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happy hiking

can't miss kayaking

astronomy and animals

tremendous trees

# Road Trippin'

Through National Parks

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly Smith Trimble writes about national parks from her home in Knoxville, Tennessee, the gateway city to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, among others.

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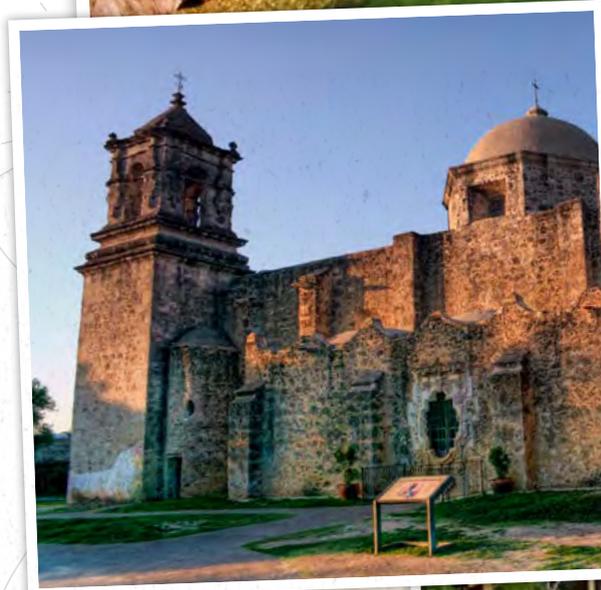
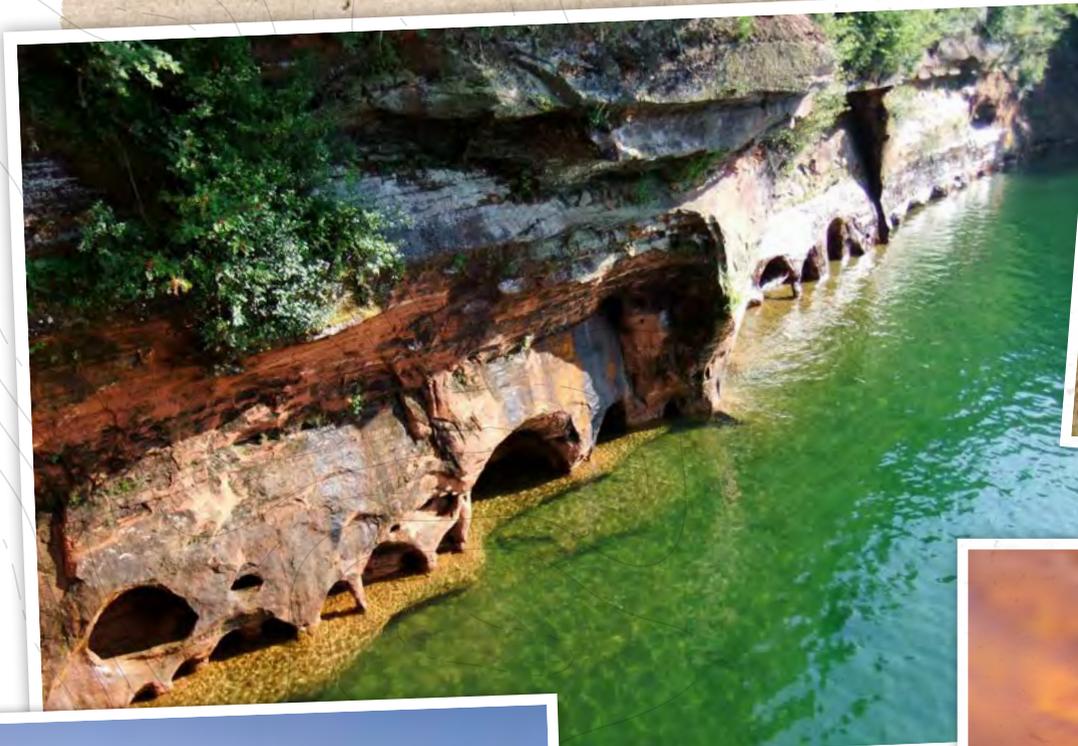
historical highlights

*Some national parks are so grand*

that they require a week or more to experience. Others ask only a few hours of your time. These 15 itineraries take you to well-known national parks, in addition to many historic sites, military parks, monuments, and reserves that you may not recognize, painting you a fuller picture of the types of places and points in history honored and preserved by the National Park Service. Many routes provide for a mix of interests and activity levels, from battlefields to bike trails to cave tours, all on the same weekend.

The itineraries assume a 3-day weekend, but for some, time will be tight; if you want a more relaxed schedule, add another day (or more), or reduce the parks covered. Seasonality is mentioned if there's clearly a best season; otherwise, check park websites for more information about weather and to decide on the best season for you to visit. Use the driving directions as a general guide; be sure to check the latest maps and travel info. When available, make camping reservations well in advance, and for first-come, first-served areas, secure your site early in the day. If camping or lodging isn't available in the park, look for hotels and inns in nearby gateway towns and get a chance to experience and support the park's surrounding communities.

Every national park lover has a bucket list. After reading about all of these lesser-known parks within a short drive from one another, your bucket list will undoubtedly get a bit longer. So go ahead, block off a vacation day or earmark an upcoming holiday, and plan a long weekend you won't soon forget.



COVER: JASON MRACHINA/FICKR;  
THE OUT/FICKR; KATIE HAUGLAND BOWEN/FICKR;  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE;  
WALLACE KECK; PATRICK EMERSON/FICKR



# Shore to Summit in Washington

NORTH CASCADES NP

Go from sea level at Puget Sound to more than 10,000 feet in the Cascade Mountains. Summer is the high season, and with good reason: great weather and ensured accessibility. Just be sure to make camping or lodging reservations in advance.



EBEY'S LANDING NH RES

## Day 1 Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

Ebey's Landing serves as an excellent example of public-private partnerships, with a mix of federal, state, county, and private land making up the reserve. Explore the early European settlement of the area through historic farms (many still in operation), structures, trails, and the town of Coupeville, where the Island County Historical Society and Museum gives a good overview. Hike the Bluff Trail, with views of Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountains to the west, and the Cascades, including Mount Baker, to the east. Stay the night in one of Coupeville's quaint inns and enjoy the sunset over beautiful Penn Cove; camp at one of a few campgrounds in the reserve; or keep moving north toward Anacortes.

## Day 2 San Juan Island National Historical Park

If you like beach walking, you'll be in heaven here, where you can access 6 miles of unfettered saltwater shoreline. Many more trails traverse the island. Be sure to bring binoculars for whale watching. The park's two units, English Camp and American Camp (both with visitor centers), hint at the area's more recent history; in 1859, the two countries almost went to war over possession of the island and, believe it or not, the death of a pig. While there's no lodging or camping within the park, the surrounding area offers options.



SAN JUAN ISLAND NHP

## Day 3 North Cascades National Park

Travel east to a completely different Washington, where adventure lovers will revel in the alpine landscape replete with rocky peaks, more than 300 glaciers, and as many lakes. The park offers plenty of opportunities for day hiking and backpacking, and cyclists will also enjoy riding the almost 100 miles of North Cascades Highway that run through the park, from the wilderness office to the visitor center to the town of Winthrop in the east. Camping opportunities abound, including car camping either by reservation or on a first-come, first-served basis, as well as backpacking by permit. If you have more time, spend another day and night here to get a taste of what North Cascades offers, and make notes for your next trip — you'll want to come back for more.



From Seattle, drive 2 hours north to the center of Whidbey Island, where Ebey's Landing introduces you to this coastal area's wild story. From Ebey's Landing, drive 45 minutes north to Anacortes, where you'll catch an hour-long ferry ride to San Juan Island. After the ferry back across to Anacortes, travel inland 1.5 hours to North Cascades. From here, it's about a 2-hour drive back to Seattle.

