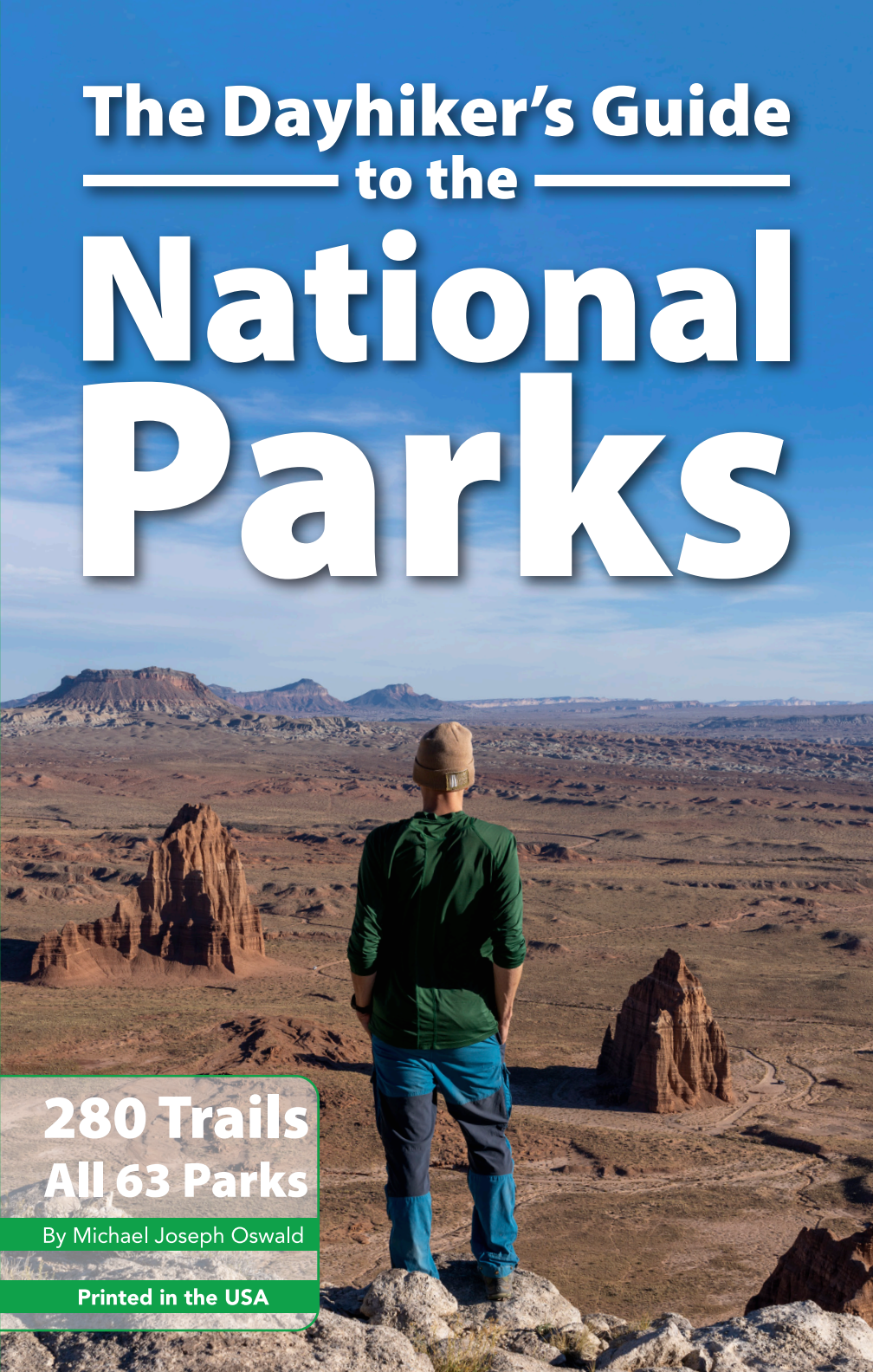
The Dayhiker's Guide to the National Parks



280 Trails
All 63 Parks

By Michael Joseph Oswald

Printed in the USA

Welcome to the Dayhiker's Guide






We Hope You
Find Your Trails

The Dayhiker's Guide to the National Parks, First Edition
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Copyright © 2023 Stone Road Press, LLC, Whitelaw, Wisconsin. All rights reserved but I'm a pretty easy-going guy. If you would like to do something with this, collaborate, or whatever, talk to me by phone (414.828.6346), email (mike@stoneroadpress.com) or snail mail (Mike Oswald, 4927 Stone Road, Whitelaw, WI 54247). I'll get back to you.

This title is also published in electronic format. Content appearing in print may not be available electronically.

Corrections/Contact

This guidebook has been researched and written with the greatest attention to detail in order to provide you with the most accurate and pertinent information. Unfortunately, travel information is subject to change, and inadvertent errors and omissions do occur. Should you encounter a change, error, or omission while using this guidebook, write to corrections@stoneroadpress.com. Your contribution will help make future editions better than the last.

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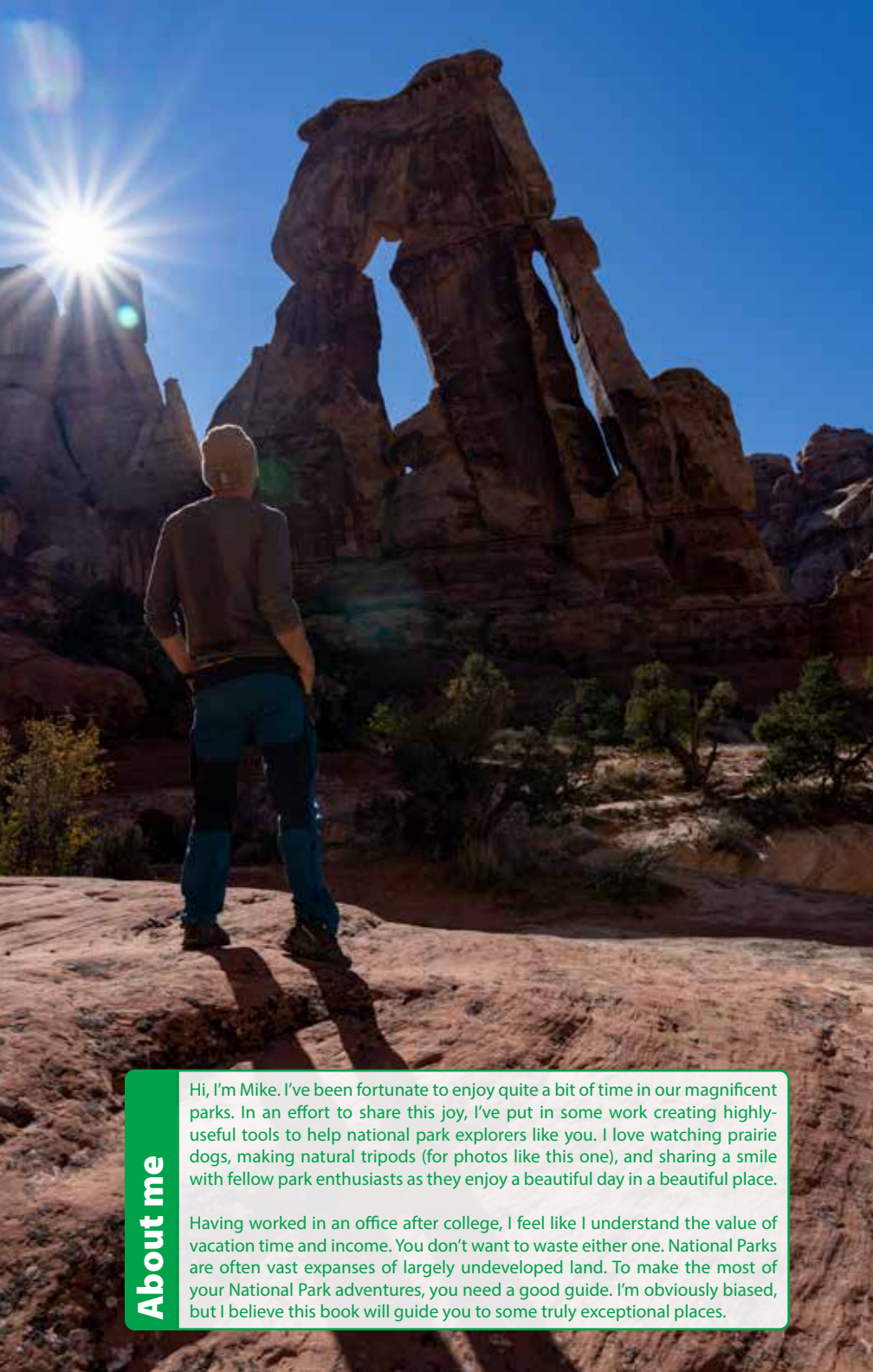
Your safety is important to us. If any activity is beyond your ability or threatened by forces outside your control, do not attempt it. It is also suggested to check with the park to confirm information (weather and trail/road conditions in particular) when it matters most.

The primary purpose of this guidebook is to enhance our readers' national park experiences, but the author and publisher cannot be held responsible for any experiences while traveling.

Cover and Introduction Photo Descriptions

Front cover: Cathedral Valley Overlook (Capitol Reef)
Introduction Pages: Castle (Badlands), Butterflies (Great Smoky Mountains), Boy Scout Trail (Joshua Tree)
About the Author: Druid Arch (Canyonlands)
Opposite Contents: Queen's Garden (Bryce Canyon)
Closing Pages: Bison (Wind Cave), Feral Horses (Theodore Roosevelt), Cracker Lake (Glacier), Grizzly Bears (Katmai)
Back Cover: Delta Lake (Grand Teton)

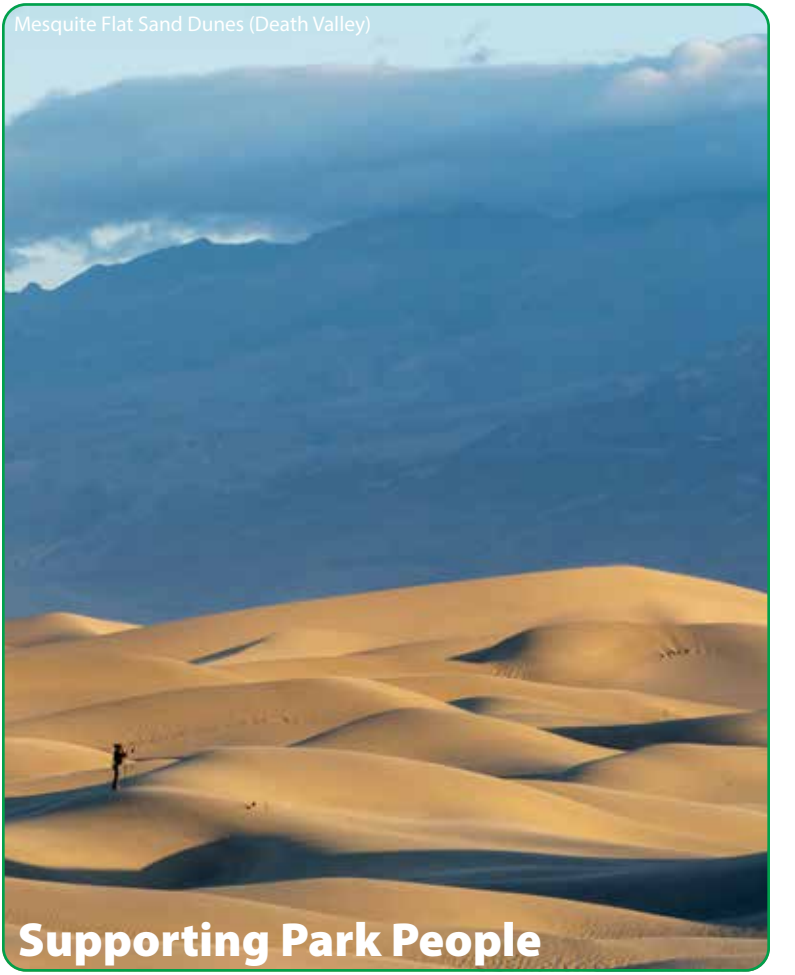




About me

Hi, I'm Mike. I've been fortunate to enjoy quite a bit of time in our magnificent parks. In an effort to share this joy, I've put in some work creating highly-useful tools to help national park explorers like you. I love watching prairie dogs, making natural tripods (for photos like this one), and sharing a smile with fellow park enthusiasts as they enjoy a beautiful day in a beautiful place.

Having worked in an office after college, I feel like I understand the value of vacation time and income. You don't want to waste either one. National Parks are often vast expanses of largely undeveloped land. To make the most of your National Park adventures, you need a good guide. I'm obviously biased, but I believe this book will guide you to some truly exceptional places.


Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes (Death Valley)

Supporting Park People

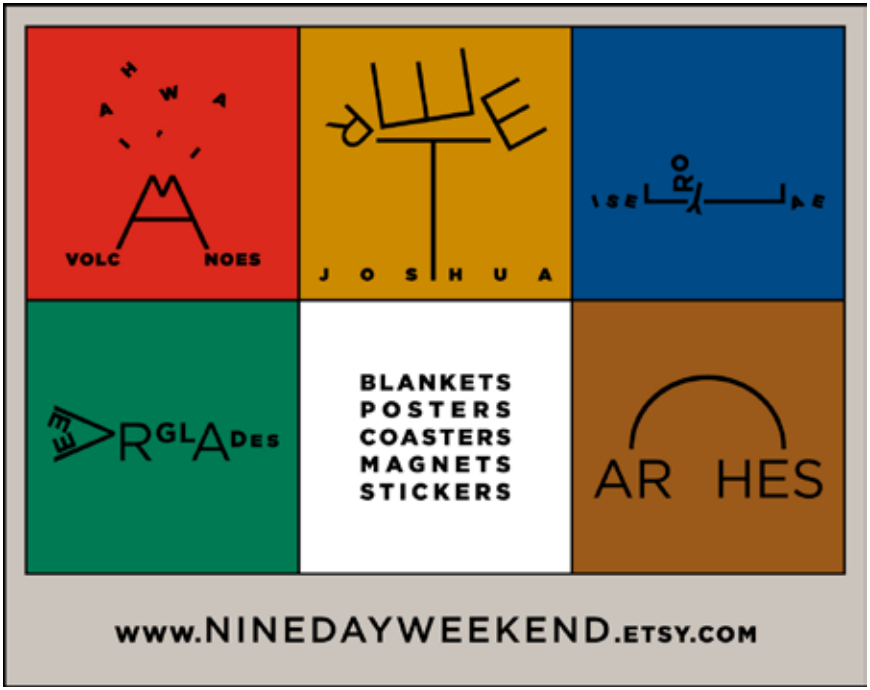
I'm Here to Help

One of the best things about this life path is meeting fellow National Park enthusiasts like you. A few of them are working on their own high-quality, National-Park-themed things.

Dan is awesome. We met in person through a mutual friend a few years back. Many of us were at the edge of our office chairs wondering when a 2023-model snowball he rolled would melt, but he also creates very clever National Park designs at Nine Day Weekend.

It's likely you already know about National Parks Traveler. Kurt's doing good work over there, spreading the National Park news.

If you are working on making positive contributions to the outdoors/National Park communities, tell me about it by writing to mike@stoneroadpress.com. I know (far too well) how difficult it is to run a business and I'm more than happy to help (if we share a similar purpose).



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Hiking

Hello, fellow hiker! I'm really excited you're getting ready to explore the U.S. National Parks—some of our planet's most spectacular and diverse landscapes—on foot. It's not uncommon for people to think hiking is this extreme activity. It certainly can be, but in all hiking's forms, it always looks an awful lot like walking to me. It's walking with flare! Occasionally scrambling boulders. Climbing ladders. Slogging up/down mountains. Cruising through canyons. And sometimes, when it's least like walking, you just sit along the shore of a picturesque alpine lake, maybe dreaming about…what trail to hike next! Those tend to be my favorite moments. And I'm confident this book will get you out in the wilderness, where you can dream about what's next!

While hiking is walking, you really need to know your limits. Pay careful attention to trail distance, elevation gain, and elevation (all provided in these pages). If you find a dream trail but aren't sure you can do it, train. Exercise—on flat land at sea level or running hills at 10,000 feet—can prepare you for any of these trails. Well, maybe not climbing Mount Whitney. That's nearly impossible! The other thing you must prepare for are conditions (weather and trail). You don't want to be in a slot canyon when it's raining (sometimes even when it's raining miles away). But don't avoid the parks or stay in your tent/hotel because a little water is falling from the sky. Places with towering cliffs like Yosemite and Zion sprout ephemeral waterfalls during heavy rain and/or rapid snowmelt. Winter is often a magical (and uncrowded) time to explore your parks. Take advantage of it. But if trails are icy, be sure to have traction devices and maybe even hiking poles.

About the Trails

So, what's included? There are 198 trail maps, featuring 280 trails. They range from easy to extreme, and 0.3 to 30.0 miles. Extremely-long-distance trails are not the norm. Of the trails detailed within these pages, the average distance is 5.9 miles. The average difficulty lies between moderate and strenuous. 46 are considered easy (short and flat). 107 are moderate (short and steep or long and relatively flat). 119 are strenuous (long and/or lots of elevation gain). 8 are extreme (serious exposure and/or challenging obstacles). Most trails do not allow dogs but a few do and National Parks are becoming increasingly pet friendly. Check with the park, if you intend to bring your pooch. Basic data for each trail includes difficulty, distance, climbing, and type of trail (loop, point-to-point, lollipop, figure 8). Climbing refers to the total number of feet you ascend on the trail. For every trail beginning and ending at the same trailhead, you will descend an equal number of feet. Some trails are flat and you climb only a few feet. Other trails are Mount Whitney and you climb (and then descend) more than a mile.

