

A complete guide to the national parks near you.



On August 25, the National Parks Service celebrates a monumental occasion: their centennial. For the organization, this year officially marks 100 years of recreation, conservation and historic preservation. And because of it, they're pulling out all the stops.

In honor of this centennial, the National Parks Service is encouraging people everywhere to get out and explore — to pack up the car or RV and enjoy at least one of the parks they have to offer.

With 407 of them across the country, there's sure to be a wide variety of national parks close to home. But for your convenience, we've picked the best of the best in each state we cover, so you can enjoy whichever park peaks your interest. Just find your state (or a state you'd like to travel to) and take a look at the parks they have to offer.

MICHIGAN

1. [Sleeping Bear Dunes](#) - Named the "Most Beautiful Place in America" on ABC's Good Morning America, the Sleeping Bear Dunes is a must-see site in Michigan. Climb up the soft sand and check out the beautiful view of Glen Lake or Lake Michigan.
2. [Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore Michigan](#) - Want more than just sand? The Pictured Rocks—containing sand dunes, sandstone cliffs, beaches, waterfalls and forest—is a beautiful place to hike and camp by Lake Superior.
3. [River Raisin National Battlefield Park](#) - Remember the Raisin! If you are more of a fan of historical sites, visit the site that commemorates the battle of the greatest victory for the American Indian confederations in the War of 1812.

INDIANA

1. George Rogers Clark National Historical Park - During the American Revolutionary War, George Rogers Clark led his brave frontiersmen into the Illinois Country to strike the heart of the British-controlled countryside and destroy British influence with the Indians. Listen to the stories behind this adventure and explore the exhibits at the George Rogers Clark National Historical Park.
2. Indiana Dunes - Whether you enjoy scouting rare species of birds, flying kites on a sandy beach or hiking trails over rugged dunes, mystifying wetlands, sunny prairies, calm rivers and green forests, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is for you.
3. Lincoln's Boyhood Home - "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Explore Abraham Lincoln's childhood home and learn about the boy who would one day become the leader of our nation.

KENTUCKY

1. Cumberland Gap National Historical Park - See the cascading waterfalls and lush forests of the Appalachian Mountains up close, step into the past at the Hensley Settlement, and explore the dark and mysterious Gap Cave that was the first great gateway to the west at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.
2. Mammoth Cave National Park - The Mammoth Cave National Park preserves the cave system and part of the Green River valley of south central Kentucky. It's the world's longest known cave system with more than 400 miles of complex labyrinths and vast chambers.
3. Trail Of Tears National Historic Trail - Remember and commemorate the survival of the Cherokee people who traveled by foot, horse, wagon or steamboat to the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, after being forcefully removed from their homelands.

OHIO

1. Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park - Circumnavigate the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park to recount Wilbur and Orville Wright and Paul Laurence Dunbar's struggle to success in inventing the first airplane. Follow their footsteps in the historically refurnished Wright brothers' printing office and bicycle shops. See the Wright brothers' third airplane. Visit the Huffman Prairie Flying Field and Hawthorn Hill, and experience Paul Dunbar's last home.
2. Cuyahoga Valley National Park - Vacationing in Cleveland and want to escape the city for a bit? Relax along the "Crooked River" at Cuyahoga Valley National Park while walking through rolling hills, deep forests and open farmlands. The park is a refuge for native plants and wildlife and provides lovely paths for visitors.
3. Hopewell Culture National Historical Park - Learn about Native American sacred spaces and reflect upon the history of these American Indians on the Ohio River Valley.

VIRGINIA

1. Blue Ridge Parkway - Drive slowly through stunning views of vistas and rugged mountains of the Appalachian Highlands.
2. Chesapeake Bay - Learn to kayak, pick crabs, go fishing, tour a lighthouse, slurp oysters and enjoy the natural beauty of Chesapeake.
3. Appalachian National Scenic Trail - The Appalachian Trail is 2,180+ miles long of scenic, wooded wild mountains.

ILLINOIS

1. [Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail](#) - Follow the path that the Corps of Discovery took in their search for a water route to shores the Pacific Ocean from the Midwest.
2. [Pullman National Monument](#) - Open your mind and listen to the stories of diverse people whose stories all link to Pullman seeking opportunity, designed as a utopia for safety and life without social limitations.
3. [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#) - See Abraham Lincoln's home while he was a husband, parent and neighbor. Learn about his challenges in life and about his dreams for overcoming these challenges and helping others do the same.