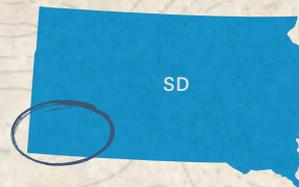
ANDREW FLENNIKEN/Flickr;  
EBEY'S LANDING NATIONAL  
HISTORICAL RESERVE/Flickr;  
TIM DUSTRUDE/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# Spectacular Stories of South Dakota



BADLANDS NP

*This corner* of the state may be remote, but it's full of truly iconic Western landscapes and stories, from the ancient past to more recent history, the Cold War. Visit from spring to fall for the best weather, but be prepared for the occasional afternoon thundershower in the heat of summer.



WIND CAVE NP

## Day 1

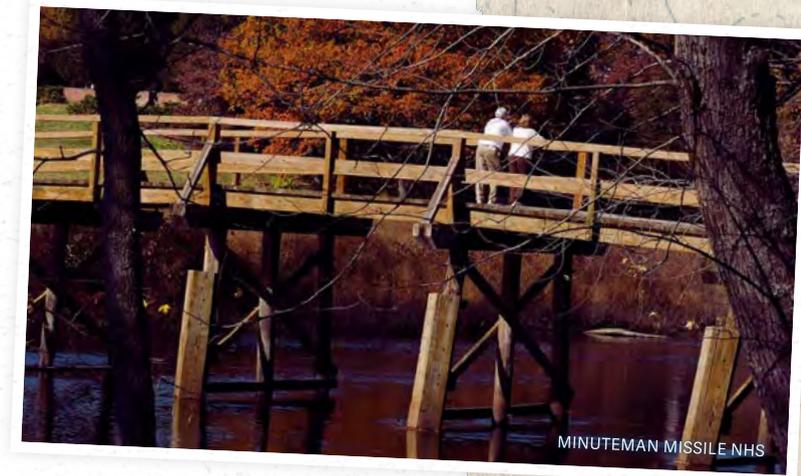
### Wind Cave National Park

Nestled in the famous Black Hills, there's as much to explore above ground here as below. This place, held sacred by many Native Americans, includes one of the world's longest and most complex caves, formed tens of millions of years ago, as well as almost 34,000 acres of prime mixed-grass prairie, home to bison, elk, mule deer, coyotes, prairie dogs, and a Ponderosa pine forest. Camping is first-come, first-served at the Lone Elk Mountain Campground, so claim your spot first. Head to the visitor center and join a ranger-guided cave tour. Then hike some of the more than 30 miles of above-ground trails, where you're likely to spot bison and elk and be transported to an iconic vista of the Western prairie.

## Day 2

### Badlands National Park

Created nearly 70 million years ago and carved into spectacular spires and buttes by erosion that continues today, Badlands is an iconic American landscape: rich rock hues against bright blue sky. Entering from the southeast at White River Visitor Center, you'll drive out of and then back into the park at Scenic Byway, then join Sage Creek Road and the Badlands Loop Road to hit all of the park's many overlooks. Give yourself plenty of time to explore and learn from interpretation about the geologic story of the area. Near the end of the loop, you can spend the night at Cedar Pass Campground and join ranger-led night



MINUTEMAN MISSILE NHS

sky programs. True sky gazers can plan their trip around the Annual Badlands Astronomy Festival, held each summer.

## Day 3

### Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

Fast-forward now from geologic time to recent history, where evidence of the Cold War still feels warm. Here, from 1963 to the early 1990s, 1,000 nuclear missiles were kept on constant alert because of the threat of attack by the Soviet Union and its allies. This military presence with unprecedented power stood in stark contrast to the small towns and peaceful prairie surrounding it. Immerse yourself in this story starting at the visitor center, then at the Delta-01 Launch Control Facility (advance reservations required) and on to the Delta-09 missile silo, where you'll see up close one of 150 such silos once spread across western South Dakota. There's no camping at Minuteman, but it's an easy drive back to Cedar Pass in Badlands for the night.



If you're planning a visit to Mount Rushmore, this detour is not far off track, but all sites at this junction of South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming are far from major airports. From Rapid City, travel south an hour to Wind Cave, then head east an hour and a half to White River Visitor Center at Badlands National Park. Explore the length of Badlands and exit the park at Ben Reifel Visitor Center and the northeast entrance, where you're just a few miles away from Minuteman Missile and Interstate 90, which heads back to Rapid City in the west and Sioux Falls in the east.

ERIK FREMSTAD: ISTOCK

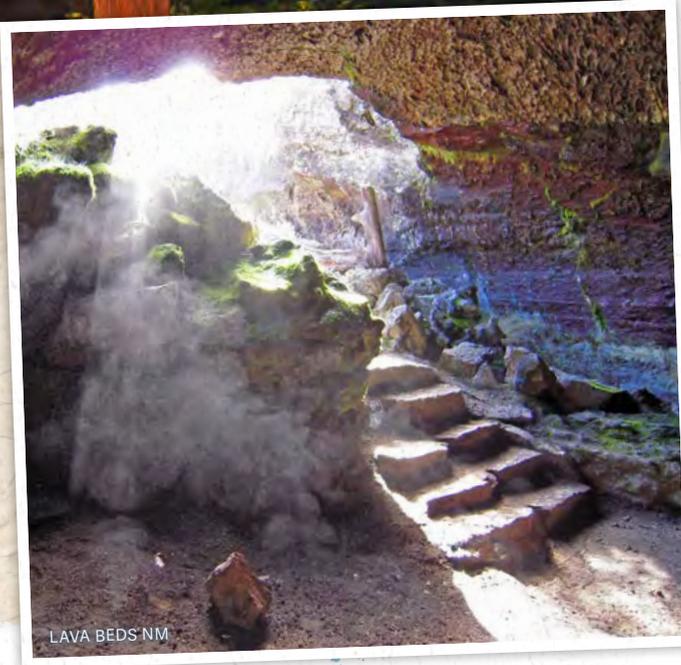
# Cave to Coast

## in California and Oregon



REDWOOD NP

The remote corner of the Cascades where California meets Oregon may be hard to reach, but once you're there, you won't want to leave. Come in summer, when roads are clear and you can skip the crowds at other, easier-accessed California parks. If you have the time, consider making a full loop to also explore Crater Lake National Park, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, and the Tule Lake unit of WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument, among many other national and state forests.



LAVA BEDS NM

### Day 1

#### Lava Beds National Monument

Whether you're new to caving or more experienced, stop by the visitor center to get a map of the park's hundreds of lava tube caves, formed over thousands of years of Medicine Lake Shield Volcano eruptions, or join a guided cave tour (summer only). Above ground, several short trails lead to historical and geologic features; for a panoramic view, hit short-but-steep Schonchin Butte Trail to the fire lookout. Find a first-come, first-served site at Indian Well Campground to stay the night.



OREGON CAVES NM & PRES

### Day 2

#### Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve

Cave tours here are guided only and reservations are recommended, but well worth planning ahead for. Be sure to also explore the hiking trails through old growth forest in the Siskiyou Mountains. While the park and surrounding areas offer camping options, a stay in the historic Oregon Caves Chateau, a celebrated national park lodge built in 1934, gives you a step-back-in-time experience; make reservations well before your trip.

### Day 3

#### Redwood National and State Parks

This 50-mile-long park along the coast stretches on Highway 101 from the Oregon border and Crescent City in the north to Redwood Creek and Orick in the south, with several information centers for visitors along the way. Known for preserving the world's tallest trees, the park is also home to amazing land and marine species from gray whales to banana slugs to Sitka spruce, so allow enough time to stop, explore, and learn about all that Redwood offers and protects.