No individual trail maps are included for Mammoth Cave, Congaree, Biscayne, Everglades, Dry Tortugas, Gateway Arch, Isle Royale, Voyageurs, Wind Cave, Hot Springs, Carlsbad Caverns, White Sands, Petrified Forest, Glacier Bay, Lake

Clark, Katmai, Gates of the Arctic, and Kobuk Valley. But you'll still find a park map and a brief discussion on their hiking trails. For example, White Sands has nine miles of trails. Alkali Flat is fantastic, but a trail map doesn't convey information any more efficiently than words. There are no trail junctions. The terrain is undulating dunes, barely showing up in shaded relief. It's staked the entire way, and most of the time you can follow footprints from start to finish. Or look at Isle Royale. It has a large network of trails but the island can only be reached by boat or plane, making it a backpacking/paddling destination. With that said, there are a few dayhiking possibilities and they're covered in the blurb beneath the park map.

Many of the parks are paradise for dayhikers. I have yet to meet a mile of trail I didn't enjoy at Glacier and Yosemite! It's bordering on information overload, but you'll also find "more trail" sections for most of the parks where dayhiking is covered in detail. Put simply, more trails warrant discussion. And, especially when visiting any of the ultra-popular destinations (Acadia, Great Smoky Mountains, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Glacier, Rocky Mountain, Arches, Zion, Grand Canyon, Sequoia, Yosemite, Mount Rainier) during peak season, extra information doesn't hurt!

About the Trail Maps

I made the trail maps in Adobe Illustrator using data from the USGS National Map. Each map features a shaded relief background, depicting the area's terrain. You'll also find specific elevation data at prominent locations like trailheads, junctions, passes, and peaks. Elevation data combined with shaded relief provides considerable insight into the trail's difficulty. There are a few areas (like canyons) where elevation data is provided near the trail, so you have a better idea of your surroundings too. Tall walls make for dramatic scenery!

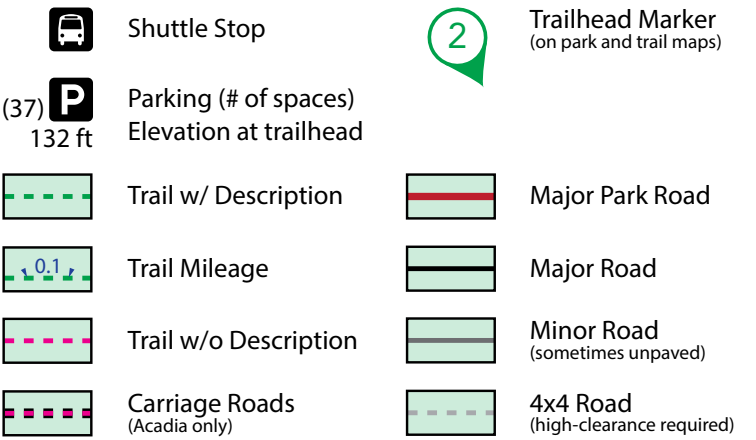
Trailheads and parking areas are clearly marked on each map. There's plenty of space in the parks, but it can get crowded. Crowdedness is directly proportional to the number of parking spaces. And there never seems to be enough of them between 9am and 3pm. I've listed the number of parking spaces at the trailheads. Some are an approximation (~), as many visitors get creative making their own parking space. When parking at popular destinations, especially early in the morning, it's a good idea to consider your surroundings. Just as it's no fun arriving at a trailhead with a full lot, it's kind of a bummer if you get back to your car and find it parked in by others who made their own spots. To alleviate the parking predicament, a couple parks run free shuttle services during peak season. Shuttle stops are also clearly identified on the trail maps.

A few of the maps have multiple trails or variants worth considering. Those variants and loops are highlighted on each map with a solid-colored path beneath the standard, green-dashed trail line. Trailheads for every trail covered in this book are clearly pinpointed on the trail maps as well as the park map at the beginning of each section.

Elevation data was sourced from Google Earth. If you'd like to find more places to explore, I highly recommend scrolling around Google Maps, Google Earth, and/or the USGS National Map Viewer. (Or wait for me to make another book!) The United States possesses an incredible amount of geographic diversity and about one-fifth of all land is federal. Excellent hiking (and camping) opportunities are everywhere, including other public land: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), as well as State Parks and other National Park Service (NPS) units. The BLM manages 245 million acres. USFS manages 193 million acres. NPS manage 85 million acres.

Below is a legend for all the trail maps.

Trail Map Legend



Online Trailhead Location Map

This QR code leads to a Google Map with trailhead locations for all the trails detailed in this book. I'm planning on treating it as a living document, adding layers of information over the years. But, if you didn't know about them already, I also wanted to point you to custom Google Maps (or whatever map service has similar functionality). They can be a very useful trip-planning tool. Make a custom map for each trip or keep one master document for all your adventures. Mark where you're staying, trails, outfitters, restaurants, maybe even places to avoid, whatever. You can add layers. Choose your own icons. Allow friends and/or family to add their own points of interest. It's an unbelievably useful tool. I do this a lot, and these maps greatly increase efficiency while exploring this great, big, beautiful country of ours. Maybe it'll help you too!

Best Dayhiking Parks

Acadia (Maine)
Great Smoky Mountains (TN/NC)
Grand Teton (Wyoming)
Yellowstone (Wyoming)
Glacier (Montana)
Big Bend (Texas)
Rocky Mountain (Colorado)
Arches (Utah)
Canyonlands (Utah)
Capitol Reef (Utah)
Bryce Canyon (Utah)
Zion (Utah)
Joshua Tree (California)
Death Valley (California)
Sequoia (California)
Yosemite (California)
Redwood (California)
Mount Rainier (Washington)
Olympic (Washington)
North Cascades (Washington)

Best Trails

Precipice (Acadia)
Beehive (Acadia)
Pemetic Northwest (Acadia)
Giant Slide (Acadia)
Old Rag (Shenandoah)
Long Point (New River Gorge)
Alum Cave/Mount LeConte (Great Smoky Mountains)
Charlie's Bunion (Smoky Mtns)
Notch (Badlands)
Castle (Badlands)
Delta Lake (Grand Teton)
Lake Solitude (Grand Teton)
Fairy Falls (Yellowstone)
Avalanche Peak (Yellowstone)
Union Falls (Yellowstone)
Swiftcurrent Pass (Glacier)
Grinnell Glacier (Glacier)
Hidden Lake (Glacier)
Highline (Glacier)
Sperry Chalet (Glacier)
Santa Elena Canyon (Big Bend)
South Rim (Big Bend)

Devil's Hall (Guadalupe Mtns)
Alkali Flat (White Sands)
Chasm Lake (Rocky Mountain)
Sky Pond (Rocky Mountain)
Black Lake (Rocky Mountain)
Emerald Lake (Rocky Mountain)
Odessa Lake (Rocky Mountain)
High Dune (Great Sand Dunes)
Delicate Arch (Arches)
Chesler Park/Joint (Canyonlands)
Spring Canyon (Capitol Reef)
Cassidy Arch (Capitol Reef)
Fairyland Loop (Bryce Canyon)
Navajo Loop (Bryce Canyon)
Angel's Landing (Zion)
Observation Point (Zion)
The Narrows (Zion)
South Kaibab (Grand Canyon)
Cape Royal (Grand Canyon)
Bristlecone (Great Basin)
Wheeler Peak (Great Basin)
Boy Scout/Willow Hole (Joshua Tree)
Bear Gulch/High Peaks (Pinnacles)
Golden Canyon (Death Valley)
Mesquite Flat Dunes (Death Valley)
Telescope Peak (Death Valley)
Lakes (Sequoia)
Sentinel Dome (Yosemite)
Mist/JMT/Half Dome (Yosemite)
Lassen Peak (Lassen Volcanic)
Cinder Cone (Lassen Volcanic)
Tall Trees (Redwood)
Fern Canyon (Redood)
Comet Falls (Mount Rainier)
Skyline (Mount Rainier)
Burroughs Mountains (Mt Rainier)
Tolmie Peak Lookout (Mt Rainier)
Lake/Mount Angeles (Olympic)
High Divide (Olympic)
Sahale Arm (North Cascades)
Hidden Lake Lookout (N Cascades)
Maple Pass (North Cascades)
Root Glacier (Wrangell–St. Elias)
Thorofare Ridge (Denali)
Harding Icefield (Kenai Fjords)
Sliding Sands (Haleakala)
Pipiwai (Haleakala)

*__Trail Name__ = Top 25 Trails


PACIFIC (Washington, DC, minus 3 hours)
MOUNTAIN (Washington, DC, minus 2 hours)
CENTRAL (Washington, DC, minus 1 hour)
North Cascades
Olympic
WASHINGTON
Mount Rainier
Glacier
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
Theodore Roosevelt
WEST
OREGON
IDAHO
Yellowstone
Crater Lake
Grand Teton
SOUTH DAKOTA
Redwood
Wind Cave
Badlands
WYOMING
Lassen Volcanic
NORTH
CALIFORNIA
NEBRASKA
NEVADA
SOUTHWEST
Yosemite
Great Basin
UTAH
Rocky Mountain
COLORADO
Arches
Pinnacles
Kings Canyon
Capitol Reef
Black Canyon of the Gunnison
Zion
Bryce Canyon
Canyonlands
KANSAS
Sequoia
Great Sand Dunes
Mesa Verde
Death Valley
Grand Canyon
Channel Islands
Joshua Tree
Petrified Forest
OKLAHOMA
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH
Saguaro
White Sands
ARIZONA
Canyon de Chelly NM, Hubbell Trading Post NHS, and Navajo NM observe daylight saving time. Other NPS units in Arizona do not.
Carlsbad Caverns
Guadalupe Mountains
TEXAS
Big Bend
ALASKA
ALASKA (Washington, DC, minus 4 hours)
RUSSIA
Kobuk Valley
Gates of the Arctic
ALASKA
CANADA
Denali
Wrangell-St. Elias
Lake Clark
Kenai Fjords
Glacier Bay
Katmai
BERING SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
0 200 400 Kilometers
0 200 400 Miles


EASTERN (Washington, DC)
Voyageurs
Isle Royale
LAKE SUPERIOR
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
LAKE HURON
LAKE MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN
LAKE ONTARIO
LAKE ERIE
NEW YORK
MAINE
Acadia
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
NJ
PENNSYLVANIA
IOWA
Indiana Dunes
Cuyahoga Valley
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
MD
DE
Shenandoah
WEST VIRGINIA
Gateway Arch
New River Gorge NP
VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
Mammoth Cave
MISSOURI
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
Great Smoky Mountains
ARKANSAS
Hot Springs
SOUTH CAROLINA
Congaree
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
EAST
MISSISSIPPI
FLORIDA
LOUISIANA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GULF OF MEXICO
Everglades
Biscayne
Dry Tortugas
North
Scale for all areas except Alaska
0 100 200 300 400 Kilometers
0 100 200 300 400 Miles
REMOTE ISLANDS
HAWAII (Washington, DC, minus 5 hours; minus 6 hours during daylight saving time)
KAUA'I
NI'IHAU
O'AHU
MOLOKA'I
Haleakala
MAUI
HAWAI'I
PACIFIC OCEAN
Hawai'i Volcanoes
REMOTE ISLANDS
AMERICAN SAMOA (Washington, DC, minus 5 hours; minus 6 hours during daylight saving time)
American Samoa
TUTUILA
OFU
TA'Ū
AMERICAN SAMOA
PACIFIC OCEAN
REMOTE ISLANDS
PUERTO RICO and VIRGIN ISLANDS (Washington, DC, plus 1 hour; same time during daylight saving time)
VIRGIN ISLANDS
PUERTO RICO
Virgin Islands

The East


North
0 100 200 300 400 Kilometers
0 100 200 300 400 Miles
EASTERN (Washington, DC)
Pictured Rocks NL
Sleeping Bear Dunes NL
LAKE HURON
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE ERIE
LAKE ONTARIO
MICHIGAN
LANSING
DETROIT
TOLEDO
CLEVELAND
AKRON
COLUMBUS
INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS
OHIO
CINCINNATI
CHARLESTON
WEST VIRGINIA
FRANKFORT
LOUISVILLE
KENTUCKY
NASHVILLE
TENNESSEE
BIRMINGHAM
ALABAMA
MONTGOMERY
ATLANTA
GEORGIA
TALLAHASSEE
JACKSONVILLE
FLORIDA
TAMPA
ST. PETERSBURG
MIAMI
GULF OF MEXICO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
BUFFALO
ROCHESTER
SYRACUSE
ALBANY
NEW YORK
PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
PITTSBURGH
PHILADELPHIA
BALTIMORE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
DOVER
MD
DE
NJ
NEW YORK CITY
VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
NORTH CAROLINA
RALEIGH
COLUMBIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON
BURLINGTON
MONTPELIER
VT
CONCORD
NH
MAINE
AUGUSTA
BOSTON
MA
PROVIDENCE
RI
HARTFORD
CT
Indiana Dunes NP
Cuyahoga Valley NP
Shenandoah NP
New River Gorge NP
Mammoth Cave NP
Great Smoky Mtns NP
Congaree NP
Everglades NP
Biscayne NP
Dry Tortugas NP
Acadia NP
Katahdin Woods and Waters NM
Appalachian NST
Saint Croix Island IHS
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP
Saint-Gaudens NHS
Lowell NHP
Fort Stanwix NM
Saratoga NHP
Harriet Tubman NHP
Women's Rights NHP
Martin Van Buren NHS
Springfield Armory NHS
Cape Cod NS
Blackstone River Valley NHP
Roger Williams N MEM
New Bedford Whaling NHP
Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural NHS
Vanderbilt Mansion NHS
Eleanor Roosevelt NHS
Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS
Weir Farm NHS
Upper Delaware SRR
Middle Delaware NSR
Steamtown NHS
Paterson Great Falls NHP
Sagamore Hill NHS
Fire Island NS
Delaware Water Gap NRA
Morristown NHP
Thomas Edison NHP
River Raisin NBP
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial
James A. Garfield NHS
Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS
Johnstown Flood N MEM
Gettysburg NMP
Flight 93 N MEM
First State NHP
Great Egg Harbor SRR
First Ladies NHS
Friendship Hill NHS
Fort Necessity NB
Eisenhower NHS
Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP
Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers NM
Harpers Ferry NHP
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad NHP
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP
Thomas Stone NHS
Assateague Island NS
George Washington Birthplace NM
Hopewell Culture NHP
William Howard Taft NHS
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Co. Battlefields Mem. NMP
George Rogers Clark NHP
Gauley River NRA
Richmond NBP
Maggie L. Walker NHS
Colonial NHP
Fort Monroe NM
Bluestone NSR
Appomattox Court House NHP
Petersburg NB
Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHP
Booker T. Washington NM
Wright Brothers N MEM
Fort Raleigh NHS
Cumberland Gap NHP
Andrew Johnson NHS
Guilford Courthouse NMP
Cape Hatteras NS
Big South Fork NRRA
Manhattan Project NHP
Blue Ridge PKWY
Fort Donelson NB
Obed WSR
Stones River NB
Carl Sandburg Home NHS
Cape Lookout NS
Cowpens NB
Kings Mountain NMP
Moores Creek NB
Chickamauga and Chattanooga NMP
Russell Cave NM
Appalachian NST
Ninety Six NHS
Little River Canyon N PRES
Kennesaw Mountain NBP
Chattahoochee River NRA
Martin Luther King, Jr. NHS
Tupelo NB
Freedom Riders NM
Horseshoe Bend NMP
Birmingham Civil Rights NM
Ocmulgee NM
Tuskegee Airmen NHS
Tuskegee Institute NHS
Andersonville NHS
Jimmy Carter NHS
Charles Pinckney NHS
Fort Sumter NM
Reconstruction Era NM
Fort Pulaski NM
Fort Frederica NM
Cumberland Island NS
Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve
Fort Caroline N MEM
Castillo de San Marcos NM
Fort Matanzas NM
Gulf Islands NS
Canaveral NS
De Soto N MEM
Big Cypress N PRES
EAST
NORTHEAST
BOSTON AREA
Adams NHP
Boston African American NHS
Boston Harbor Islands NRA
Boston NHP
Frederick Law Olmsted NHS
John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS
Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters NHS
Minute Man NHP
Salem Maritime NHS
Saugus Iron Works NHS
NEW YORK CITY AREA
African Burial Ground NM
Castle Clinton NM
Federal Hall N MEM
Gateway NRA (also NJ)
General Grant N MEM
Governors Island NM
Hamilton Grange N MEM
Saint Paul's Church NHS
Statue of Liberty NM
Stonewall NM
Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace NHS
PHILADELPHIA AREA
Edgar Allan Poe NHS
Hopewell Furnace NHS
Independence NHP
Thaddeus Kosciuszko N MEM
Valley Forge NHP
BALTIMORE AREA
Fort McHenry NM and Historic Shrine
Hampton NHS
NATIONAL CAPITAL
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Belmont-Paul Women's Equality NM
Carter G. Woodson Home NHS
Constitution Gardens
Ford's Theatre NHS
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
Frederick Douglass NHS
Korean War Veterans Memorial
Lincoln Memorial
Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove
Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS
National Capital Parks
National Mall
Pennsylvania Avenue NHS
Rock Creek Park
Theodore Roosevelt Island
Thomas Jefferson Memorial
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Washington Monument
White House
World War I Memorial
World War II Memorial
MARYLAND
Antietam NB
Catoctin Mountain Park
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP (also DC and WV)
Clara Barton NHS
Fort Washington Park
Greenbelt Park
Monocacy NB
Piscataway Park
Potomac Heritage NST (also PA, VA, and DC)
VIRGINIA
Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial
George Washington Memorial PKWY (also MD)
Manassas NBP
Prince William Forest Park
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts



Acadia

Hiking Trails: 150+ miles

Precipice



Acadia Favorites

1. **Bar Island**
   Easy | 2.0 miles | 220 feet
2. **Ladder**
   Strenuous | 2.3 miles | 670 feet
3. **Precipice**
   Extreme | 2.2 miles | 950 feet
4. **Beehive**
   Extreme | 1.1 miles | 490 feet
5. **Gorham Mountain**
   Moderate | 2.8 miles | 480 feet
6. **Jordan Cliffs**
   Strenuous | 3.1 miles | 890 feet
7. **Northwest Pemetic**
   Strenuous | 1.6 miles | 785 feet
8. **Cadillac Mountain**
   Strenuous | 3.0 miles | 1,210 feet
9. **Giant Slide**
   Strenuous | 4.6 miles | 1,100 feet
10. **Beech Cliff**
    Strenuous | 2.1 miles | 460 feet
11. **Perpendicular**
    Strenuous | 2.4 miles | 850 feet




ACADIA 11
EASTERN BAY
FRENCHMAN BAY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
DESERT ISLAND
Hamilton Pond
Crooked Road
Hulls Cove
Start of Park Loop Road
Hulls Cove Entrance
Hulls Cove Visitor Center
Lake Wood
Breakneck Ponds
Duck Brook Rd
BAR HARBOR
Cadillac Mountain Entrance
Burnt Porcupine Island
Long Porcupine Island
Sheep Porcupine Island
Bald Porcupine Island
Breakwater
Passenger ferry to Winter Harbor (seasonal)
Cadillac Mountain
Sieur de Monts
Aunt Betty Pond
EAGLE LAKE
Cadillac Summit Rd
Sieur de Monts Entrance
Schooner Head Rd
Park Loop Road
The Thrumcap
Egg Rock
Schooner Head
Bar Island
Jordan Pond
SOMES SOUND
Sargeant Dr. Autos only
JORDAN POND
Bubble Pond
The Bowl
Otter Cliff Rd
Great Head
Old Soaker
Sand Beach Entrance Station
Sand Beach
Upper Hadlock Pond
Lower Hadlock Pond
Valley Cove
Carriage roads outside the park closed to bicyclists
Long Pond
Stanley Brook Entrance
Otter Cove
Otter Cliff
Blackwoods Campground
one-way
Hunters Head
Fernald Point
The Narrows
NORTHEAST HARBOR
Northeast Harbor
SEAL HARBOR
Seal Harbor
Ingraham Point
Carriage Roads
Passenger ferry
SOUTHWEST HARBOR
Bear Island
EASTERN WAY
GREENING ISLAND
Southwest Harbor
Passenger ferry (seasonal)
SUTTON ISLAND
Islesford Historical Museum
WESTERN WAY
LITTLE CRANBERRY ISLAND
The Pool
GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND
BAKER ISLAND
Seawall Campground
Acadia National Park
Park Loop Road
Unpaved road
Carriage road
Hiking trail
Ferry Service (seasonal)
Do not use this map for hiking or carriage road navigation. Buy maps at visitor center.
Some lands within and adjoining the park remain private property; respect the owners' rights and posted regulations.



Grand Teton
Hiking Trails: 50+ miles

Delta Lake

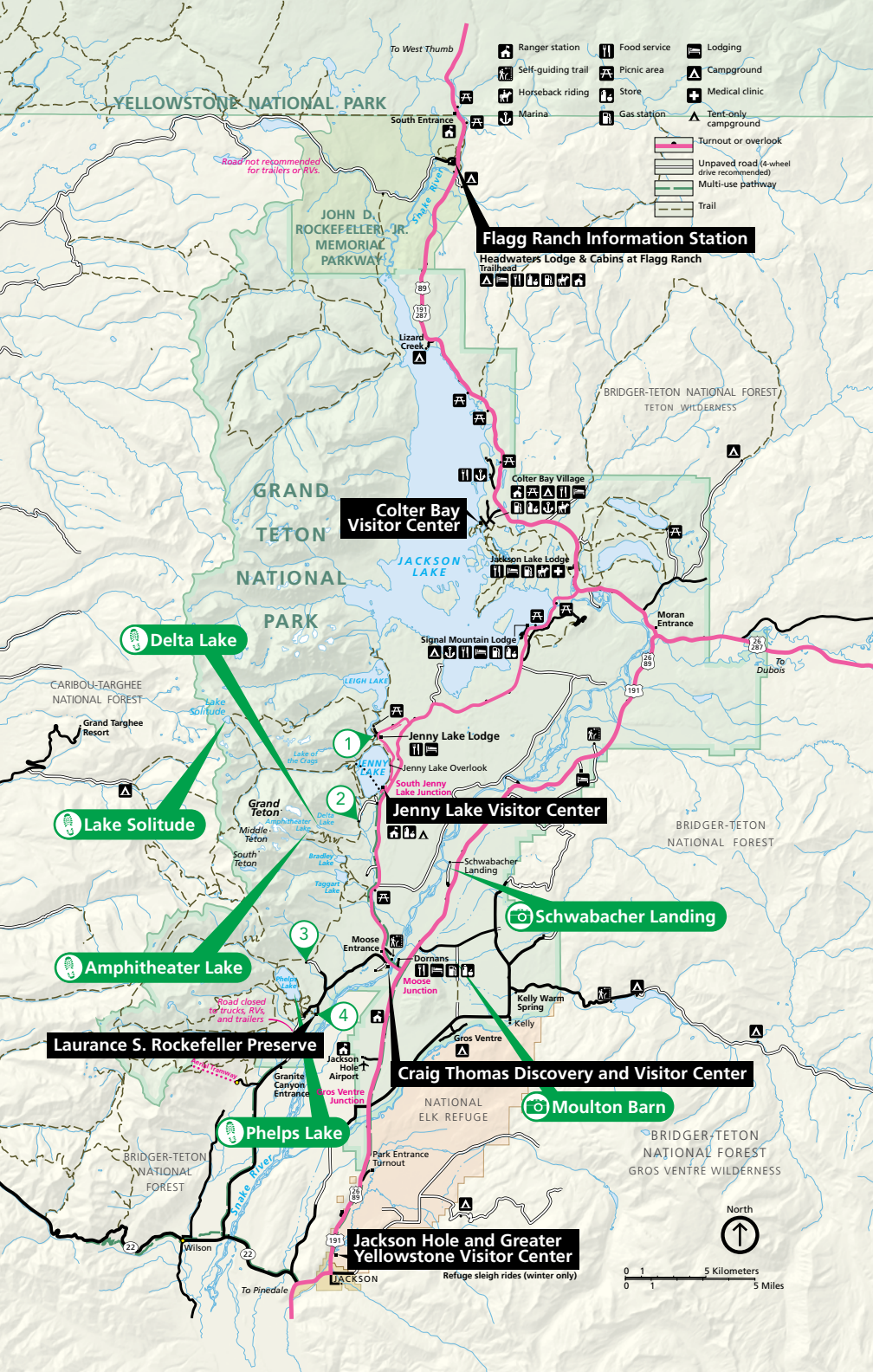
Grand Teton Favorites

1 **Lake Solitude**
Strenuous | 18.2 miles | 4,000 feet

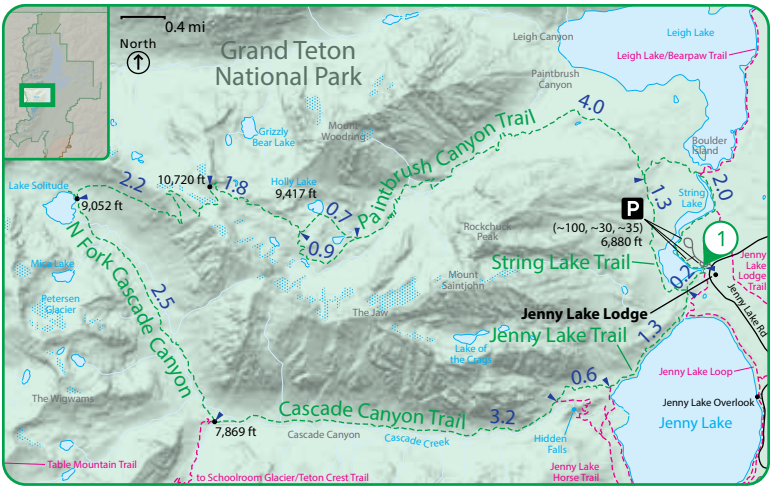
2 **Delta Lake**
Strenuous | 7.1 miles | 2,400 ft

2 **Surprise/Amphitheater Lakes**
Strenuous | 9.6 miles | 3,000 feet

3-4 **Phelps Lake**
Moderate | 6.6 miles | 500 feet


Ranger station
Food service
Lodging
Self-guiding trail
Picnic area
Campground
Horseback riding
Store
Medical clinic
Marina
Gas station
Tent-only campground
Turnout or overlook
Unpaved road (4-wheel drive recommended)
Multi-use pathway
Trail
To West Thumb
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
South Entrance
Road not recommended for trailers or RVs.
Snake River
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR. MEMORIAL PARKWAY
Flagg Ranch Information Station
Headwaters Lodge & Cabins at Flagg Ranch
Trailhead
89
191
287
Lizard Creek
BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
TETON WILDERNESS
GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK
Colter Bay Visitor Center
Colter Bay Village
JACKSON LAKE
Jackson Lake Lodge
Moran Entrance
Signal Mountain Lodge
To Dubois
26
89
191
Delta Lake
CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST
LEIGH LAKE
Lake Solitude
Grand Targhee Resort
Jenny Lake Lodge
Jenny Lake Overlook
South Jenny Lake Junction
Jenny Lake Visitor Center
Lake Solitude
Grand Teton
Middle Teton
South Teton
Delta Lake
Amphitheater Lake
Bradley Lake
Taggart Lake
Schwabacher Landing
Schwabacher Landing
Amphitheater Lake
Moose Entrance
Dornans
Moose Junction
Kelly Warm Spring
Kelly
Gros Ventre
Road closed to trucks, RVs, and trailers
Phelps Lake
Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve
Jackson Hole Airport
Granite Canyon Entrance
Gros Ventre Junction
Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center
Moulton Barn
Phelps Lake
NATIONAL ELK REFUGE
BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
Park Entrance Turnout
BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
GROS VENTRE WILDERNESS
Snake River
Wilson
22
Jackson Hole and Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center
Refuge sleigh rides (winter only)
JACKSON
To Pinedale
North
0 1 5 Kilometers
0 1 5 Miles

LAKE SOLITUDE

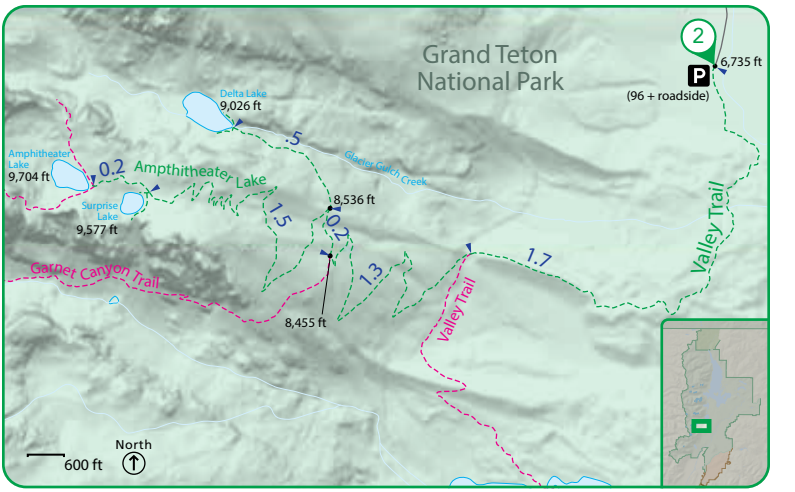


Lake Solitude | Strenuous | 18.2 miles | 4,000 feet | Loop
Trailhead: String Lake (1)

Few trails shower hikers with ever-changing mountain views like the Cascade Canyon–Paintbrush Canyon Loop, stopping at Lake Solitude. It's absolutely wonderful. It seems like most people prefer to go clockwise. However, even though Paintbrush Canyon is steeper, it's also prettier, so my preference is to do the prettier part in the morning light. Beginning with Paintbrush also gets you to Lake Solitude sooner (as long as you power your way up to Paintbrush Divide). Another positive to a counterclockwise approach is Hidden Falls and Inspiration Point will be near the end of your hike, and then it'll be easier to decide whether you have enough time and energy left for them. (I'd rather take a break at Holly Lake on Paintbrush Canyon, than at Inspiration Point, but that's just me.) The hike is long, but you'll enjoy several blissful hours walking among these sublime mountains. And there's very little to be confused about (aside from getting to Hidden Falls, which should be expected since it's hidden).

This is a popular backpacking destination (and something to consider, especially if you aren't sure about being able to dayhike it). Another great backpacking option is to hike behind Grand, Middle and South Teton by taking Paintbrush Canyon to Lake Solitude, but instead of returning via Cascade Canyon, take Teton Crest Trail (past Schoolroom Glacier) and loop back via Death Canyon Trail. You can take the Jenny Lake shuttle (first trip at 7am) but it doesn't shorten the trek and that's a little bit of a late start. I'd stick with beginning at the String Lake Trailhead, located near Jenny Lake Lodge. Snow sticks around Paintbrush Canyon well into summer, so it's important to check trail conditions with the park or stop in at Jenny Lake Ranger Station.

SURPRISE, AMPHITHEATER, DELTA LAKES



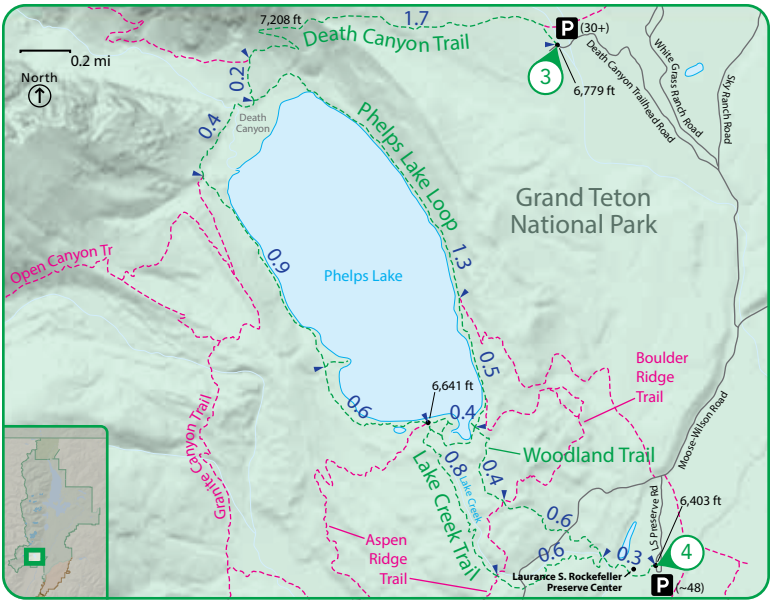
Surprise/Amphitheater Lakes | Strenuous | 9.6 miles | 3,000 feet | Out-and-back
Delta Lake | Strenuous | 7.1 miles | 2,400 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Lupine Meadows (2)

Surprise and Amphitheater Lakes are small but picturesque alpine lakes nestled within the jagged peaks of the Teton Range. The views are tremendous, but they are earned, not given. After an easy first mile or so, it's a long steady climb to Surprise and then Amphitheater lakes. You'll pass a few spur trails. Garnet Canyon Trail is the primary route for climbing Grand Teton, and, even if you aren't after a summit, it serves up nice views of Middle Teton. There's also an unmarked and most-likely unseen spur trail to Delta Lake. If you're up for some scrambling and a bit of an adventure, don't skip it.

Delta Lake, with Grand Teton looming in the background, is the stuff of your outdoor adventuring dreams. To get there, you'll have to do a little rock scrambling and shuffle up a steep (and sandy) escarpment, but boy is it worth it. As an out-and-back from Lupine Meadows, it's a little more than seven miles. Tacking it onto a Surprise and Amphitheater lakes itinerary only adds another mile. Other than its relative increased difficulty, the main thing you need to know is the spur trail is unmarked (in fact, it's more hidden than Hidden Falls). Occasionally good-intentioned hikers build a cairn at the junction, but they inevitably are removed (by if you know, you know-type hikers). With that said, if you know to look for the trail at the back of a switchback, you should spot it with ease. Miss it. No problem. Catch it on the way back from Amphitheater Lake. It is much easier to spot coming down.

Lupine Meadows is a very popular trailhead. It will be crowded in summer but there always seems to be enough room thanks to additional parking along

PHELPS LAKE

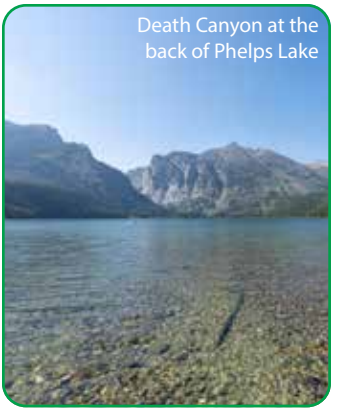


Lupine Meadows Road. An early start is still a good idea. Late arrivals will not only have less daylight, but you could add a mile or more walking to the trailhead. Plus, morning light is best at each lake.