WISCONSIN

1. [Apostle Islands National Lakeshore](#) - Experience the Jewels of Lake Superior by camping out, watching the dazzling stars at night and paddling through the cool lake during the day.
2. [Ice Age National Scenic Trail](#) - See some of the best evidence of mammoths, saber tooth cats and cave lions from the North American Ice Age glacier.
3. [Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway](#) - Paddle and adventure down the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers for a scenic route of 200 miles of clean water.

ALABAMA

1. [Little River Canyon National Preserve](#) - Forested uplands, waterfalls, canyon rims and bluffs, pools, boulders, and sandstone cliffs galore: this setting offers a variety of recreational activities tying natural resources and cultural heritage together.
2. [Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area](#) - Hear the whispered tales of some of the nation's biggest moments and how the Tennessee River played a role in each while exploring the region's sites and buildings around the water.
3. [Russell Cave National Monument](#) - Explore this archaeological site with one of the most complete records of prehistoric cultures in the southeast, dating from 10,000 B.C. to 1650 A.D.

GEORGIA

1. [Andersonville National Historic Site](#) - The Camp Sumter military prison at Andersonville was one of the largest Confederate military prisons during the Civil War. Experience the site where 45,000 Union soldiers were confined during the 14 months the prison existed and commemorate the 13,000 that died.
2. [Augusta Canal National Heritage Area](#) - Visit the Augusta Canal that helped usher the Industrial Revolution into the south by using the Savannah River to power mills and factories.
3. [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#) - Take a walk to enjoy nature's beauty and raft through the rocky shoals or fish through the waters in the ancient Chattahoochee River.

NORTH CAROLINA

1. [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#) - Visit one of England's first known settlements in what we now call the United States of America.
2. [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#) - Explore the Cades Cove of historic homes and churches and see black bears and wildflowers on your way.

3. Blue Ridge National Heritage Area - Discover some of the age-old traditions of craft, music and agriculture of the Cherokee heritage.

SOUTH CAROLINA

1. Congaree National Park - Explore the ecosystem in Congaree National Park where the waters from the Congaree and Wateree Rivers nourish and rejuvenate this diverse forest.
2. Fort Sumter National Monument - Visit the site where the American Civil War began and learn about the battles in the Charleston Harbor.
3. Kings Mountain National Military Park - The battle of Kings Mountain was an important turning point in the American victory during the Revolutionary War. Visit the site that was vital to America's freedom.

TENNESSEE

1. Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area - Explore the 125,000 acres of the Cumberland Plateau and the historic features and outdoor recreational activities it provides.
2. Manhattan Project National Historical Park - Learn about the creation of the atomic bomb in Los Alamos (NM), Oak Ridge (TN) and Hartford (WA), which helped end World War II.
3. Obed Wild & Scenic River - Explore the wild scenic river that the pioneers farmed and fished on and enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities.

MAINE

1. Acadia National Park - Hike granite peaks, bike historic carriage roads or relax and enjoy the scenery of one of the first eastern national parks, home to many plants and animals and the tallest mountain on the U.S. Atlantic coast.
2. Roosevelt Campobello International Park - Visit Campobello Island, the summer vacation getaway spot of Franklin D. Roosevelt that serves as a memorial to FDR and a symbol of cooperation between the U.S. and Canada.
3. Saint Croix Island International Historic Site - Learn about the beginning of European presence in North America and Pierre Dugua's French expedition.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

1. Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site - See more than 100 of Augustus Saint-Gaudens' artworks in the galleries and on the grounds from heroic public monuments to artistic portraits, and the gold coins that changed the look of American coinage. Go to summer concerts, explore nature trails or discover a new talent in sculpture class.

VERMONT

1. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park - Stroll through one of Vermont's most beautiful landscapes, across bridges and alongside stone walls shaded under sugar maples and hemlocks. Enjoy the green pastures and green mountains of this national historical park.

Still feeling adventurous? We've also made a list of 14 beautiful lakes for boating.