The closest towns to Lava Beds are Klamath Falls or Merrill, Oregon, and Tulelake or Alturas, California; whichever direction you come from, be sure to fill up with gas, as services near the park are minimal. From Lava Beds, drive through Klamath Falls and Medford, Oregon, to Oregon Caves, about 4 hours away, then south 1.5 hours to the Redwood Visitor Center. Explore Redwood along Highway 101 from north to south.

ISTOCK: LAVA BEDS NM; NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# Traveling Through Time in Idaho



CRATERS OF THE MOON NM & PRES

From the pre-Ice Age to just 80 years ago, the history uncovered in this Southern Idaho route, stretching from Boise to the Utah border, expands horizons. Visit from spring to fall, and be sure to plan for temperature swings.



CITY OF ROCKS N RES

## Day 1

### Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument and Minidoka Historic Site

At Hagerman's visitor center, view pre-Ice Age fossils, including the ancient horses that spurred Congress to preserve the beds in the 1980s specifically for paleontological research and education. There are no outside places open to fossil viewing, so catch some views of the beautiful Snake River, then head to Minidoka. This memorial stands as a reminder to never repeat one of the darkest periods of American history. After Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt signed orders that forced 120,000 Japanese Americans to relocate to facilities throughout the West, including 9,000 to this site. As you traverse the 1.6-mile trail, imagine the thousands of people interned here, their lives and their stories. Stop by the nearby towns of Eden, Jerome or Twin Falls for reflection and to stay the night.

## Day 2

### Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve

Discover the effects of geologically recent (within the past 15,000 years) volcanic activity on this high desert ecosystem that looks so much like the moon that, in 1969, NASA astronauts trained at the monument for their moon landing. Explore the park via the 7-mile scenic loop drive and then hike one of several trails into and around the area's many craters, cones, and flows. On Broken Top Loop Trail, hike on cinders to get a full picture of volcanic features here and access to the freshest lava,



HAGERMAN FOSSIL BEDS NM

just 2,000 years old; with a permit, you can also enter Buffalo Caves along this route. Camp at Lava Flow Campground (first-come, first-served) near the visitor center.

## Day 3

### City of Rocks National Reserve

In the late 1800s, the remarkable granite formations of City of Rocks were a landmark for those traveling westward to California. Today, it's on the must-do list for rock climbers, but the park also offers opportunities for hiking, backpacking, and touring. Starting in Albion, drive the 49-mile City of Rocks Back Country Byway to get the full experience. Allow plenty of time, as you'll find many spots to snap the perfect pic or take a short hike. This is the only park on the itinerary with a campground, and it's a beautiful one. Reservations are recommended in the summer; if the campground is full, check availability at the state park nearby.



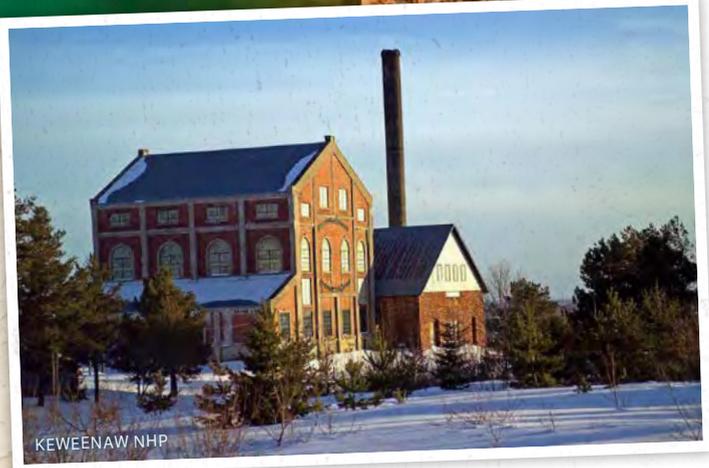
Find Hagerman 1.5 hours southeast of Boise. From Hagerman, drive about an hour east to Minidoka, then head north 2+ hours to Craters of the Moon. You'll backtrack a bit south and then head southeast an hour and a half of Minidoka to City of Rocks, just a few miles from the Utah border.

SHUTTERSTOCK; WALLACE KECK/ NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; HAGERMAN FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT



# Superior Scenery in the Northern Great Lakes

*Experience* Lake Superior, the largest and most unfettered of the Great Lakes, in this itinerary that hugs the shorelines across Wisconsin and Michigan. The parks are open year-round, but summer provides the most comfortable weather. If you have more time, add Isle Royale National Park to your plans.

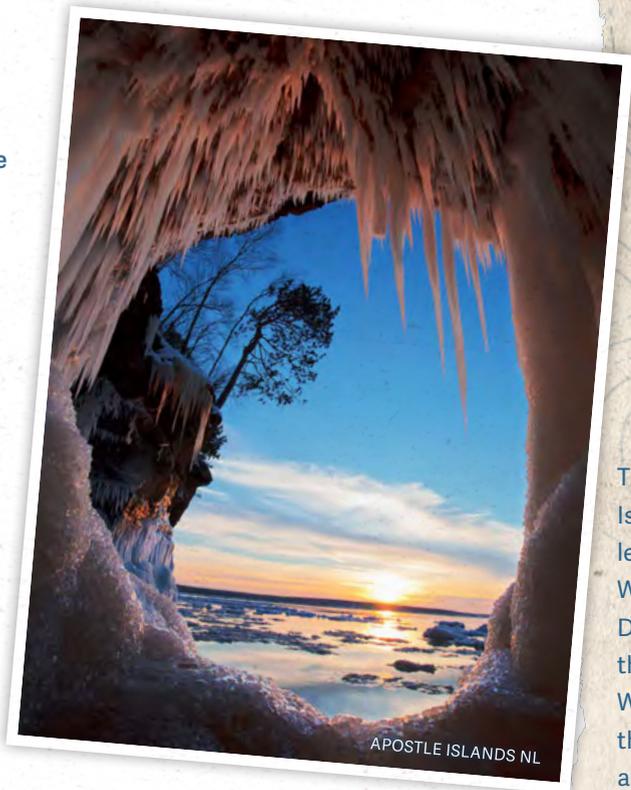


PICTURED ROCKS NL

KEWEENAW NHP

## Day 1 Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

At the northeastern tip of Bayfield Peninsula in northernmost Wisconsin, this park encompasses 21 islands plus a mainland portion. Start at the visitor center in Bayfield, where you can get tickets and details for a shuttle to the islands. Depending on your interests and activity level, you can hop on a lighthouse tour, go day sailing on a captained boat, or join a guided kayak trip to the famous sea caves along the rocky shore. Camping is available with a reservation on the islands, or you can find lodging in Bayfield, a lovely coastal town with art galleries, shops, and restaurants worth exploring.



APOSTLE ISLANDS NL

## Day 2 Keweenaw National Historical Park

On this peninsula in Michigan, humans have mined copper for more than 7,000 years, from early native peoples to the Ojibwa, who informed Europeans of the resource when they arrived. Two park units, 12 miles apart, in the villages of Quincy and Calumet, tell the story of Michigan's "Copper Country." From Calumet Visitor Center, join a ranger-guided walking tour of the former mines and the historic downtown; a guided tour of surface ruins leaves from Quincy Visitor Center. Take a drive up US-41 to experience additional historic sites and scenery. The Keweenaw Peninsula offers many hotel, campground, and dining options.

## Day 3 Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

In this 42-mile shoreline park, immerse yourself in the natural beauty of Lake Superior. The park's 15 miles of sandstone cliffs are a major draw and the source of its name. See them by hopping aboard a 3-hour narrated boat tour from Munising. When you get back on land, walk the paved trail to 50-foot Munising Falls, one of several falls in the park. Lakeside camping is available first-come, first-served at Twelvemile Beach Campground, and lodging is available in the gateway towns of Munising and Grand Marais.