Phelps Lake | Moderate | 6.6 miles | 500 feet | Loop
Trailhead: Death Canyon (3) or Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve (4)

Phelps Lake is the best Grand Teton trail that doesn't penetrate the spectacular mountain range's interior. It's relatively flat with an abundance of scenic views looking toward Death Canyon. With that said, the loop can leave you wanting some changing scenery. For a short trek, simply walk to the south end of the lake and back. Or lengthen it and shake up the scenery by taking Aspen Ridge or Boulder Ridge Trails. I took Aspen Ridge last time there. It added an element of solitude, but the scenery was better by the lake. In fall, I imagine it'd be fantastic. As for the loop around Phelps Lake, the big attraction is a large rock on the lake's northeast shoreline. Visitors have a lot of fun cannonballing off it.

Parking at the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve lot is about as competitive as it gets. During peak season, they'll be letting one car in as one car leaves for most of the day. So, it's a good idea to arrive early. An alternative is to hike in via Death Canyon Trail. (Hiking into Death Canyon is a good idea too. Backpackers should think about taking Alaska Basin Trail to Schoolroom Glacier, and then Lake Solitude.) You may have an easier time finding a parking spot. You'll get better views of Death Canyon. The tradeoff is the hiking is tougher, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.


Death Canyon at the back of Phelps Lake

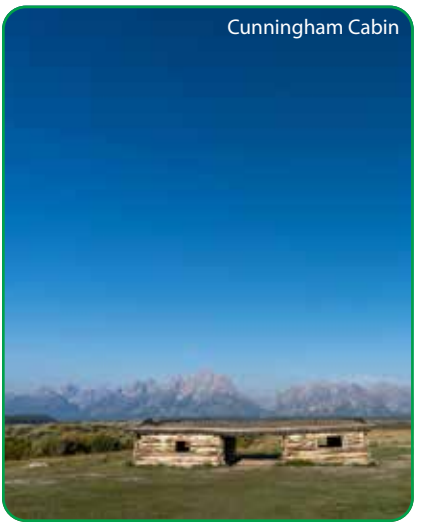
More Trails

Grand Teton is a relatively small park but there are more trails. The primary omissions are Death Canyon and Table Mountain (strenuous, 12.0 miles). Death Canyon is visible from Phelps Lake, and, like all great Grand Teton trails, it leads into the Tetons. Table Mountain is unique in that the trailhead is located on the west side of the range. The path goes directly toward the back side of Grand Teton. Of all the easy trails, String Lake (3.7 miles) and Jenny Lake (7.1 miles) are probably the best, but there are several fun historic sites too!

More Activities

Visitation is vigorous in summer. One of the better ways to avoid crowds is to book an outfitter-led tour. Horseback riding, Snake River floats, rock climbing, and fly fishing are popular. And many outfitters are available for each one. I still think waking up early and exploring the mountains on your own is the better choice, but outfitters always find a way to keep things exciting (and you're already at an exciting destination). Boat rentals are available at Jackson Lake. Bring your own watercraft (even an SUP), and you'll need a permit and Aquatic Invasive Species inspection (fees).


Watch for wildlife!


Cunningham Cabin

More Attractions

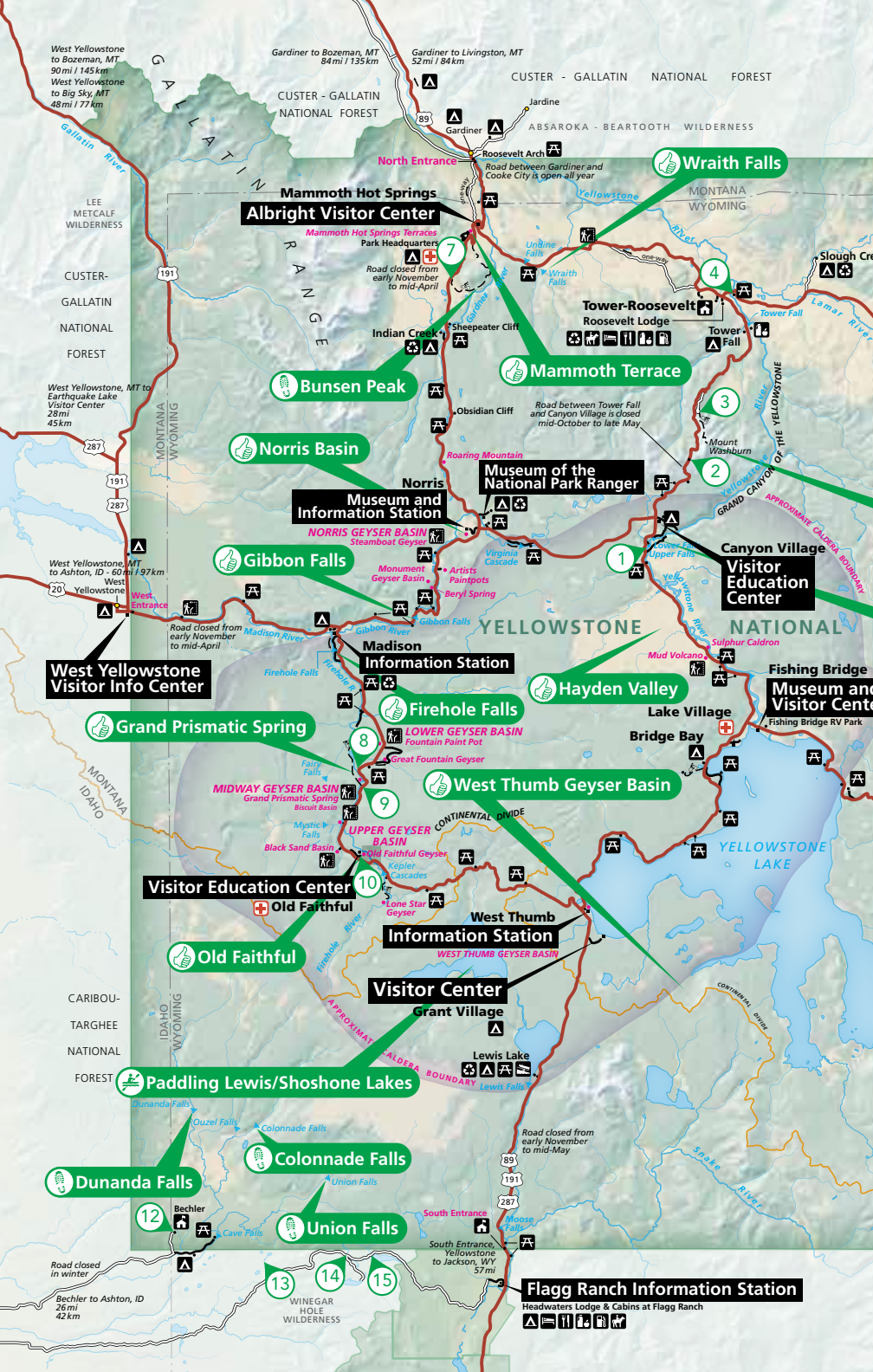
Grand Teton National Park is a favorite of photographers. Moulton Barns and Schwabacher Landing are the two most popular destinations, but Menor's Ferry Historic District (Chapel of the Transfiguration) and Cunningham Cabin are fun places to peruse as well. And then there's Mount Moran, the sentinel looming at the southwest corner of Jackson Lake. Jackson Lake itself is fun to explore on a boat tour (or rent a boat and cruise on your own). And then, of course, the big attraction is Yellowstone National Park, directly to the north.

Yellowstone

Hiking Trails: 1,000+ miles



Old Faithful

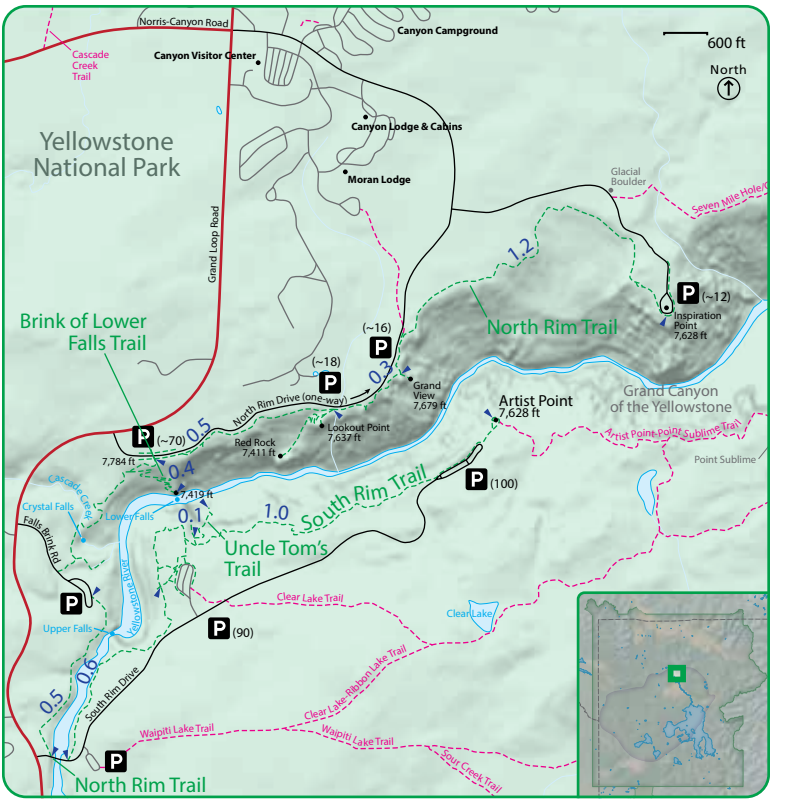

West Yellowstone, MT 90mi / 145km
West Yellowstone to Big Sky, MT 48mi / 77km
Gallatin River
Gardiner to Bozeman, MT 84mi / 135km
Gardiner to Livingston, MT 52mi / 84km
CUSTER - GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST
GALLATIN RANGE
CUSTER - GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST
Jardine
Gardiner
89
ABSAROKA - BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS
Roosevelt Arch
North Entrance
Road between Gardiner and Cooke City is open all year
Wraith Falls
Mammoth Hot Springs
Albright Visitor Center
Yellowstone River
MONTANA
WYOMING
LEE METCALF WILDERNESS
Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces
Park Headquarters
7
Road closed from early November to mid-April
Undine Falls
Wraith Falls
Slough Cre
CUSTER-GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST
191
4
Tower-Roosevelt
Roosevelt Lodge
Tower Fall
Lamar River
Indian Creek
Sheepeater Cliff
Mammoth Terrace
Bunsen Peak
West Yellowstone, MT to Earthquake Lake Visitor Center 28mi 45km
MONTANA
WYOMING
Obsidian Cliff
Road between Tower Fall and Canyon Village is closed mid-October to late May
3
Mount Washburn
287
Norris Basin
Roaring Mountain
Museum of the National Park Ranger
2
Norris
Museum and Information Station
GRAND CANYON OF THE YELLOWSTONE
APPROXIMATE CALDERA BOUNDARY
NORRIS GEYSER BASIN
Steamboat Geyser
Virginia Cascade
Gibbon Falls
Monument Geyser Basin
Artists Paintpots
Beryl Spring
1
Canyon Village
Visitor Education Center
West Yellowstone, MT to Ashton, ID - 60mi / 97km
20
West Yellowstone
West Entrance
Road closed from early November to mid-April
Madison River
Gibbon River
YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL
Madison
Information Station
Firehole Falls
Firehole River
Mud Volcano
Sulphur Caldron
Fishing Bridge
Museum and Visitor Cente
Fishing Bridge RV Park
West Yellowstone Visitor Info Center
Hayden Valley
Firehole Falls
Lake Village
Grand Prismatic Spring
8
LOWER GEYSER BASIN
Fountain Paint Pot
Great Fountain Geyser
Bridge Bay
Falls
MONTANA
IDAHO
MIDWAY GEYSER BASIN
Grand Prismatic Spring
Biscuit Basin
9
West Thumb Geyser Basin
Mystic Falls
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
UPPER GEYSER BASIN
Black Sand Basin
Old Faithful Geyser
Kepler Cascades
YELLOWSTONE LAKE
Visitor Education Center
10
Old Faithful
Lone Star Geyser
West Thumb
Information Station
WEST THUMB GEYSER BASIN
Firehole River
Old Faithful
Visitor Center
Grant Village
CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST
IDAHO
WYOMING
APPROXIMATE CALDERA BOUNDARY
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
Lewis Lake
Paddling Lewis/Shoshone Lakes
Lewis Falls
Dunanda Falls
Ouzel Falls
Colonnade Falls
Road closed from early November to mid-May
89
191
287
Snake River
Dunanda Falls
Colonnade Falls
Union Falls
12
Bechler
Cave Falls
Union Falls
South Entrance
Moose Falls
Road closed in winter
Bechler to Ashton, ID 26mi 42km
13
14
15
WINEGAR HOLE WILDERNESS
South Entrance, Yellowstone to Jackson, WY 57mi
Flagg Ranch Information Station
Headwaters Lodge & Cabins at Flagg Ranch


Grand Prismatic Spring

Yellowstone Favorites

1. **Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone**
   Easy–Strenuous | Varies
2-3. **Mount Washburn**
   Strenuous | 5.0–6.5 miles | 1,333 feet
4. **Yellowstone River Overlook**
   Moderate | 3.9 miles | 440 feet
5-6. **Cache Creek**
   Strenuous | 18.7 miles | 2,500 feet
7. **Bunsen Peak**
   Strenuous | 9.0 miles | 2,100 feet
8. **Grand Prismatic Spring**
   Easy | 0.7 miles | 100 feet
9. **Fairy Falls**
   Easy | 4.8 miles | 200 feet
10. **Upper Geyser Basin**
    Easy | Varies
11. **Avalanche Peak**
    Strenuous | 4.4 miles | 2,100 feet
12. **Dunanda Falls**
    Moderate | 16.9 miles | 400 feet
13-15. **Union Falls**
    Moderate | 14.4–14.8 miles | 800 feet

GRAND CANYON OF THE YELLOWSTONE

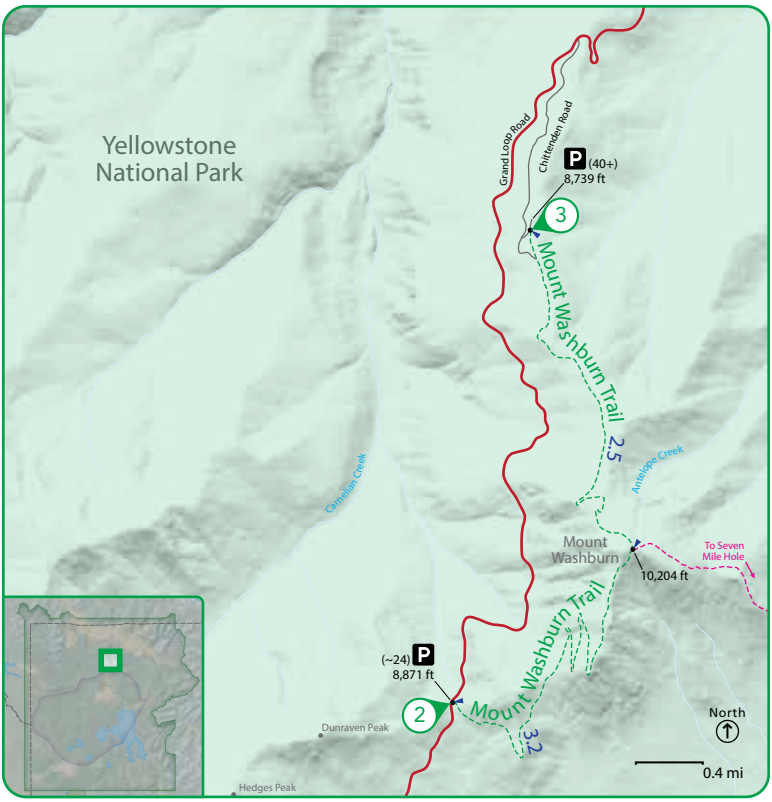


Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone | Varies
Trailhead: Multiple Parking Areas along South and North Rim Drives (1)

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is one of the park's iconic locations. While it isn't exactly a true hiking destination, you can easily log a few miles walking along the north and south rims of this one-of-a-kind canyon. Both sides have their merits. Artist Point is my favorite spot to simply enjoy the view and Uncle Tom's Trail (stairs) provides the best up-close experience. They're both on the South Rim. One of the nicest things about the North Rim is it's a short walk from the lodges and campground at Canyon Village. The views from Red Rock Point and Lookout Point are tremendous, and Brink of Lower Falls Trail leads you down a steep grade directly to the top of Lower Falls. Most guests' eyeballs are glued to Lower Falls, but Upper Falls is no slouch and having a look comes with considerably smaller crowds.

