305-676-3777

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reserve.floridastateparks.org/web/Facilities/SearchViewUnitAvailability.aspx or call 800-326-3521.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 40 campsites for RVs of all sizes. Search by RV length on the reservation website.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available at some sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Amenities include picnic tables, restrooms, showers, laundry, and water access for boating, snorkeling, and swimming.

COST: \$38 to \$44 per night, plus reservation fee.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed at certain sites. Search for pet-friendly sites on the reservation website. Pets are not allowed on beaches.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This state park is an economical option to stay in the Keys, in a natural setting on a protected beach, close to the mainland. Located 34 miles from the Biscayne visitor center.

Channel Islands National Park, California

NPS.gov/chis



Introduction to Channel Islands National Park

It may surprise you to learn that Channel Islands National Park is one of the least visited national parks, since it's clearly visible from the shoreline of one of the most populous areas of the country. But its very limited facilities, rules forbidding motorized vehicles and even bicycles, and accessibility only by boat or plane service at an additional cost, quickly explain why.

It may take some extra effort, planning, and budgeting, but visitors to this string of five narrow islands off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, are rewarded with the experience of hiking, swimming, kayaking, snorkeling, and wildlife viewing in a unique and pristine natural environment. Known as the "Galapagos of North America," the Channel Islands are home to subspecies of animals and plants that can't be found anywhere else.

ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO VISITOR CENTER
1901 SPINNAKER DRIVE, VENTURA, CA 93001
805-658-5730
(Main visitor center—ferries depart from here)

OUTDOORS SANTA BARBARA VISITOR CENTER
113 HARBOR WAY 4TH FLOOR, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93109
805-884-1475
(No ferries depart from Santa Barbara)

Channel Islands National Park, California



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

There's no transportation between the islands and each has its own character and activities available. There are no services on the islands—no food or water available, no cell service, and pit toilets only. Check the national park website for departure times, duration, prices, and information on what to pack.

1. Half-Day Trip to Anacapa Island

With express boat service, visitors can enjoy hiking the 2-mile loop trail around Anacapa, followed by a swim or snorkel before returning to the mainland. There's a small visitor center on the island, and free guided hikes are frequently offered. Note that while the hiking trail is flat, visitors must climb a steel-rung ladder to the dock, and 157 stairs to the top of the island.

2. Full-Day Trip to Santa Cruz Island

The largest island in California, Santa Cruz is the state in miniature, with mountain ranges, canyons, and a central valley. Its jagged coastline features cliffs, tide pools, expansive beaches, and giant sea caves. An island concessionaire offers snorkel and kayak rentals and guided tours. Several hiking trails cross the park, with stunning views. (Note: Most of the island is owned by The Nature Conservancy and is not accessible from the trails.)

3. Boat Tours

From whale watching to bird-watching, there are several guided boat tours offered for visitors to experience the island landscapes and spectacular marine life up close, without having to disembark.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

While the Channel Islands share mainland Southern California's Mediterranean climate, with relatively mild temperatures year-round, they do have distinctions to each season. Plus, ocean and weather conditions can vary greatly on a day-to-day basis.

Late June to late September is the best time for warm weather and calmer winds and seas. Winter, spring, and early summer bring higher chances of rain, fog, or high winds. It's possible to experience a perfectly sunny, warm, and calm day throughout the year. Ask about weather conditions when making reservations, and check again as you get closer to the travel date.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Pets are not allowed in the park and should be kept at home. If you're planning a full-day visit, check with your RV park for pet boarding recommendations.



INSIDER TIPS

Advance planning and ticket purchase are essential to getting the most out of a trip to the Channel Islands.

The best-value boat tour is the Island Wildlife Cruise, a non-landing, 3.5-hour tour with the chance to see dolphins, whales, sea lions, and nesting birds up close to the rugged shores of Anacapa. This is a good option for families with smaller children.

One of the largest sea caves in the world is on Santa Cruz Island. For those physically able, Painted Cave can be visited by kayak from the island (guided tours available). Otherwise, the boat tour to Santa Rosa Island includes a stop at Painted Cave on the return journey.

Finally, the free visitor center in Ventura Harbor is well worth a stop even if you don't travel to the islands. With engaging, hands-on exhibits and views of the Channel Islands, it's a great way to learn about this unique destination and plan a future trip. Kids can earn their junior ranger badge without leaving the mainland.



RV CAMPING IN CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

There is no RVing on the Channel Islands, or camping facilities at the mainland visitor center. Rustic tent camping on the islands is a popular activity for an overnight or multiday trip. Note that with no services, campers must pack in and pack out everything they need. For more information on tent camping, see the national park website.

Channel Islands National Park, California



Featured Campgrounds Outside Channel Islands National Park

There are many options for RVers on the mainland between Ventura and Santa Barbara. Note that while there's a small visitor center in Santa Barbara, all boat tours depart from the main visitor center in Ventura, 30 miles south.

This stretch of the California coast is a popular tourist destination year-round. It's best to book your RV park in advance, and have a backup plan if you're trying your luck at a first-come, first-served state beach camping spot.

If you're traveling the coast for the first time, the beautiful city of Santa Barbara is a destination in its own right, and worth the extra time to get to the port in Ventura. Check traffic conditions, and enjoy the scenic drive.

The beach town of Ventura has its own laid-back charm to offer. Only an hour west of Los Angeles, Ventura is a great option for visitors staying in Southern California, who have already been to Santa Barbara, or who want to be close to the boat departure point.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

Ventura Beach RV Resort

vbrvresort.com

805-643-9137

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit vbrvresort.com or call 805-643-9137.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Close to 200 big rig friendly sites. Mix of back-in and pull-through, with more space available at Premier sites (for a higher rate).

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Amenities include restrooms and showers, laundry, general store, pool and hot tub, recreation room, playground, bike rentals, free downtown shuttle, and access to walking/biking path to the beach.

COST: \$75 to \$175 per night, depending on site type and date.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed, with some dog breed restrictions. Fee applies per pet.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located next to the beach and only 6 miles from the Channel Islands visitor center, Ventura Beach RV Resort is a great option for families with kids, offering fun activities and events in addition to amenities like the pool and playground.

Foster Residence Campground

venturaparks.org/reservation/camping

805-654-3951

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit venturaparks.org/reservation/camping or call 805-654-3951.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Under 20 sites in a wooded setting. A few sites can fit RVs over 40 feet, but most are suitable for 25 to 30 feet max.

HOOKUPS: Full-hookup and no-hookup sites available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, central restrooms available.

COST: \$23 for no hookups, \$42 for full hookups. Additional reservation fee applies.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This comfortable county campground offers full-hookup sites in a natural setting, at a good value for the area. Located 12 miles from the main national park visitor center.

Channel Islands National Park, California

Emma Wood State Beach

parks.ca.gov/?page_id=604

805-585-1850

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: First come, first served, or visit reservecalifornia.com/CaliforniaWebHome.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 90 campsites for RVs up to 40 feet long.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: None. The campground is for self-contained vehicles only.

COST: \$40 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 7 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed in the campground, but not on the beach.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: While this is essentially a long and narrow parking lot, with train tracks and Highway 101 behind it, the expansive beachfront location makes it a coveted stop for RVers along the California coast. It's located 8 miles from the main national park visitor center.

Faria Beach Park

ventura.org/parks-department/beach-front-parks/faria-beach-park

805-654-3951

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit venturaparks.org/reservation/camping. Can be made up to 180 days in advance.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 42 campsites, some can fit RVs up to 34 feet.

HOOKUPS: 15 sites have hookups, the rest have no hookups.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Fire pits, showers, bathrooms, concession stand.

COST: \$43 per night for no hookups, \$60 per night for hookups during peak season.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed in the campground, but not on the beach.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Compared to nearby California state beaches, this Ventura County beachfront campground is a hidden gem. Tight spaces take some maneuvering but are worth the effort. Located 11 miles from the main national park visitor center.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara Sunrise RV Park

santabarbararv.com

805-966-9954

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit secure.thinkreservations.com/santabarbararv/reservations or call 805-966-9954.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 30 sites, most are big rig friendly.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, restrooms, and laundry.

COST: \$60 to \$70 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, WiFi offered is strong.

PET POLICIES: Pets allowed, with some breed restrictions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Spaces are tight and there is some noise from the adjacent highway, but the hosts are friendly and the location is ideal, close to downtown Santa Barbara and walking distance to the beach. Located 30 miles from the Channel Islands visitor center.

Earl Warren Showgrounds RV Park

earlwarren.com/rv-park

805-350-4556

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit earlwarren.com/rv-park.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 44 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers and restrooms are available.

COST: \$65 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

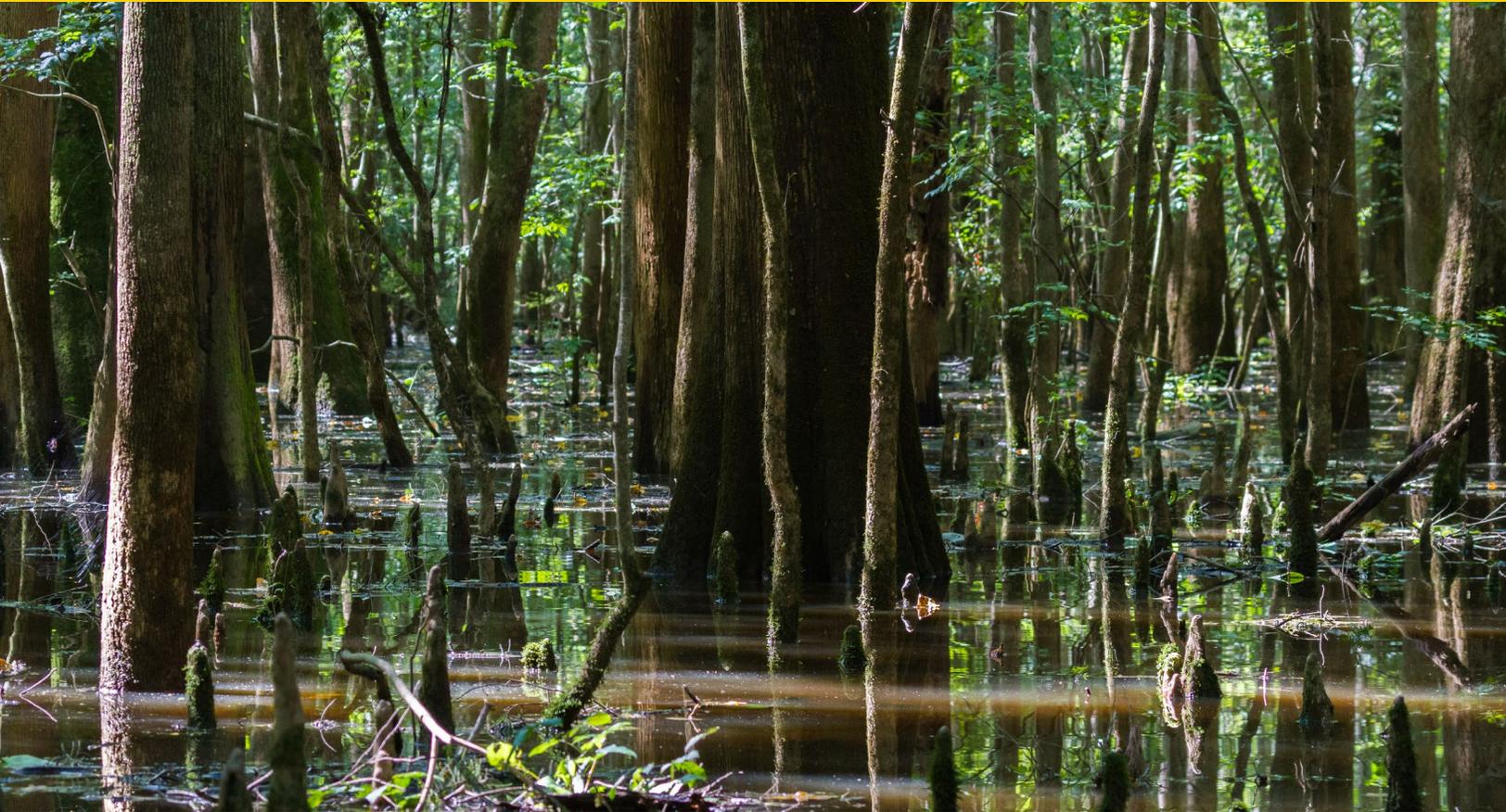
CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, WiFi offered is strong.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This fairgrounds campground has a basic parking lot layout, but is a great value for its full-hookup sites and central location in Santa Barbara. Convenient to the highway, yet in a quiet location surrounded by trees. Find it 35 miles from the Channel Islands visitor center.

Congaree National Park, South Carolina

NPS.gov/cong



Introduction to Congaree National Park

Congaree National Park is located on the East Coast, in central South Carolina. Despite its central location in the southeast, Congaree is one of the least visited national parks. It's only 20 miles from the state capital of Columbia, and about 100 miles from both Charleston, South Carolina, and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Congaree preserves the largest remaining section of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the United States. Its unique river floodplain ecosystem boasts a soaring tree canopy, including 25 trees that are the largest known examples of their species. The park is known for its sheer diversity in all types of plant and animal species: 75 different trees, almost 200 birds, 60 fish, 75 reptiles and amphibians, and even 65 different species of butterflies.

HARRY HAMPTON VISITOR CENTER

100 NATIONAL PARK ROAD, HOPKINS, SC 29061
803-776-4396

Congaree National Park, South Carolina



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Congaree is a pet-friendly national park, with leashed pets allowed on all trails and boardwalks. If you prefer to leave your pet in the comfort of your RV, nearby campgrounds are less than an hour's drive from the visitor center.



INSIDER TIPS

To get the most out of your visit to Congaree, join one of the free ranger programs. From a 2-hour nature walk along the boardwalk to a 5-mile off-trail Big Tree Hike, there's a program for everyone to learn about the unique beauty of Congaree. View the schedule in advance on the national park website.

Some of the most popular programs are the ranger-guided canoe tours offered in the spring and summer. Tours are free, but reservations are required and they sell out quickly. To make a reservation, visit [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777.

If you're planning to visit in the spring, check the schedule of dates for the annual Firefly Festival, which celebrates the amazing sight of the synchronized hovering lights among the trees. The visitor center is open late and there are extra kid-friendly activities during the 2-week festival.



RV CAMPING IN CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

Congaree offers tent and hammock camping only, in two developed campgrounds or the backcountry. Tent sites at the campgrounds are all walk-in, from 100 feet to a mile from the designated parking areas. If you're interested in tent camping, see [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) for more information and reservations.



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Hiking

Hiking and nature walks among the tall trees are the most popular activities. Congaree has more than 25 miles of hiking trails, plus 2 miles of accessible boardwalk that take visitors over the floodplain and through a primeval bald cypress forest.

2. Canoeing and Kayaking

Canoeing or kayaking the 20 miles of marked trail along Cedar Creek is an unforgettable way to experience the old-growth forest and view wildlife up close. Note that the park does not have watercraft rentals available. Bring your own, or rent from local outfitters.

3. Recreational Fishing

Congaree National Park allows catch-and-release fishing with a valid South Carolina fishing license. Different types of shiner, sunfish, and perch can be found, among more than 60 species of fish.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

The park is open and accessible year-round. The best times to visit are March through May and September through November. Temperatures are milder, and mosquitoes less prevalent during spring and fall.

Mid-May to mid-June is firefly season, while late October or early November brings peak fall colors.

Congaree National Park, South Carolina

Featured Campgrounds Outside Congaree National Park

There are several public and private campgrounds within 30 to 40 miles of the visitor center. Depending on your budget and preferences, you have the option of state parks with partial hookups or private RV parks with full hookups that range from small and simple to full of kid-friendly amenities. Campers have convenient access to city shopping and dining opportunities in nearby Columbia as well.



Santee State Park

southcarolinaparks.com/santee

803-854-2408

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reserve.southcarolinaparks.com or call 866-345-PARK. Reservations can be made up to 13 months in advance. Two nights minimum required.

CAMPSITE SIZE: The park has over 150 campsites for tents or RVs in two campgrounds. Most can fit rigs up to 35 or 40 feet, a few can accommodate RVs up to 50 feet. Availability can be filtered by RV size on the reservation website.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings or grills at sites. Campground facilities include a dump station, restrooms and showers, playgrounds, and a park store. Biking, hiking, and water activities are all available.

COST: \$18 to \$27 per night, depending on the date.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak. Free WiFi is offered at the camp store.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located on Lake Marion, Santee State Park is popular with day trippers and weekend campers for fishing and water activities. Kayak and canoe rentals are available. Located 38 miles from the park entrance, and close to I-95.

Poinsett State Park

southcarolinaparks.com/poinsett

803-494-8177

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reserve.southcarolinaparks.com or call 1-866-345-PARK. Reservations can be made up to 13 months in advance. Two nights minimum required.

CAMPSITE SIZE: A smaller state park campground than Santee, Poinsett has 24 RV sites. Most can fit RVs up to 35 feet, a few up to 40 feet. Availability can be filtered by RV size on the reservation website.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings or grills at site. Campground facilities include a dump station, restrooms and showers, a playground, and a park store. Biking, hiking, and water activities are all available.

COST: \$32 to \$45 per night, depending on date.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good. Free WiFi is offered at the camp store.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located within Manchester State Forest, this wooded campground features hiking and mountain biking trails and a 10-acre lake. Kayak, canoe, and stand-up paddleboard rentals are available. Note: Campers have complained that the road into the park is narrow and rutted. Call the campground in advance to ask about road conditions, especially if you have a bigger RV. Located 35 miles from the national park entrance.

Congaree National Park, South Carolina

Sesquicentennial State Park

southcarolinaparks.com/sesqui

803-788-2706

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reserve.southcarolinaparks.com or call 1-866-345-PARK. Reservations can be made up to 13 months in advance. Two nights minimum required.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 84 sites for tents or RVs that can accommodate rigs up to 30 feet. 17 sites can accommodate up to 35 feet. Availability can be filtered by RV size on the reservation website.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings or grills at site. Campground facilities include a dump station, restrooms and showers, playgrounds, and a park store. Biking, hiking, and water activities are all available, in addition to a volleyball court, splash pad, and dog park.

COST: \$20 to \$45 per night, depending on date.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good. No WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed. Purchase of permit required to use the 2-acre dog park on site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located in the Columbia metropolitan area, "Sesqui" is a popular destination for locals and families to enjoy the splash pad and 30-acre lake. Kayak, stand-up paddleboard, and pedal boat rentals are available. Located 27 miles from the national park entrance.

River Bottom Farms Family Campground

riverbottomfarms.com

803-568-4182

SEASONALITY: Open year-round

RESERVATIONS: Visit riverbottomfarms.com/reservation.html or call 803-568-4182.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 70 sites that can accommodate RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: A former Yogi Berra's Jellystone Park, this private campground is full of kid-friendly amenities, including a bounce pad, playground, seasonal pool, sports fields, and activities. Additional facilities include a general store, dump station, bathhouse, fishing pond, and nature trails.

COST: \$38 to \$45 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good. WiFi not offered.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed, although some dog breeds are restricted.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: River Bottom Farms' location is not as convenient to Columbia or the interstate as other options, but it's a great choice for families with young kids spending a few days in the area. Located 41 miles from the national park entrance.

Barnyard RV Park

barnyardrvpark.com

803-957-1238

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Call 803-957-1238.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 129 pull-through sites, most can accommodate big rigs.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Dump station, bathhouse and laundry, playground, dog park.

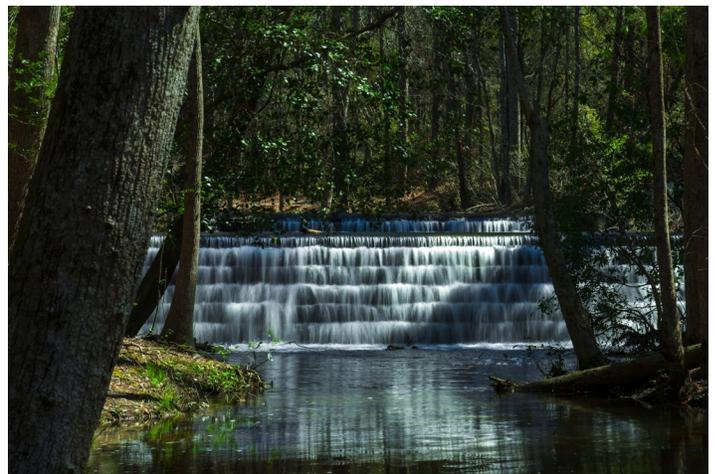
COST: \$38 to \$43 per night, depending on date. Weekly and monthly rates available.

MAXIMUM STAY: 1 month.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: One of the closest full-hookup RV parks to Congaree, Barnyard's spacious grounds are also close to Columbia, I-20, and I-26. Located 25 miles from the national park entrance.



Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio

NPS.gov/cuva



Introduction to Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is located in northeast Ohio, following the Cuyahoga River from the city of Cleveland on Lake Erie south to Akron, through beautiful and pristine sections of deciduous forest surrounding the river valley. First established as a national recreation area in 1974 and designated a national park in 2000, Cuyahoga is home to a variety of landscapes and geographic features, from forests to marshy wetlands, mossy boulders, limestone ledges, and multiple waterfalls.

While people from outside the area may not be familiar with Ohio's only national park, it's a popular and beloved destination that sees over 2 million visitors a year, making it one of the most visited national parks. Residents of the surrounding areas and tourists alike can enjoy hiking, road biking, mountain biking, and waterfall chasing on over 100 miles of trails throughout the park. You can learn about the human history and development of the area through historic building tours, and by taking a scenic ride on the park's heritage railroad, an activity unique to Cuyahoga.

Cuyahoga National Park is within 20 miles of the city of Cleveland, and just 7 miles from Akron. The park is accessible by several major highways, including Interstates 80, 77, 271, and 480.

BOSTON MILL VISITOR CENTER

6947 RIVERVIEW ROAD, PENINSULA, OH 44264
440-717-3890

CANAL EXPLORATION CENTER

7104 CANAL ROAD, VALLEY VIEW, OH 44125
216-524-1497

HUNT HOUSE

2054 BOLANZ ROAD, PENINSULA, OH 44264
(Open April through Labor Day)

Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Hiking

With over 125 miles of trails, Cuyahoga is a hiker's paradise. The park offers a wide variety of terrain, landscapes, and hiking levels, allowing all visitors to experience its natural beauty, whether on a short nature walk or all-day hike.

Brandywine Falls is the most popular destination in Cuyahoga. If you've seen photos of this stunning 65-foot waterfall cascading down limestone shelves, you'll understand why. The trail is accessible from the viewpoint parking lot, which fills up fast, so it's best to arrive early or later in the day. A 1.5-mile loop trail allows visitors to leave most of the crowds behind and enjoy a hike along the creek that flows from the base of the falls.

The Virginia Kendall Ledges Trail is a favorite among locals. Just over 2 miles, this scenic, moderate hike runs down into a valley and back up, through forest filled with giant limestone boulders, mossy cliffs, and caves.

Speak with a ranger at the visitor center for trail recommendations based on your group's time, abilities, and current park conditions.

2. Biking

The Towpath Trail is a flat, accessible, mixed-use trail that follows the historic route of the Ohio and Erie Canal. The canal, which was completed in 1832, opened up Ohio to the rest of the settled eastern United States. The path is currently 87 miles long (with plans to expand), running through the national park all the way to Cleveland, Ohio, and Lake Erie to the north and Akron to the south.

There are several access points to the trail along the 19.5 miles that run through the park. Biking the Towpath Trail is a great way to experience the park and a popular activity for locals, especially when fall foliage is at its peak. Bike rentals are available inside Cuyahoga; see the park website for details.

In addition to Towpath Trail, the East Rim trail system has extensive mountain biking trails of varying levels.



3. Scenic Train Ride

Cuyahoga is the only national park with a heritage railroad running through it. Taking a ride on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, which runs along the Cuyahoga River, is a unique and relaxing way to enjoy the landscapes and spot wildlife in the park. The privately run, nonprofit railroad offers scenic and themed tours throughout the year. See the park website for a link to details on pricing and reservation.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

While the park is open year-round, the average RVer is not recommended to visit during winter, when it snows and temperatures are often below freezing.

September and October can be the ideal time to visit, with mild temperatures and breathtaking fall foliage. Spring is a good time as well for wildflowers and flowing water, although it is busy with locals eager to get outside after a long winter. April to May and September to October are the best months for hiking and camping.

Summer is the busiest time in the park. Temperatures can vary greatly from 50 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit, but it's best to simply expect hot and humid weather at this time of year.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Cuyahoga Valley is a pet-friendly park. Leashed pets are allowed on over 100 miles of hiking trails and on the mixed-use Towpath Trail. Pets are not allowed in park buildings, on the Cuyahoga Scenic Railroad, or on the East Rim mountain bike trails. See the park website for recommended hikes with pets.



INSIDER TIPS

At a park that has multiple entry points from all directions, it can be difficult to know where to start. Cuyahoga Valley is orientated north-south, with Riverview Road, the Towpath Trail, and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad all running along the Cuyahoga River. Boston Mill Visitor Center is right in the middle where these car, bike, and train paths meet, just off the east-west Interstate 271. Start at Boston Mill to pick up maps and get tips from a ranger for the best way to plan your day.

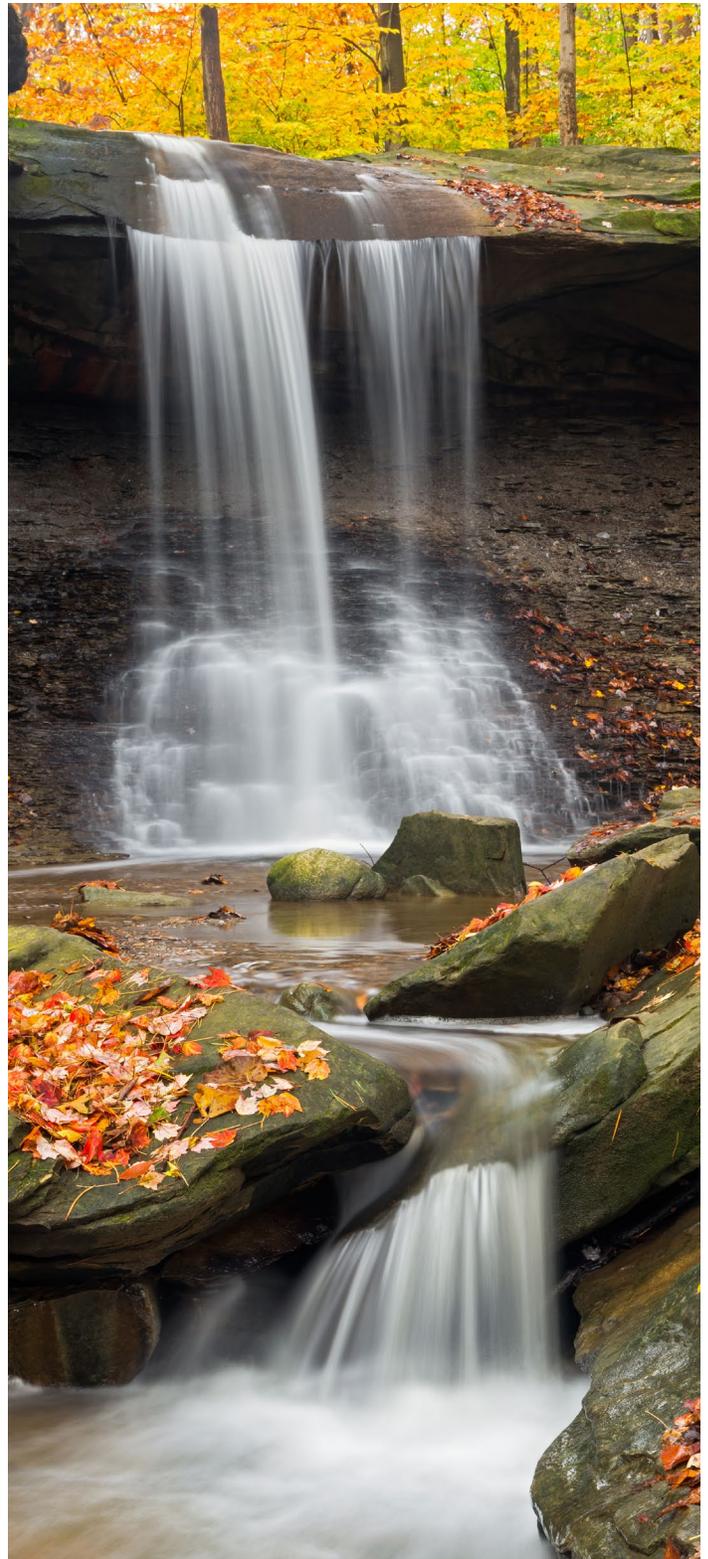
A fun way to experience Cuyahoga is to bike the Towpath Trail one way, then hop on the train for the return trip. The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's Bike Aboard program allows bikers to flag down the train at any boarding station and ride for a minimal fee.

Can't get enough of waterfalls after experiencing Brandywine? The park is home to several more falls, each of them uniquely scenic. Blue Hen and Buttermilk Falls are accessible by the 3-mile out-and-back Blue Hen Falls Trail, starting at Boston Mill Visitor Center. You'll reach Blue Hen Falls after half a mile; keep going to see the stunning cascade of Buttermilk Falls, hidden in a secluded glen.



RV CAMPING IN CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

As of 2021, there is no camping inside the national park.

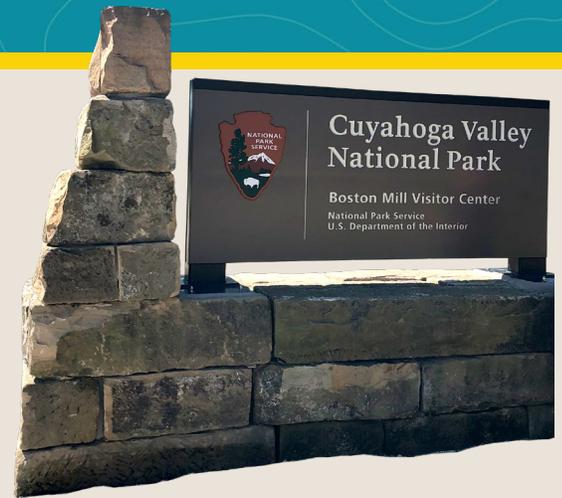


Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio

Featured Campgrounds Outside Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Cuyahoga is a centrally located national park with multiple entrances and easy access to interstates and nearby cities, yet it's also surrounded by small towns and rural areas. RVers have a variety of public and private options to choose from west, east, and south of the park. Where you choose can depend on your general route, amount of time, and if you're visiting other sites in the area. Since the city of Cleveland is within 20 miles, most campgrounds are conveniently located to enjoy the city's culture and sites as well as the national park.

Keep in mind that most campgrounds operate seasonally and are either completely closed or have only a limited number of sites and services between the end of October and early April.



PUBLIC RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR CUYAHOGA NATIONAL PARK

Silver Springs Campground

stowohio.org/stow-silver-springs-campground

330-689-5100

SEASONALITY: Open April through October.

RESERVATIONS: Visit stowohio.org/stow-silver-springs-campground. Reservations required one day in advance.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 27 large, grassy sites that can accommodate RVs up to 35 feet.

HOOKUPS: Electric hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire rings, and grills at sites. Central facilities include vault toilets, potable water, and a dump station. Park facilities include hiking trails, a fishing lake, playground, dog beach, and recreation courts.

COST: \$15 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 5 days at one site, 15 consecutive days total.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This municipal park is a great value for electric hookups in a spacious, natural setting with access to the park's recreation facilities, shopping, and dining in the town of Stow, Ohio. Located 11 miles southeast of the Cuyahoga visitor center.

Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park Campground

summitmetroparks.org/nimisila-reservoir-metro-park.aspx

330-867-5511

SEASONALITY: Open year-round. From November through April, only the 6 electric sites are open.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reserveamerica.com/explore/nimisila-reservoir-metro-park-campground.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 29 sites that can accommodate RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Electric hookups available at 6 sites, the rest have no hookups.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include vault toilets and a dump station. Park facilities include hiking trails, a boat launch, a playground, and recreation courts.

COST: \$30 to \$35 per night, \$23 during the off-season.

MAXIMUM STAY: 10 nights.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Another good value municipal park with limited electric hookups. Big rig friendly sites in a wooded setting, some with lake views, and access to the 800-acre park's recreation facilities. Located 28 miles south of the Cuyahoga visitor center.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio

PRIVATE RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR CUYAHOGA NATIONAL PARK

Woodside Lake Park

woodsidelake.com

330-626-4251

SEASONALITY: Open mid-April through mid-October.

RESERVATIONS: Visit woodsidelake.com.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 250 sites that can accommodate RVs up to 45 feet.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available, as well as dry camping sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include restrooms and showers, a dump station, camp store, recreation courts, and lake access with a swimming beach and water games.

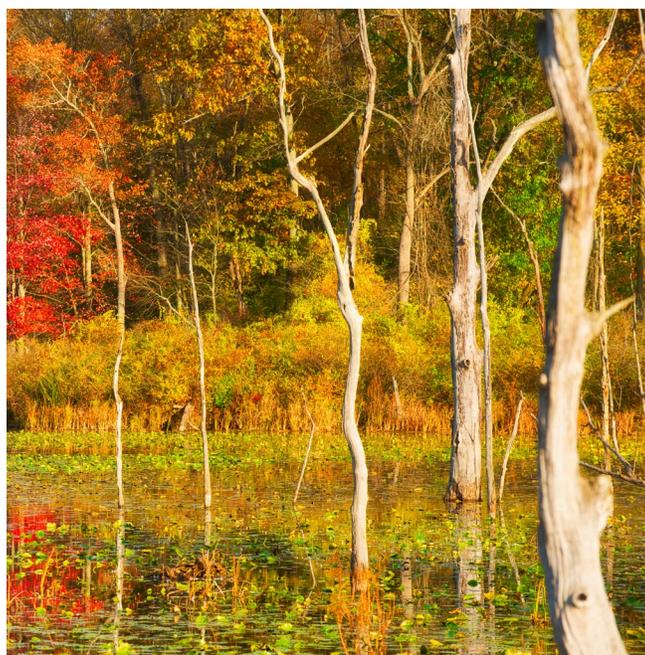
COST: \$34 to \$51, depending on date and hookups.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good to strong, WiFi is offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Spacious, shady campground with full-hookup, big rig friendly sites in a 100-acre park with a lake, close to shopping and dining in Streetsboro, Ohio. Located 15 miles east of the Cuyahoga visitor center.



Streetsboro Cleveland SE KOA

koa.com/campgrounds/streetsboro

330-650-2552

SEASONALITY: Open May through October.

RESERVATIONS: Visit koa.com/campgrounds/streetsboro or call 330-650-2552.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Around 500 sites that can accommodate RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available, as well as dry camping sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables at sites. Central facilities include restrooms and showers, a dump station, camp store, fishing lake, pool, playground, jump pad, dog park, laundry, and recreation courts.

COST: \$55 to \$80, depending on site type and date.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good, WiFi is offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Sprawling campground in a woodsy, picturesque setting with the expected KOA amenities and activities, including a pool and two lakes. Close to shopping and dining in Streetsboro, 10 miles east of the Cuyahoga visitor center.

Maple Lakes Campground

maplelakes.com

330-336-2251

SEASONALITY: Open mid-April to October.

RESERVATIONS: Visit maplelakes.com or call 330-336-2251.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 220 sites that can accommodate big rigs.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables at sites. Central facilities include restrooms and showers, a dump station, camp store, fishing lake, playground, dog park, laundry, recreation courts, and activities.

COST: \$55 to \$65 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, WiFi is offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Large, full-hookup sites in a natural setting, with kid-friendly amenities and activities centered around two lakes. Located 30 miles southwest of the Cuyahoga visitor center.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska

[NPS.gov/gaar](https://www.nps.gov/gaar)



Introduction to Gates of the Arctic National Park

Second only to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in size, Gates of the Arctic is as large as the country of Switzerland and located entirely north of the Arctic Circle. The park's name refers to two distinct mountains in the Brooks Range that appear to divide the vast spruce forest from the arctic tundra beyond. The treeless sloping tundra and wide river valleys, framed by snowcapped, craggy peaks, create a uniquely stunning landscape.

Gates of the Arctic is a true wilderness. There are no National Park Service facilities, visitor centers, or campgrounds in over 13,000 square miles. With the exception of the gravel

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska

[NPS.gov/gaar](https://www.nps.gov/gaar)

Dalton Highway skirting its eastern edge, the park is outside the road system and home to only one village, Anaktuvuk Pass of the Nunamiut Eskimo. Anaktuvuk is the largest of several subsistence communities that live in Gates of the Arctic, following the customs of hunting and gathering established thousands of years ago in what is now park land.

Visitors can reach the park only by plane or by foot, and must have the knowledge and skills to be truly self-sufficient in the wilderness. This extreme remoteness attracts experienced backcountry adventurers for multiday hikes, rafting on one of the six Wild and Scenic Rivers in the park, and setting up camp to fish, bird-watch, or simply enjoy the solitude.

Visitors who don't have the time or skills to launch a wilderness expedition still have options to experience the beauty and ruggedness of Gates of the Arctic.

Air taxis and tour companies offer "flightseeing" day trips, overnight camping, guided rafting trips, and more. A national park visitor center in the community of Bettles, Alaska, and an interagency visitor center in Coldfoot, Alaska, provide ranger services, maps, exhibits, and the park film.

Access to Gates of the Arctic begins in Fairbanks, Alaska. Several small airlines provide daily flights into the gateway communities of Bettles, Coldfoot, and Anaktuvuk Pass. From here, visitors can join a prebooked day tour or guided trek into the park. RVers have the option to use an RV park in Fairbanks as a base, or keep the rig in Anchorage, Alaska and add another flight to the itinerary.

With careful planning, budgeting, and advance reservations, Gates of the Arctic rewards an unparalleled opportunity to see one of the great wilderness areas of the world.



Photo provided by NPS.gov

FAIRBANKS ALASKA PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION CENTER

Inside the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center

101 DUNKEL STREET, FAIRBANKS, AK 99701
907-459-3700

(Open year-round)

ARCTIC INTERAGENCY VISITOR CENTER

260 miles from Fairbanks

DALTON HIGHWAY, COLDFOOT, AK 99701
907-678-5209

(Open late May to late September)

BETTLES RANGER STATION AND VISITOR CENTER

Accessible by air only

AIRPORT ROAD, BETTLES, AK 99726
907-692-5494

(Open late May to late September)

ANAKTUVUK PASS RANGER STATION

Accessible by air only

ANAKTUVUK PASS RANGER STATION
3030 MAIN STREET, ANAKTUVUK PASS, AK 99721
907-661-3520

(Open April through September)

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Hiking

With no trails or even established routes, Gates of the Arctic affords the rare chance to hike across seemingly untouched landscapes. The park preserves and supports a 12,000-year-old human history of living on the land.

The tundra's dense vegetation, soft boggy ground, and frequent river and stream crossings make for slow and challenging terrain. A hike in Gates of the Arctic is not about distance covered, but the experience of wilderness hiking in epic landscapes and solitude.

2. Rafting and Canoeing

Several rivers, including six designated Wild Rivers, provide an opportunity to paddle in Gates of the Arctic for a few hours or several overnights. The Noatak River is one of the longest Wild Rivers in Alaska and a popular travel route with incredible scenery and wildlife. Many guided trips are suitable for all levels, presenting an immersive wilderness experience with little challenging whitewater to navigate.

3. Wildlife Viewing and Photography

Grizzly and black bears, moose, Dall sheep, musk ox, lynx, wolverines, 145 species of birds, and the largest caribou herd in Alaska can all be found in Gates of the Arctic. Caribou, bears, and birds are common sights on hikes and river journeys. Outfitters offer guided tours specifically for wildlife photography, using their expertise to help visitors safely observe and photograph elusive animals in their natural habitat.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Winters are long and summers short in Gates of the Arctic. Mid-June to September is the best time to visit. The entire region has 24-hour sunlight during the summer for at least 30 days.

Thunderstorms are common in June and July, and freezing temperatures can occur at any time of the year. Weather varies within the park's different ecosystems and elevations. Check with your outfitter for appropriate gear to pack for a visit to Gates of the Arctic. Be prepared for changing weather, and for intense bugs.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

There are no areas closed to pets in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, although they must be kept on a leash. Of course, with limited access by small plane, getting your pet into the park is a challenge.

Unless you are planning an independent expedition and are comfortable taking on the additional responsibility of bringing your pet into the wilderness, ask your campground in Fairbanks for pet boarding recommendations.



INSIDER TIPS

Planning a trip to Gates of the Arctic will make it apparent why it's one of the least visited of all U.S. National Parks. Gates of the Arctic National Park does not provide detailed route planning at all. The main reason is because the park was specifically established as a trail-less wilderness area, and repeated use of a particular route can damage the fragile arctic ground cover. Even with backcountry camping experience, a visitor must be comfortable reading a topographical map, devising a route, and adjusting the route based on fluctuating weather conditions. This is a park where a guided tour is necessary for all but the most prepared outdoor adventurers.

If you have limited time or a limited budget, consider a flightseeing tour provided by a local air taxi company that takes you over Gates of the Arctic, along with a drop-in to neighboring [Kobuk Valley National Park](#) for a two-in-one park experience.

For visitors comfortable day hiking on their own in the wilderness, drop-off and pickup inside the park can be arranged with an air taxi company based on their expertise and suggested location.

Several outfitters provide guided overnight and multiday camping expeditions by foot, raft, or canoe. Start with the park's online list of authorized commercial visitor service providers to find the best experience for your time, budget, and ability level. Service providers: nps.gov/locations/alaska/services-gates-of-the-arctic.htm.



