



Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

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Best Hikes

- » General Sherman Tree to Moro Rock (p171)
- » Tokopah Falls (p171)
- » Monarch Lakes (p173)
- » Zumwalt Meadow Loop (p174)
- » Rae Lakes Loop (p176)

Best Places to Stay

- » Lodgepole Campground (p181)
- » Sheep Creek Campground (p186)
- » Sequoia High Sierra Camp (p184)
- » Silver City Mountain Resort (p184)
- » Sequoia Village Inn (p191)

Why Go?

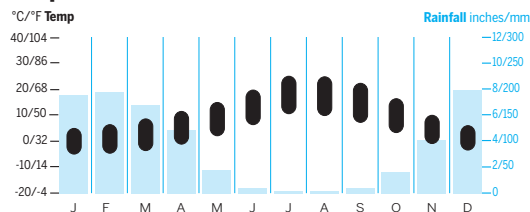
With a cleft deeper than the Grand Canyon and forests harboring the world's largest trees, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks dazzle visitors with superlatives. Throw in opportunities for spelunking, rock climbing, splashing in swimming holes or backcountry hiking through granite-carved Sierra Nevada landscapes, and you have all the ingredients for an unforgettable national-parks experience.

Although larger than Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks receive fewer than half as many visitors as their more iconic neighbor to the north. Luckily, that makes these southern Sierra Nevada parks almost effortless places to find solitude, even with five-star geological highlights, hulking giant sequoias and wildflower meadows all within easy reach.

The two contiguous parks are administered together as one unit, with a section of the Giant Sequoia National Monument gouging into them like a bite out of a cookie.

When to Go

Sequoia National Park



Feb

Go snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or play in the snow beside giant sequoias.

May & Jun

Beat the crowds before or after the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Sep

Summer vacation crowds melt away after Labor Day, but all park roads are still open.

Entrances

Both national parks are only accessible by car from the west, and no roads cross the Sierra Nevada mountain range, only trails. Furthest south, Sequoia National Park's main entrance is at Ash Mountain in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Furthest north, Big Stump is the only entrance to Kings Canyon National Park.

All park entrances are open 24 hours a day year-round, although some roads (eg from Three Rivers to Mineral King in Sequoia National Park, Hwy 180 past the Hume Lake turn-off to Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon National Park, and Big Meadows Rd in the Sequoia National Forest off the Generals Hwy) are closed during winter. Exact opening and closing dates vary by area of the park and on the weather from year to year, but sometimes the most remote and hazardous roads are inaccessible from autumn's first snowfall until the snow melts in late spring or early summer.

DON'T MISS

Although there's a lot to see just inside both of these national parks, the neighboring Sequoia National Forest also harbors some amazingly scenic spots, from ancient sequoia groves to alpine lakes. In fact, to drive between the national parks on the Generals Hwy, or from Grant Grove to Cedar Grove via the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway, you'll pass right through the Sequoia National Forest and its Giant Sequoia National Monument anyway, making it easy to stop off and see the sights, score a campsite or hike less-trammeled trails into the wilderness.

When You Arrive

- » Although administered as a single unit by the National Park Service (NPS), Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are actually two national parks.
- » The two parks together are commonly referred to as 'SEKI.' The phrase 'Kings Canyon' may refer the national park or may just mean the eponymous canyon itself.
- » The \$20 vehicle entrance fee covers both national parks and also the Hume Lake Recreation Area in the nearby Sequoia National Forest.
- » The national parks' free seasonal newspaper *The Guide* is loaded with information on activities, campgrounds, lodging, shuttles, visitor services and more.
- » All telephone numbers within the parks have the same area code (☎559) and prefix (☎565). Locals often give telephone numbers by their last four digits only (eg '4436' means ☎559-565-4436).

PLANNING TIPS

For 24hr recorded information, including winter road conditions and summer road-construction updates, call ☎559-565-3341.

The comprehensive **NPS website** (www.nps.gov/seki) offers free downloads of the park newspaper and helpful trip-planning tips.

Fast Facts

- » Total area: 1353 sq miles (865,734 acres)
- » Foothills (Sequoia) elevation: 1700ft
- » Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) elevation: 6600ft

Reservations

Delaware North Companies (☎801-559-4948, 866-807-3598; www.visitsequoia.com) Sequoia National Park lodgings.

NPS & USFS Campgrounds (☎518-885-3639, 877-444-6777; www.recreation.gov)

Sequoia-Kings Canyon Park Services Company (☎559-335-5500, 866-522-6966; www.sequoia-kingscanyon.com) Kings Canyon and some Sequoia National Forest lodgings.

Resources

NPS website (www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/lodging_outsideparks.htm) Lists even more area lodgings.

Sequoia National Forest (www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/gsnm.html) All about the Giant Sequoia National Monument.