There are two reasons to get an early start at Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. 1). Both waterfalls face east, making them most appealing in the morning light. And 2). Parking will be less competitive before 9am, which is only highly

MOUNT WASHBURN

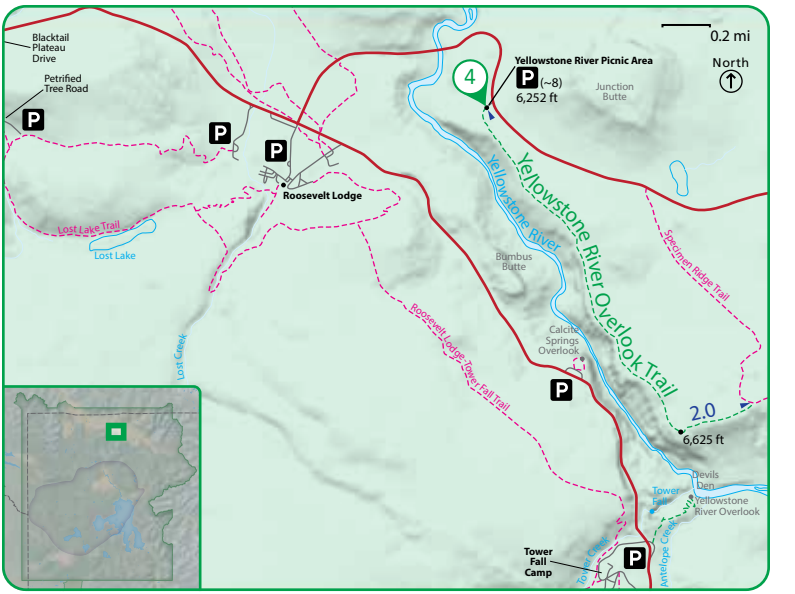


competitive in summer. South Rim Drive is two-way traffic for its entire length and there are large parking areas near Upper Falls View/Uncle Tom's Trail and the end of the road at Artist Point. North Rim Drive is one-way, with parking on either side of the road at Brink of Lower Falls Trail, Red Rock/Lookout Point, and Grand View, to go along with frequent pullouts and a fair amount of space at Inspiration Point (two-way traffic). In summer, it's best to park and walk or, better yet, stay overnight at Canyon Village. Late spring and fall are very manageable in a vehicle. And then, if you'd like an even more unique experience, consider visiting in winter when snowcoaches reach this stunning canyon.

Mount Washburn | Strenuous | 5–6.5 miles | 1,333 feet | Out-and-back or Point-to-point | **Trailhead:** Dunraven Pass (2) or Chittenden Road (3)

Mount Washburn is a classic Yellowstone hike. You can approach the summit and its lookout tower from the north, parking at the end of Chittenden Road. This trail is shorter, wider, and steeper. It's also open to bicyclists. On the southern slope of the mountain, you can hike up from Dunraven Pass Trailhead,

YELLOWSTONE RIVER OVERLOOK



located on Grand Loop Road about 4.5 miles north of Canyon Village. This route is a bit longer but also better for hiking. You could also arrange a ride and do it as a point-to-point. Washburn's summit is a great place to be on a clear day, thanks to distant views of the mountainous terrain to the east.

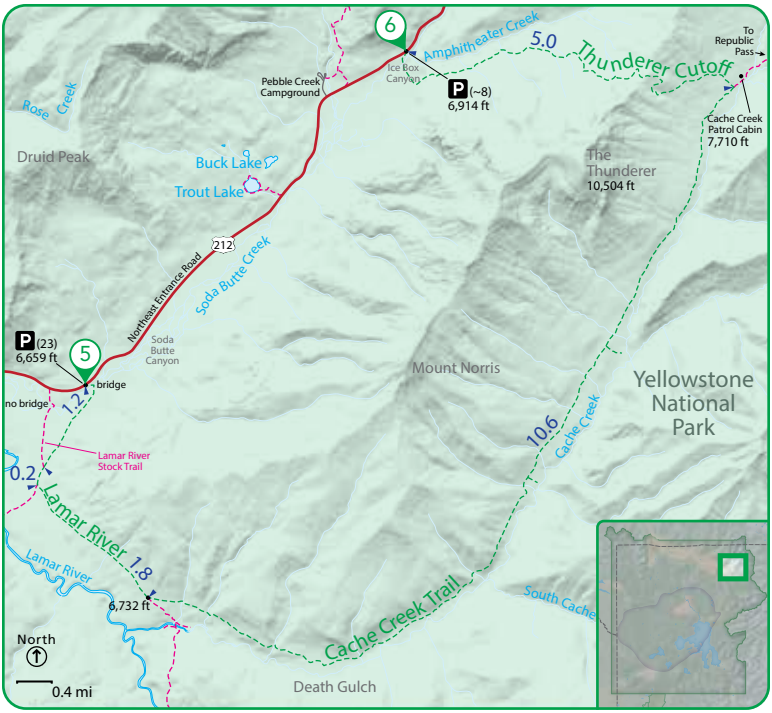
Yellowstone River Overlook | Moderate | 3.9 miles | 440 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Yellowstone River Picnic Area (4)

The effort-to-views ratio is pretty darn high for this trail. After the initial climb from the picnic area, you're greeted with stunning views above the Yellowstone River. Yes, it's similar to what you'll see at Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, but without the crowds (and no Upper and Lower Yellowstone Falls).

Cache Creek | Strenuous | 18.7 miles | 2,500 feet | Point-to-point
Trailhead: Lamar River (5) and Thunderer (6)

A lot of visitors expecting stunning mountain vistas leave Yellowstone woefully unimpressed. Mount Washburn is nice, but things don't get serious until you reach the Absaroka Range running the length of the park's eastern boundary. Cache Creek leads hikers (primarily backpackers) into some of the more impressive mountains. But this loop is a bad dayhike idea (requiring a great deal of route finding to cross Thunderer). It's included to make you aware, high elevation is everywhere at Yellowstone, prominent peaks are not. This is the opposite of Grand Teton, just to the south, which spoils motorists with unlimited mountain landscapes from the road. The main motorist-

CACHE CREEK

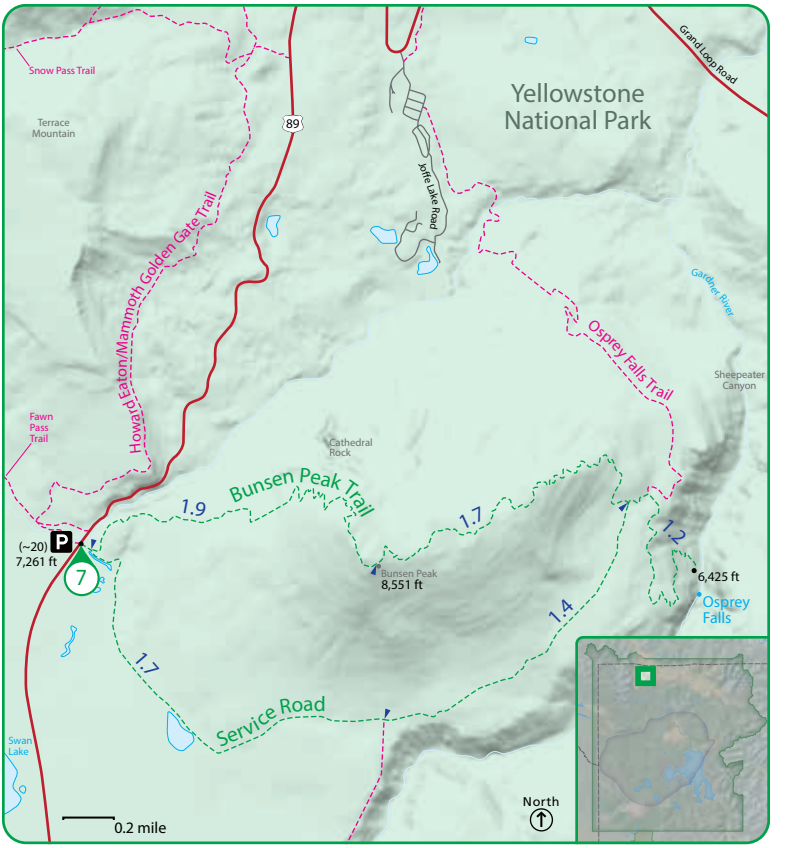


friendly features at Yellowstone are waterfalls and geothermal features (which are awesome!). With that said, breathtaking mountain scenery exists. And if you really want to get off the beaten path, it's a good idea to look beyond the national park in this corner of Wyoming and Montana. For example, begin this trail outside the park by crossing Republic Pass and exiting at Lamar River.

Bunsen Peak/Osprey Falls | Strenuous | 9.0 miles | 2,100 feet | Loop
Trailhead: Bunsen Peak (7)

First, a little fun trivia: the summit is named for German chemist Robert Bunsen who invented the Bunsen Burner. He also studied geysers. This loop, especially when combined with the 2.3-mile (roundtrip) spur to Osprey Falls, packs a lot of variety. You'll pass through forests and meadows. You'll walk down to a 150-ft waterfall, crashing over ancient volcanic rocks. And then you'll be treated to 360-degree views atop Bunsen Peak before hiking down the mountain back to the trailhead. It's a moderately popular trail and there's only room for about twenty vehicles at the trailhead, with another pullout just to the south. The service road is a bit of a slog through a downed-tree wasteland, but Osprey Falls is a very nice reward for your effort.

BUNSEN PEAK/OSPREY FALLS



Grand Prismatic Spring | Easy | 0.7 mile | 100 feet | Lollipop
Trailhead: Grand Prismatic Spring Parking Lot (8)

Grand Prismatic Spring loop is one of the park's busiest areas. Coach buses stop here, along with pretty much everyone else on their way to Upper Geyser Basin from West Yellowstone. Still, it's worth a quick visit. But just so you know, an eye-level view of Grand Prismatic Spring doesn't produce the results many visitors expect. The spring's colors only 'pop' when viewed from above while the sun is high in the sky. For that you'll need to book a helicopter tour or make the short walk to an overlook on the other side of the spring (described in the next entry for Fairy Falls). Regardless of the spring's color saturation, walking around this boardwalk has something of a fairytale feel to it. Steam rises from the springs. Some bubble continuously. It's cool, and, quite frankly, made better by the steady stream of visitors who come to enjoy it. Still, West Yellowstone to Old Faithful is the busiest area of the park.

FAIRY FALLS/GRAND PRISMATIC SPRING



Fairy Falls/Grand Prismatic Spring Overlook | Easy | 4.8 miles | 200 feet | Out-and-back | **Trailhead:** Fairy Falls (9)

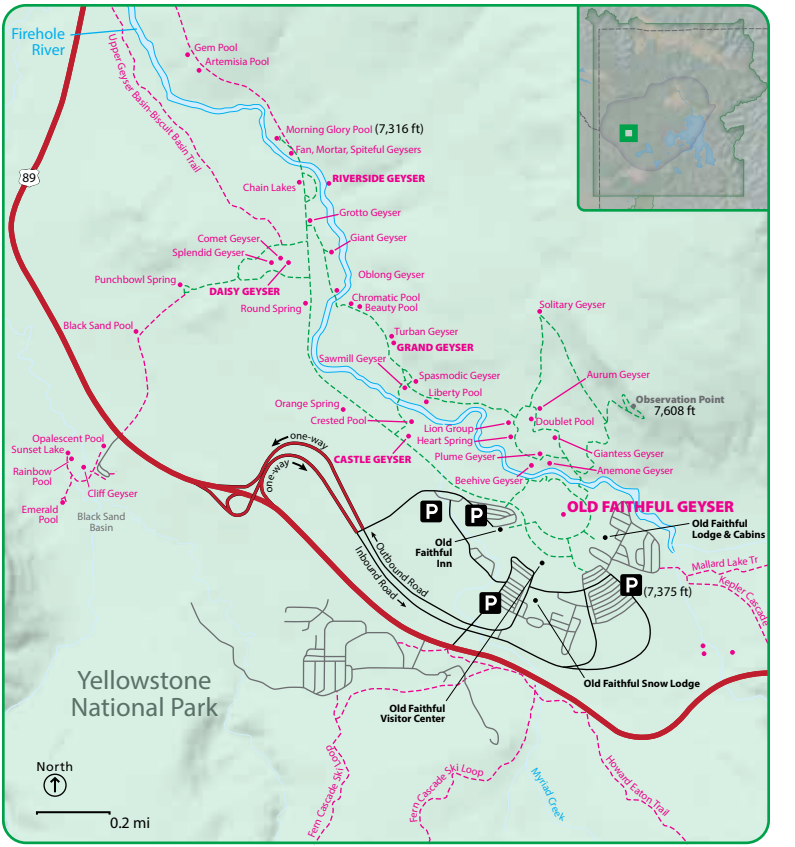
The journey to reach Fairy Falls and Grand Prismatic Overlook is ordinary for Yellowstone standards but the trickle of a fall—all 200 feet of it—and scenic overlook are two destinations you do not want to skip. It bears repeating that Grand Prismatic will not have the same colorful pop in the early morning and late evening. It needs some direct sunlight. So, if you arrive in the morning, catch the overlook on the return trip. In the evening, stop at it first. The overlook is one of the park's more recent improvements. Before its construction, people trudged up the hill, making a ton of social paths. Some visitors still scurry higher up the hillside, much to the chagrin of park rangers, I imagine.

Fairy Falls Trailhead has one of the biggest parking areas at Yellowstone. But it fills to capacity in summer. Fortunately, parking turns over regularly as most motorists are only stopping for the overlook. If you'd like to avoid large and competitive parking lots, you can also hike to Fairy Falls from the trailhead at the end of Fountain Flat Drive. It's not the best use of valuable Yellowstone time, adding nearly five miles to the hike.

Upper Geyser Basin | Easy–Strenuous | Varies | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Old Faithful Area (10)

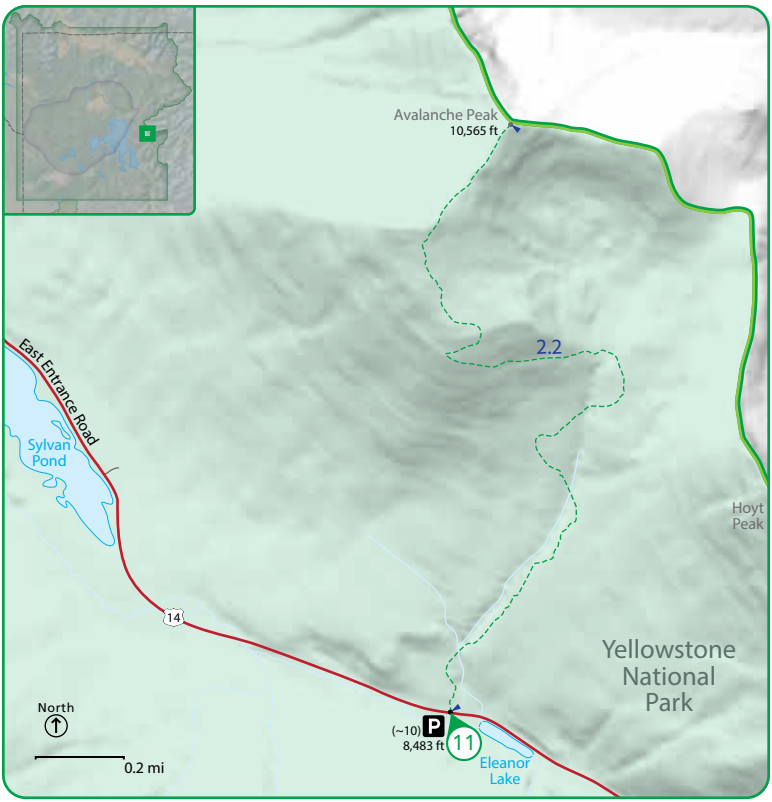
Old Faithful is the busiest area in the park and yet I feel like it's also the most misunderstood and underappreciated. This is because most guests hustle down here, check the Old Faithful schedule, wait in the bleachers for an eruption, and return to their car to head to the next destination. Bad idea. There's so much more to see. Old Faithful isn't the only reliable geyser. The park posts (online and at each geyser) eruption predictions for Castle, Grand, Daisy, Riverside, and Great Fountain, too! Every one of those except Great Fountain is located at Upper Geyser Basin. But there's a lot more. Beehive

UPPER GEYSER BASIN/OLD FAITHFUL



erupts most days. Observation Point provides an alternative view of Old Faithful. Chromatic Pool, Punchbowl Spring, Grotto Geyser, and Morning Glory Pool are all interesting. There's a lot to see. And hear. And smell. Geyser basins are experiences for more senses than sight. Please do not stop for Old Faithful and carry on your way. There is one caveat, you need to have some patience. Most eruptions last a few minutes, so you could see any of them going off in the distance with enough time to catch the show but, in my opinion, it's better to be there from start to finish. And, of course, spouting columns of scalding-hot water aren't for everyone. If some people in your group aren't in to sitting around, they could hike Mallard Lake Trail or Howard Eaton Trail (which leads to Lone Star Geyser—it erupts about every three hours). In a park filled with so much biological diversity, the diversity of geothermal areas is equally impressive. Each one features wildly different sights, sounds, and smells.