RV CAMPING IN GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping or road access to Gates of the Arctic. Overnight options in the park are backcountry tent camping or public-use cabins.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Featured Campgrounds Outside Gates of the Arctic National Park

Air tours and transportation to Gates of the Arctic originate in Fairbanks. There are a handful of RV parks in Fairbanks to use as a base while you visit Gates on a day tour or multiday trip. Keep in mind that Fairbanks is a 360-mile drive north of Anchorage along the George Parks Highway, Alaska Route 3. RVers who do not want to take on this round-trip journey can stay in Anchorage and add flight service and overnight accommodations in Fairbanks to their Gates of the Arctic itinerary.

If you're planning a multiday trip away from your RV, it's best to book a private campground and let the host know about your plans. Distance from the main airports in Anchorage and Fairbanks are provided below for each campground as a point of reference, but your tour may depart from a different airport depending on the tour company, itinerary, and type of aircraft.



RV Campgrounds Near Transportation Options to Gates of the Arctic National Park

RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Tanana Valley Campground and RV Park

tanavalleycampgroundandr.com

907-456-7956

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit tanavalleycampgroundandr.com or call 907-456-7956.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 50 tent and RV sites. A limited number can fit RVs over 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$25 to \$35 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Wooded campground on the northern edge of Fairbanks, providing a peaceful location with convenient access to amenities and transportation. Located 7 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.

Riverview RV Park

riverviewrvpark.net

907-488-6392

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit riverviewrvpark.net or call 907-488-6392.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 160 sites that can accommodate RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, clubhouse, WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$50 to \$60 per night, depending on site size and electric hookup amps. A 3-night discount and weekly rates available.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Family-run riverside campground with a peaceful location just outside the city, full hookups, and big rig friendly sites. Located 13 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska

River's Edge Resort RV Park

riversedge.net/fairbanks-rv-park

907-474-0286

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit riversedge.net/fairbanks-rv-park or call 907-474-0286.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 167 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, WiFi, dog-walking services, car and RV wash.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$55 to \$65 per night, depending on site size and hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Riverside campground with full hookups and a busy but convenient location in downtown Fairbanks. Located 3 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.

RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Paradise Alaska RV Park

paradisealaskarv.wixsite.com/rvpark

907-775-6359

SEASONALITY: Open May to September 30.

RESERVATIONS: Call 907-775-6359.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 34 big rig friendly pull-through sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers, laundry, potable water, dump station, WiFi, community fire pit and grill.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$45 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: New RV park, spacious sites in a wide-open grassy area with views of the surrounding mountains. Located in the town of Palmer, Alaska, 51 miles from the Anchorage airport.

Big Bear Campground and RV Park

alaskarvpark.net

907-745-7445

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit alaskarvpark.net or call 907-745-7445.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 47 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, WiFi, game room, and playground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comfortable, family-run RV park with grassy sites in a spacious, open area and well-maintained facilities. Between the towns of Wasilla, Alaska and Palmer, 44 miles from the Anchorage airport.

Fox Run Lodge and RV Campground

foxruncamp.com

907-745-6120

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit foxruncamp.com or call 907-355-8641.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Sites vary in size, from accommodating only small rigs to a maximum of 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$50 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located in Palmer, adjacent to Manatuska State Recreation Area lakes and trail system. Located 43 miles from the Anchorage airport.

Great Basin National Park, Nevada

NPS.gov/grba



Introduction to Great Basin National Park

Great Basin National Park is located in eastern Nevada close to the Utah border. The nearest major cities are Salt Lake City, Utah, 200 miles; Las Vegas, Nevada, 300 miles; Reno, Nevada, 400 miles.

Thanks to its remoteness, Great Basin is officially designated an International Dark Sky Park. The park is also famous for its spectacular caves, and three groves of the extremely rare and ancient Great Basin bristlecone pine trees.

LEHMAN CAVES VISITOR CENTER
5500 NV-488, BAKER, NV 89311
775-234-7510

GREAT BASIN VISITOR CENTER
NATIONAL PARK, 100 GREAT BASIN, BAKER, NV 89311
775-234-7520

RESERVATIONS AT [RECREATION.GOV/CAMPING/GATEWAYS/2732](https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2732) • 877-444-6777

Great Basin National Park, Nevada



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Leashed pets are allowed, but can be walked only at the campgrounds, in front of visitor centers, or along roads in the park. They are not allowed on any trails, with the exception of the remote Lexington Arch Trail. Kennel services are available in the gateway town of Baker.



INSIDER TIPS

Lehman Caves tours regularly sell out, but you can purchase tickets in advance on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Cave tours are not included in the park entrance fee or Annual Pass and must be purchased separately.

If tickets are sold out, or if the caves are closed for other reasons (like COVID-19 restrictions), Great Basin still has a lot to offer. With more time to traverse aboveground, experience the incredible natural diversity of the park by pairing the Bristlecone Pine Glacier Trail with the Alpine Lakes Loop Trail.

Note that there is an 8,000-foot difference in elevation between the valley floor and Wheeler Peak. Remain aware of how altitude can affect your health and the weather.



RV CAMPING IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK

Great Basin has five developed campgrounds, three of which can accommodate RVs. RVs over 24 feet are limited to two campgrounds, and are not allowed past the first 3 miles of Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive, the 12-mile main road through the park.

Reservations can be made during peak season and are recommended, especially if you have an RV over 30 feet. Any sites not reserved, and all sites in the off-season, are available on a first-come, first-served basis.



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Lehman Caves Tour

Accessible only by guided tour, the Lehman Caves are the main draw for many visitors, with more than 300 unique limestone formations. Sixty- or 90-minute tours are offered daily throughout the year.

2. Stargazing

During peak season, the park offers ranger-led astronomy programs. Rangers can also provide tips on how to get the most out of stargazing on your own.

3. Hiking the Bristlecone Pine Glacier Trail

This 4.6-mile out-and-back trail takes hikers through a bristlecone pine grove and to the foot of the Wheeler Peak Glacier (one of the southernmost glaciers in the U.S.).



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Great Basin National Park is open year-round, but the best time to visit is May through October, when visitor centers and ranger-led programs are fully operational. During the summer, temperatures at the higher elevations are still comfortable. September is ideal for spectacular fall foliage.

Great Basin National Park, Nevada



Great Basin National Park Campgrounds

ALL CAMPGROUNDS

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Each site has a picnic table and fire ring. Nearby facilities include pit toilets and potable water. A dump station is available near the park entrance.

COST: \$20 per night (senior discounts available).

CONNECTIVITY: Cell service is weak to nonexistent throughout the park.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 consecutive days at a site.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed, but can be walked only around the campground or on paved roads in the park.

LOWER LEHMAN CREEK CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Available May to October, 6 months in advance. Visit [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777 for yearly peak season dates and to make a reservation. Sites are first-come, first-served in off-peak season.

CAMPSITE SIZE: The 11 campsites have paved pads and can accommodate RVs. Six sites are pull-through for big rigs over 40 feet. The remaining sites vary in length limits from 24 to 35 feet. Size limit per site can be viewed on [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The only campground in the park that can fit big rigs, Lower Lehman still has a peaceful and natural setting. It remains accessible year-round thanks to its location at a lower elevation, close to the park entrance and visitor center.

UPPER LEHMAN CREEK CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: Available 6 months in advance. Visit [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777 for yearly open dates and to make a reservation.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 24 campsites total, with paved pads. All can accommodate RVs, however only one can fit an RV over 40 feet. The majority of sites have an RV length limit between 18 and 30 feet. Maximum size per site can be viewed on [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The levelness of sites varies, but they're spaced well apart. Trees provide privacy and shade. Campers can hike all the way to Wheeler Peak directly from the campground along Lehman Creek Trailhead.

WHEELER PEAK CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open May to October. Note: Wheeler Peak Campground is closed in 2021 for renovations.

RESERVATIONS: Not available; all sites are first-come, first-served. Check the NPS website for yearly open dates.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 37 sites total. Maximum RV or trailer length is 24 feet; no vehicles over this size are allowed on Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive past Upper Lehman Creek Campground.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The campground is located at the end of Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive, at an elevation of almost 10,000 feet. Campers with small RVs can enjoy direct access to the best-known hiking trails, including to Wheeler Peak.



Great Basin National Park, Nevada

Featured Campgrounds Outside Great Basin National Park

With Great Basin's remote location and limited RV sites for big rigs, it's good to have a backup plan if you don't have a campground reservation. Keep in mind that the only entrance is on the northeast side of the park, in the town of Baker. Also keep in mind that Baker is much smaller than a typical national park gateway town, with a very limited number of businesses and slow cell service.

The nearest bigger town is Ely, Nevada. While Ely is an hour's drive west of the park entrance, it has a variety of stores and restaurants and good cell service. If you're looking for connectivity and convenient access to amenities, Ely is a great base for day trips to Great Basin National Park and other historical and natural sites in the area.



CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR BAKER, NEVADA

Whispering Elms

whisperingelms.com

775-234-9900

Private RV park with full hookups right in town, under 6 miles from the park entrance and walking distance to the few amenities in Baker.

Border Inn

borderinncasino.com

775-234-7300

A motor inn and casino on the border with Utah offers an RV park with full hookups, 13 miles from the park entrance.

Sacramento Pass BLM Campground

blm.gov/visit/sacramento-pass-rec-area

775-289-1800

Public campground less than 20 miles from the park entrance with pit toilets and designated sites that can accommodate big rigs.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ELY, NEVADA

Ely KOA Journey

koa.com/campgrounds/ely

775-289-3413

Private RV park with full hookups, typical KOA amenities like a store, playground, and dog run, and spacious grounds. This campground is located 64 miles from the park entrance.

Cave Lake State Park

parks.nv.gov/parks/cave-lake

775-728-8100

Well maintained state park campground, 66 miles from the entrance to Great Basin. No hookups. Facilities include restrooms and showers, potable water, and a dump station.

Ward Mountain Campground

recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/234207

775-289-3031

Another public option in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Ward has spacious sites with picnic tables and fire rings, and pit toilets. Dry camping only, no hookups or dump station available. This campground is located 73 miles from the park entrance.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

NPS.gov/grsm



Introduction to Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Great Smoky Mountains National Park encompasses over 500,000 acres, close to 800 square miles, straddling the border of Tennessee and North Carolina in the southeastern U.S. Part of the Appalachian Mountain Range, the ancient mountain peaks of the “Great Smokies” are blanketed in forest, filled with tranquil meadows and countless streams, rivers, and waterfalls. Ranging in elevation from under 900 to over 6,600 feet, these mountains are world renowned for their incredibly diverse flora and fauna, including elk and black bears.

RESERVATIONS AT [RECREATION.GOV/CAMPING/GATEWAYS/2739](https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2739) • 877-444-6777

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

NPS.gov/grsm

Great Smoky Mountains is the most visited U.S. National Park by far with about two-thirds of the entire U.S. population living within a day's driving distance of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. So, advanced research and planning are key to an enjoyable trip to the Great Smokies so you don't end up spending your time waiting in line at the entrance gate and circling parking lots.

Aside from the crowds, the park is simply huge, with entrances in both Tennessee and North Carolina, and an extensive number of natural and historical sites scattered throughout. With all that space, including 384 miles of road and over 800 miles of maintained trails, there is plenty of opportunity to find solitude off the beaten path.

The nearest cities are Knoxville, Tennessee, 45 miles from Gatlinburg; and Asheville, North Carolina, 50 miles from Cherokee. The closest major cities are Nashville, Tennessee, at a distance of 220 miles; and Charlotte, North Carolina, 170 miles away.



Factors That May Impact Your Visit

 ROAD CLOSURES

 SEASONAL CLOSURES

 CONSTRUCTION

 CROWDS

Visit nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/conditions.htm for more information on current park conditions and alerts.

SUGARLANDS VISITOR CENTER

1420 FIGHTING CREEK GAP ROAD, GATLINBURG, TN 37738
865-436-1200

OCONALUFTEE VISITOR CENTER

1194 NEWFOUND GAP ROAD, CHEROKEE, NC 28719
828-497-1904

CADES COVE VISITOR CENTER

5686 CADES COVE LOOP ROAD, TOWNSEND, TN 37882
865-436-7318

CLINGMANS DOME VISITOR CONTACT STATION

CLINGMANS DOME ROAD, BRYSON CITY, NC 28713
865-436-1200

RESERVATIONS AT RECREATION.GOV/CAMPING/GATEWAYS/2739 • 877-444-6777

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Auto Touring

While many national parks have a scenic drive, Great Smoky Mountains has a few different routes, each offering a unique experience.

Newfound Gap Road, or state Route 441, is the main road bisecting the park, running 34 miles between Gatlinburg and Cherokee. A drive along Newfound Gap Road has been compared to traveling from Georgia to Maine, in terms of the diverse forest ecosystems encountered. Stop at the large parking area at Newfound Gap, nearly a mile high, to take in the panoramic views (weather permitting) or even stretch your legs on the Appalachian Trail, which runs along the state line through the park.

When driving Newfound Gap Road, save time for a 7-mile detour along **Clingmans Dome Road** (open seasonally), which leads to the highest peak in the Smokies. Visitors can walk the paved but steep half-mile path to the Clingmans Dome observation tower for 360-degree views.

One of the most popular destinations in the park is Cades Cove, a stunning mountain valley. **Cades Cove Loop Road** runs one way for 11 miles around the edge of the broad valley, which offers some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities and the widest variety of historical buildings in the park.

As one of the park's most popular destinations, Cades Cove Loop has also experienced some of its worst traffic issues. Cades Cove is closed to cars all day on Wednesdays from May to October. Be sure to plan around this, and arrive well before 9 a.m. to get ahead of the crowds.

2. Hiking

Choosing from over 800 miles of trails can be as daunting as planning to hike the Appalachian Trail, 170 miles of which run through the Great Smokies. Start by thinking about what you would most like to experience, whether it be waterfalls, old-growth forest, panoramic views, or wildlife. Then consider how long of a hike is realistic for your time and abilities, and where the trailhead is in relation to your campground base. Depending on how much time you have, it's a good idea to focus on one or two trails, arrive early, and take time to enjoy the hike, rather than trying to rush around and see everything (and instead end up sitting in traffic).

- **Grotto Falls** and **Laurel Falls** are two popular waterfall hikes under 3 miles. Rainbow Falls is considered moderate to difficult, but at over 5 miles you will leave most of the crowd behind. An additional 4 miles leads to the summit of Mount LeConte, the third highest peak in the park.
- A fun trail for families with kids is **Kephart Prong Trail**, with historical building remnants, wildlife viewing opportunities including the park's famous salamanders, and log bridges over streams. It's 4 miles round-trip, so families with little kids may want to turn around before the last two bridges, which are more challenging to cross.
- Visitors to the Great Smokies have the unique opportunity to walk a portion of the Appalachian Trail. If you park at Newfound Gap, you can hike 7 miles of the trail to **Clingmans Dome**, or 4 miles to the sweeping **Charlies Bunion** overlook.



Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

3. Historical Sites

Southern Appalachia's history of human habitation spans thousands of years, from Paleo-Indians to early European settlers and loggers, through to the Civilian Conservation Corps. A standout among national parks, Great Smoky Mountains offers the opportunity to see a variety of popular sites, from grist mills and cabins to ghost towns and cemeteries.

Cades Cove holds the widest variety of historical buildings in the park. Pick up a self-guided tour booklet at the entrance to the loop road for information about the 18th- and 19th-century buildings on view, including a mill, churches, and log cabins.

One of the most popular and most photographed sites is **Mingus Mill**, built in 1886. A visit to this working grist mill, located near Cherokee and the Oconaluftee Visitor Center, provides unique insight into the mechanics and history of the rustic wooden structure, along with a spectacularly scenic setting, particularly in the fall.

Hiking trails in the **Elkmont district**, near the Gatlinburg entrance, provide the fascinating and sometimes spooky opportunity to view dilapidated homes in the middle of the woods, remnants of a classic summer vacation town. Four cabins in the area have been restored and are open to the public.

About 160 known cemeteries are located within the national park's borders, some of which date back 9,000 years. Two accessible cemeteries that can be visited respectfully are at the Sugarlands Visitor Center and in Cades Cove. If you're interested in viewing others, speak to a ranger at the visitor center for more information.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

The park is open year-round. Though winter can be a magical time with the smallest crowds and sometimes surprisingly mild weather, much of the park's operations are limited and many campgrounds close for the season. April, May, and early June is a great time to experience smaller crowds and springtime's blossoming trees, flowing streams and waterfalls, and animals emerging from hibernation. The weather can still be unpredictable, so RVers should keep a close watch and be prepared for temperatures below freezing overnight.

Summer and fall are the busiest times in the country's most popular park. It's an ideal time to visit with the park's roads, services, and programs fully operational, good weather (although it can get hot and humid in the summer), and spectacular fall foliage. Crowds are inevitable, but with advance research and planning you can take advantage of the great weather and enjoy a stress-free visit to the Great Smokies.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Leashed pets are allowed only in a limited area of the park, including campgrounds, picnic areas, along roads, and on two short walking trails. They are not allowed on any other trails in the park. Leave your pet in the comfort of your RV while you visit the park, or ask your campground for a nearby kennel recommendation. Kennel services are available in many gateway towns around the park, in particular, the Gatlinburg–Pigeon Forge area in Tennessee.

The good news for travelers who love to hit the trails with their pet is that there are extensive public land hiking options near the national park. See the park website for details.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina



INSIDER TIPS

Cades Cove Loop Road is closed to cars for the full day on Wednesdays between May and October. For those able, this is an incredible opportunity to experience the beauty of Cades Cove without any automobile traffic. Bring your bikes with you into the park on Wednesday, or pick up a rental at the Cades Cove Campground.

While in the Cades Cove area, check out **Spruce Flats Falls**, a lesser-known trail to multiple cascades in less than 2 miles.

To experience the park like an early automobile driver, **Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail** is a one-way, narrow and winding 5.5-mile paved loop road that runs past old-growth forest, rushing streams, log cabins, grist mills, and other historical buildings.



RV CAMPING IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

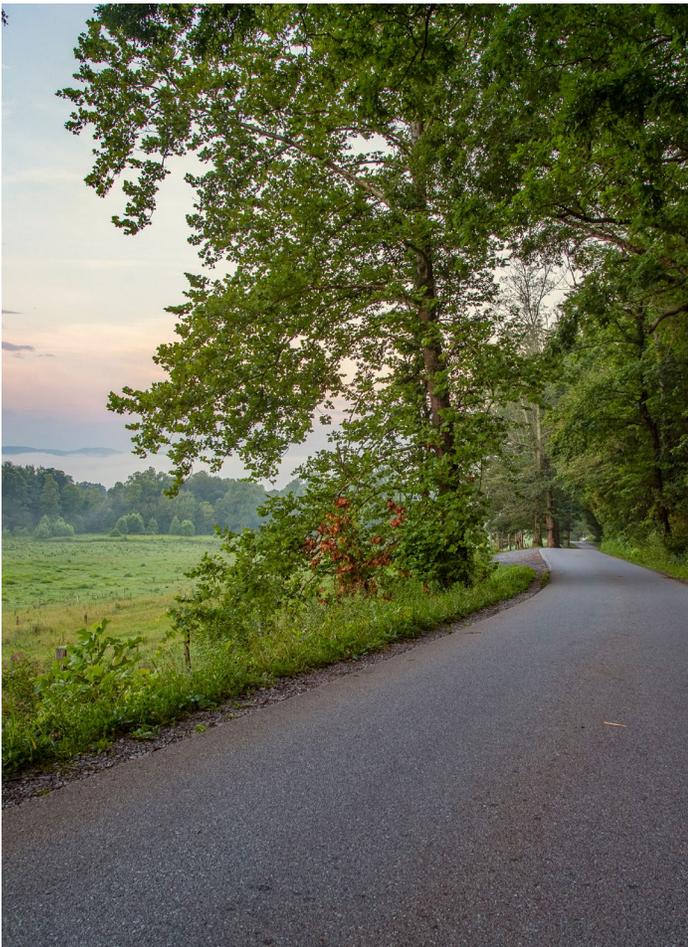
Great Smoky Mountains is home to 10 frontcountry campgrounds for individual campers, half of which can accommodate RVs. The park offers additional campgrounds for groups and for campers with horses. Backcountry camping is a popular activity in this vast park; see the park website for details.

The park campgrounds are rustic, offering an immersive natural experience in the forest, with many sites next to babbling mountain streams. There are no hookups, or reliable cell service. Flush toilets and running cold water are the only amenities provided.

Advance reservations are required; there are no first-come, first-served sites. There is high demand for camping in this national park and campsites can get snapped up the moment they open for reservations 6 months in advance.

Campers will attest that it's worth the effort to time your online search to try to snag one of these coveted spots. The big advantage to camping inside the park, in addition to the natural beauty and direct access to trails, is being able to enjoy it before and after the day-tripping crowds.

In general, camping inside Great Smoky Mountains is not a big rig friendly experience. Aside from the limited number of sites for RVs over 25 or 30 feet, the mountain roads must be approached with caution. Most secondary roads inside the park prohibit trailers and RVs.



Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina



Great Smoky Mountains National Park Campgrounds

ALL CAMPGROUNDS

RESERVATIONS: Visit [recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2739](https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2739) or call 877-444-6777. Advance reservations are required and can be made up to 6 months in advance.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include flush toilets and cold running water.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed in the campground, but not on trails.

CADES COVE CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open year-round, with reservations required year-round.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Over 160 sites total, 130 for RV motorhomes or trailers. About 70 sites can accommodate RVs up to 30 feet, half of that amount for up to 35 feet. A handful of sites are available for up to 40 feet.

COST: \$25 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Cades Cove is one of the most beloved and scenic areas of the park, with ample opportunity for wildlife sightings. May through October, a camp store offers limited grocery and sundry items, plus bike rentals. Enjoy Cades Cove Loop Road while it's closed to cars before 10 a.m. during peak season.

COSBY CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open seasonally, May through October.

CAMPSITE SIZE: The campground offers 148 sites, with around 20 available for RVs up to 25 feet. Only a handful of sites can accommodate larger RVs.

COST: \$17.50 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For smaller RVs, Cosby Campground provides a secluded and peaceful environment under a canopy of shady trees on the north end of the park, located a few miles off state Route 32.

DEEP CREEK CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open seasonally, May through October.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 25 out of a total 92 sites can accommodate RVs up to 20 feet. A handful of sites can fit RVs up to 25 feet.

COST: \$25 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located next to one of the park's most popular creeks for summer water recreation, in the southeastern portion of the park in North Carolina, with direct access to trails and waterfalls.

ELKMONT CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open seasonally, May through October.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Over 200 sites total, with 160 for RVs. About half of the RV sites can accommodate RVs up to 25 feet, and a limited number up to 35 feet.

COST: \$25 to \$27 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The largest and busiest campground in the park. Elkmont's spacious sites in a forested setting are highly coveted, particularly the riverfront sites. Centrally located to many popular attractions and trailheads, only 8 miles from Gatlinburg.

SMOKEMONT CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open year-round; reservations required year-round.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 130 sites for RVs. Almost all sites can accommodate RVs up to 35 feet and many can fit up to 40 feet.

COST: \$25 per night.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located on the quieter North Carolina side of the park in a scenic setting, near Cherokee, the Oconaluftee Visitor Center, and just off U.S. Route 441. Smokemont is the most big rig friendly campground in the park.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

Featured Campgrounds Outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park

For RVers with bigger rigs, those who prefer hookups and access to amenities, or anyone not lucky enough to secure a spot inside the park, there are plenty of good options nearby. In fact, there are so many camping choices, in all directions, it can feel overwhelming trying to

decide where to stay. To narrow things down, think about which main entrance you'll use as a base. Factors can include which region of the park you want to focus on seeing, whether you prefer the bustle of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge (or not), or simply which side of the park, in Tennessee or North Carolina, is easier for you to get to.

The next consideration is the type of camping experience you're looking for, whether it's an RV resort packed with amenities and activities, or a quiet, natural escape. Many campgrounds in the area have amenities like pools, dog parks, and outdoor game courts along with tubing, fishing, hiking, and riverside campsites, offering the best of both worlds.



CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK'S GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE ENTRANCE

Greenbrier Campground

smokymountaincamping.com

865-430-7415

With over 120 full-hookup wooded or riverfront sites, a camp store, WiFi, laundry, playgrounds, recreation courts, and a swimming hole, Greenbrier provides a comfortable base in a parklike setting just outside the bustle of Gatlinburg, 10 miles from Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Imagination Mountain Camp-Resort

imaginationmountaincamping.com

423-487-5534

With a peaceful yet convenient location outside of Gatlinburg, Imagination Mountain is a kid-friendly resort with a pool, ice cream parlor, games, and activities. Most full-hookup sites are located creekside for a serene, natural setting. Located 21 miles from Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Pigeon Forge / Gatlinburg KOA Holiday

koa.com/campgrounds/pigeon-forge

865-453-7903

For those who want to be in the middle of the fun and action of Pigeon Forge, the KOA is just off the main drag and offers a trolley service into town and to Dollywood. With the expected KOA amenities like a pool, snack bar, store, playground, and dog park, this is a great option for families with older kids. Located 10 miles from the Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK'S TOWNSEND, TENNESSEE ENTRANCE

Townsend KOA

koa.com/campgrounds/townsend-great-smokies

865-448-2241

Townsend offers a quieter location not far from Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, with its own park entrance that is closest to the Cades Cove area of the Great Smokies. The KOA has a comfortable mix of kid-friendly amenities and activities, plus river tubing and fishing on site. Less than a mile from Townsend Entrance Road.

Little Arrow Outdoor Resort

camplittlearrow.com

865-448-6363

With glamping tents, cabins, and tiny homes to rent in addition to RV sites; a pool, river access, a playground, food trucks, activities, and a rustic-chic aesthetic, Little Arrow provides a comfortable retreat in a natural setting, half a mile from Townsend Entrance Road.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK'S CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA ENTRANCE

Yogi in the Smokies

jellystonecherokee.com

828-482-4212

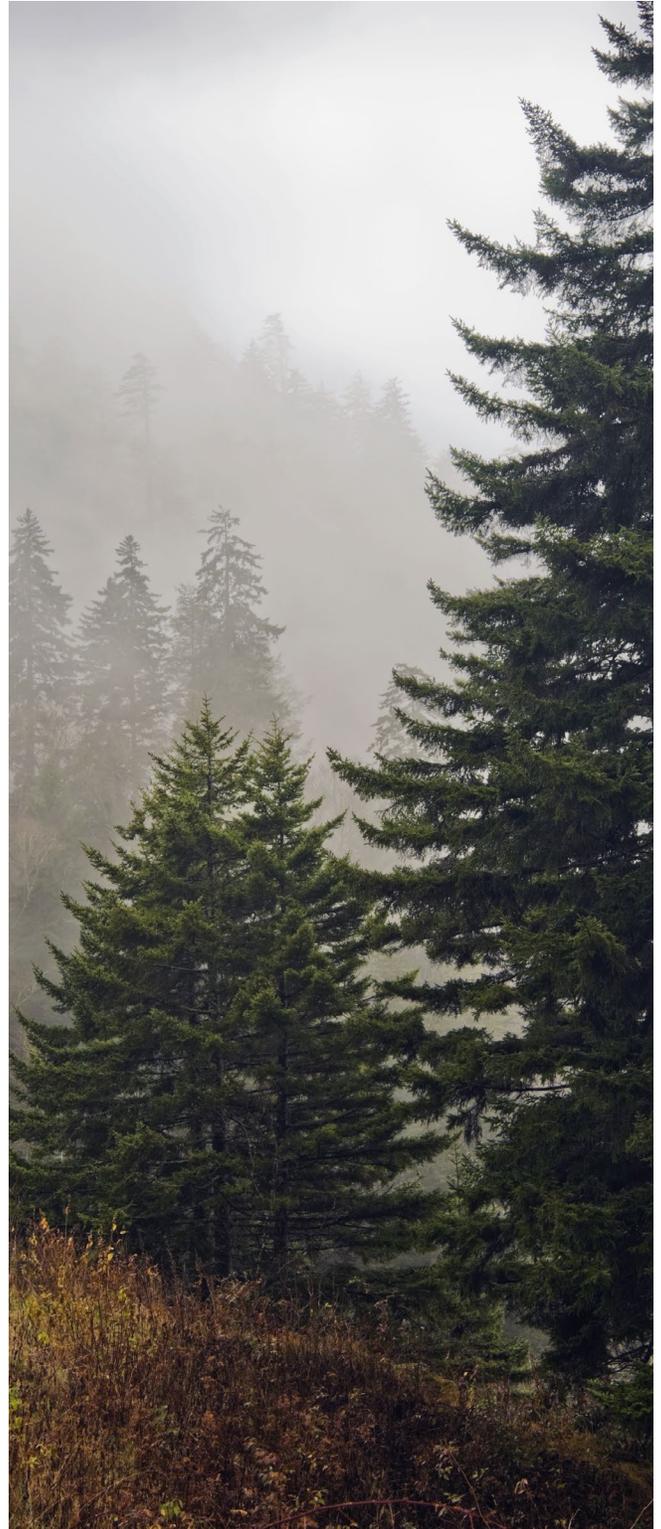
The family-favorite Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts has a location on the North Carolina side of the Smokies, with a beautiful forested, riverfront setting and kid-friendly amenities and activities like recreation courts, a pool, a game room, pedal carts, crafts, and much more, plus river tubing and fishing. Located 9 miles from the Oconaluftee Visitor Center.

Happy Holiday RV Campground

happyholidayrv.com

828-497-9204

Located on land owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Happy Holiday RV Campground offers the unique opportunity to learn about Cherokee Indian culture while enjoying a stay at this spacious campground with over 350 big rig friendly sites, a large pool, a playground, indoor and outdoor games, river tubing, and fishing. Located 7 miles from the Oconaluftee Visitor Center.



Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas

NPS.gov/hosp



Introduction to Hot Springs National Park

Located in the middle of a town, with no entrance gate and a focus on historic buildings, Hot Springs is not a typical national park. Yet in some ways it's considered the first national park, as the first land set aside by the U.S. federal government for purely recreational purposes. This happened in 1832, 84 years before the National Park Service was created. Hot Springs officially became a national park in 1921.

Nestled in the Ouachita Mountain Range in central Arkansas, the 47 natural hot springs protected in the park formed over 4,000 years ago, when water trapped under the surface started bubbling up through folds and faults in the mountains. Mineral hot springs have long been valued all over the world for their purported healing properties, and after its federal protection in 1932 a spa town began growing up around Hot Springs. Modeled after European spa towns, Hot Springs became the premier U.S. "healing waters" destination, culminating in the construction of elaborate Victorian bathhouses.

Visitors to Hot Springs National Park can experience a traditional hydrothermal bathing regimen in one of the historic bathhouses (for an additional fee), and drink from the hot and cold water taps around town. You can learn about the town's unique architecture, history, and culture through walks, self-guided tours, and in-depth ranger programs. Hot Springs is for outdoor enthusiasts as well: Miles of forested hiking trails, panoramic mountain views, and a wide range of land- and water-based recreation opportunities await in the surrounding area.

Hot Springs National Park is located 55 miles southwest of Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, and less than 20 miles from Interstate 30.

FORDYCE BATHHOUSE VISITOR CENTER AND MUSEUM
369 CENTRAL AVENUE, HOT SPRINGS, AR 71901
501-620-6715

Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Thermal Waters

The first thing to understand is that soaking in the protected hot springs outdoors is not allowed. However, visitors can soak inside two of the historic bathhouses, and can choose between a contemporary spa or a traditional Victorian bathhouse experience.

The Buckstaff Bathhouse has been operating continuously since 1912; it offers a traditional hydrotherapy treatment program in addition to modern services like manicures and pedicures. The Quapaw Bathhouse was built in 1922 but has been renovated into a modern spa, with typical services plus communal or private mineral spring pools. See the park website for links to both spas' pricing and reservation details.

There are unique (and free) opportunities to experience the water outside. Visitors can dip their feet and hands into two springs off Bathhouse Row. The Display Spring's natural cascade and setting among dense trees and mossy rocks make it a great place to sit and relax outside the bustle of town.

Finally, several public taps around town are available for unlimited use, to fill up bottles and jugs with hot or cold mineral spring water to drink.

2. Fordyce Bathhouse Tour

While only two of the nine historic bathhouses still provide a spa experience, the stunning Fordyce Bathhouse, which contains the national park visitor center, provides a fascinating look into the history and practices of natural hot springs bathing, massage, and other therapies. Self-guided and ranger-led tours are available.

3. Hiking

While Hot Springs is unique as a national park for its city setting, it still offers the more typical park experience of hiking, with 26 miles of forested trails that start just a short walk from town. Sunset Trail, the longest trail at 10 miles one way, leads from the Gulpha Gorge Campground to West Mountain Summit and winds through most of the park. The trail can be accessed at several points for a variable-length hike.

Goat Rock Trail is another favorite hike with some challenging, steep switchbacks and great views. The trail is just over 1 mile one way, and links up with several other trails for a longer hike.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Hot Springs National Park is open year-round. August through October is the best time to visit, for warm but mild temperatures and beautiful fall foliage. Fall is also one of the busiest periods at the park, although it can be quieter if you avoid weekends and holidays. Spring is a good time of year to visit, especially for hiking, with cooler temperatures, flowing water, and wildflowers to enjoy.

Summer is peak season, and best avoided. In addition to crowds, hot and humid weather isn't very appealing for soaking in hot spring baths. Winter is the quietest period, except for holidays. Visiting the bathhouses when it's cold outside is an exhilarating experience, although RVers should check the weather and plan cautiously as the temperature can get below freezing in the winter.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Hot Springs is a pet-friendly national park. While pets are not allowed in the federal buildings, leashed pets are welcome on all of the park's trails as well as outside the visitor center and museum buildings.

Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas



INSIDER TIPS

Strolling Bathhouse Row is an essential experience at Hot Springs, evoking its Victorian past. Don't miss the equally engaging Grand Promenade, a half-mile brick pathway behind Bathhouse Row that runs through some of the prettiest parts of the park, under a thick canopy of trees, and along a hot springs cascade, with interesting views of the caps that cover the springs and of the bathhouses from above.

Beer enthusiasts won't want to miss out on the only brewery inside a national park. Superior Bathhouse Brewery is not only located inside one of the historic bathhouses, it uses the thermal spring waters to brew its beer.

Hot Springs' two scenic drives are a great way to venture outside of town and enjoy sweeping vistas of the area without having to hike. West Mountain Drive provides views over the town of Hot Springs, which are particularly beautiful in the fall surrounded by colorful foliage.

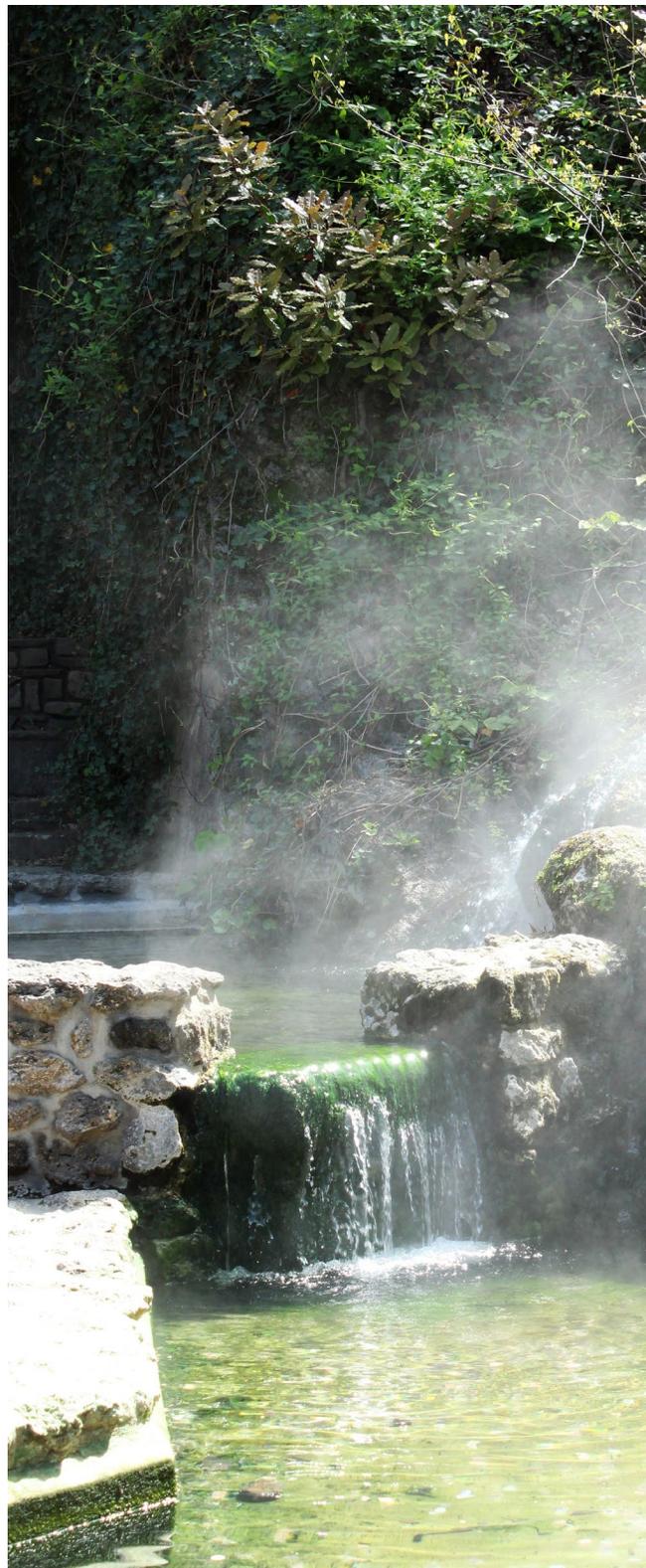
North Mountain leads up to Hot Springs Mountain Tower, which has breathtaking 360-degree views. The tower was originally constructed out of wood in 1877, and was replaced by a steel tower with an elevator in the 1980s. Active visitors have the option to climb up the tower's stairs. Note that a separate admission fee applies.

In addition to mineral hot springs, Arkansas quartz crystals are a unique natural resource found in the Ouachita Mountains that have been prized for thousands of years. Amateur geologists can dig for crystals at the nearby Ron Coleman Mining site (for a fee), or buy specimens at shops in town.



RV CAMPING IN HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

There is one campground in Hot Springs for both tents and RVs. Unusual for a national park, Gulpha Gorge Campground has full hookups and sites that can accommodate RVs up to 60 feet. Site sizes vary, and with only 40 sites, all on a first-come, first-served basis, this popular park can fill up by 12 p.m. on weekends and holidays.



Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas



Springs National Park Campground

GULPHA GORGE CAMPGROUND

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 40 sites, most can accommodate big rigs.

HOOKUPS: All sites have full hookups.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and grills at sites. Central facilities include bathrooms and potable water.

COST: \$30 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed in the campground and on trails.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: From a natural setting in the middle of town, campers can enjoy direct trails through the forest and to the visitor center, bathhouses, shops, and restaurants. Riverside sites are the most desirable, but all sites fill up, so it's best to arrive early.



Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas



Featured Campgrounds Outside Hot Springs National Park

Hot Springs and the surrounding Ouachita Mountains are a popular tourist destination. The historic sites, shopping, and dining amenities in town combined with the abundance of outdoor recreation activities make it a destination that anyone can enjoy. RVers have their choice of private RV parks and campgrounds, mainly clustered outside downtown Hot Springs, as well as public campgrounds in stunning natural settings, including the largest lake in Arkansas.

Keep in mind that this is a woody, mountainous area. Even if RVs can fit into sites, be prepared to navigate around narrow, steep roads and low tree branches. The length of your RV and comfort driving mountain roads should be considered in your choice of campgrounds. If you have any concerns don't hesitate to call the campground directly for details on driving access.

PRIVATE RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

Hot Springs National Park KOA

koa.com/campgrounds/hot-springs-national-park

501-624-5912

This KOA has the expected kid-friendly amenities like a pool, playground, dog park, and outdoor game courts, plus mini golf, weekend breakfasts, and a shuttle bus to the historic bathhouses. About 50 sites can accommodate RVs of all sizes with partial and full hookups and some upgraded sites. Under 4 miles from the Hot Springs visitor center.

Catherine's Landing

rvoutdoors.com/catherines-landing

501-262-2550

Large RV park inside a sprawling recreation park, offering spacious and modern big rig friendly full-hookup sites, plus access to extensive amenities and activities including lake recreation, a pool, a splash pad, a zip line, dog parks, walking trails, and much more. Located 6 miles from the Hot Springs visitor center.

J & J RV Park

jjrvpark.com

501-321-9852

Small, family-run RV park with big rig friendly full-hookup sites and well-maintained facilities in a peaceful and shady natural setting, just outside the bustle of downtown Hot Springs. Under 4 miles from the Hot Springs visitor center.

PUBLIC RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

Lake Catherine State Park

arkansasstateparks.com/parks/lake-catherine-state-park

501-844-4176

With 70 campsites, many of them lakeside, this spacious state park provides a peaceful, natural setting to tour Hot Springs and the surrounding area. Some partial and full-hookup sites available, generally big rig friendly. Direct access to trails, including the beautiful Falls Creek Falls. Located 13 miles from the Hot Springs visitor center.

Lake Ouachita State Park

arkansasstateparks.com/parks/lake-ouachita-state-park

800-264-2441

Situated on a peninsula in the largest lake in Arkansas, Lake Ouachita State Park offers a total of 93 campsites, many of which can accommodate RVs with partial hookups. Great campground option for a few days to enjoy the lake and visit Hot Springs, 15 miles away.

Caddo Drive Campground

recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233446

870-246-5501

One of several Army Corps of Engineers campgrounds around DeGray Lake, Caddo Drive Campground can be booked online through Recreation.gov for an economical RV site with electric hookups in a woody natural setting, with access to a swimming beach and other recreational activities. Located 26 miles from the Hot Springs visitor center.

Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve, Alaska

[NPS.gov/kefj](https://www.nps.gov/kefj)



Introduction to Kenai Fjords National Park

Mountains, ice, and ocean meet at the Kenai Peninsula in south central Alaska, creating an unforgettable combination of deep blue waters, bright green forest, jagged mountain peaks, and the crystal walls of nearly 40 glaciers flowing from one of the largest ice fields in the U.S.

Visitors come to Kenai Fjords to experience the waters, glaciers, and abundant wildlife up close through boat tours, air tours, kayaking trips, and trekking. The Exit Glacier is one of the park's main attractions; the nearby visitor center has ranger programs where visitors can learn about the Sugpiaq people who relied on the rich natural resources of the Kenai Peninsula, and about the changing climate, which is starkly visible in the park's shrinking glaciers.

The 670,000 acres of Kenai Fjords National Park is only a small part of the Kenai Peninsula, which also includes the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Kachemak Bay State Park, and Chugach National Forest. For all that wilderness, Kenai Fjords is a surprisingly accessible park for Alaska, only 126 miles south of Anchorage along the National Scenic Byway of Seward Highway. The small but bustling town of Seward, Alaska, provides a comfortable base with accommodations and amenities. This proximity and infrastructure make Kenai Fjords a great option to fly into Anchorage and rent an RV.

KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER

1212 FOURTH AVENUE, SEWARD, AK 99664
907-422-0535
(Open June through September)

EXIT GLACIER NATURE CENTER

24620 HERMAN LEIRER ROAD, SEWARD, AK 99664
907-422-0535
(Open June through September)

Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve, Alaska



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Exit Glacier Area

The only part of Kenai Fjords accessible by road, the Exit Glacier area is where visitors can hike trails, take a ranger-led walk, and witness up close how glaciers reshape the landscape. Start at the Exit Glacier Nature Center to view exhibits, check the ranger program schedule, and get tips on current trail conditions.

The Glacier View Loop Trail, which departs from the visitor center, is an accessible 1-mile trail with a panoramic vista of Exit Glacier. An additional trail leads to Exit Glacier Overlook, which has close-up views of the glacier in its valley. Glacier Overlook is just over 1 mile round trip, but it's steep and considered to be moderate to strenuous.

2. Harding Icefield Trail

The longest trail at Kenai Fjords presents the unique opportunity to hike an ice field. Branching off from the Glacier View Loop Trail, this 8.2-mile hike is strenuous and can take 6 to 8 hours to complete, with 1,000 feet of elevation gain per mile. Camping is permitted along the corridor, but you must set up camp at least .125-mile from the trail on bare rock or snow. The top of the trail rewards sweeping vistas of the ice field, but even a short hike provides great views of the glacier and the valley.

3. Boat Tour

The best way to see Kenai Fjords is by boat. The National Park Service does not offer tours or work with an exclusive concessionaire. Instead, visitors can book a private tour from one of several operators departing out of Seward. A typical option is a 6-hour tour of the park that cruises through the fjords, past alpine and tidewater glaciers including the Aialik Glacier, and offers a bounty of wildlife sighting opportunities, from whales and sea lions to bald eagles and puffins. Use the Seward Chamber of Commerce website for tour operators: seward.com.

4. Kayaking

Paddling the waters of Kenai Fjords, close to the dynamic glaciers and marine life, is a bucket-list experience. Since the fjords are exposed to the Gulf of Alaska with only a few protected coves, inexperienced travelers are strongly recommended to travel with a guide. See seward.com for a list of tour companies.

Outside the national park, there's an abundance of kayaking opportunities in sheltered waters for paddlers of all levels, including Waterfront Park in Seward.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Summer is the best time to visit Kenai Fjords, when the park is fully operational and the weather is most suitable for RV travel in the area. The visitor centers are open from June to early September. Summer temperatures range from the mid-40s to the low 70s, with frequent overcast and rainy days. July and August are the best months for the chance of warm, sunny days and the best time to visit if Kenai is part of a longer road trip itinerary.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Leashed pets are allowed only on the road to Exit Glacier and in the parking lot of Exit Glacier Nature Center. Pets are not permitted on any trails or in the coastal backcountry. Leave your pet behind in the comfort of your RV, or ask your campground for pet boarding recommendations.

Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve, Alaska



INSIDER TIPS

Parking at Exit Glacier is limited. Plan on arriving before 10 a.m., or book a taxi or shuttle service from Seward.

Scenic flights are an incredible way to experience Kenai Fjords, and the only way to see the entire Harding Icefield. While “flightseeing” tours are pricey, if you plan and budget for them in advance, they can provide an unforgettable experience in a limited amount of time. Some flightseeing tour options include glacier landings. See [seward.com](https://www.seward.com) for a list of tour companies.

Air and water taxi services are common in Alaska. Even though they don't come with commentary or meals, they can be an economical alternative to a guided tour. [Seward.com](https://www.seward.com) has a list of service operators.

The Alaska SeaLife Center, a mammal rehabilitation center on Resurrection Bay in Seward, is a great place for kids to learn about the animals in the area.

Seward is also home to some of Alaska's most accomplished dogsledding mushers. Visitors can take a kid-friendly and affordable behind-the-scenes tour of an Iditarod sled dog team kennel, and even help train puppies by hopping on a wheeled sled for a tour of the property. For a truly unique adventure, take a scenic helicopter flight to experience a dogsled ride across a remote glacier.

With so many private tour and transportation options to choose from, don't hesitate to call your campground and ask for recommendations. They'll likely have information on economical air and water taxi itineraries that provide the best views, and may offer discounts for tours that they can book directly.



RV CAMPING IN KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping in Kenai Fjords. The only option for camping is a 12-site walk-in tent campground at Exit Glacier.



Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Featured Campgrounds Outside Kenai Fjords National Park

The gateway town of Seward is the main hub for visiting Kenai Fjords, with stores, restaurants, a marina, tour companies, and the national park visitor center. Seward is the most convenient base for RVers to visit the national park, but there are plenty of camping options throughout the Kenai Peninsula down to the town of Homer, Alaska, 170 miles from Seward.

While there are several private campgrounds offering full and partial hookups, the Kenai Peninsula has an abundance of public camping options, including municipal parks, state parks, national forest campgrounds, and boondocking areas. Most campgrounds are closed or offer limited facilities in the winter.

Whether you're staying at a private RV park or boondocking, it's a good idea to always stock up on gas and food when you have the chance and to research your route in advance with an understanding of distances, road access, and remoteness. While cell phone service is generally available along the major roads and in towns, it should not be relied on for navigation.



RV Campgrounds Near Kenai Fjords National Park

PRIVATE CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Seward KOA

koa.com/campgrounds/seward

907-224-4887

SEASONALITY: Open April through September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit koa.com/campgrounds/seward or call 800-562-9105.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 60 big rig friendly RV sites, plus a few tent sites that can accommodate small RVs.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, dog park, playground, and game room.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$60 to \$80 per night, depending on date and hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed; dog park is available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Recently opened, the KOA is an ideal base with full hookups and basic amenities, next to the Resurrection River with views of Exit Glacier Valley. Located 8 miles from Exit Glacier Nature Center.

Stoney Creek Campground

stoneycreekrvpark.com

907-224-6465

SEASONALITY: Open May through September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit stoneycreekrvpark.com.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 81 big rig friendly RV sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include restrooms, showers, laundry, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Weekly and monthly rates available.

COST: \$52 to \$57 per night, depending on site type.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: New facility in a scenic setting along Stoney Creek, with convenient access to amenities in downtown Seward. Located 12 miles from Exit Glacier Nature Center.

Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Renfro's Lakeside Retreat

renfroslikesideretreat.com/lodging.html

907-288-5059

SEASONALITY: Open May through September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit renfroslikesideretreat.com/lodging.html or call 907-288-5059.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 10 big rig friendly RV sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, playground, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$45 per night, depending on hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Small RV campground along with cabins offered in a peaceful, natural setting. Basic sites without privacy are made up for by the location right on Kenai Lake. Ask about discounts on Kenai Fjords tours. Located 24 miles from Exit Glacier Nature Center.

PUBLIC CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK

Resurrection Campground & RV Park

cityofseward.us/departments/parks-recreation

907-224-4055

SEASONALITY: Open May through September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit campspot.com/book/sewardmunicipalcampgrounds

CAMPSITE SIZE: 100 sites that can accommodate RVs up to 30 or 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available at some sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include restrooms, showers, laundry, and a dump station.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

COST: \$40 to \$65 per night, depending on hookups and site location.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: One of several Seward Municipal Campgrounds, Resurrection is located in Waterfront Park in downtown Seward. The campground is a basic parking lot grid, with a spectacular location on Resurrection Bay. Premium sites are waterfront. Located 12 miles from Exit Glacier Nature Center.

Quartz Creek Campground

fs.usda.gov/recarea/chugach/recarea/?recid=6646

907-288-3178

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233909. Reservations available during the summer season.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 45 sites that can accommodate RVs up to 30 feet. About 20 sites can accommodate up to 45 feet.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include picnic tables, flush toilets, and potable water. Water service is available only in the summer season.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

COST: \$18 per night during the summer, free in the winter.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: National forest campground with basic facilities and well-maintained, spacious sites, plus trails and boat access on Kenai Lake. Located 50 miles from Exit Fjord Nature Center.

Upper Lake Trail Pullout

fs.usda.gov/chugach

907-288-3178

GPS: 60.5025, -149.3694

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Large open area with space for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: No facilities.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

COST: Free.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: National forest boondocking area, with a spectacular location overlooking Upper Lake. Popular camping spot with locals, easy access for big rigs off Seward Highway. Located 34 miles from Exit Fjord Nature Center.

Kobuk Valley National Park, Alaska

NPS.gov/kova



Introduction to Kobuk Valley National Park

Located in northwest Alaska, Kobuk Valley is one of the most remote and least visited U.S. National Parks. Kobuk Valley offers a truly unique wilderness experience to visitors who journey north of the Arctic Circle. Vast sand dunes improbably emerge from the surrounding tundra, river valleys, forest, and mountain ranges. This ancient landscape is a migratory path for half a million caribou, and has been a home to humans since the last Ice Age.

There are no roads, entrance gates, or facilities inside the park. Visitors reach Kobuk Valley by plane, and must have the knowledge and skills to be truly self-sufficient in the wilderness. This extreme remoteness attracts experienced backcountry adventurers for hiking, dune camping, wildlife viewing, and floating on the Kobuk River.

Visitors who don't have the time or skills to launch a wilderness expedition still have options to experience the unique beauty and isolation of Kobuk Valley. Air taxis and tour companies offer "flightseeing" day trips, overnight camping, guided kayak trips, and more.

Access to Kobuk Valley begins with a flight from Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska, to a smaller town, and from there by air taxi into the park, either as an independent, self-reliant traveler or as part of a guided tour. RVers can keep their rig based at a campground in Fairbanks or Anchorage.

Commercial jets from Anchorage fly to the town of Kotzebue, 80 miles southwest of the park and home to the park's visitor center, the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center. From Fairbanks, regular air service runs to the small community of Bettles, Alaska, which is also an entry point to [Gates of the Arctic National Park](#).

With careful planning, budgeting, and advance reservations, Kobuk Valley offers the opportunity to experience a unique wilderness and solitude unlike most anywhere else.

NORTHWEST ARCTIC HERITAGE CENTER

171 THIRD AVENUE, KOTZEBUE, AK 99752
907-442-3890

KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Great Kobuk Sand Dunes

The largest dune field in the park, and the largest active sand dunes in the Arctic, Great Kobuk Dunes is the highlight of a visit to Kobuk Valley. Many visitors experience the dunes as part of a flightseeing tour, with their plane landing right on the dunes for a quick photo, or by getting picked up via plane after a day hike.

A more adventurous option is to land by floatplane on the Kobuk River and hike 2 miles across the tundra to the dunes. While the visitor center in Kotzebue can provide route information, there are no marked trails. Orienteering and survival skills are critical for anyone planning on hiking without a guide, and bushwhacking through dense vegetation on the tundra is part of the experience.

Rising up to 100 feet from the valley floor and filling 25 square miles, the Great Kobuk Dunes are the largest and most accessible of the three dune fields in the park. No matter how brief your visit, they are an unforgettable, incongruous sight in the Arctic Circle.

2. Canoeing and Kayaking

Independent adventurers can arrange to bring an inflatable kayak with them on their flight in and out of the park. Otherwise, multiday guided tours are available for paddlers of all levels. The Kobuk River is generally slow-flowing, and makes for an immersive wilderness experience, with time to observe the dramatic landscape, view wildlife, and camp overnight on the dunes.

3. Flightseeing

A flightseeing tour is a good way to combine the necessary air transportation to get to Kobuk Valley with a pilot's commentary and a flight route that highlights the best views. Flightseeing options range from a 1-hour scenic tour, to a couple of hours with a brief landing on the dunes, to a full day over several national parks and preserves in the area.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Winters are long and summers short above the Arctic Circle in Northern Alaska. Mid-June to September is the best time to visit for mild temperatures. The sun does not set at all between early June and early July.

Weather is a constant concern at any time of year; snow, clouds, wind, and rain are possible even on a summer day. Check with your outfitter

for appropriate gear to pack for a visit to Kobuk Valley. Be prepared for changing weather and for intense bugs.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

No areas in Kobuk National Park are closed to pets, although they must be kept on a leash. Of course, with limited access by small plane, getting your pet into the park is a challenge.

Unless you're planning an independent expedition and are comfortable taking on the additional responsibility of bringing your pet into the wilderness, it's best to leave your pet behind. Ask your campground in Fairbanks or Anchorage for pet boarding recommendations.



INSIDER TIPS

While not as huge as the neighboring Gates of the Arctic National Park, Kobuk Valley is similar in its remoteness, lack of facilities, and low visitation numbers. For most visitors, it requires advance planning, budgeting, and the expertise of a guide. Even for someone with backcountry experience, an expert guide who knows the park can offer a safe and in-depth introduction to the specific treasures of Kobuk Valley.

A popular option for visitors on a limited schedule or budget is to book a flightseeing tour that includes breathtaking views of Gates of the Arctic and Kobuk Valley from above, along with a landing and photo op at the Great Kobuk Sand Dunes.

For visitors with the skills to traverse the wilderness on their own, air taxi companies also provide drop-off and pickup service in the park for a full-day hike or overnight camping on the dunes.

A variety of guided tours are offered by local outfitters, from full-day or overnight hikes to multiday excursions on the Kobuk River.

Start with the park's online list of authorized commercial visitor service providers to find the best option for your time, budget, and experience level. Service providers: nps.gov/locations/alaska/services-kobuk-valley.htm.



RV CAMPING IN KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping or road access to Kobuk Valley. Overnight options in the park are limited to backcountry tent camping.

KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA

Featured Campgrounds Outside Kobuk Valley National Park

Air tours and transportation to Kobuk Valley originate in Fairbanks or Anchorage. Either city can be used as a base to visit Kobuk on a day tour or multiday trip. Fairbanks is closer to Kobuk Valley, but it's a 360-mile drive north of Anchorage along Alaska Route 3. RVers who do not want to take on this round-trip journey should stay in Anchorage.

If you're planning a multiday trip away from your RV, it's best to book a private campground and let the host know about your plans. Distance from the main airports in Anchorage and Fairbanks are provided below for each campground as a point of reference, but your tour may depart from a different airport depending on the tour company, itinerary, and type of aircraft.

RV Campgrounds Near Transportation Options to Kobuk Valley National Park

RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Tanana Valley Campground and RV Park

tananavalleycampgroundandrvc.com

907-456-7956

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit tananavalleycampgroundandrvc.com or call 907-456-7956.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 50 tent and RV sites. A limited number can fit RVs more than 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$25 to \$35 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Wooded campground on the northern edge of Fairbanks, providing a peaceful location with convenient access to amenities and transportation. Located 7 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.

Riverview RV Park

riverviewrvpark.net

907-488-6392

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit riverviewrvpark.net or call 907-488-6392.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 160 sites that can accommodate RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, clubhouse, WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$50 to \$60 per night, depending on site size and electric hookup amps. A 3-night discount and weekly rates are available.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Family-run riverside campground with a peaceful location just outside the city, full hookups, and big rig friendly sites. Located 13 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.



Photo provided by NPS.gov

KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA

River's Edge Resort RV Park

riversedge.net/fairbanks-rv-park/

907-474-0286

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit riversedge.net/fairbanks-rv-park/ or call 907-474-0286.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 167 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, restrooms, showers, laundry, dump station, potable water, WiFi, dog-walking services, car and RV wash.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$55 to \$65 per night, depending on site size and hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Riverside campground with full hookups and a busy but convenient location in downtown Fairbanks. Located 3 miles from Fairbanks International Airport.

RV CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Paradise Alaska RV Park

paradisealaskarv.wixsite.com/rvpark

907-775-6359

SEASONALITY: Open May to September 30.

RESERVATIONS: Call 907-775-6359.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 34 big rig friendly pull-through sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers, laundry, potable water, dump station, WiFi, community fire pit and grill.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$45 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: New RV park, spacious sites in a wide-open grassy area with views of the surrounding mountains. Located in the town of Palmer, Alaska, 51 miles from the Anchorage airport.



Big Bear Campground and RV Park

alaskarvpark.net

907-745-7445

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit alaskarvpark.net or call 907-745-7445.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 47 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, WiFi, game room, and playground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comfortable, family-run RV park with grassy sites in a spacious, open area and well-maintained facilities. Between the towns of Wasilla, Alaska and Palmer, 44 miles from the Anchorage airport.

Fox Run Lodge and RV Campground

foxruncamp.com

907-355-8641

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit foxruncamp.com or call 907-355-8641.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Sites vary in size, from accommodating only small rigs to a maximum of 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$50 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located in Palmer, adjacent to Manatuska State Recreation Area lakes and trail system. Located 43 miles from the Anchorage airport.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska

NPS.gov/lacl



Introduction to Lake Clark National Park

Located on the Alaska Peninsula southwest of Anchorage, Lake Clark's 4 million acres are not on the road system and can be accessed only by air.

For those who make the effort to visit, Lake Clark rewards some of Alaska's most stunning scenery: rolling green mountains and jagged granite peaks, glaciers, volcanoes, braided rivers and waterfalls, vast tundra, one of the deepest lakes in the state, and a rugged, forested coastline. The adventurous are drawn to Lake Clark for unparalleled hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and bear viewing opportunities in its vast backcountry. All visitors to Lake Clark can enjoy it in their own way, from "flightseeing" and boat tours to nature hikes, calm lake paddles, berry picking, and comfortable lodge accommodations.

A visit to Lake Clark requires an investment of time, money, and planning. Access to and within the park is limited to light-plane service, while accommodations and services are provided by private businesses. Package tours can be the best way to manage a visit, even for the most independent traveler. For RVers, Anchorage, Alaska, can be used as a base to visit the park for a full day or overnight.

Lake Clark's headquarters and visitor center are located in Port Alsworth, Alaska, on Lake Clark, about 120 miles southwest of Anchorage by air, about a 1-hour flight away. Homer, Alaska, is 65 miles by air to the east. [Katmai National Park](#) is located to the south of Lake Clark National Park on the Alaska Peninsula.

PORT ALSWORTH VISITOR CENTER

1 PARK PLACE, PORT ALSWORTH, AK 99653
907-781-2117
(Open Memorial Day through Labor Day)

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Hiking

Similar to other national parks in the state, hiking in Lake Clark is all about the off-trail experience. Chances to explore the backcountry are available in whatever region or regions you choose to visit. If you're looking for day hike options, the main developed area of Port Alsworth in the heart of the park has a few marked trails that highlight some of the most stunning scenery in the area.

The Tanalian Falls Trail offers views of Lake Clark on its way to the roaring river falls in less than 2 miles, and to Kontrashibuna Lake another .5 mile beyond. The Beaver Pond Loop Trail can be taken on the way back for additional views of Lake Clark and the surrounding mountains. For those up to the challenge, a steep, 3-mile one-way trail climbs the side of Mount Tanalian and rewards panoramic vistas.

2. Boating and Fishing

Lake Clark National Park is a perfect place to paddle, on the pristine lakes and rivers surrounded by epic mountain scenery. It also poses a logistical challenge, as visitors cannot simply bring their own equipment with them on the small planes. Private accommodation operators in the park offer kayak and canoe rentals or tours.

Rafting is a popular activity in Lake Clark, with three Wild and Scenic Rivers to choose from. The Tlikakila River combines some of the best scenery with the least challenging waters to navigate, making it an ideal choice for families with kids and first-time rafters.

Another way to experience the park from the water is to book a powerboat tour on Lake Clark, Crescent Lake, or the rugged coast of Cook Inlet. Tours offered by the private companies within the park vary in length and focus, from photography to fishing.

Lake Clark is a premier destination for anglers, with some of the most pristine fishery habitats in the National Park system, including the watershed for the sockeye salmon. An Alaska state fishing license is required; see the park website for details.