The closest city to Apostle Islands is Duluth, Minnesota, less than 2 hours away. Whether traveling east from Duluth or from cities to the south, start at Bayfield, Wisconsin, gateway to the park. Drive northeast about 3.5 hours along Lake Superior to Keweenaw. Pictured Rocks is another 3 hours east along the coast in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. From here, it's 5 hours back to Duluth and 3+ hours to other cities in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan.

**Note:** To add Isle Royale to your itinerary, detour from Keweenaw. From Calumet, it's a 40-minute drive to Copper Harbor, where you can take a 3-hour ferry to Isle Royale National Park, a remote, car-free island wilderness with plenty of campsites (ferry and camping reservations recommended). Return to the mainland via the ferry.

ISTOCK; NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; MICHAEL DEWITT

# Circle the Big Island of Hawai'i

HAWAII VOLCANOES NP

## Visit 4 national parks

on the island of Hawai'i, also known as the Big Island. At Hawai'i Volcanoes, you'll come to fully understand that the land truly is alive.

At the other historic sites, get to know the Hawai'ian people, their history and culture, and visit some of the state's most pristine beaches. If you have extra time, spend additional days at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.



PU'UHONUA O HONAUNAU NHS

## Day 1

### Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Start at Kilauea Visitor Center, then take Crater Rim Drive to popular sites and overlooks that give you spectacular views and insight into the island's geologic features. Be sure to get out of the car and take the short walks to Thurston Lava Tube, Devastation Trail and Keanakāko'i Crater. For a more adventurous drive, detour on Chain of Craters Road to the coastal region of the park, where lava flows build new acres of island annually and sometimes block the road; check at the visitor center beforehand to be sure the drive is passable. Book a night at historic Volcano House lodge, or get reservations at one of two campgrounds at the park, Kulanaokuaiki or Nāmakaniipao (which also offers rustic cabins), available through the lodge.

## Day 2

### Pu'uuhonua O Hōnaunau and Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historic Sites

Pu'uuhonua, meaning place of refuge, is considered a sacred site. Pick up a trail guide at the visitor center, then walk to the Pu'uuhonua and the Royal Grounds to take the 1871 trail to Kī'īlae Village for a better understanding of this place, its people and their traditions prior to Europeans' arrival. Continue on to coastal Kaloko-Honokōhau, where several preserved fishponds show the industry of the Hawai'ian people. Take the Ala Hele Ike Trail from the visitor center to Honokōhau Beach to enjoy the ocean and look for sea turtles and the elusive Hawai'ian



PU'UKOHOLO HEIAU NHS

monk seal. Camping isn't available in either park, but Hawai'i County operates several beachfront campgrounds; the closest to Kaloko is at Kohanaiki Beach Park.

## Day 3

### Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site

This northern island park, near many of the island's most popular resorts, preserves Hawai'ian culture through education and interpretation, and provides access to beautiful beaches. Hike a short portion of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail to Mau'uamae Beach or a few miles further to Hapuna Beach. Bring your binoculars to look for whales, sharks, dolphins, and birds. Set up camp and a picnic at county-managed Spencer Beach Park, adjacent to the national park.



Hawai'i Volcanoes is just a 30-minute drive from Hilo, which has an inter-island airport. From Hawai'i Volcanoes, drive westward 1.5 hours around the island edge to Pu'uuhonua. From there, Kaloko-Honokōhau is less than an hour north. About 30 minutes further is Pu'ukoholā Heiau, near the northern tip of the island. It's just 1.5 hours back to Hilo.

ISTOCK; PU'UKOHOLO HEIAU NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



# Journey Through Ohio History

From the U.S.'s struggle for claim during the War of 1812 to the industrious canals on which future president James Garfield worked as a teenager, Ohio played a crucial role in America's expansion in the 1800s, and these parks recount those stories. While summer is a fine time to visit, Cuyahoga Valley National Park is best known for its spectacular colors in fall.



JAMES A. GARFIELD NHS

## Day 1 Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial

South Bass Island has been a natural stop-off for boaters for centuries. From the docks at Put-in-Bay, take a ferry to the island. Climb to the memorial's observation deck, the tallest open-air example in the National Park Service, to consider the victorious Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812 and also the enduring peace between the U.S., Canada, and Britain that continues today. Stay the night in Put-in-Bay and explore more of the historic lakeside community.



PERRY'S VICTORY & INTERNATIONAL PEACE MEMORIAL

## Day 2 James A. Garfield National Historic Site

The 20th president of the United States, James Garfield is known for hosting the first "front porch" presidential campaign in which he literally delivered speeches and greeted the community from the front steps of his home. Raised humbly on an Ohio farm, he famously served as a canal worker before going to school, serving in the Union Army, and rising in the ranks of state and federal government. From the visitor center, take a guided tour of the home and a walk around the property. Then head to Cuyahoga for a night at one of the two inns in the park (Stanford House or Inn at Brandywine Falls), or stay at a nearby hotel or campground.

## Day 3 Cuyahoga Valley National Park

If you're lucky enough to stay in the inn, you'll wake up next to one of the park's greatest natural features, Brandywine Falls; either way, head to the 65-foot waterfall early to (hopefully) enjoy it minus the crowds. Hop on a bike (rentals available) to cycle the 20 miles of the Towpath Trail, following the historic Ohio & Erie Canal route within the park. The trail is fully accessible with restrooms and picnic spots; there are also train stops along the way, so if one-way is enough for you, plan to ride the scenic train back.



Coming from Detroit, Perry's Victory is 2.5 hours southeast along Lake Erie, passing through Toledo, on South Bass Island in Put-in-Bay. From Cleveland, it's 2 hours west, but you'll double back to get to Garfield House in Mentor, just west of Cleveland. Cuyahoga Valley National Park is just 20 minutes south of Cleveland.

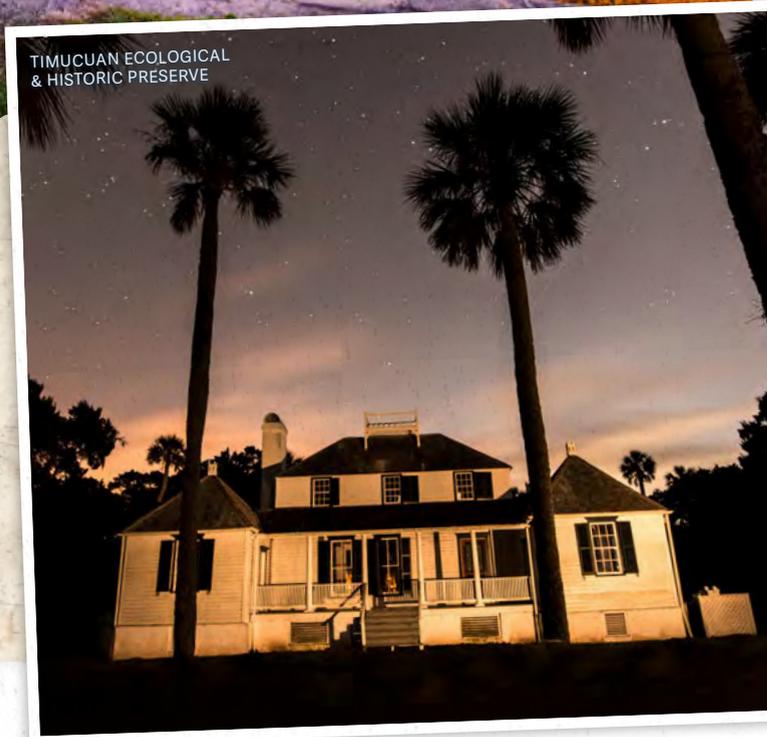
ISTOCK; TIM EVANSON/FLICKR; SHUTTERSTOCK

# Preserving History and Ecology in Florida



CASTILLO DE SAN MARCOS NM

*Escape the crowds* and plan a road trip along the Atlantic coast of Florida between Orlando and Jacksonville. Explore unspoiled beaches and uncover stories from early Native Americans, European settlers, and African Americans that help us better understand our complex history.



