

Discover USA's Best National Parks

Contents 

Throughout this book, we use these icons to highlight special recommendations:



The Best...

Lists for everything from bars to wildlife – to make sure you don't miss out



Don't Miss

A must-see – don't go home until you've been there



Detour

Special places a little off the beaten track



If you like...

Lesser-known alternatives to world-famous attractions

These icons help you quickly identify reviews in the text and on the map:



Sights



Eating



Drinking



Sleeping



Information

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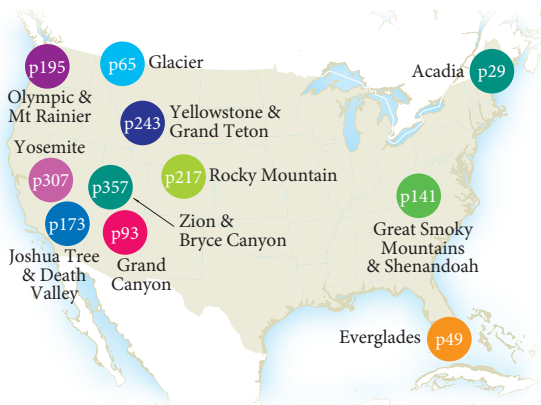
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USA's Best National Parks

The moment you roll up to a national park entry kiosk, you feel it. You're entering someplace special. Maybe it's the mountain air or the smell of the trees. Most likely, it's because you're about to see something *big*. Something indescribable. A canyon so deep you can see two billion years of geological history in its walls. Trees so massive you could fit buildings inside them. Rock formations so strange they can only be called 'hoodoos.'

America's national parks hold some of earth's most spectacular scenery. A collection of superlatives, they encompass the highest and lowest points in North America. One park is home to the greatest concentration of geothermic features on the planet. Another encompasses the world's densest collection of natural stone arches. In yet another, the continent's highest waterfall plummets over a cliff amid the greatest expanses of exposed granite on earth.

Indeed, the national parks are our greatest treasure. They protect 85,000 miles of the country's most beautiful rivers and streams, and over 43,000 miles of our wildest shoreline. They are home to 27,000 historic structures and nearly 70,000 archeological sites. They also protect 400 endangered species – plants and animals that might very well be gone if not for the parks.

We can thank some early visionaries for their existence. The John Muirs, Theodore Roosevelt, Stephen Mathers and Horace Albrights. The conservationists and naturalists who fought to protect these swaths of land for the enjoyment of *all*. But the preservation of the parks today are the efforts of so many more. Since the creation of the first national park, over 2.4 million people have together logged more than 97 million work hours, without pay, to make these places better.

No wonder our skin tingles upon entry to a national park. Behind those entry kiosks lie landscapes that are vastly beautiful, histories that are inspirational, an idea that was, as novelist Wallace Stegner famously put it, America's best.

“
Behind
those entry
kiosks lie
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”



USA's National Parks



15

Top Experiences



- 1 Yosemite Valley, Yosemite
- 2 Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier
- 3 Sunset, Grand Canyon
- 4 Wildlife Watching on Snake River, Grand Teton
- 5 Rock Climbing, Joshua Tree
- 6 Longs Peak, Rocky Mountain
- 7 The Narrows, Zion
- 8 Wildlife Watching, Yellowstone
- 9 Sunrise, Cadillac Mountain, Acadia
- 10 Bryce Amphitheater, Bryce Canyon
- 11 Hoh Rainforest, Olympic
- 12 Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes, Death Valley
- 13 Paddling, Everglades
- 14 Cades Cove Historic Buildings, Great Smoky Mountains
- 15 Wildflower Season, Mt Rainier