If getting out on the water in Lake Clark is a priority, it's a good idea to look into package deals offered by the park concessionaires that include transportation, watercraft and fishing gear rentals, or guided tours.

See *Insider Tips* below for a link to the park's list of service operators to select from.

3. Bear Watching

Like nearby Katmai National Park, Lake Clark has world-class bear viewing. Unlike Katmai, there are no viewing platforms from which to observe these wild creatures. Brown bears congregate in high numbers to feed along the Cook Inlet coast, and Chinitna Bay, Silver Salmon Creek, and Crescent Lake offer some of the best chances for bear viewing.

Bear viewing is risky even for the well prepared, and the park website provides detailed information on how to behave around bears in the wild. Rangers can provide guidance on site. Guided tours are offered, and are a great option to experience the thrill of observing bears in their natural habitat with an experienced guide.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

June, July, and August are the best months to visit for mild weather and park access. These are also the best months for bear viewing. With only around 20,000 visitors per year, the short season and busiest months hardly result in crowds at Lake Clark. At the same time, there may be limited availability for your chosen itinerary and mode of transportation, so it's best to plan and book in advance.

There are two distinct climates within the national park: The coast is often foggy and wet, with an average annual rainfall of 40 to 80 inches, while the average rainfall in the interior is under 30 inches per year. The coast has mild winter weather, but in the interior, temperatures fall well below 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

On a day-to-day and even an hour-to-hour basis, the weather can change dramatically. Visitors should prepare to experience a variety of weather conditions at Lake Clark by packing layers of clothing, rain gear, and waterproof footwear.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Although leashed pets are allowed in Lake Clark, visitors are strongly encouraged to leave their pets at home for safety reasons and to protect the ecosystem.

Since the park is accessible only by air and there are no campgrounds nearby, it's best to look into pet boarding options in Anchorage when you're making campground arrangements. A visit to Lake Clark is at minimum a full day, and you may want to consider overnighting in the park to get the most out of your visit.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska



INSIDER TIPS

It takes extra research and budgeting to visit Lake Clark, but the advance planning can pay off with an unforgettable experience. Below are a few things to consider.

Regions

The park has six major regions to visit that are connected only by backcountry hiking or air service. As noted below, not all areas are accessible during the same visit, depending on the type of plane landing gear needed.

- Port Alsworth is the main hub in the park, with an airfield, visitor center, basic facilities, marked hiking trails, and a stunning location on the shore of Lake Clark.
- Twin Lakes, in the north, highlights beautiful turquoise blue lakes and Proenneke's Cabin on Upper Twin Lake, hand-built in the 1960s and 70s by famed naturalist Dick Proenneke.
- Crescent Lake is the park's most visited area, a remote and stunning lake in the heart of the Chigmit Mountains, with some of the best fishing and bear viewing available.
- On Cook Inlet, Silver Salmon Creek and Chinitna Bay also offer excellent fishing and bear viewing, plus the opportunity to tour the coastal area of the park.



Transportation

Lake Clark can be reached only by light plane. Additionally, some areas can be reached only by planes on wheels, while others are accessed exclusively by planes on floats. You should determine where you want to visit first, and whether you should travel by a plane on wheels or on floats. Choosing an itinerary that uses either of these types of planes exclusively is important, as switching between the two types of landing gear can be time-consuming and expensive.

Park Accommodations and Facilities

Lake Clark does not have a concessionaire that runs dining and lodging facilities. All accommodations in the park are on private property and run by private businesses that must be contacted directly for information and reservations.

Accommodations are available throughout the park, with services ranging from rustic camping and bed and breakfasts to all-inclusive lodges. These businesses also provide the park's guided tour and watercraft rental options, as well as the only food services available.

If you aren't staying overnight or booking a tour, be prepared to pack in lunch, snacks, and water, as there is no food available in the park outside the lodges.

Lake Clark is not the kind of national park to show up unprepared. You may end up wasting money and time. It's worth considering at least one overnight in the park to get the most out of your visit. Decide what you want to do (hike, kayak, take a boat tour) and which region or regions you want to visit, and look into package tours that can offer the best value for your time and budget.

A good place to start is the park's directory of commercial visitor service providers: nps.gov/locations/alaska/services-lake-clark.htm.



RV CAMPING IN LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping or road access to Lake Clark. Overnight options in the park include backcountry tent camping, public-use cabins, and a range of private lodging facilities. See the park website for more information.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Featured Campgrounds Outside Lake Clark National Park

Like much of Alaska, Lake Clark is not part of the road system. Travel to and around the park takes place primarily by light aircraft. RVers can use Anchorage as a base to visit Lake Clark by air.

Note that in addition to the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, the Anchorage area is home to several smaller airports. Many air taxis and tours depart from Lake Hood Seaplane Base at the international airport. This can vary by tour company and aircraft type, so be sure to check with the departing airport if you're selecting a campground close by or planning travel time from your RV.

The Anchorage area offers a variety of private and public campgrounds, in addition to the amenities one would expect in a major tourist hub. Private campgrounds are generally rustic, with partial or full hookups and basic facilities. Public campgrounds include both state and municipal parks.

Boondocking is a popular option for RVers throughout Alaska. More than half of the state is made up of public lands, and dry camping spots are plentiful, from U.S. Forest Service developed campgrounds to free camping areas just off the highway designated by the Bureau of Land Management.

RV Campgrounds Near Transportation to Lake Clark National Park

PRIVATE CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Paradise Alaska RV Park

paradisealaskarv.wixsite.com/rvpark

907-775-6359

SEASONALITY: Open May to September 30.

RESERVATIONS: Call 907-775-6359.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 34 big rig friendly pull-through sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers, laundry, potable water, dump station, WiFi, community fire pit and grill.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$45 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: New RV park, spacious sites in a wide-open, grassy area with views of the surrounding mountains. Located in the town of Palmer, 51 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

Big Bear Campground and RV Park

alaskarvpark.net

907-745-7445

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit alaskarvpark.net or call 907-745-7445.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 47 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, WiFi, game room, and playground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$55 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comfortable, family-run RV park with grassy sites in a spacious open area and well-maintained facilities. Between the towns of Wasilla and Palmer, 44 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Fox Run Lodge and RV Campground

foxruncamp.com

907-355-8641

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit foxruncamp.com or call 907-355-8641.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Sites vary in size, from accommodating only small rigs to a maximum of 40 feet.

HOOKUPS: Full and partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Central facilities include showers, laundry, dump station, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$40 to \$50 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located in Palmer, adjacent to Manatuska State Recreation Area lakes and trail system. Located 43 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

PUBLIC CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Eagle River Campground, Chugach State Park

dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/chugach/eaglerivercamp.htm

907-269-8400

SEASONALITY: Open May to September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit lifetimeadventures.net or call 970-764-4644. Half the sites can be reserved in advance, the others are first-come, first-served.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 57 sites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, central facilities include potable water, flush toilets, and a dump station.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: 4 days.

COST: \$20 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located in the town of Eagle River, just outside downtown Anchorage. Convenient yet peaceful location inside Chugach State Park. Located 19 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

Bird Creek Campground, Chugach State Park

dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/chugach/birdcreekcamp.htm

907-269-8700

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 24 sites total, some can accommodate RVs up to 35 feet.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, central facilities include potable water and flush toilets.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

MAXIMUM STAY: 7 days.

COST: \$20 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located at the southern end of Chugach State Park at Bird Creek, this small campground is in a peaceful state park setting. Located 20 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

Centennial Campground

muni.org/departments/parks/pages/camping.aspx

907-343-6986

SEASONALITY: Open May to September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit muni.org/departments/parks/pages/camping.aspx.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 84 total sites, half of which can fit RVs of varying sizes.

HOOKUPS: Electric hookups available at 20 sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites, central facilities include potable water, flush toilets, a dump station, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days per year.

COST: \$25 per night dry camping, \$35 per night for sites with electric hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Municipal park in a wooded setting in the city of Anchorage, basic facilities and convenient location for an economical rate. Located 12 miles from Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, West Virginia

NPS.gov/neri



Introduction to New River Gorge National Park

While New River Gorge in West Virginia has been a national river since 1978, it became the country's 63rd national park in 2020. For many, the news of this designation was their first introduction to New River Gorge, but it's been a popular outdoor destination for many years, seeing around 1 million visitors annually.

Visitors have been coming to New River Gorge to experience white-water rafting, kayaking, mountain and road biking, hiking, climbing, backcountry camping, and more. For the less experienced, local outfitters provide equipment and guided tours that can make these outdoor activities accessible to almost anyone. For those less inclined to physical adventures, the area's stunning natural beauty can be appreciated on scenic drives and overlooks from the gorge rim, in dense forest, and from the river.

The New River is in fact one of the oldest rivers, not only in North America but in the world. Over millions of years, the river has carved a stunning canyon, up to 1,600 feet deep, out of the Appalachian Mountains.

This old river and new national park are located in the southeast corner of West Virginia, close to Interstate 64. Fayetteville, West Virginia, is a charming gateway town, with outfitters, shops, and restaurants offering all the necessary amenities. The closest city is Charleston, West Virginia, 70 miles away. The nearest major cities are Roanoke, Virginia, at 130 miles; Knoxville, Tennessee, at 270 miles; and Cincinnati, Ohio, 255 miles away.

CANYON RIM VISITOR CENTER (NORTH)

162 VISITOR CENTER ROAD, LANSING, WV 25862
304-574-2115
(Main visitor center, open year-round)

SANDSTONE VISITOR CENTER (SOUTH)

330 MEADOW CREEK ROAD, SANDSTONE, WV 25985
304-466-0417
(Open April through October)

GRANDVIEW VISITOR CENTER

GPS: 37.83017, -81.06312
(Open Memorial Day to Labor Day)

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, West Virginia



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Scenic Drive

The best way to experience the complete park with limited time, or to get a good overview of the different areas before diving deeper, is to take the scenic loop drive around the gorge and river. The full 83-mile drive includes interstates, divided highways, and two-lane roads with scenic overlooks and historical site stops, plus detours that wind down to the river. See the park website for information, and pick up a map to start at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center in Fayetteville at the north end, or Sandstone Visitor Center at the park's south end.

2. Hiking

From rim trails with panoramic views to winding forest trails and riverside hikes, New River Gorge has a wide variety of hiking options for all ability levels and schedules. While the trails are relatively short, from under a mile to 7 miles long, many trails can be combined for longer hikes.

Some of the most popular trails include the 3.2-mile round-trip Long Point Trail near Fayetteville, which runs through varied terrain to an iconic view of the New River Gorge Bridge.

In the Grandview area, the short but slightly strenuous Castle Rock Trail offers close-up views of the unique sandstone rock formations and their exposed coal seams. The trail meets the Grandview Rim Trail for a longer hike.

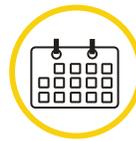
At 1,500 feet across, Sandstone Falls is the largest waterfall on the New River. Though reaching the falls takes some time on the narrow mountain roads, once you arrive at the Sandstone Visitor Center, several trailheads are a short drive away. The accessible Sandstone Falls Boardwalk and Island Loop Trail provide close vantage points of the beautiful falls.

3. Rafting

New River Gorge is a world-class white-water rafting destination, with 53 miles of free-flowing river to navigate. The upper river consists of long pools and relatively easy rapids up to Class III, while the lower river is full of challenging Class III to Class V rapids. Experienced rafters or kayakers can run the river independently. See the park's website under "Private Boaters" for more information.



For everyone else, local private outfitters offer rafting tours for the full range of skill levels and abilities. See the park's website for authorized outfitters, or ask for recommendations from your RV park.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

New River Gorge is open year-round. The best time to visit is late spring to early fall, when all of the visitor centers and areas of the park are open. Keep in mind that weather in the mountains is generally cooler and wetter than the surrounding area, and also unpredictable.

The temperature gets below freezing in the winter, and is best avoided by the average RVer, especially considering the area's steep and narrow mountain roads.

New River Gorge has been a popular destination for adventurers for years, and that is only expected to increase now, after its national park designation. Make your plans and reservations in advance, especially if you're traveling during peak summer season or holiday weekends.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

New River Gorge is one of the most pet-friendly national parks you will find, since leashed pets are allowed on all trails. Be sure to keep pets leashed and well-behaved and pick up after them to ensure that this policy can continue.

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, West Virginia



INSIDER TIPS

For a great view of the New River Gorge Bridge from below, take Fayette Station Road down to the river. This historic road winds through a series of hairpin turns down through the gorge and crosses the river on the reconstructed Fayette Station Bridge. The parking area on the south side of the bridge is a good place to stretch your legs and let the kids play, while watching rafters and kayakers go by.

For a completely different perspective, take a Bridge Walk tour, which spans the 3,000-foot bridge by way of a narrow catwalk beneath it (while secured to a safety cable). See bridgewalk.com for details on pricing, reservations, and safety.

A visit to New River Gorge is a great chance to try a new outdoor sport or experience a familiar activity on another level. Take advantage of excellent local outfitters offering guided tours in everything from white-water rafting to mountain biking and rock climbing for beginners and experts alike. Though you can hike in practically any national park, you may find it worth the additional time and money to invest in an outdoor guided adventure at New River Gorge.



RV CAMPING IN NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK

In addition to backcountry camping, New River Gorge offers nine primitive campgrounds, seven of which can accommodate RVs. There are no hookups or potable water available, and restrooms are limited. Campsites are first-come, first-served, and are free. Campgrounds are small, with about 10 sites or fewer. Some campgrounds have only one site that's suitable for a small RV.

For the most part, these are for small-to-medium-size RVs. Note that while some online reviews may indicate that larger rigs can be accommodated in certain campgrounds, the national park does not recommend any of their campgrounds for RVs over 20 feet.

When you're considering whether you'll be comfortable camping inside the park with your rig, you should also take into account the mountain roads. All campgrounds except for War Ridge are located along the river, which provides an ideal setting but also requires a steep and narrow drive to the gorge floor.



New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, West Virginia



New River Gorge National Park Campgrounds

ALL CAMPGROUNDS

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at some sites. Flush or pit toilets available. No potable water or dump station.

COST: Free.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

STONE CLIFF BEACH

CAMPSITE SIZE: 1 drive-in site for a small RV or tent, in addition to 6 walk-in tent sites.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located off state Route 25 near Thurmond, West Virginia.

ARMY CAMP

CAMPSITE SIZE: 11 tent or RV sites.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located on an unmarked dirt road, off state Route 41 near Prince, West Virginia. Army Camp is the best option for RVs, because some larger sites are available. If your RV is over 20 feet, call the visitor center in advance for additional details on accessibility.

GRANDVIEW SANDBAR

CAMPSITE SIZE: 10 sites for RVs or tents, in addition to 6 walk-in tent sites and 2 accessible sites.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located on Glade Creek Road, off state Route 41 near Prince.

GLADE CREEK

CAMPSITE SIZE: 5 drive-in sites for RVs or tents, in addition to 6 walk-in tent sites and one accessible site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located at the end of Glade Creek Road, off state Route 41 near Prince.

WAR RIDGE / BACKUS MOUNTAIN

CAMPSITE SIZE: 8 drive-in sites for small-to-medium RVs or tents.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Off Backus Mountain Road near Lawton on state Route 41.

MEADOW CREEK

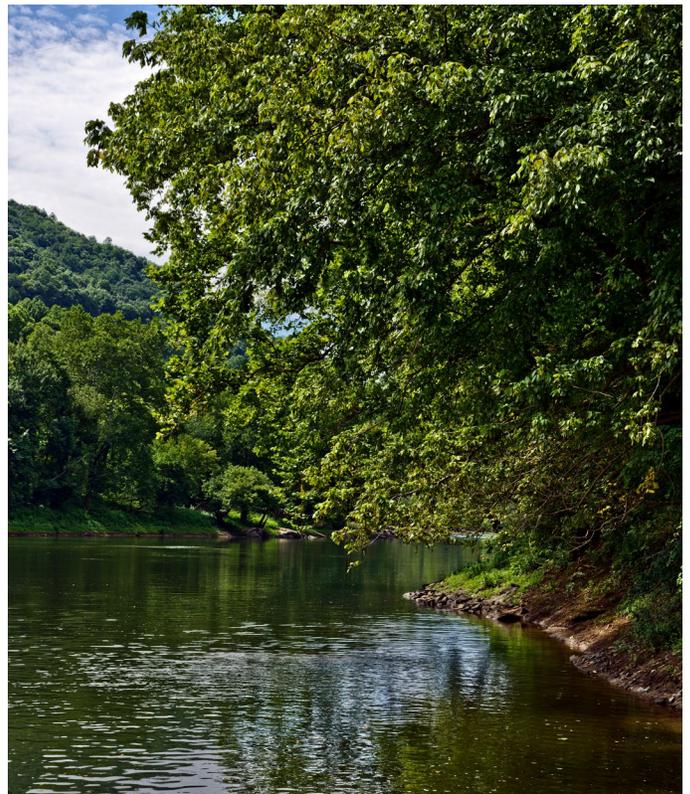
CAMPSITE SIZE: 10 drive-in sites for RVs or tents.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Located along the New River, 1 mile down the road from Sandstone Visitor Center.

GAULEY TAILWATERS

CAMPSITE SIZE: 18 drive-in sites for RVs or tents.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This campground is located at Gauley River National Recreation Area, north of New River Gorge along state Route 19.



New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, West Virginia

Featured Campgrounds Outside New River Gorge National Park

For RVers with rigs over 20 feet, or anyone who prefers hookups or to have a reservation secured in advance, a range of public and private campgrounds are available nearby. While the national park designation for New River Gorge is new, the area has been a magnet for adventure travelers for a long time, with the infrastructure in place to support it.

Several private campgrounds are clustered around the gateway town of Fayetteville, convenient to state Route 19. Many parks offer guided hiking and river tours directly, and some have their own adventure courses and amenities on-site.

Three state parks are close to the national park and offer big rig friendly RV sites with partial and full hookups. Note that some campgrounds are open only seasonally or operate in a limited capacity over the winter.



PUBLIC RV CAMPGROUNDS NEAR NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK

Babcock State Park

wvstateparks.com/park/babcock-state-park

304-438-3004

Babcock State Park offers sites with electric hookups, plus restrooms, laundry, and a dump station. This is an older campground with tight roads more suitable for smaller rigs. Make reservations and search for sites by RV size at reservations.wvstateparks.com/select_destination. Located 13 miles from the main visitor center.

Little Beaver State Park

wvstateparks.com/park/little-beaver-state-park

304-763-2494

Partial hookups available, along with restrooms, laundry, a dump station, and WiFi. A total of 16 campsites, all of which can accommodate RVs over 40 feet. Make reservations and search for sites by RV size at reservations.wvstateparks.com/select_destination. Located 13 miles from the seasonal Sandstone Visitor Center.

Pipestem Resort State Park

wvstateparks.com/park/pipestem-resort-state-park

304-466-1800

At a distance of 25 miles from the seasonal Sandstone Visitor Center, this sprawling state park is a good option if you're staying in the area for a few days. Pipestem offers kid-friendly adventure facilities like zip lines and a splash park, plus sites with electric hookups, laundry, and a dump station. Make reservations and search for sites by RV size at reservations.wvstateparks.com/select_destination.

PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS NEAR NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK

Adventures on the Gorge

adventuresonthegorge.com/about-us

304-461-6570

This highly regarded, kid-friendly resort has added new RV camping sites to their existing cabins, glamping tents, and other lodging options. It has 10 big rig friendly sites, plus an additional three sites for small RVs and vans that have full hookups and access to the resort amenities, including a host of guided tours. Located 2 miles from the main visitor center.

Riftrafters Campground

rifrafters.com

304-574-1065

This campground in a quiet natural setting close to amenities in Fayetteville offers over 20 RV sites with partial hookups, most of which can accommodate RVs up to 40 feet. Central facilities include restrooms and showers, a dump station, and a store. Located 4 miles from the main visitor center.

Ace Adventure Resort

aceraft.com

844-895-4176

Full-service resort in a natural setting with a range of accommodations, amenities, adventure courses, and guided tours offered. RV sites are generally big rig friendly and offer partial hookups in a woody setting. Adjacent to the national park, 12 miles from the main visitor center.

North Cascades National Park, Washington

NPS.gov/noca



Introduction to North Cascades National Park

North Cascades National Park is located in northwest Washington state, on the Canadian border. The national park complex includes the adjacent Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas. The park is vast and wild, and the North Cascades Visitor Center is within just 120 miles of Seattle.

With over 300 glaciers, North Cascades National Park is the most heavily glaciated area in the United States outside of Alaska. Its stunning alpine landscapes may be less familiar to visitors than Washington's two other national parks, Olympic and Mount Rainier. Brilliantly colored lakes, craggy mountain peaks, flower-filled meadows, and an abundance of wildlife can be enjoyed in a variety of ways in North Cascades, on scenic drives, kayak tours, and multiday hikes.

While the park attracts many visitors for its backcountry hiking and camping opportunities, it's still very accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities, and easy to get to from the Seattle metropolitan area.