TIMUCUAN ECOLOGICAL & HISTORIC PRESERVE

## Day 1

### Canaveral National Seashore

Most Americans recognize the name Canaveral as the home to Kennedy Space Center and rocket launches, but the area on the Atlantic Ocean is also home to sea turtles, bald eagles, and manatees. Explore some of the 24 miles of undeveloped beaches, then get on the water. You can rent a kayak outside the park or a canoe at Apollo Beach to paddle in lagoons and along the shore; you'll find a kayak/canoe launch behind Apollo Visitor Center. Primitive camping is available at Apollo Beach by reservation, or return to the mainland where you'll find plenty of lodging options.



CANAVERAL NS

## Day 2

### Fort Matanzas and Castillo de San Marcos National Monuments

This coast holds even more significance historically than as a vacation destination, and these two monuments near St. Augustine, the oldest continuous European-settled city in the country, prove it. Tour the fort, built in 1740, almost 200 years after St. Augustine's founding, to help defend Spanish-held Florida from British threat, then walk the half-mile boardwalk trail through maritime forest. Just 15 miles north is the city and Castillo San Marcos, the fortress built in 1672 to defend it. Take a self-guided tour and pause to watch demonstrations by re-enactors in period dress. Stay the night in the historic Old City and explore centuries-old brick streets.

## Day 3

### Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve

Just outside of Jacksonville, discover one of the last virgin wetlands of the Atlantic coast, as well as countless stories of people, from Native Americans to French explorers to African slaves, living and surviving where land meets water. The preserve encompasses several federal, state, and city sites, including Fort Caroline, which honors the brief 16th century period of French exploration in Florida. You can also visit Kingsley Plantation to gain a better understanding of the lives of slaves in this area, and American Beach in the Amelia Island portion of the preserve, where during segregation, African Americans established their own beach resort. Camping is available within the preserve at Little Talbot Island State Park and Huguenot Memorial Park.



Access the seashore, between Melbourne and Daytona Beach, from Apollo Beach in the north or Playalinda Beach in the south near Titusville, just outside Orlando. Fort Matanzas is an hour north on A1A near historic St. Augustine. Another hour north, just outside of Jacksonville, you'll find Timucuan and Fort Caroline.

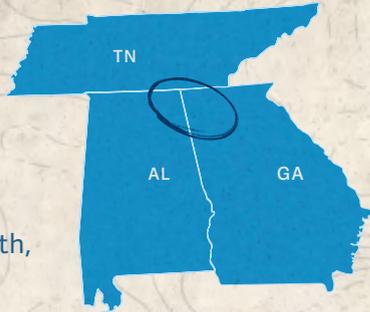
ISTOCK; RICK RASMUSSEN/  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



RUSSELL CAVE NM

# Civil Rights & Civil War in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama

*This packed itinerary* takes you to six parks, three states, and through the history of the South, from ancient peoples to the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement, with stops for reflection on the natural beauty of a multifaceted region.



CHICKAMAUGA NMP

## Day 1 Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield

All Americans know the name of Martin Luther King Jr., but relatively few of us have seen his home and church in the heart of Atlanta. Start in the visitor center to experience permanent and changing exhibits and to sign up for a ranger-led tour of his birth home. In under 2 hours, you can visit the International World Peace Rose Garden, Ebenezer Baptist Church, the King Center and his birth home. Then, for a break from the city, head to Cochran Shoals Park, an access point to the Chattahoochee River area just north of the I-285 perimeter, where you can explore paved trails, capture views of the river and, if the water is up, see tubers "Shooting the 'Hooch.'" Head west for the last stop in metro Atlanta, Kennesaw Battlefield, a roughly 3,000-acre park preserving the site of a Civil War battleground. Drive or take a shuttle to the top of the mountain, then drive to Cheatham Hill (the main battlefield) and Kolb Farm. After a full day exploring sites in and around Atlanta, you'll find plenty of places to eat and rest the night in this populated suburban area.

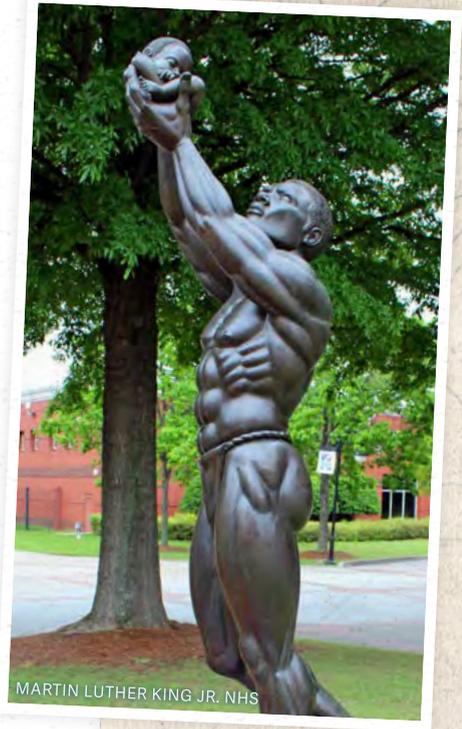
## Day 2 Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park

Head north to continue your exploration of this region's Civil War story along the

Tennessee-Georgia border. In September 1863, Confederates claimed victory in Chickamauga, but continued fighting at Chattanooga in November, turning the tide in the Union's favor and opening up access to the Deep South, signaling the "Death Knell of the Confederacy." The park includes the battlefield at Chickamauga as well as at Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, together encompassing 10,000 preserved acres with 80 miles of hiking trails. One popular trail is Signal Point in the Chattanooga portion, with views of the Tennessee River and Cumberland Plateau. Grab dinner, a local brew and a good night's rest in downtown Chattanooga.

## Day 3 Little River Canyon National Recreation Area and Russell Cave National Monument

At the Russell Cave entrance, artifacts have been found dating to some of the earliest human inhabitants of North America. Join a ranger-led tour of the cave shelter area; be sure to check the park schedule for days and times. At nearby Little River Canyon, take the 11-mile scenic drive along the rim, stopping at Little River Falls and several overlooks, and hike Eberhart Point Trail to the bottom of the canyon. While there's no camping in the park, you can find campsites at nearby state parks and lodging and restaurants around the quaint, historic town of Mentone.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NHS



Start from downtown Atlanta, home to the King site, and head 30 minutes north to the Chattahoochee area. Then travel 30 minutes east to Kennesaw, both still within metro Atlanta. Travel up I-75 for 1.5 hours to Chickamauga on the Georgia-Tennessee border, then Chattanooga. Russell Cave is an hour east, just over the Tennessee line in Alabama. Finally, head south an hour to Little River Canyon.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; ISTOCK; WALLY GOBETZ/FLICKR

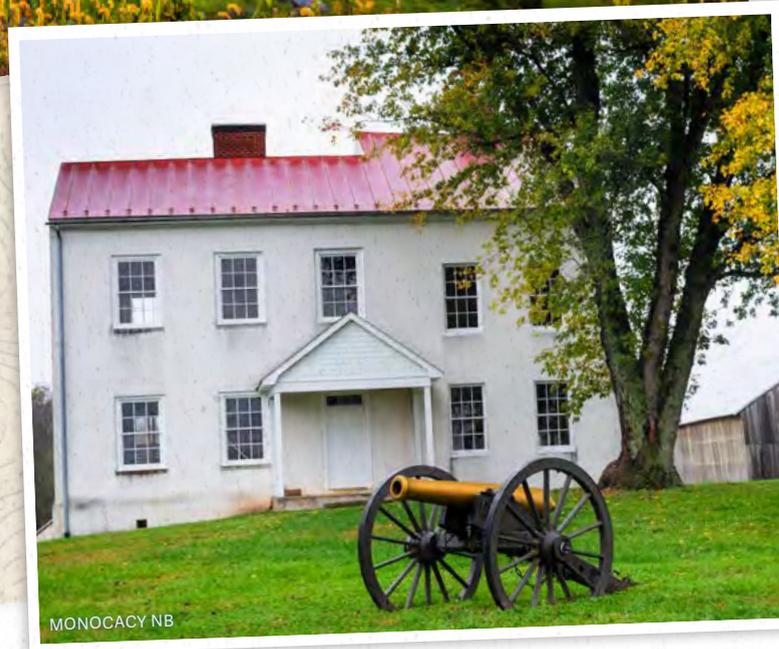
# The Civil War on Union Soil

## in Maryland and Pennsylvania



GETTYSBURG NMP

Here's an itinerary for Civil War hobbyists and anyone wanting to better understand this transformative time in American history. These battlefields north of Washington, D.C. exhibit the war's true turning points in favor of the Union.