AVALANCHE PEAK



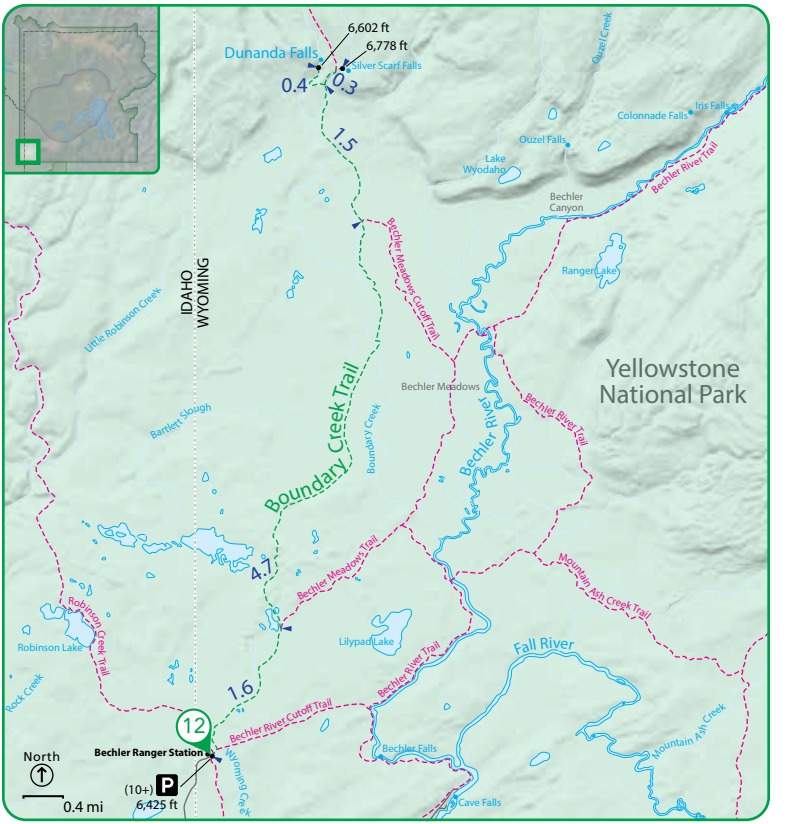
Avalanche Peak | Strenuous | 4.4 miles | 2,100 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Avalanche Peak/Eleanor Lake, East Entrance Road (11)

Along with Mount Washburn, Avalanche Peak is one of the easier ways to get decent mountain views at Yellowstone, and views across Yellowstone Lake are a bonus. But it's a steep, strenuous climb to get there. The trail is relentless in its incline and there's little-to-no protection from the sun and wind. Avalanche Peak's summit is beyond the end of the marked trail at the park boundary.

Dunanda Falls | Moderate | 16.9 miles | 400 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Bechler Ranger Station (12)

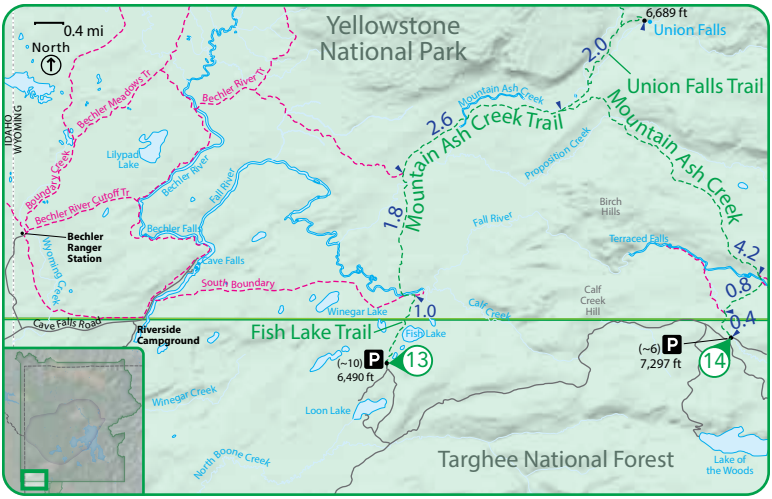
It's nearly impossible to argue Yellowstone's Cascade Corner is better for dayhiking than backpacking. And backpacking gets even better if you can arrange a ride to do a point-to-point backpacking trip. For example, you can through hike from Old Faithful to Bechler via Howard Eaton and Bechler River trails, passing many waterfalls (like Ouzel and Colonnade) and geothermal features along the way. However, there are a few things you can do as (long) day hikes. Dunanda Falls is one of the best options. Aside from a couple stream

DUNANDA FALLS



crossings, the journey is easy and unspectacular. This trail is often traversed by horses and its design has them in mind. At each ford, the trail usually intersects a wide stretch of stream. Look off to the side of the main trail and you'll often find an easier crossing for humans. With that said, even if you must take off your shoes, the streams are not a major obstacle late in the summer season. The stretch of Boundary Creek Trail is long, and, quite frankly, a little boring for most hiker's taste. If you enjoy tranquility, then it's perfect. I feel like it's a good idea to make the short (but steep) ascent to view Silver Scarf Falls before heading down to Dunanda. For starters, it's a pretty waterfall, but it will also help get bearings on Dunanda as you can look down on it from the trail. It's also easy to lose track of time soaking in Dunanda's pools that you might feel rushed enough to skip the nearby attractions even after hiking all this way. The access trail to Dunanda is not marked or particularly easy to find. It's located at the back of site 9A3 (which is marked and easy to find and a highly desirable site among backpackers). From the site, with the recent acquisition of Dunanda Falls bearings, you should be able to find the steep trail down to Boundary Creek. Follow the creek up to the waterfall and enjoy, just be careful as there are several hot springs running into the river here. And they are hot.

UNION FALLS



The trailhead is located near Bechler Ranger Station. It takes considerable commitment to reach but it's worth it, especially if you plan a few other stops. The backside of the Tetons can be a fun place to play, and this is a sparsely populated and less-commercialized part of the country, so you won't have all the hullabaloo found in and around Jackson, WY.

Union Falls | Moderate | 14.4–14.8 miles | 400–800 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Fish Lake (13), Cascade Creek (14), Grassy Lake (15)

At 250 feet, Union is the second tallest waterfall in the park. The tallest is Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River. A few million visitors see Lower Falls each year. A tiny fraction of that have the privilege of seeing Union Falls, and it's nearly as incredible. I guess that's the kind of difference a 15-mile hike creates. To be one of the few who reach Union Falls, you have a few options. You can set out from the Bechler/Cave Falls area, but those are backpacking trips, not dayhiking, clocking in at 20+ miles. However, Cave Falls/Bechler is a nice area to visit (where you can hike up to Dunanda, Colonnade, and Ouzel falls, as well as a few shorter options). The other three trailheads are a long, slow drive from Bechler/Cave Falls. It usually takes at least an hour and a half to get from Cave Falls to Fish Lake Trailhead on mostly unpaved roads. Fish Lake, Cascade Creek and Grassy Lake trailheads can also be accessed from Grand Teton National Park via Grassy Lake Road (Ashton–Flagg Ranch Road). Grassy Lake Trailhead is a little less than two hours from Jackson Lake Lodge at Grand Teton. And it's about a forty-minute drive between Grassy Lake and Fish Lake Trailheads. As for the hikes, Grassy Lake Trailhead provides the most direct route to Union Falls, at roughly 14.4 miles. From Cascade Creek, it's about 14.8 miles and you'll be tempted to take the short spur near the trailhead, which leads to Terraced Falls. It's about 14.7 miles from Fish Lake Trailhead. All of them require fording

a river (come prepared). If you'd like to slow down and enjoy the area more, there are two backpacking sites (permit required) near Union Falls and four more along the trails. Slowing down and enjoying this remote corner of the park is a good idea, but dayhiking is possible.

More Trails

With more than 1,000 miles of trails at Yellowstone, this list barely scratches the surface of your hiking opportunities. If you're looking for a long, strenuous hike to one of the park's tallest summits, check out Electric Peak (extreme, 18.0 miles) in the park's northwest corner. It even concludes with a scramble. Another option near Bunsen Peak is to hike to the remains of a lookout tower atop Mount Holmes. It also pushes dayhiking to its limits (20 miles), but it's another solid choice if you have the stamina. For short and easy, consider Wraith Falls (1 mile) near Mammoth or Trout Lake (1.2 miles) near Lamar Valley. But there are many more.

Safety

Yellowstone is a park you should explore with a considerable amount of caution.

Grizzlies: They probably receive the most headlines, but I feel like they're the least of your concerns. First, in 2019 interested parties estimated there's about 150 bears with home ranges wholly or partially inside the park. Walking among two million acres of wilderness, it's unlikely you'll come across a grizzly. If you'd like to, the best places to look are Hayden and Lamar valleys, Mount Washburn, and from Fishing Bridge to the East Entrance. Whatever you're doing, it's still a good idea to take a few grizzly precautions. Hiking in a group. Carry bear spray. If you do see one, keep your distance (at least 100 yards).

Other Wildlife: Bison might be the most dangerous animals in the park. Do not approach them. Do not pose for photos with them. Always stay at least 25 yards away from them. They're big (the largest land mammal in North America) and they're fast (can run up to 35 mph). Upset one and you (or your vehicle) are in trouble.

Geothermal Features: Stay on the boardwalks!

Time Management

Plan at least three days.

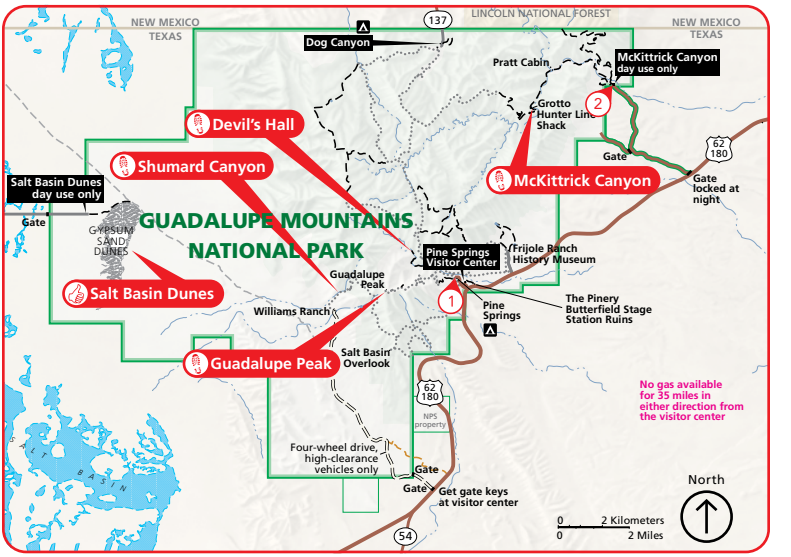
Staying in the park is well worth the premium and planning.

If you'd like to set up an in-park basecamp, the most convenient campgrounds are Norris and Canyon. They're as centrally located as you can get.

Of the Cascade Corner waterfalls, Union Falls is the easiest to do as a daytrip from Yellowstone or Grand Teton, plus there's a fair amount of camping available along Grassy Lake Road. Reaching Bechler is a good idea, but it's also a bigger commitment.

If you're traveling a great distance to get here and likely won't return for some time (if ever), do not return home without going down to Grand Teton (and treat it as more than a quick daytrip). The Tetons will spice up your scenery with aggressive mountain peaks.





Guadalupe Mountains Favorites

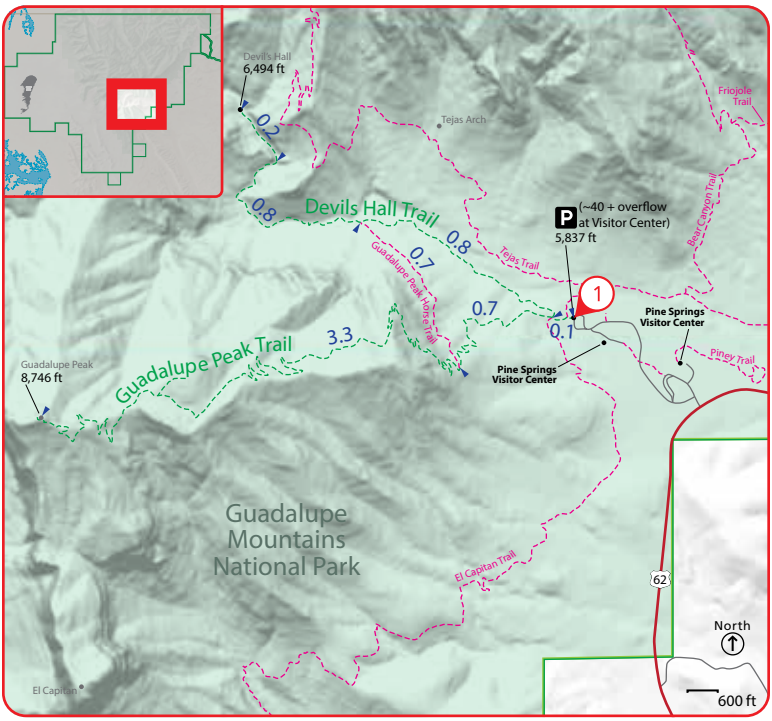
1 **Guadalupe Peak**
Strenuous | 8.0 miles | 3,000 feet

2 **McKittrick Canyon**
Moderate | 6.8 miles | 330 feet

Devil's Hall
Moderate | 3.8 miles | 700 feet

Permian Reef
Strenuous | 6.1 miles | 2,100 feet

GUADALUPE PEAK/DEVIL'S HALL



Guadalupe Peak | Strenuous | 8.0 miles | 3,000 feet | Out-and-back
Devil's Hall | Moderate | 3.8 miles | 700 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Pine Springs Campground (1)

Guadalupe Peak (8,746 ft) is the highest point in Texas. That fact alone is enough for many visitors to put this arduous trek at the top of their hiking wish lists. It is tough, with plenty of switchbacks and often a whole lot of wind. But the views aren't too shabby. Before reaching the peak, you'll have panoramic views to the south overlooking El Capitan. At the summit, you'll be able to peer far across the flat salt basin. It's quite the contrast compared to Texas's tallest peak! Return the way you came. A horse trail connects Guadalupe Peak with Devil's Hall. Combining the two hikes saves about one mile.

Devil's Hall is great. Most of the trail follows a desert wash, but you'll encounter two truly spectacular features. The first is a rocky staircase. Although it's fun negotiating your way up and down the staircase, this isn't its most impressive feature. What's stunning are the rocks bookending the stairs. Without knowing what Devil's Hall looks like, you could mistakenly think the stairwy is it. It isn't. After enjoying a photo-op with the stairs, carefully choose the best way up them for you and continue less than a quarter mile to Devil's Hall, a a long rock hallway. Having read this (and seeing the photo), you'll know it when you


Pratt Cabin (McCittrick Canyon)

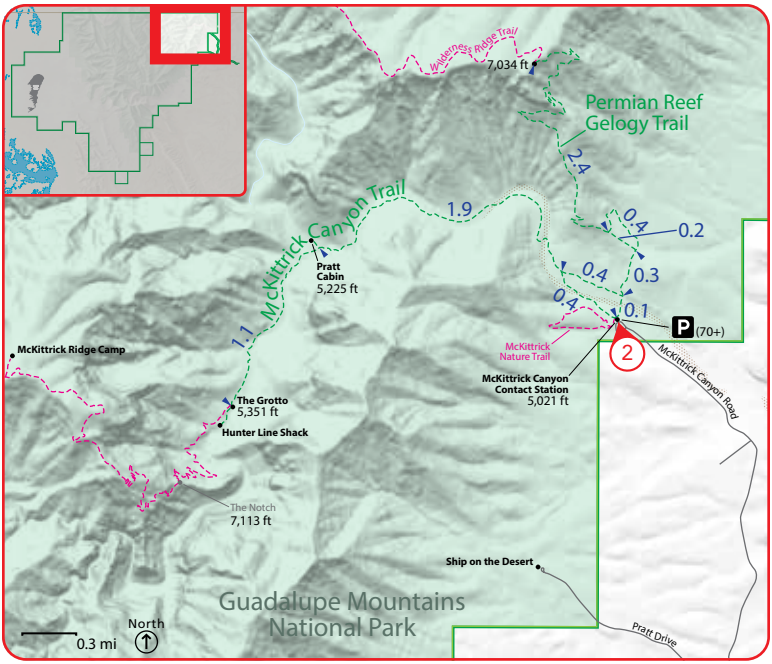
see it. While the elevation gain to Devil's Hall is reasonable, hiking in a sandy wash takes more effort than walking along firm ground. Your calves might be a little sore in the morning after this one.

The trailhead is conveniently located near Pine Springs Campground. Parking fills up in the fall and spring, especially during spring break. Arrive early if you'd like a parking space at the trailhead. Overflow parking is available at the visitor center.

McKittrick Canyon | Moderate | 6.8 miles | 330 feet | Out-and-back
Permian Reef | Strenuous | 6.1 miles | 2,100 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: McKittrick Canyon (2)

McKittrick Canyon is a gentle walk through a beautiful, sandy canyon. Come in fall when the leaves have changed for maximum beauty. There are several notable features along the way. Pratt Cabin, the original summer home of Wallace Pratt (an oil geologist), is the first major waypoint. Today it's a picnic/rest area as well as an interpretive site. The Pratts donated considerable land, along with this cabin and their other vacation home, Ship on the Desert, to the National Park Service. The Grotto is next, featuring a small cave with some whacky rock formations and another picnic area. Just beyond the Grotto is Hunter Line Shack. The trail continues beyond this point, and the elevation gain becomes serious. McKittrick Ridge Trail is often called the "toughest

MCKITTRICK CANYON/PERMIAN REEF



trail in Texas." It's one more very strenuous mile to "The Notch," where you're rewarded with excellent views of McKittrick Canyon. Another 3.1 miles up the steep ridge you'll find a backcountry campsite (if you're thinking about backpacking, it's a good choice).