NORTH CASCADES VISITOR CENTER

STATE ROUTE 20 AT MILEPOST 120, MARBLEMOUNT, WA 98267
206-386-4495

RESERVATIONS AT [RECREATION.GOV/CAMPING/GATEWAYS/2845](https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2845) • 877-444-6777

North Cascades National Park, Washington



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Hiking and Nature Walks

A variety of trails and scenic views can be found along spectacular Route 20, which traverses the park. Several short trails start at the North Cascades Visitor Center, including the 1.8-mile River Loop Trail with sweeping river views. The park has over 400 miles of trails, so speak with a ranger about the best options for your group considering time, ability, and weather conditions.

2. Boating on Ross Lake

Ross Lake Resort provides portage service, a water taxi service, and rental kayaks, canoes, and power boats. This 70-year-old lakefront resort is sold out every season, but national park visitors can enjoy the same breathtaking views from the water.

3. Bird and Wildlife Viewing

North Cascades is home to one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet. More than 200 species of birds, including the bald eagle, can be found in the park. Stop at the visitor center to join a ranger program or pick up information to learn more, and find the best places and times for animal spotting.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

The best time to visit North Cascades is mid-June through September. In the spring and autumn, Okanogan, Skagit, and Stehekin valleys are popular destinations to see leaves, wildflowers, and wildlife, although rain and wind can be expected. The park is open with limited facilities in the winter, and snow can remain on some trails well into summer.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Inside the borders of North Cascades National Park, pets are allowed if they're leashed and no further than 50 feet off paved roads. They are also allowed on the Pacific Crest Trail.

The good news for RVers with pets is that the three campgrounds listed below are all within Ross Lake National Recreation Area, where leashed pets are allowed on trails. Pets are also allowed in adjacent national forest land.

For details on which trails are open to pets, call the Wilderness Information Center at 360-854-7245.



INSIDER TIPS

Don't miss the Washington Pass overlook along Route 20. It has a small walking path to take in the spectacular mountain vista, and you may even be able to spot mountain goats in their natural habitat.

For an all-ages hike with views of brilliant blue Diablo Lake and mountain peaks, Thunder Knob is a great option under 4 miles. Leashed dogs are allowed on this trail.

It takes additional time and advanced planning, but a day trip or overnight to the remote town of Stehekin is an unforgettable experience. Purchase tickets in advance for the ferry from Chelan to journey along the 55-mile fjord Lake Chelan.



RV CAMPING IN NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

Much of North Cascades is geared toward the backcountry experience, with the park's dozens of small, rustic campgrounds catering to tent campers. Some are accessible only by foot or kayak. Small, rugged RVs can access a few drive-in campgrounds, like Gorge Lake.

In keeping with the natural setting, campground facilities are generally limited to potable water and pit toilets. Firewood, ice, and gas are not available in the park complex, and cell service is weak to nonexistent.

One campground, Newhalem Creek, can accommodate larger rigs. It has more than 90 RV sites, although they can sell out during peak season. For RVs over 30 feet, if you're not able to secure a reservation inside the park, there are several options close by (see below). Keep in mind that while campsites that go unreserved are available on a first-come, first-served basis, they are usually filled up by mid-morning during peak season.

North Cascades National Park, Washington



North Cascades National Park Campgrounds

ALL CAMPGROUNDS

SEASONALITY: Open year-round, with limited capacity and services in the winter.

RESERVATIONS: Reservations for peak season can be made 6 months in advance. Visit [recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2845](https://www.recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2845) or call 877-444-6777 to view peak dates and make a reservation. Off-peak, sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

HOOKUPS: There are no hookups.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

MAXIMUM STAY: 14 days in July and August, 30 days for the rest of the year.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

NEWHALEM CREEK CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: There are 90 sites that all accommodate RVs up to 30 feet. Half of those sites can fit up to 40 feet, with about 30 total sites accommodating larger rigs.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at the sites. Central facilities include a dump station, drinking water, flush toilets, and paved roads throughout the campground.

COST: \$24 per night.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The campground is in a natural setting and still within walking distance of the visitor center and Skagit General Store, in the community of Newhalem, to stock up on basics.

COLONIAL CREEK SOUTH CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: Just over 40 sites that can accommodate RVs up to 20 feet. There are eight sites with a maximum RV length of 30 feet.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire rings, and bear boxes at sites. Central facilities include drinking water and flush toilets. Note that there is some paved parking, but most sites are uneven gravel.

COST: \$24 per night.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The campground entrance parking lot is also used by day trippers for the boat launch and trailheads. Campsite size and privacy vary, but all are under a thick canopy of old-growth trees and a short distance from Thunder Arm, an offshoot of Diablo Lake.

GOODELL CREEK CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: This small campground has 17 sites, with a maximum RV length of 25 feet.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Drinking water, flush toilets, and paved roads.

COST: \$20 per night.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Goodell Creek Campground has two group sites that can accommodate big rigs. Call 877-444-6777 to see if the option to book a space in the group site is available for your travel dates.



North Cascades National Park, Washington

Featured Campgrounds Outside North Cascades National Park

While campsites inside the park complex are limited for larger rigs, there are several options to be found in the surrounding national forests, as well as in private campgrounds nearby. Staying outside the park will also give you access to hookups, amenities, and cell service.

The west side of the park is heavily wooded, closer to the Seattle area and the Pacific Coast. Staying on this side makes North Cascades easy to add into a Pacific Northwest road trip itinerary that includes Mount Rainier and Olympic national parks. On the other hand, the east side provides an open landscape of plains and farmland. It's convenient if you're on an east-west drive, or staying near Lake Chelan to take the ferry to Stehekin.



CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK WEST ENTRANCE

Alpine RV Park

alpinervcamping.com

360-873-9002

Alpine is the closest RV park to the west entrance that has full hookups and amenities. It's a kid- and pet-friendly option with wooded walking trails and views of the North Cascade Mountains. Located 4 miles from the west entrance.

Howard Miller Steelhead Park

skagitcounty.net/departments/parksandrecreation/parks/howardmiller.htm

360-853-8808

This Skagit County park campground is located between Seattle and the North Cascades, making it a convenient option to overnight and enjoy a day trip into the national park. This campground is located 15 miles from the west entrance.

Marble Creek Campground

fs.usda.gov/recarea/mbs/recarea/?recid=17668

877-444-6777

Inside the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Marble Creek Campground provides a quiet, remote dry camping experience just outside the national park. For small RVs and trailers only. This campground is located 14 miles from the west entrance.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK EAST ENTRANCE

Winthrop / North Cascades KOA

koa.com/campgrounds/winthrop

509-996-2258

Located in the gateway town of Winthrop, this campground offers big rig friendly sites, full hookups, and the expected kid- and pet-friendly amenities of a KOA. This campground is located 30 miles from the east entrance.

Pine Near RV Park

pinenearpark.com

509-341-4062

Another option in Winthrop, within walking distance of downtown, Pine Near has large grassy sites with full hookups, basic campground amenities, and friendly staff. This RV park is located 30 miles from the east entrance.

Klipchuck Campground

fs.usda.gov/recarea/okawen/recarea/?recid=59281

509-996-4000

Klipchuck Campground can accommodate RVs up to 34 feet, with 30 first-come, first-served sites in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest with convenient access to Route 20. Located 10 miles from the east entrance.

Lakeshore RV Park

cityofchelan.us/departments/parks-recreation/rv-park

509-682-8023

This lakeside city park in Chelan, with concrete pads and full hookups, is ideal for RVers planning a day trip on Lake Chelan or overnight at Stehekin after driving through the national park. Located 90 miles from the east entrance.

Redwood National Park, California

NPS.gov/redw



Introduction to Redwood National Park

Redwood National Park, located in northernmost coastal California, is famous for being home to the tallest trees on Earth. And while the purpose of a visit to Redwood is certainly to walk among these giants of nature, there is much more to see and do here. In addition to forests of coast redwood, the national park protects oak woodlands, wild riverways, vast prairies, and almost 40 miles of rugged Pacific coastline.

In fact, Redwood consists of four adjacent parks: the national park that was established in 1968, and three older state parks. Since 1994, Redwood has been jointly managed by the National Park Service and California State Parks; together they're known as Redwood National and State Parks.

This can be a little confusing to first-time visitors, however the joint management means that there are multiple visitor centers and access points providing flexible options to visit. It's possible to stop at one of the visitor centers and experience a redwood grove in just an hour. Many visitors choose to drive the length of the park, from north to south or vice versa, as part of a longer California coast road trip. Alternatively, a visit concentrated in the north or south ends of the park allows for more time to hike and enjoy.

The park is about 50 miles long, stretching from Crescent City, California, near the Oregon border, south to the town of Orick, California. Keep in mind that Redwood is Crescent City; McKinleyville, California; or Medford, Oregon.

HIOUCHI VISITOR CENTER
1600 U.S. HIGHWAY 199,
CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531
707-465-7334

CRESCENT CITY INFORMATION CENTER
1111 SECOND STREET,
CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531
707-465-7306

THOMAS H. KUCHEL VISITOR CENTER
U.S. HIGHWAY 101 AND REDWOOD
HIGHWAY, ORICK, CA 95555
707-465-7334

JEDEDIAH SMITH VISITOR CENTER
1460 U.S. HIGHWAY 199,
CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531
707-458-3496

PRAIRIE CREEK VISITOR CENTER
NEWTON B. DRURY SCENIC PARKWAY
(LOCATED OFF U.S. HIGHWAY 101)
ORICK, CA 95555
707-465-7334

Redwood National Park, California



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Forest Walks and Hikes

Redwood offers the opportunity for a short walk or longer hike along dozens of trails and hundreds of miles. The good news is, there is no “best” trail that’s a must for all visitors. Any trail that lets you experience old-growth redwood trees in the time available is going to be the best for you.

Popular trails from north to south are Simpson-Reed Trail, Big Tree Wayside, Prairie Creek / Foothills Trail, Trillium Falls, and Lady Bird Johnson Grove. These provide a great mix of lush forest, some of the largest trees, waterfalls, and creeks.

Longer trails that can be traveled for a couple of hours or a full day include the James Irvine Trail to Fern Canyon in the south, and Stout Memorial Grove in the north.

2. Scenic Drives

As the parks generally run along the north-south U.S. Highway 101 and there are no formal entrance stations, it’s possible to drive through the parks without even realizing it. Be sure to take exits for scenic drives and visitor centers to fully experience Redwood.

At the southern end, the 10-mile-long Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway meanders through thousands of acres of old-growth redwood forest. Stop at the Prairie Creek Visitor Center and use the pull-outs to get out of your car and take a longer look. This road is accessible to vehicles of all sizes.

On the north end, the unpaved Howland Hill Road provides motorists an unforgettable, close-up drive through the towering trees. Located in Jedediah Smith State Park, several pull-outs and trailheads are available along the 10-mile road.

The Coastal Loop Drive, a narrow and steep 9-mile round trip, offers breathtaking views of the rugged Pacific Coast.

3. Kayaking

The various rivers, lagoons, coves, and the open ocean beaches of Redwood provide unparalleled opportunities for kayakers at all ability levels. Ranger-led kayak tours are offered along the Smith River, the largest free-flowing river system in California. See the park website for information on ranger tours, and local outfitters providing rentals and private tours.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Redwood National Park is open and can be visited year-round. Fall may be the ideal season, for the best chance of a warm, sunny day with smaller crowds. Spring brings the end of winter rains and the start of wildflower blooms. Summer is the busiest time, but visitors can be surprised by the prevalence of cool coastal fog. Winter in Redwood is generally cold and wet, but if you dress appropriately it can be the best time to visit with no crowds.

The climate is mild year-round—you won’t experience extreme heat or cold. However, you should also be prepared for rain at any time of the year.

Redwoods is a popular California destination, and most visitors spend at least a night or more. Book as far in advance as possible, especially for weekends and holidays.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Pets are not allowed on any park trails. They are allowed in parking areas, developed campgrounds, gravel roads, scenic viewpoints, and beaches. There are public beaches and forests in the area that allow leashed and controlled unleashed pets. See the park’s website for more details.



Redwood National Park, California



INSIDER TIPS

Ranger-led programs are a great way to learn about any park. At Redwood, take advantage of the five different visitor centers to find a program that's a great fit for your interests, timing, and location. Daily schedules are posted on the park's website, at visitor centers, and in campgrounds.

In addition to nature walks and junior ranger programs, unique opportunities at Redwood include ranger-led kayak tours and tide pool walks.

One of the most scenic and popular destinations in the park is Fern Canyon, a mini-canyon with 30-foot walls covered in ferns and dripping water. The mile-long Fern Canyon Loop Trail leads up from Gold Bluffs Beach following a creek through the canyon. Visit early in the day before the parking area fills up, and wear a pair of sturdy, waterproof shoes.



RV CAMPING IN REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Camping among the giant redwoods, along the wild Smith River, and overlooking the rugged Pacific Coast are bucket-list items for many RVers, and they can all be achieved at Redwood National and State Parks. In addition to out-of-state travelers, many locals return year after year to a beloved campground in Redwood. Needless to say, the park campgrounds are highly coveted and require advance planning to get a spot. Reservations are essential during peak season.

The four developed campgrounds in Redwood are managed by and bookable through California State Parks. These are older, rustic campgrounds with no hookups and suitable only for RVs well under 30 feet. While the price may be higher than a typical national park campground, most campers find the unparalleled locations to be well worth it.

For backcountry campers, Redwood has over 200 miles of trails and seven designated backcountry campsites available. See the park website for details.



Redwood National Park, California



Redwood National Park Campgrounds

ALL CAMPGROUNDS

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Visit reservecalifornia.com or call 800-444-7275. Reservations are available from 2 days to 6 months in advance for May 1 to October 1. Sites are first-come, first-served the rest of the year.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

COST: \$35 per night, plus \$7.99 reservation fee.

MAXIMUM STAY: 7 to 14 nights.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed in the campground, but not on trails.

JEDEDIAH SMITH CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: 86 sites for tents or RVs. Maximum length allowed is a 25-foot RV or 21-foot trailer. Not all sites can accommodate this size. Search and book sites based on RV length on the reservation website.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire pits, and grills at sites. Central facilities include toilets, hot showers, a dump station, and a visitor center.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Jedediah Smith Campground is highly coveted for its ideal setting among old-growth redwoods and along the Smith River, with swimming and boating access.

MILL CREEK CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: 145 sites for tents or RVs. Maximum length allowed is a 28-foot RV or 24-foot trailer. Not all sites can accommodate this size. Search and book sites based on RV length on the reservation website.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire pits, and grills at sites. Central facilities include toilets, hot showers, and a dump station.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Mill Creek is a secluded campground among young coast redwoods and towering maple trees, with access to Mill Creek and several hiking trails.

ELK PRAIRIE CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: 75 sites for tents or RVs. Maximum length allowed is a 27-foot RV or 24-foot trailer. Not all sites can accommodate this size. Search and book sites based on RV length on the reservations website.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire pits, and grills at sites. Central facilities include toilets and a visitor center.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Elk Prairie provides a mix of coastal redwood forest and open prairie, with grazing Roosevelt elk and black-tailed deer, plus access to over 70 miles of hiking and biking trails.

GOLD BLUFFS BEACH CAMPGROUND

CAMPSITE SIZE: 26 sites for tents or RVs. Maximum length allowed is a 24-foot RV. Trailers are not allowed.

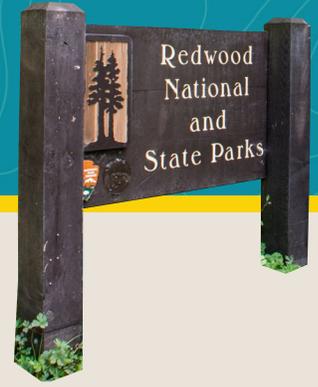
ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire pits, and grills at sites. Central facilities include toilets and showers.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is not available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Small campground with a magical setting on the rugged coastal bluffs, with grazing Roosevelt elk and easy access to hiking in Fern Canyon.



Redwood National Park, California



Featured Campgrounds Outside Redwood National Park

Campers who can't get a reservation at park campgrounds, or who have an RV over 28 feet, have a range of options to choose from close to Redwood. Keep in mind that it's not only the size of the campsites that's restrictive—many of the roads within the park are not suitable for big rigs either. It's best to camp outside Redwood and drive your tow car to enjoy full access to the park.

Where you choose to stay can depend on your general route, desired access to amenities, and preference between private RV parks with hookups or rustic public campgrounds. Since the four parks within Redwood have several entry points, you have flexibility to make it part of your California or Pacific Coast road trip itinerary, whether for a quick overnight stop or several days.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR CRESCENT CITY, NORTH REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Crescent City / Redwoods KOA Holiday

koa.com/campgrounds/crescent-city

707-464-5744

Family-friendly woodsy campground with full hookups and KOA amenities, close to Crescent City, the coast, and Jedediah Smith State Park in Redwood. Six miles from Jedediah Smith Visitor Center.

Orman Guest Ranch and Stables

ormanranch.net

707-464-4434

A unique option for campers, Orman Guest Ranch offers dry camping sites on their extensive grounds for RVs of all sizes, under the trees or in open grassy areas. A convenient and economical option for the area. Located 9 miles from Jedediah Smith Visitor Center.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR KLAMATH, CENTRAL REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Klamath River RV Park

klamathriverrvpark.com

707-482-2091

Klamath River RV Park offers full-hookup sites in an open grassy area on the Klamath River, providing a comfortable base in an ideal setting to tour the area. Amenities include laundry, a gift shop, and a café. Located just a couple minutes' drive from the beach in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, 17 miles from Prairie Creek Visitor Center.

Mystic Forest RV Park

mysticforestrv.com

707-482-4901

Family-run campground in a forested setting, with full-hookup sites, laundry, groceries, mini golf, a clubhouse, and access to miles of hiking trails. Located 1 mile from beaches and overlooks on the coast and 17 miles from Prairie Creek Visitor Center.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR TRINIDAD, SOUTH REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Patrick's Point State Park

parks.ca.gov/?page_id=417

707-677-3570

This sprawling, forested state park with a dramatic coastal setting offers several campgrounds, miles of hiking trails, and beach access. No hookups are available. Site sizes vary; search by RV length on the state parks website. Reservations are mandatory. Located 13 miles from Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center.

Big Lagoon County Park

humboldt.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Big-Lagoon-2

707-445-7421

First-come, first-served county park with dry camping sites under a tree canopy, in close walking distance to the wildlife-rich Big Lagoon and miles of ocean beach. Larger RVs can be accommodated in some sites; bathrooms and showers available. Located 12 miles from Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center.

Elk Country RV Resort

elkcountrysrvresort.com

707-488-2181

True to its name, RVers at Elk Country RV Resort camp in an open meadow along with grazing Roosevelt elk. The campground encompasses 200 acres including forest, creeks, and a private lake. Big rig friendly full-hookup sites. Located 5 miles from Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center.

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

NPS.gov/voya



Introduction to Voyageurs National Park

Voyageurs National Park is in the very north of Minnesota, at the border with Canada. With four large lakes and 26 interior lakes, 40 percent of this huge park is water, and the rest is forested mainland and scattered islands. Voyageurs is located 300 miles from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and 170 miles from Duluth, Minnesota.

In addition to being accessible by ferry, private boat, canoe, or kayak, Voyageurs is known as one of the best places in the continental U.S. to spot bald eagles. The aurora borealis, or northern lights, can often be seen from the park. While most activities in Voyageurs are centered around the water, there are also interesting and accessible historical attractions to see on land, from a remote historic hotel to a unique rock garden.

RAINY LAKE VISITOR CENTER

1797 TOWNSHIP ROAD 342,
INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN 56649
218-286-5258
(Open year-round)

KABETOGAMA LAKE VISITOR CENTER

9940 CEDAR LANE, KABETOGAMA, MN 56669
218-875-2111
(Open late May to late September only)

ASH RIVER VISITOR CENTER

9899 MEAD WOOD ROAD, ORR, MN 55771
218-374-3221
(Open late May to late September only)

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Boating

As one can imagine, Voyageurs must be experienced from the water. Visitors can bring their own canoes and kayaks, or rent them nearby. Ranger-led boat tours and commercial boat companies authorized to operate in the park provide accessible and comfortable options for everyone.

2. Hiking

There are some limited opportunities to hike in the park without first getting on a boat. Each of the three visitor centers can be reached by car and offer accessible nature trails. Popular hiking trails include the Echo Bay Trail and the 2.5-mile Blind Ash Bay Trail.

Whether you're getting to the hiking trails by car or by boat, pick up a detailed trail map at a visitor center before heading out.

3. Wildlife Viewing

Voyageurs is home to over 40 breeding pairs of bald eagles. While these majestic raptors can be spotted throughout the park, they're most commonly found on the shorelines and islands of West Rainy Lake, North and East Kabetogama Lakes, and West Namakan Lake.

Moose are another popular animal to look for in the boreal forest; this is one of the few national parks in the lower 48 states where they live. Most of the 40 to 50 moose in the park reside on the Kabetogama Peninsula.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Voyageurs is open year-round. Though winter services are limited, visitors can experience cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, and a 7-mile ice road in the national park.