MONOCACY NB

### Day 1

#### Monocacy National Battlefield

In summer 1864, Confederate troops, ordered by General Lee, attempted to secure the Shenandoah Valley and take Washington, D.C. While Confederates won the battle of Monocacy, the fighting delayed the advance toward Washington enough to ultimately secure the capital. Monocacy includes more than 1,600 acres and several Civil War-era farms. Drive the 6-mile self-guided auto tour route and stop at structures exhibiting architectural influences ranging from Georgia to the Caribbean. Stay the night in Frederick, a mecca for history buffs with several museums, including the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.

### Day 2

#### Antietam National Battlefield

Many Americans recognize the name Antietam, but may not realize that it was the bloodiest single day of battle in American history with 26,000 soldiers killed. It was also the first battle of the Civil War fought on Union soil, in 1862. Start at the visitor center and join a ranger-led talk or walk through the battlefield to pick up information about various monuments along the battlefield drive. Be sure to stop by the Pry House Field Hospital, which served as Union headquarters during the battle and was visited by Abraham Lincoln two weeks after. Head north towards Gettysburg for the night.



ANTIETAM NB

### Day 3

#### Gettysburg National Military Park

This site, perhaps the most famous of Civil War landmarks, provides not only the opportunity to visit hallowed ground that witnessed three brutal days of battle in 1863, but also to conduct in-depth research at the resource library about those who fought here, and elsewhere. Join one of many ranger-led or living history programs; drive the battlefield; and visit the David Wills House, where Lincoln put the finishing touches on his famous address. Round off the day by stopping for a quiet moment at Soldier's National Cemetery, where the address was given and where the power of Lincoln's words can still be felt today.



From either downtown Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, drive an hour northeast to Frederick, Maryland, home of Monocacy Battlefield. Antietam is just a half hour east of Monocacy. Gettysburg is 1.5 hours further northeast in Pennsylvania.

# Wilderness and History

near New York City



PATERSON GREAT FALLS NHP



FIRE ISLAND NS

Step outside the city to learn some history of the region and experience the landscape pre-pavement. While the parks are open year-round, spring to fall is the optimal time to visit if you plan on backcountry camping at Fire Island, and structures at Weir Farm are only open May to October; early fall is best for tackling the whole itinerary.



## Day 1

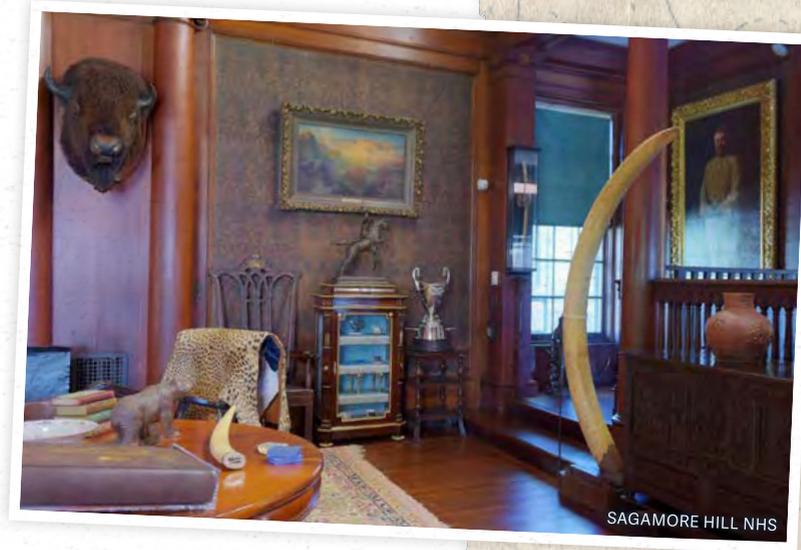
### Fire Island National Seashore

A backcountry experience just miles from New York City? It's possible here in the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, the only federally designated wilderness in New York state and, at 1,380 acres, the smallest wilderness area managed by the National Park Service. Secure your backcountry camping permit before you arrive. Stop at the Wilderness Visitor Center first, then hike the trails along Burma Road and look for a spot to set up camp. This is just one of many ways to explore Fire Island, so if the backcountry's not your thing, plan to visit the lighthouse, beaches or the many communities on the island, where you can find a hotel to stay the night.

## Day 2

### Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

Spend your morning exploring more of Fire Island, then head back to civilization, where you can visit the home of Theodore Roosevelt. Get tickets in advance to tour the house, but also be sure to walk the paths through the marsh, woodland, and beach ecosystems that drew Teddy to this place. The nearby village of Oyster Bay offers more Teddy landmarks, including his gravesite and an Audubon bird sanctuary bearing his name, among many other museums and historical sites. You can also find restaurants and hotels in Oyster Bay.



SAGAMORE HILL NHS

## Day 3

### Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and Weir Farm National Historic Site

The city of Paterson, New Jersey, was founded by then Secretary of Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, as the nation's first planned industrial city. Central to the story is the Great Falls of the Passaic River, whose power was harnessed by civil engineers to support the growing mill industry as well as a locomotive and Colt revolver factory. Download the free Mill Mile app to take a self-guided tour of the park. Then head to 60-acre Weir Farm, where the focus shifts to American arts. It was home to a family of artists, including J. Alden Weir, whose visits to Paris in the 1870s led to his artistic evolution that soon made him the leader of the American Impressionists. Take a self-guided tour using the Painting Sites Guide to see real places depicted in Weir paintings. Don't forget to take the park up on its offer of art supplies to spend some time creating your own impressions.



Drive to Fire Island's Wilderness Visitor Center on the east end of the island via William Floyd Parkway from Long Island. Note that you can access either end of the island by car, but there are no roads between. It's an hour drive to Sagamore Hill, back on Long Island, and another hour to Great Falls in New Jersey, northeast of Manhattan. Weir Farm is another hour (or more, depending on route) east in Connecticut.

# A World Away

## in Deep South Texas



SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NHP

### Immerse yourself

in a beautiful, diverse part of the country that's been claimed and disputed for centuries, and still remains under scrutiny today. This itinerary starts in San Antonio, a vibrant town with a rich history, then heads to the beach and the Mexican border in the Rio Grande Valley. Winter is a good time to travel this path and escape the cold temps further north.



PADRE ISLAND NS

### Day 1

#### San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

This park encompasses four areas near downtown San Antonio, each a few miles apart: Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan, and Mission Espada. The missions were established by Spanish colonists between the 17th and 19th century to spread Catholicism and to stake claim in the Southwest. Visit all four UNESCO World Heritage sites on bike via the Mission Hike and Bike Trail, which connects to the city's famed River Walk via Mission Portals, for a 16-mile round-trip journey easy enough for the kids and with plenty of opportunities to stop for water and lunch. Stay the night in San Antonio or hop in the car and head south to Padre Island.