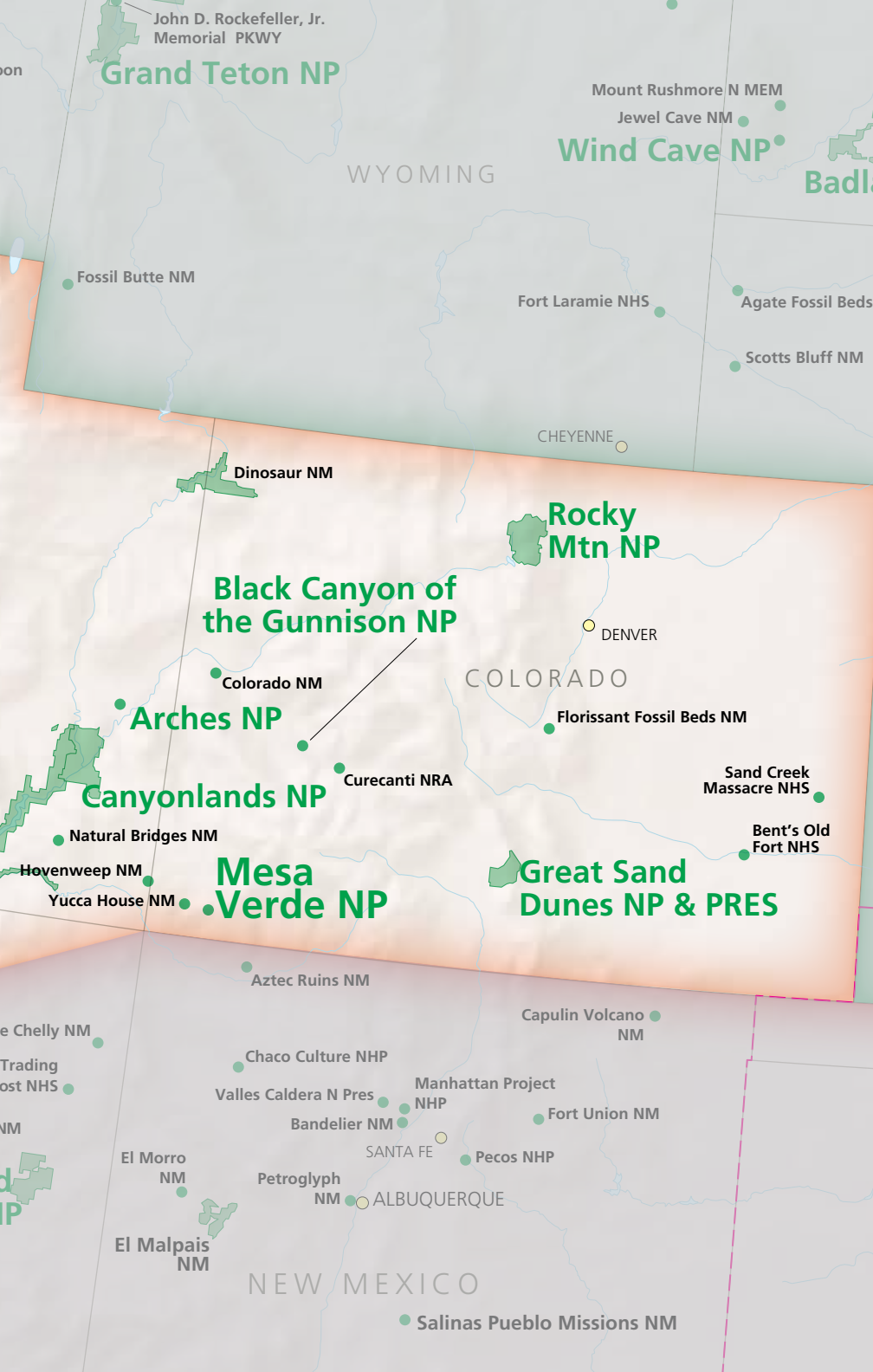
McKittrick Canyon is a popular trail. Permian Reef is not. Escaping the crowds can be its own reward but Permian Reef has much more to offer than that. There are plenty of interesting rocks to walk among, and the views, looking down on the crowd in McKittrick Canyon are awfully good. If you're trying to choose between the two, Permian Reef is the way to go, as long as you don't mind all the elevation gain.

McKittrick Canyon is a day-use area, with visiting hours from 8am until 5pm. The entrance gate is locked the rest of the day.

More Trails

There are a few more fun trails to check out, but they take some effort to reach. At the west side of the park, you'll find Salt Basin Dunes (day-use area). With a high-clearance 4x4, you can reach Williams Ranch, where you can hike up Shumard Canyon. The road isn't anything too undriveable but it's extremely rugged. There's also a gate at the start of the road. You'll need to stop in at the visitor center to get the key. There's a small network of trails in the park's interior, where backpackers like to explore. You can also get a feel of the park's interior from Dog Canyon at the park's northern boundary, but it's a somewhat low pay-off for a long drive to the trailhead.


Pacific NM
Hagerman Fossil Beds NM
Craters of the Moon NM & PRES
Minidoka NHS
City of Rocks N RES
Golden Spike NHS
SALT LAKE CITY
Timpanogos Cave NM
NEVADA
UTAH
Great Basin NP
SOUTHWEST
Bryce Canyon NP
Capitol Reef NP
Cedar Breaks NM
Zion NP
Glen Canyon NRA
Tule Springs Fossil Beds NM
LAS VEGAS
Pipe Spring NM
Rainbow Bridge NM
Grand Canyon NP
Navajo NM
Lake Mead NRA
Castle Mountains NM
Mojave N PRES
Wupatki NM
Sunset Crater Volcano NM
Walnut Canyon NM
Tuzigoot NM
Montezuma Castle NM
Petrified Forest NP
Joshua Tree NP
The Southwest
ARIZONA
PHOENIX
Tonto NM
Hohokam Pima NM


John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial PKWY
Grand Teton NP
Mount Rushmore N MEM
Jewel Cave NM
Wind Cave NP
WYOMING
Fossil Butte NM
Fort Laramie NHS
Agate Fossil Beds
Scotts Bluff NM
CHEYENNE
Dinosaur NM
Rocky Mtn NP
Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP
DENVER
Colorado NM
COLORADO
Arches NP
Florissant Fossil Beds NM
Curecanti NRA
Canyonlands NP
Sand Creek Massacre NHS
Natural Bridges NM
Bent's Old Fort NHS
Hovenweep NM
Yucca House NM
Mesa Verde NP
Great Sand Dunes NP & PRES
Aztec Ruins NM
Capulin Volcano NM
Chaco Culture NHP
Valles Caldera N Pres
Manhattan Project NHP
Bandelier NM
Fort Union NM
SANTA FE
Pecos NHP
El Morro NM
Petroglyph NM
ALBUQUERQUE
El Malpais NM
NEW MEXICO
Salinas Pueblo Missions NM



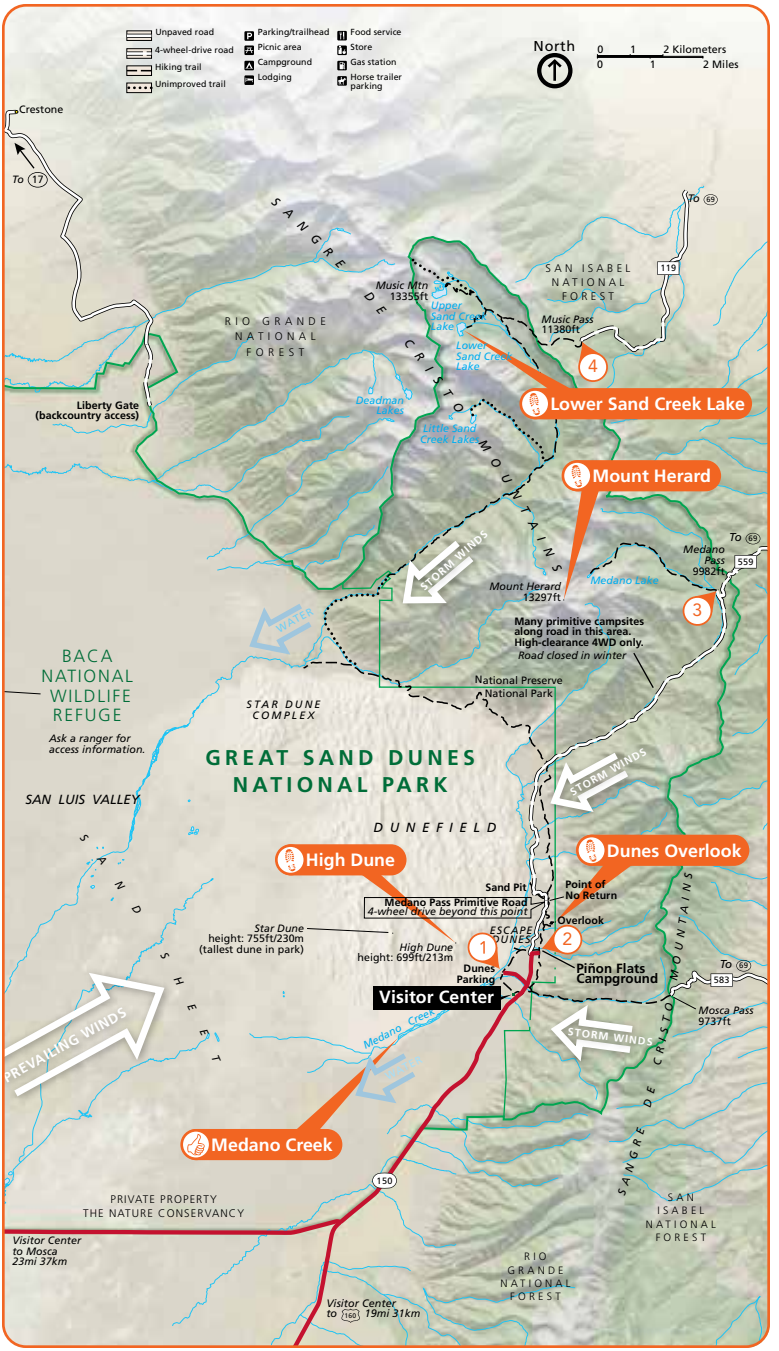
Great Sand Dunes

Hiking Trails: 50+ miles

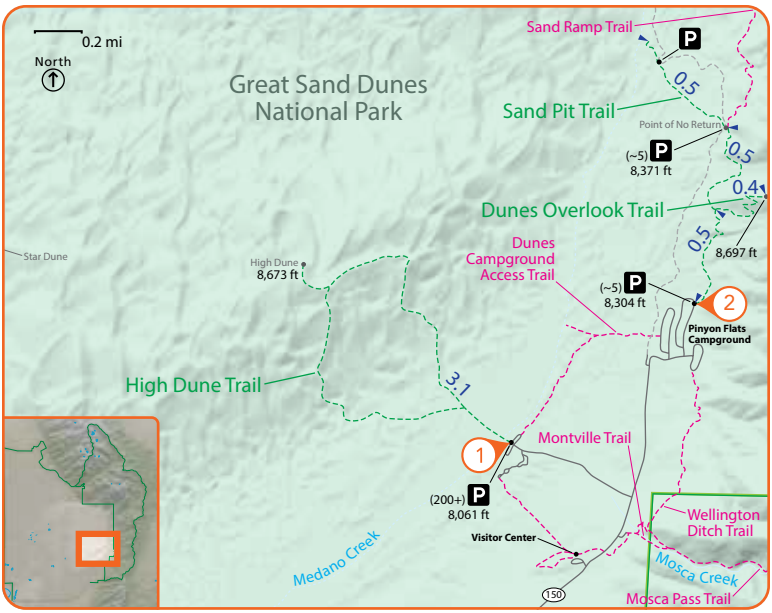
Sand dunes have ridges

Great Sand Dunes Favorites

1. **High Dune**
   Strenuous | 3.1 miles | 650 feet
2. **Dunes Overlook**
   Moderate | 1.9 miles | 450 feet
3. **Medano Lake**
   Strenuous | 6.7 miles | 2,000 feet
4. **Sand Creek Lakes**
   Strenuous | 9.5 miles | 2,000 feet


Unpaved road
4-wheel-drive road
Hiking trail
Unimproved trail
Parking/trailhead
Picnic area
Campground
Lodging
Food service
Store
Gas station
Horse trailer parking
North
0 1 2 Kilometers
0 1 2 Miles
Crestone
To 17
To 69
SANGRE DE CRISTO MOUNTAINS
RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST
SAN ISABEL NATIONAL FOREST
119
Music Mtn 13356ft
Upper Sand Creek Lake
Lower Sand Creek Lake
Music Pass 11380ft
Deadman Lakes
Little Sand Creek Lakes
Liberty Gate (backcountry access)
4
Lower Sand Creek Lake
Mount Herard
STORM WINDS
Mount Herard 13297ft
Medano Pass 9982ft
559
Medano Lake
3
Many primitive campsites along road in this area. High-clearance 4WD only.
Road closed in winter
WATER
BACA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Ask a ranger for access information.
STAR DUNE COMPLEX
National Preserve
National Park
GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK
SAN LUIS VALLEY
DUNEFIELD
STORM WINDS
Dunes Overlook
High Dune
Sand Pit
Point of No Return
Medano Pass Primitive Road
4-wheel drive beyond this point
Overlook
Star Dune
height: 755ft/230m
(tallest dune in park)
High Dune
height: 699ft/213m
ESCAPE DUNES
1
2
Dunes Parking
Piñon Flats Campground
583
Visitor Center
Mosca Pass 9737ft
PREVAILING WINDS
SAND SHEET
Medano Creek
STORM WINDS
Medano Creek
150
PRIVATE PROPERTY
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
SAN ISABEL NATIONAL FOREST
Visitor Center to Mosca 23mi 37km
RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST
Visitor Center to 160 19mi 31km

HIGH DUNE/DUNES OVERLOOK

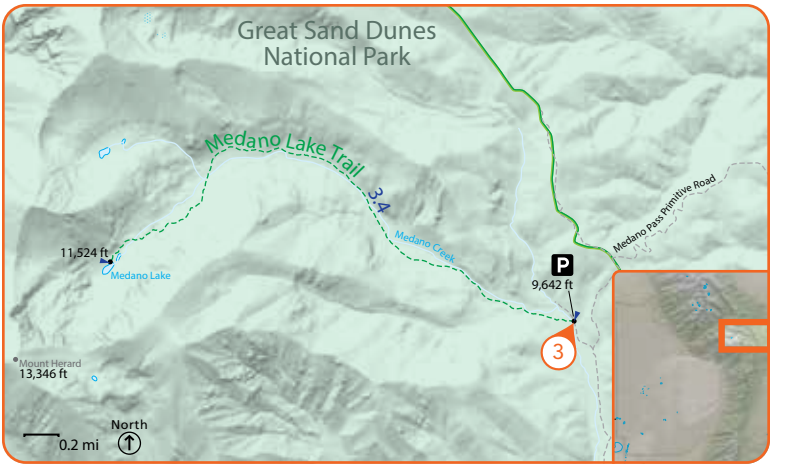


High Dune | Strenuous | 3.1 miles | 650 feet | Lollipop
Trailhead: Dunes Parking Lot (1)

High Dune isn't the tallest dune in the park, but it is the tallest visible dune from Dunes Parking Lot, making it the park's most popular "hike." Since the surface is a giant sand box, there's no marked path telling you where to go. There's also no right or wrong way to get there. Just hard and harder. The "easy" way is to follow the ridgelines. From Dunes Parking Lot, cross Medano Creek (you may need to take off your shoes) and continue directly to the dunefield. To your right (north), follow the most prominent ridgeline (likely featuring many footprints). Follow it up to a long, respectably-wide ridge running mostly east and west. High Dune will once again be a prominent landmark to the west. At this point, there shouldn't be any confusion about what route to take. It involves a short, relatively steep climb before the ridge tapers off and stretches into the distance (some visitors like to enjoy the sunset from this perch). Bounding down giant sand dunes is one of life's great joys. So, I'd suggest choosing your own path back and have all the fun frolicking among the dunes. If not, you can return as you came or there's another set of fairly-easy-to-follow ridges heading south near the short, steep climb up to the back of High Dune. It's slightly steeper than the way you came.

While hiking the dunes barefoot is ideal, the sand gets unbearably hot on warm sunny days. Choose your shoes carefully. Ones that will easily allow sand to sneak into them will be nearly as annoying as walking barefoot across sole-scorching sand.

MEDANO LAKE



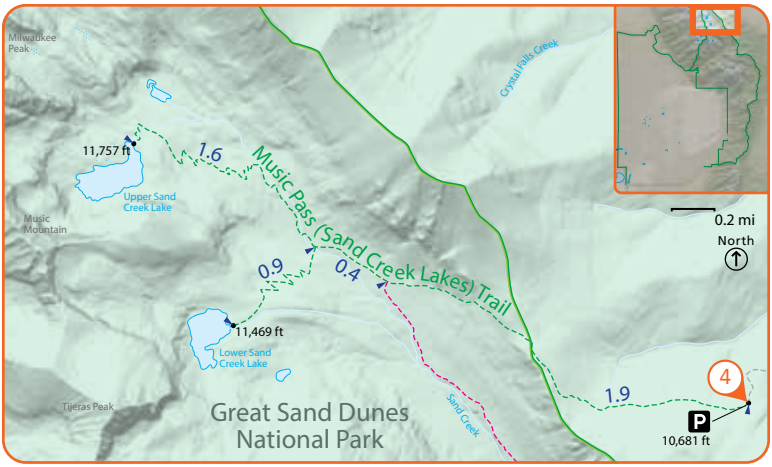
Dunes Overlook | Moderate | 1.9 miles | 450 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Pinon Flats Campground (2)

Not a must-hike, but Dunes Overlook is often a peaceful escape from the crowds congregating near Dunes Parking Lot. You can reach the trail directly from the back of Loop 2 at Pinon Flats Campground or drive down Medano Pass Primitive Road and park at Point of No Return, where you'll find another trailhead. Most vehicles should be able to make it to Point of No Return, no problem. Beyond that, things typically get a little sandier, but most vehicles should also be able to make it to Sand Pit, which is another fun, more peaceful area of the park. You can also hike to Sand Pit from Point of No Return. If you're really looking to get away from things, consider heading out on Sand Ramp Trail (22 miles roundtrip) from Point of No Return. It follows the edge of the dunefield all the way to the foot of Star Dune Complex (the highest elevation dunes in the park). There are backcountry campsites along the way.