For RVers, summer and early fall are the best seasons to visit. July and August provide the best times for stargazing, including the August Perseids meteor shower. Fall comes with spectacular foliage and a drop in both pesky mosquitoes and the temperature, but keep in mind that it can snow as early as October.



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Pets are allowed in the immediate area of the visitor centers, in parking lots, and on the 1.7-mile Recreation Trail from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. If you're planning on boating and hiking, leave your pet in the comfort of your RV, or ask the campground host about boarding options nearby.



INSIDER TIPS

Voyageurs may be one of the least visited national parks in the country, but its short summer season can be relatively busy. Guided ferry tours are a popular way to see the park, and the limited seating can sell out. Purchase tickets in advance at recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2970 or by calling 877-444-6777.

The Ellsworth Rock Garden Cruise includes a ranger-guided tour and time to wander this beautiful and unique rock garden on your own. The ferry departs from Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center.

The Kettle Falls Cruise stops at the historic and remote Kettle Falls Hotel. Enjoy lunch on your own at the hotel, and walk around the grounds to the dam and waterfall. The ferry departs from Kabetogama Lake and Rainy Lake visitor centers.

Even if you visit Voyageurs in the summer, you may still have a chance to witness the northern lights. The aurora borealis is more likely to be seen during the longer periods of darkness in the winter, but it can appear at any time of year.



RV CAMPING IN VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

There is no RV camping in Voyageurs National Park. Tent camping sites are accessible only by boat. Designated sites are considered frontcountry if they are directly accessible by boat, or backcountry if campers must hike to the site from the water. Permits are required for all campsites.

A unique and comfortable way to stay overnight in the park is on a houseboat, which can be rented by authorized commercial outfitters outside the park. Designated houseboat sites are available first come, first served, with access to a beach area with fire rings. The required permit can be purchased at recreation.gov/camping/gateways/2970.

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

Featured Campgrounds Outside Voyageurs National Park

Several public and private campgrounds are available outside Voyageurs and provide a convenient base to tour the park. Even with amenities offered, most campgrounds reflect the expansive natural surroundings and have a rustic feel, with grass, dirt, or gravel sites that may be uneven. Keep in mind that the travel season this far north is shorter for RVers looking to avoid winter weather. Campgrounds generally operate from May to October; check with each campground for specific dates.



CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR RAINY LAKE VISITOR CENTER

Arnold's Campground and RV park

218-285-9000

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: Call 218-285-9000.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Spacious campground with wooded sites that can fit RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: Partial and full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Central facilities include restrooms, showers, a dump station, and water taxi service.

COST: \$30 per night for full hookups, \$25 for partial.

MAXIMUM STAY: Monthly rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: A comfortable campground with friendly hosts, Arnold's is located close to amenities in the town of International Falls, and 13 miles from Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

Rainy Lake RV

rainylakerv.com

218-288-1130

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: Call 218-288-1130.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 16 sites can all accommodate RVs over 40 feet. The campground has additional long-term seasonal sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Fire rings and dock slips at each site, access to a protected swimming beach. Restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities are planned to be added in the future.

COST: \$55 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Monthly rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak, WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Newly built in 2019, Rainy Lake RV is ideal for guests looking for full hookups and direct water access, just 6 miles from Rainy Lake Visitor Center.



Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR KABETOGRAMA LAKE VISITOR CENTER

Wooden Frog Campground

dnr.state.mn.us/state_forests/forest.html?id=sft00027#cmp00032

218-235-2520

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: All sites are first come, first served.

CAMPSITE SIZE: About 60 primitive campsites available for tents or RVs. Sites are spacious and most can fit big rigs, although on busy summer weekends they can fill up fast.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Potable water and vault toilets on the grounds, swimming beach, and lake access.

COST: \$17 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 21 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This state forest campground offers open sites directly on the lake or nestled in the forest. Economical camping in a beautiful setting, under 6 miles from Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center.

The Pines of Kabetogama Resort

thepineskab.com

218-875-2000

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: Visit thepineskab.com/reservations or call 218-875-2000.

CAMPSITE SIZE: All sites can accommodate big rigs. Site categories range from standard sites at lake level to Preferred and Premium cliffside lakeview sites with concrete pads.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic table and fire ring at each site. Resort facilities include laundry, a marina, golf cart, and boat rentals.

COST: \$75 to \$145 per night. Premium sites at \$145 include a golf cart and dock space.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good, WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed. Off-leash area and walking trails available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The Pines of Kabetogama provides a beautiful lakeside resort experience just a mile from the national park visitor center.

CAMPGROUND OPTIONS NEAR ASH RIVER VISITOR CENTER

Ash River Campground

dnr.state.mn.us/state_forests/forest.html?id=sft00027#cmp00029

218-235-2520

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: All sites are first come, first served.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Eight spacious, rustic sites for tents or RVs up to 35 feet.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables and fire rings at sites. Potable water and vault toilets on the grounds, swimming beach, and boat launch access.

COST: \$17 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: 21 days.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This small state forest campground is located on Ash River, less than 5 miles from Ash River Visitor Center.

Ash Riviera Resort

ashriviera.com

218-374-3411

SEASONALITY: Open May to October.

RESERVATIONS: Call 218-374-3411.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Spacious campground surrounded by forest, with about 20 big rig friendly, open-space sites.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic table and fire ring at each site. Central facilities include restrooms, showers, and laundry.

COST: \$45 per night.

MAXIMUM STAY: Monthly rates available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent, WiFi offered.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets allowed. Off-leash area and walking trails available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Great option for full-hookup sites in a natural setting, 5 miles from Ash River Visitor Center.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska

NPS.gov/wrst



Introduction to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

Wrangell-St. Elias is the largest U.S. National Park by far at 13 million acres. Beyond its sheer size, the park contains four major mountain ranges, nine of the 16 highest peaks in North America, the highest coastal mountain range in the world, some of the highest plug dome volcanoes in the world, and the largest concentration of glaciers anywhere. A single glacier in Wrangell-St. Elias is larger than the state of Rhode Island.

Located east of Anchorage, Alaska, along the border with Canada, this vast park is surprisingly accessible. Other national parks in Alaska can be reached only by boat or plane, but a major highway borders the western edge of Wrangell-St. Elias for direct road access. Although this is only a fraction of the park, in a full day it's possible to see braided rivers, forest, meadows and tundra, mountain vistas, glaciers, a historic mining town, and countless scenic views and wildlife encounters.

Wrangell-St. Elias is a premier destination for outdoor adventures of all kinds, from multiday hiking and backpacking treks to mountaineering, whitewater rafting, fishing, and wildlife photography. Miles of maintained hiking trails are available on the west side of the park for all ability levels.

There are several entrances to Wrangell-St. Elias, with the gateway town of Copper Center, Alaska, just under 200 miles west of Anchorage along Alaska Routes 1 and 4. Air taxis and "flightseeing" tours are available from the Copper Center area or from Anchorage. RVers have the option to camp near the park, or use Anchorage as a base to visit Wrangell-St. Elias as well as other Alaska national parks by air.

COPPER CENTER VISITOR CENTER
MILE 106.8 RICHARDSON HIGHWAY
COPPER CENTER, AK 99573
907-822-7250
(Open May through September)

CHITINA RANGER STATION
MILE 33 EDGERTON HIGHWAY
CHITINA, AK 99566
907-823-2205
(Open mid-May to mid-September)

KENNECOTT VISITOR CENTER
MCCARTHY ROAD (5 MILES NORTH OF MCCARTHY)
CHITINA, AK 99566
907-205-7106
(Open Memorial Day to Labor Day)

SLANA RANGER STATION
MILE 0.5 NABESNA ROAD, SLANA, AK 99586
907-822-7401
(Open mid-May to mid-September)

YAKUTAT DISTRICT OFFICE
951 AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD, YAKUTAT, AK 99689
907-822-5234
(Open in the summer)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska



TOP ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Hiking

In a park of this size, the number of backcountry hiking options are endless. If you're interested and prepared for a backpacking trip in Wrangell-St. Elias, see the park website for suggested books to research your plans in advance. Local guide and air taxi services (available on the park website) also provide itineraries in addition to their services.

For day hikes, most trails are maintained for a few miles before becoming "routes" that continue farther over unmaintained terrain. Keep in mind that even maintained trails should be approached with wilderness safety and preparedness in mind. The park website has more information about each trail, including the likelihood of bear encounters and other hazards. Check in at a ranger station before heading out to get information on current conditions and safety tips.

Here are a few of the most popular and accessible hikes in each area:

Copper Center Area

Managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Tonsina River Trail is a scenic 4-mile out-and-back trail that leads through mossy forests and flower-filled meadows, and along a bluff overlooking the Tonsina River.

Another BLM trail is Liberty Falls, a short but steep 2-mile round-trip hike through forest and across a rock scramble to a ridgeline end, with views of a lake and the Wrangell and Chugach mountain ranges. Note that Liberty Falls itself can be seen near the state recreation campground located at the trailhead.

Nabesna Road Area

For a longer but more moderate hike with less than 1,000 feet of elevation gain, Caribou Creek Trail provides easy roadside access and spectacular scenery, including valley views, wildflowers, and easy creek crossings.

The Skookum Volcano Trail leads through an extinct volcanic system and offers a unique opportunity to examine dramatic volcanic geology exposed by erosion. Panoramic valley vistas and wildlife viewing are part of this 2.5-mile round-trip hike with a 3,000-foot elevation gain.

McCarthy and Kennecott Area

Root Glacier is one of the most popular hikes in the park. A moderate trail rewards close-up views of the glacier and several mountain peaks in a 4-mile round trip from Kennecott town.

The Wagon Road is the 4.5-mile trail between McCarthy and Kennecott, Alaska. Less than a mile outside McCarthy, a short spur trail leads to the toe of the Kennecott Glacier and the chance to hike along the glacier for several miles.

Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark

Unless you're flying in, accessing the Kennecott Mines requires a 60-mile drive along the unpaved McCarthy Road, followed by a 4.5-mile hike or private shuttle service.

Many visitors come to Kennecott to access trailheads, but a full day can be spent exploring this fascinating and picturesque historic mining town. Start at the Kennecott Visitor Center, located in a historic schoolhouse, for maps and a schedule of ranger programs. Several buildings in town include exhibits, and the 1.5-mile Top of the Mill Trail loops up and around the mill for spectacular views.



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

The park is fully operational from mid-May to mid-September. Temperatures in June and July can reach close to 80 degrees. This is also peak mosquito season, so be prepared for bugs. Temperatures fall and rainfall increases in August and September. The brief fall season—which lasts just a couple of weeks between late August and early September—can be the ideal time to visit, with clear, cool, mosquito-free days and spectacular fall colors.

Given the park's vast size and elevation variation, visitors at any time of year should be prepared for changing weather throughout the day with layers of clothes and rain gear.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska



PET-FRIENDLY TIP

Leashed pets are allowed on trails and in the backcountry of Wrangell-St. Elias. Leashes are required around the visitor centers, Kennecott Mines, and certain trails. Trapping is popular and legal in Alaska and a hazard to off-leash pets. See the park website for details and safety tips.

If you prefer to tour the park without your pet, leave them behind in the comfort of your RV or ask your campground for pet-sitting recommendations nearby.



INSIDER TIPS

While Wrangell-St. Elias is the largest U.S. National Park, it's actually more accessible than other national parks in Alaska that can be reached only by plane or boat. Roads lead to only a small fraction of the vast park, but it's relatively easy for RVers and roadtrippers to get to the west side of Wrangell-St. Elias and experience some of the most popular attractions.

The town of Copper Center is part of a main hub that also includes Glennallen and a few other small towns at the intersection of Alaska Routes 1 and 4, less than 200 miles from Anchorage. Though it's technically outside the national park, Copper Center includes the park's main visitor center, plus amenities, trails, and access to the park's Chitina area and McCarthy Road.

For visitors with a limited amount of time, driving McCarthy Road is a great way to experience the park independently. The 60-mile drive from the small town of Chitina to McCarthy includes many scenic overlooks and access to trailheads, with opportunities for wildlife viewing. From McCarthy, visitors can hike or pay for a shuttle bus to Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark.

The Nabesna Road area is accessed from the town of Slana, Alaska, 88 miles north of Copper Center along Route 1. The 42-mile-long Nabesna Road is nestled in a valley between two mountain ranges, with rivers, lakes, and some great kid-friendly roadside hikes.

Finally, the Yakutat and Coastal areas at the southern end of the park are accessible only by plane or boat. With additional time, visitors to this area can explore more than 150 miles of remote coastline, where towering mountains, huge glaciers, and temperate rainforests meet the ocean, creating some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the park.

A wide variety of guided tours are available for a more adventurous or in-depth experience, from glacier camping to river rafting. See the park website for a list of outfitters.

Since only a fraction of the park is accessible by road, Wrangell-St. Elias is ideal for a flightseeing tour, which provides some of the most epic views from the air.



RV CAMPING IN WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK

Wrangell-St. Elias is not like other national parks that have a selection of park-run campgrounds and gateway-town RV parks to choose from. Close to 1 million of the park's 13 million total acres are privately owned. This results in a patchwork of private and public campground options, some of which happen to be inside the park borders, others outside. Below are a few developed campgrounds, but check the park website for information on primitive camping along McCarthy and Nabesna Roads for additional options.



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska



Featured RV Campgrounds In and Around Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

RV Campground Options in the Copper Center Area

NORTHERN NIGHTS CAMPGROUND

northernnightscampground.com

907-822-3199

SEASONALITY: Open mid-May to mid-September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit northernnightscampground.com or call 907-822-3199.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 28 big rig friendly sites.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups; full hookups at 5 sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers, laundry, potable water, dump station, and WiFi.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$35 to \$40 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comfortable private campground with large wooded sites and friendly hosts. Located 65 miles from the Chitina Ranger Station.



KING FOR A DAY CAMPGROUND & CHARTERS

kingforaday.camp

907-822-3092

SEASONALITY: Open mid-May to mid-September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit kingforaday.camp or call 907-822-3092.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 60 sites for tents or RVs of varying sizes.

HOOKUPS: Partial and full hookups available, in addition to dry camping sites.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Showers, laundry, camp store, potable water, and dump station.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to good.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$25 to \$45 per night, depending on hookups.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Wooded campground along the Klutina River, offering basic campsites with hookups in addition to cabins and fishing charters. Located 51 miles from the Chitina Ranger Station.

DRY CREEK STATE RECREATION SITE

dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/matsu/drycreeksrs.htm

907-205-0766

SEASONALITY: Open mid-May to mid-September.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 50 campsites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables at sites, central facilities include vault toilets and potable water.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

MAXIMUM STAY: 15 days.

COST: \$20 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Maintained campground in a state recreation area near Copper Center, spacious dry-camping sites for an economical rate. Located 67 miles from Chitina Ranger Station.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska

RV Campground Options in the McCarthy Road and Kennecott Area

LIBERTY FALLS STATE RECREATION SITE

dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/matsu/libertyflsrs.htm

907-823-2265

SEASONALITY: Open mid-May to mid-September.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: 10 campsites for RVs of all sizes.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables at sites, central facilities include vault toilets and potable water.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak.

MAXIMUM STAY: 15 days.

COST: \$20 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Small state recreation area maintained campground, next to Liberty Falls in the scenic Copper River Valley. Located 10 miles from Chitina Ranger Station.

BASE CAMP KENNICOTT

basecampkennicott.com

907-554-1062

SEASONALITY: Open mid-May to mid-September.

RESERVATIONS: First-come, first-served only.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Open camping area for tents, campers, and RVs of most sizes.

HOOKUPS: No hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: No facilities available.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is weak to nonexistent.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$10 to \$40 per night, depending on vehicle size.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This basic dry camping area provides the unique opportunity to camp at the foot of the Kennicott Glacier, with direct access to the Root Glacier and other trails. Note: This is a 60-mile drive from Chinita Ranger Station along the unpaved McCarthy Road.

RV Campground Options in the Nabesna Area

HART D RANCH

hartd.com

907-822-3973

SEASONALITY: Open May to September.

RESERVATIONS: Visit hartd.com or call 907-822-3973.

CAMPSITE SIZE: Small RV park with ranch lodging, amenities, and sites that can fit big rigs.

HOOKUPS: Full hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire rings, restrooms, and showers.

CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, fast internet provided.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$45 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Small lodge and RV park with comfortable facilities in a natural setting, located in the town of Slana at the start of Nabesna Road.

RED EAGLE LODGE

redeaglelodge.net/camping.asp

907-822-5299

SEASONALITY: Open year-round.

RESERVATIONS: Call 907-822-5299.

CAMPSITE SIZE: RV sites that can accommodate big rigs.

HOOKUPS: Partial hookups available.

ADDITIONAL CAMPGROUND FACILITIES: Picnic tables, fire rings, restrooms, and showers.

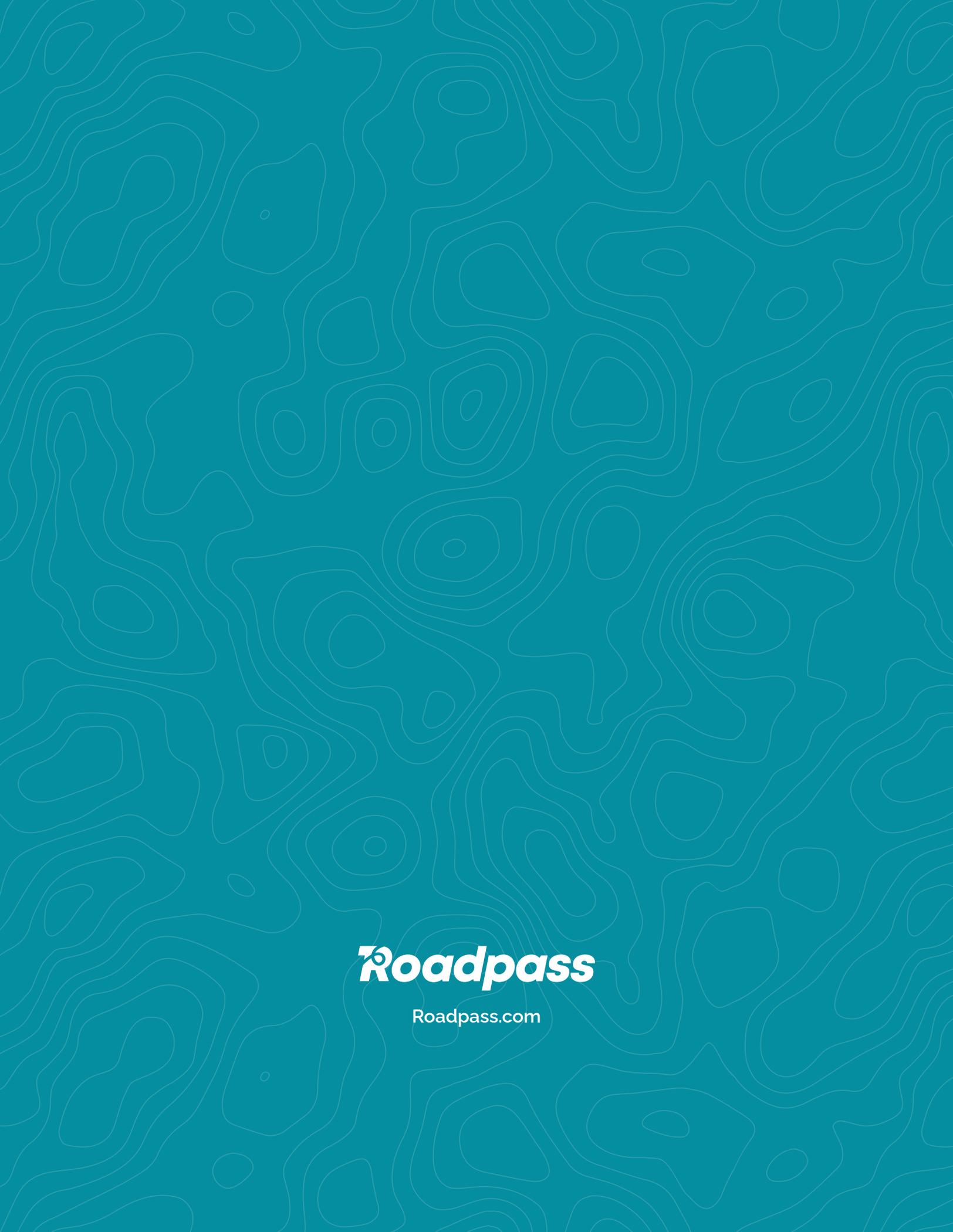
CONNECTIVITY: Cell phone service is good, fast internet provided.

MAXIMUM STAY: Check with the campground.

COST: \$18 per night.

PET POLICIES: Leashed pets are allowed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Lodge and RV park with well-maintained facilities and friendly hosts. Located 27 miles from Slana Ranger Station at the start of Nabesna Road.



Roadpass

Roadpass.com