### Day 2

#### Padre Island National Seashore

This island just off the coast of Corpus Christi is a natural paradise in the Gulf of Mexico. While the gulf side is beautiful, the Laguna Madre side between mainland and island offers a hypersaline (meaning saltier than the ocean) ecosystem unique to only six known lagoons in the world. Laguna is popular for windsurfing, fishing, birding, and boating, and the shallow waters are great for beginners. Worldwide Windsurfing, a private company on the island, rents stand up paddle boards, kayaks, and windsurfing boards, and offers lessons for those new to the sport.



PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NHP

### Day 3

#### Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park

Campsites are abundant, but first-come, first-served, so check availability at the visitor center early to secure your spot. On this site in the Rio Grande Valley in May 1846, a skirmish between U.S. and Mexican troops launched the 2-year U.S.-Mexican War that led to the borders we know today. The conflict had been brewing over U.S. plans of Westward Expansion, as President James K. Polk claimed, "to the Pacific." Tour the visitor center to get a grasp of the complex relationship between these neighbors and understand the evolving map in the 1800s; at the time of Palo Alto, Mexico still claimed the Texas Territory (though Texas had claimed independence a few years before) and areas of what we know today as New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, and California. Walk the half-mile trail to the battlefield overlook and the additional short walk to the U.S. and Mexican battle lines of years past.



From downtown San Antonio and the Missions, drive I-37 southeast 2.5 hours to Padre Island. Palo Alto is another 2.5 hours south near Harlingen, Brownsville, and the Mexico border. From here, it's 4+ hours back to San Antonio.

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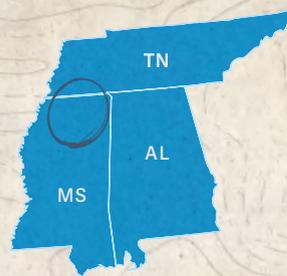


# Re-Trace History

from Tennessee to Mississippi

Follow a historic route

taken by Native Americans, explorers, tradesmen, and soldiers from Nashville to Tupelo, and get away from the hustle and bustle of highways for a slow drive. Not only does the Natchez Trace take you to several Civil War battlefields, it also offers tons of worthy natural and cultural stops along the way.



BRICES CROSS ROADS NBS

## Day 1

### Natchez Trace Parkway

Start at the parkway's northern terminus south of Nashville off Hwy 100, or exit 192 on I-40. Take your time and stop at the many landmarks in this Tennessee section, including the Tobacco Farm, Jackson Falls, and Fall Hollow Trail. At Meriwether Lewis Monument, tour the exhibits and visit the gravesite of this famous explorer whose life ended early on the Trace. There are restrooms, a picnic area, and first-come, first-served campsites here, so plan to stay the night; if sites are full, David Crockett State Park is nearby off Hwy 64 to the east.

## Day 2

### Shiloh National Military Park

Continue south on the Trace, then detour to Shiloh. Not only does the park showcase a significant Civil War battlefield, it also preserves the Shiloh Indian Mounds, where more than 800 years ago, a Native American town overlooked the Tennessee River. The residents, perhaps ancestors of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, or Creek Indians, were farmers, and archaeologists have uncovered evidence of their homes and lives here. In addition to touring the battlefield, be sure to learn about these earlier inhabitants. Head south to Corinth, Mississippi, and the Civil War Interpretive Center, also part of the park, then drive back to the Trace, heading



SHILOH NMP

south. Stop at Freedom Hills Overlook and Bear Creek Mound Cave Spring, before camping at Tishomingo State Park.

## Day 3

### Brices Cross Roads and Tupelo National Battlefields

Keep driving south toward Tupelo, detouring for Brices Cross Roads just before milepost 280. Take a self-guided tour of this one-acre site to understand its significance to the Union army's march south. Then head to Tupelo, which, in addition to its Civil War significance, is well-known as the birthplace of Elvis. The one-acre war memorial site is located along Main Street in downtown, a former battlefield that now exists as a small, modern city. Stay the night in Tupelo, or head back to the Trace and camp at Tombigbee State Park.



The Natchez Trace Parkway stretches 444 miles through Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi from just south of Nashville to Natchez National Historical Park in Natchez, Mississippi. The speed limit is 50 mph most of the way, and many access/exit points allow detours to historically significant spots in the region. Exit at Hwy 64 near Lawrenceburg, Tennessee to visit Shiloh, and return to the Trace via the access from Hwy 72 near Cherokee, Alabama. Get to Brices Cross Roads via Hwy 370, then loop around to Tupelo on Hwy 78, which intersects with the Trace. Return to Nashville via the Trace, or pick up the speed on a faster Interstate route.



# Easy Living in Louisiana and Mississippi

JEAN LAFITTE NHP & PRES

*New Orleans* is about more than parades and cocktails. It's a culturally and historically rich city surrounded by remarkable nature where water becomes land. Explore a few of the parks in this area, and you'll start planning a return visit. Note: It can be swelteringly hot here in the summer, but ferries only run to Ship Island from May to October — try the earlier or later end of that time span.



## Day 1

### Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

The Lafitte collection of sites includes Barataria Preserve in Marrero, Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery in Chalmette, French Quarter Visitor Center in New Orleans, Acadian Cultural Center in Lafayette, Prairie Acadian Cultural Center in Eunice, and Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux. Start out in the city at French Quarter Visitor Center to learn how French engineers drew plans for the original city in the early 1700s. Then make your way to the Jazz Park Visitor Center (stopping for beignets at famous Café Du Monde) to discover the story of New Orleans jazz and hear live music. You can also take a self-guided tour of sites throughout the city that are significant to jazz history. Plan for a full night of dinner and music in New Orleans.

## Day 2

### Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve

While it's easy to explore The Big Easy for days, Lafitte preserves natural and cultural jewels beyond the city. Head to Chalmette Battlefield by car, or take the Creole Queen paddlewheeler (info at the main park visitor center in the Quarter). Learn about the War of 1812 and Battle of New Orleans. Then escape to the natural side of south Louisiana at Barataria Preserve, south of the city. Explore the 23,000 acres of preserved wild wetlands on a network of trails and



boardwalks via self-guided or cellphone tour. The Acadian sites west of New Orleans are too much to add to this trip, but if you'd rather learn about Acadians than alligators, or if you have more time, ask a ranger at the main visitor center for information on visiting those sites.

## Day 3

### Gulf Islands National Seashore

This park includes a collection of beaches in both Mississippi and Florida along the Gulf of Mexico. From New Orleans, head to the Mississippi coast and catch a ferry from Gulfport to West Ship Island (May to October), one of many pristine barrier islands. Tour Fort Massachusetts, swim, and enjoy a picnic. Ferry back to mainland and head to Davis Bayou Area near Ocean Springs. You can walk a 2-mile trail that winds through the forest and bayous, then camp for the night (reservations highly recommended).



From the French Quarter sites, Chalmette Battlefield is about 6 miles east along the Mississippi River. Barataria Preserve is a 30-minute drive south from downtown. From New Orleans, take I-10 an hour northeast to Mississippi and that state's section of the Gulf Islands near Gulfport and Ocean Springs.



# Prairie and Presidents

## near Kansas City

For many years, Kansas was the frontier, the edge of the U.S. before entering the Wild West. It has served not only as a physical frontier, but also as a dividing line for the ideals of north and south, east and west. Explore natural and cultural boundaries through the sites conserved here. For the best weather and access, visit between April and October.



### Day 1

#### Fort Scott National Historic Site

Established in 1842 as a frontier military post, Fort Scott reminds us today that America was a young and growing country in the mid-1800s. Soldiers at the fort were called on to negotiate with Native American tribes and between those tribes and white settlers bent on moving westward. During the Civil War, the fort served as a supply unit for the Union. Tour the visitor center, 11 historic structures, and three museums, including the infantry and dragoon barracks. The park also manages 5 acres of restored tallgrass prairie; walk the ¼-mile Tallgrass Prairie Trail to learn more about this vibrant native ecosystem. Book the night in a hotel or bed and breakfast in the Fort Scott community.



### Day 2

#### Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site

Once a vast ecosystem covering the middle of the country, most tallgrass prairie was plowed under for agriculture, but these almost 11,000 acres remain in the Flint Hills. Learn about the prairie's diversity of flora and fauna at the visitor center, then grab a trail map and explore the prairie on foot. Take the 3.2-mile (one way) Scenic Overlook Trail that leaves from the visitor center, keeping a safe distance from the preserve's bison herd grazing in Windmill Pasture. Then head to Topeka to visit Brown v. Board of Education, which interprets the history of segregation in America and the landmark

### Day 3

#### Harry S. Truman National Historic Site

The 33rd president, Harry S. Truman is credited with taking the country from a period of isolationism into an international age. The Truman era saw World War II end and the Cold War begin, but here, you'll get to know more about the Missouri farm boy before he became the nation's leader. Start at the visitor center in Independence, then tour the Truman Home, a Victorian house originally built by the family of Truman's wife, Bess, in 1867. This was the primary home of the president from 1919, when he and Bess married, until he died in 1972. To understand Harry Truman, though, it's important to also visit the Truman Family Farm and Home, where Harry worked alongside his family in his 20s. Take a self-guided tour of the farmhouse and 10 surrounding acres where this president spent his formative years.



This itinerary forms a loop southwest of Kansas City. Start at Fort Scott, 1.5 hours south of the city. Then head northwest 2+ hours to Tallgrass Prairie. The Brown v. Board of Education site is an hour northeast in Topeka. Head back an hour or so east through Kansas City to reach the Truman Home in Independence and Truman Farm Home in Grandview, both in Missouri.

# Park Directory



## Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

Kailua-Kona, HI  
808.326.6012 x101  
www.nps.gov/alka

## Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

Sandy Springs, GA  
678.538.1200  
www.nps.gov/chat

## Fort Scott National Historic Site

Fort Scott, KS  
620.223.0310  
www.nps.gov/fosc

## James A. Garfield National Historic Site

Mentor, OH  
440.255.8722  
www.nps.gov/jaga

## Little River Canyon National Recreation Area

Fort Payne, AL  
256.845.9605 x201  
www.nps.gov/liri

## Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve

Cave Junction, OR  
541.592.2100  
www.nps.gov/orca

## Antietam National Battlefield

Sharpsburg, MD  
301.432.5124  
www.nps.gov/anti

## Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park

Fort Oglethorpe, GA  
706.866.9241  
www.nps.gov/chch

## Gettysburg National Military Park

Gettysburg, PA  
717.334.1124  
www.nps.gov/gett

## Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

New Orleans, LA  
504.589.3882  
www.nps.gov/jela

## Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site

Atlanta, GA  
404.331.5190 x5046  
www.nps.gov/malu

## Padre Island National Seashore

Corpus Christi, TX  
361.949.8068  
www.nps.gov/pais

## Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site

Kawaihae, HI  
808.882.7218 x0  
www.nps.gov/puhe

## Shiloh National Military Park

Shiloh, TN  
731.689.5696  
www.nps.gov/shil

## Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

Bayfield, WI  
715.779.3397  
www.nps.gov/apis

## City of Rocks National Reserve

Almo, ID  
208.824.5901  
www.nps.gov/ciro

## Gulf Islands National Seashore

Gulf Breeze, FL  
850.934.2600  
www.nps.gov/guis

## Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historic Site

Kailua-Kona, HI  
808.329.6881 x1329  
www.nps.gov/kaho

## Minidoka Historic Site

Hagerman, ID  
208.825.4169  
www.nps.gov/miin

## Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park

Brownsville, TX  
956.541.2785 x333  
www.nps.gov/paal

## Redwoods National and State Parks

Crescent City, CA  
707.465.7335  
www.nps.gov/redw

## Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

Strong City, KS  
620.273.8494 x0  
www.nps.gov/tapr

## Badlands National Park

Interior, SD  
605.433.5361  
www.nps.gov/badl

## Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve

Arcó, ID  
208.527.1300  
www.nps.gov/crmo

## Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument

Hagerman, ID  
208.933.4105  
www.nps.gov/hafo

## Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield

Kennesaw, GA  
770.427.4626 x0  
www.nps.gov/kemo

## Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

Philip, SD  
650.433.5552  
www.nps.gov/mimi

## Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park

Paterson, NJ  
973.523.0370  
www.nps.gov/pagr

## Russell Cave National Monument

Bridgeport, AL  
256.495.2672 x113  
www.nps.gov/ruca

## Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve

Jacksonville, FL  
904.641.7155  
www.nps.gov/timu

## Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site

Tupelo, MS  
800.305.7417  
www.nps.gov/brcr

## Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Brecksville, OH  
330.657.2752  
www.nps.gov/cuva

## Harry S. Truman National Historic Site

Independence, MO  
816.254.2720  
www.nps.gov/hstr

## Keweenaw National Historical Park

Calumet, MI  
906.337.3168  
www.nps.gov/kewe

## Monocacy National Battlefield

Frederick, MD  
301.662.3515  
www.nps.gov/mono

## Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial

Put-in-Bay, OH  
419.285.2184  
/www.nps.gov/pevi

## Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

Oyster Bay, NY  
516.922.4788  
www.nps.gov/sahi

## Tupelo National Battlefield

Tupelo, MS  
800.305.7417  
www.nps.gov/tupe

## Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site

Topeka, KS  
785.354.4273  
www.nps.gov/brvb

## Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

Coupeville, WA  
360.678.6084  
www.nps.gov/ebla

## Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Hawai'i National Park, HI  
808.985.6000  
www.nps.gov/havo

## Lava Beds National Monument

Tulelake, CA  
530.667.8113  
www.nps.gov/labe

## Natchez Trace Parkway

Tupelo, MS  
800.305.7417  
www.nps.gov/natr

## Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

Munising, MI  
906.387.3700  
www.nps.gov/piro

## San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

San Antonio, TX  
210.932.1001  
www.nps.gov/saan

## Weir Farm National Historic Site

Wilton, CT  
203.834.1896 x0  
www.nps.gov/wefa

## Canaveral National Seashore

Titusville, FL  
321.267.1110  
www.nps.gov/cana

## Fire Island National Seashore

Patchogue, NY  
631.687.4750  
www.nps.gov/fiis

## Isle Royale National Park

Houghton, MI  
906.482.0984  
www.nps.gov/isro



## New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

New Orleans, LA  
504.589.4841  
www.nps.gov/jazz

## Pu'uhonua O Hōnaunau National Historic Site

Honaunau, HI  
808.328.2326  
www.nps.gov/puho

## San Juan Island National Historical Park

Friday Harbor, WA  
360.378.2240  
www.nps.gov/sajh

## Wind Cave National Park

Hot Springs, SD  
605.745.4600  
www.nps.gov/wica

\*For information on national park lodging, camping, and tour reservations please visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)



We are all owners of 84 million acres of the world's most treasured places – all protected in America's more than 400 national parks. Chartered by Congress, the National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks and nonprofit partner of the National Park Service. Dedicated to enriching America's national parks and programs through private support, the National Park Foundation helps to PROTECT America's national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts, CONNECT all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and INSPIRE the next generation of park stewards. Together, we can make a difference. Learn more at [nationalparks.org](http://nationalparks.org).

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The National Park Service and the National Park Foundation are inviting people everywhere to discover their own personal connections to parks. So much more than vast landscapes, there are urban parks, cultural treasures, and historical places — all within the National Park System. A park can even be a feeling or a state of mind. You may also find that a National Park Service program helped preserve a special place in your community. With more than 400 national parks and thousands of historic and recreational lands across the country, there are endless ways for you to find your unique connection. If you've already found your park, please share your story with us using #findyourpark. If you haven't found your park just yet, visit [findyourpark.com](http://findyourpark.com) for more ideas and inspiration.





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[nationalparks.org](http://nationalparks.org)