Medano Lake | Strenuous | 6.7 miles | 2,000 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Medano Pass (3)

First thing to know is that you'll need a 4x4 to reach the trailhead. You can access the trailhead from either direction on Medano Pass Primitive Road. If you're coming from the dunefield, it's a long, slow slog up, crossing Medano Creek several times along the way. And the road near the dunefield can be challenging for another reason … sand. It's a good idea to lower your air pressure. If you don't carry a pump, there's one near the RV dump station next to Pinon Flats Campground. Of course, that only helps if you're traveling Medano Pass Primitive Road from east to west (which is the recommended direction). As for the trail. It's less than four miles to a beautiful (but small) alpine lake. The lake is worth visiting on its own merit, but many hikers like to take things

SAND CREEK LAKES



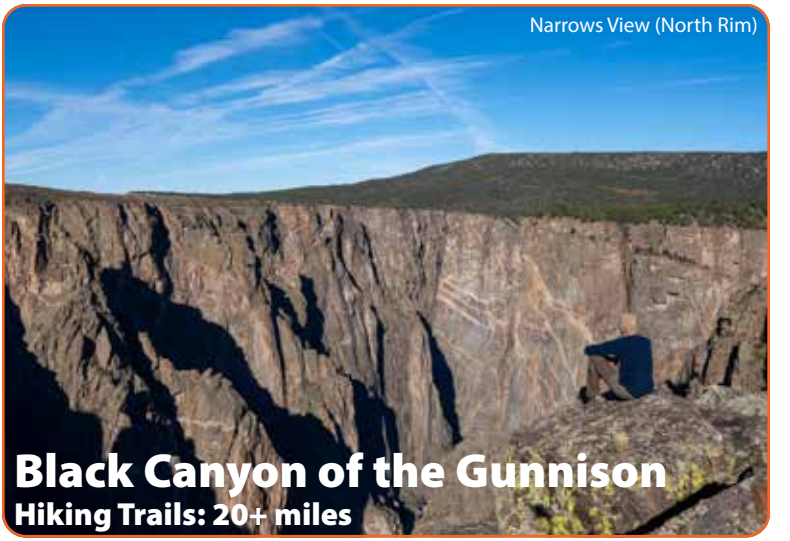
a step further, hiking roughly another mile-and-a-half (one-way) to the top of Mount Herard, where you can enjoy an aerial view of the massive dunefield. What you want to do is look for cairns leading up the slope on the righthand side (north) of the lake. About halfway there, you'll reach a ridgeline. Follow it (past a false summit) to the open mountaintop. Like with all 4x4 roads and high-elevation trails, it's a good idea to contact the park and ask about current conditions. Snow hangs around up here well into summer.

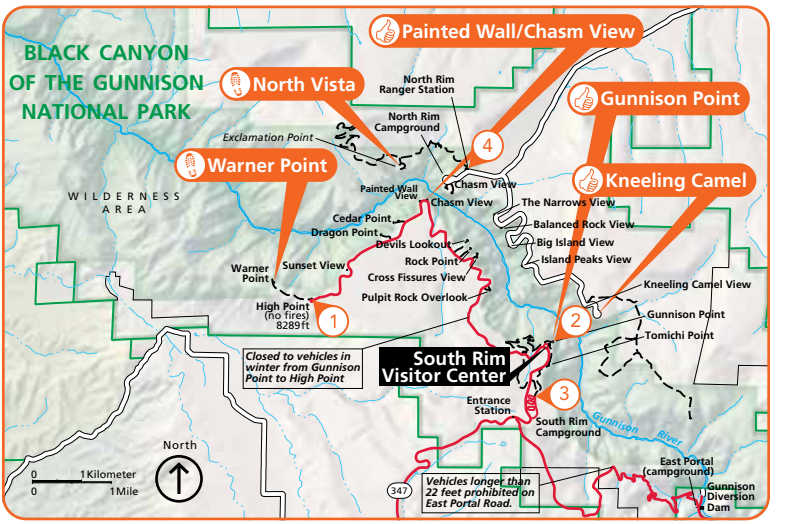
Sand Creek Lakes | Strenuous | 9.5 miles | 2,000 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Music Pass (4)

A high-clearance 4x4 unlocks some more stunning scenery. It'll take a bit of rocking and rolling to get up here, but once you do, you've got all day to walk to (and enjoy) two picturesque alpine lakes. Hiking both lakes measures about ten miles. If for some reason you only have time for one, go with Lower. Rumor has it, this is also popular cutthroat trout country. So, if you enjoy fishing, bring your rod and tackle (obeying all regulations, of course).

More Info

The park is quite pleasant outside the busy summer tourist season. Yes, snow hangs around in the mountains, and it can begin falling as early as September in the high elevations, but daytime highs regularly reach the 50s (and occasionally higher) in November/December. That's great hiking weather, and who wouldn't love to see these undulating dunes blanketed in a fresh sheet of snow? Just come prepared for it. The 'low' flats surrounding the dunefield are still above 7,000 feet. No matter when you visit, spend at least one night. Playful light crossing the sand's undulating ridges is very fun to observe.





Black Canyon of the Gunnison Favorites

1 **Warner Point**
Moderate | 1.5 miles | 150 feet

4 **North Vista**
Strenuous | 6.7 miles | 1,100 feet

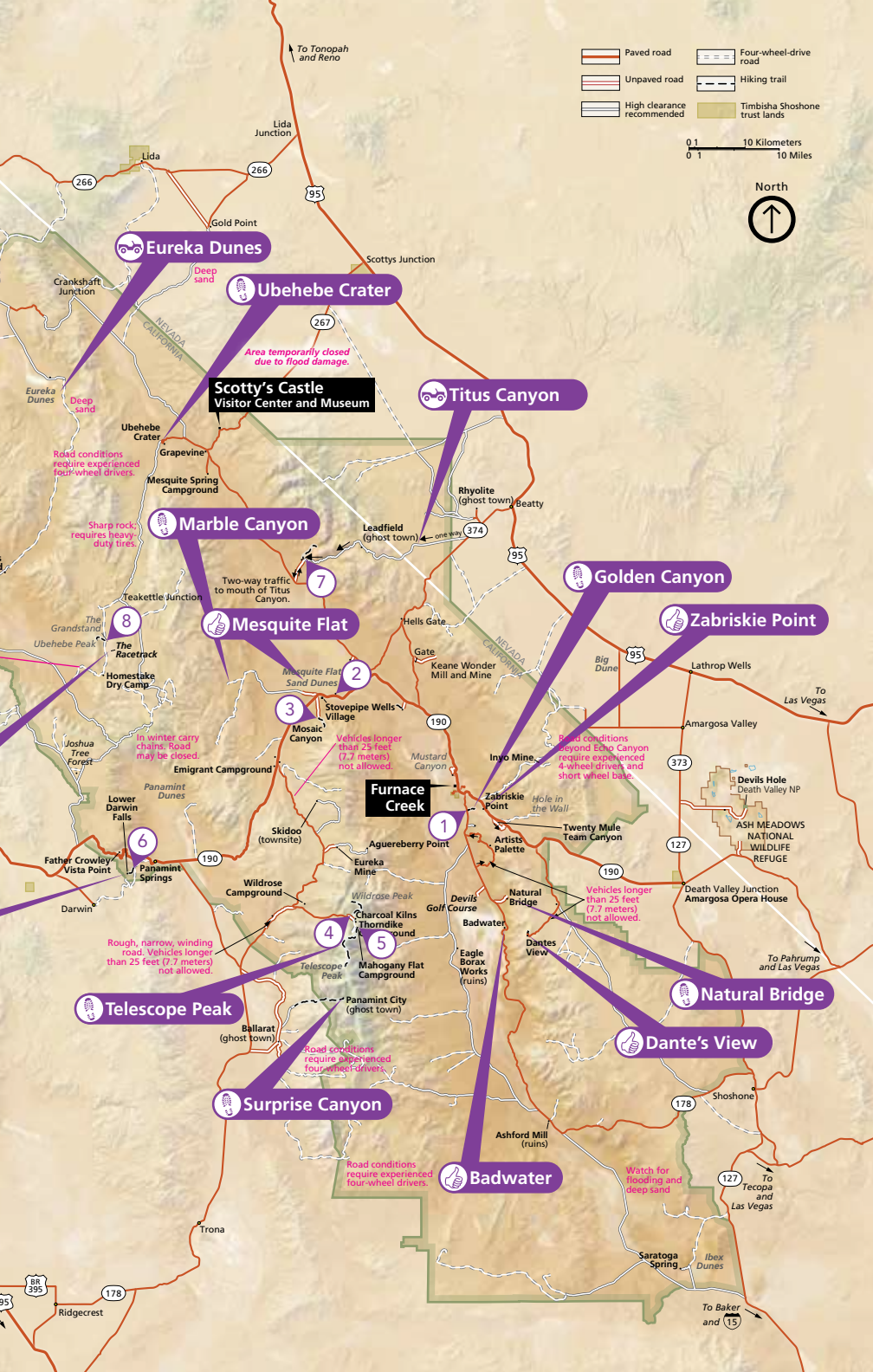
2-3 **Rim Rock/Oak Flat**
Strenuous | 3.3 miles | 800 feet



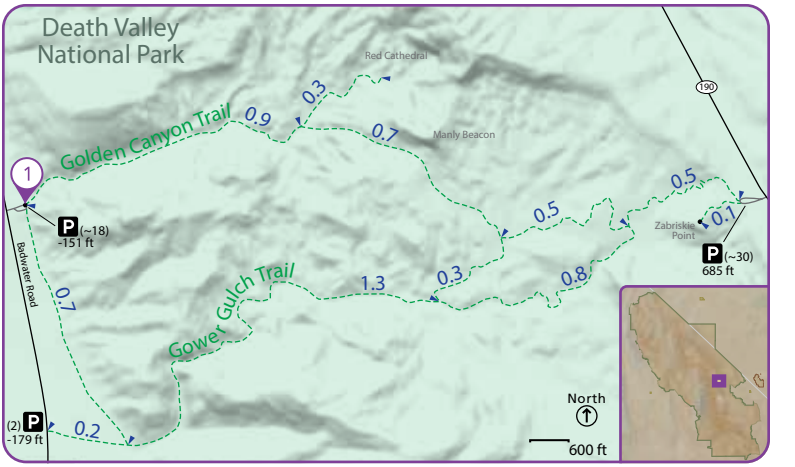
Death Valley Favorites

1. **Golden Canyon**
   Moderate | 6.9 miles | 1,100 feet
2. **Mesquite Flat Dunes**
   Moderate | 1.9+ miles | Varies
3. **Mosaic Canyon**
   Moderate | 1.9–3.4 miles | 1,070 feet
4. **Wildrose Peak**
   Strenuous | 8.0 miles | 2,200 feet
5. **Telescope Peak**
   Strenuous | 12.0 miles | 2,950 feet
6. **Darwin Falls**
   Easy | 2.0 miles | 200 feet
7. **Titus Canyon**
   Moderate | up to 7.8 miles | Varies
   Fall Canyon
   Moderate | 6.8 miles | 1,700 feet
8. **Ubehebe Peak**
   Strenuous | 3.9 miles | 2,300 feet




Paved road
Four-wheel-drive road
Unpaved road
Hiking trail
High clearance recommended
Timbisha Shoshone trust lands
0 1 10 Kilometers
0 1 10 Miles
North
To Tonopah and Reno
Lida Junction
Lida
266
95
Gold Point
Eureka Dunes
Scottys Junction
Crankshaft Junction
Deep sand
Ubehebe Crater
267
NEVADA
CALIFORNIA
Area temporarily closed due to flood damage.
Scotty's Castle
Visitor Center and Museum
Titus Canyon
Eureka Dunes
Deep sand
Ubehebe Crater
Grapevine
Road conditions require experienced four-wheel drivers.
Mesquite Spring Campground
Rhyolite (ghost town)
Beatty
Marble Canyon
Sharp rock requires heavy duty tires.
Leadfield (ghost town)
one way
374
95
Two-way traffic to mouth of Titus Canyon.
7
Golden Canyon
Zabriskie Point
Teakettle Junction
8
The Grandstand
Ubehebe Peak
The Racetrack
Homestake Dry Camp
Mesquite Flat
Hells Gate
Gate
Keane Wonder Mill and Mine
Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes
2
3
Stovepipe Wells Village
Mosaic Canyon
190
Big Dune
95
Lathrop Wells
To Las Vegas
Amargosa Valley
Joshua Tree Forest
In winter carry chains. Road may be closed.
Emigrant Campground
Vehicles longer than 25 feet (7.7 meters) not allowed.
Mustard Canyon
Inyo Mine
Road conditions beyond Echo Canyon require experienced 4-wheel drivers and short wheel base.
373
Devils Hole
Death Valley NP
Panamint Dunes
Lower Darwin Falls
Furnace Creek
Zabriskie Point
Hole in the Wall
1
Twenty Mule Team Canyon
ASH MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Skidoo (townsite)
Aguereberry Point
Artists Palette
127
6
Father Crowley Vista Point
190
Panamint Springs
Eureka Mine
190
Death Valley Junction
Amargosa Opera House
Wildrose Campground
Wildrose Peak
Devils Golf Course
Natural Bridge
Vehicles longer than 25 feet (7.7 meters) not allowed.
Darwin
Charcoal Kilns
Thorndike Campground
4
5
Badwater
Dantes View
Rough, narrow, winding road. Vehicles longer than 25 feet (7.7 meters) not allowed.
Telescope Peak
Mahogany Flat Campground
Eagle Borax Works (ruins)
To Pahrump and Las Vegas
Telescope Peak
Panamint City (ghost town)
Natural Bridge
Ballarat (ghost town)
Dante's View
Road conditions require experienced four-wheel drivers.
Surprise Canyon
178
Shoshone
Ashford Mill (ruins)
Road conditions require experienced four-wheel drivers.
Badwater
Watch for flooding and deep sand
127
To Tecopa and Las Vegas
Trona
Saratoga Spring
Ibex Dunes
BR 395
178
Ridgecrest
To Baker and 15

GOLDEN CANYON



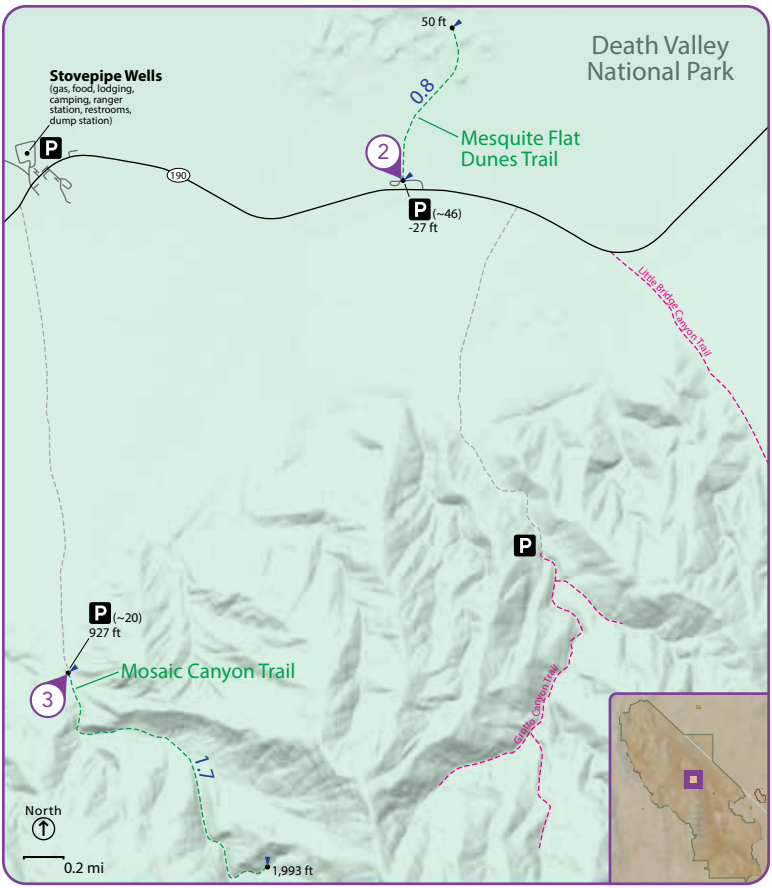
Golden Canyon | Moderate | 6.9 miles | 1,100 feet | Loop
Trailhead: Golden Canyon (1)

Golden Canyon is awesome, but it comes with a few options. You can begin from Zabriskie Point (CA-190) or Golden Canyon (1). There are a variety of loop or out-and-back options. At a minimum, you should walk by Manly Beacon and pay a visit to the Red Cathedral. Doing the full loop through Golden Canyon/Gower Gulch and going up to Zabriskie Overlook (a great sunrise location) is just under seven miles. The spur to Zabriskie Point has a pretty good grade. You could skip it and drive there another time, bringing the loop mileage under six miles. There isn't an official parking area or trail at the end of Gower Gulch but there is enough room for a couple cars alongside the road if the Golden Canyon Trailhead lot is full.

Mesquite Flat Dunes | Moderate | 1.9+ miles | Varies | Follow the Ridges
Trailhead: Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes (2)

There's no right or wrong way to explore Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes. Being the most easily accessible dunes in the park it's also the most popular. Personally, humans make sand dunes more fun, adding an element of scale to such an unusual sight. Morning or evening light is best. Just make sure the sun is still above the surrounding mountains, allowing shadows to dance across the dunes. It's about two miles to the top of the tallest dune from the parking lot but there are a ton of interesting crests to explore. Go where you want. Climb a few ridges then bound down their slopes. Have fun! Just be warned, it's a workout going up and down these things and the dunes are not a particularly pleasant place to be when it's windy.

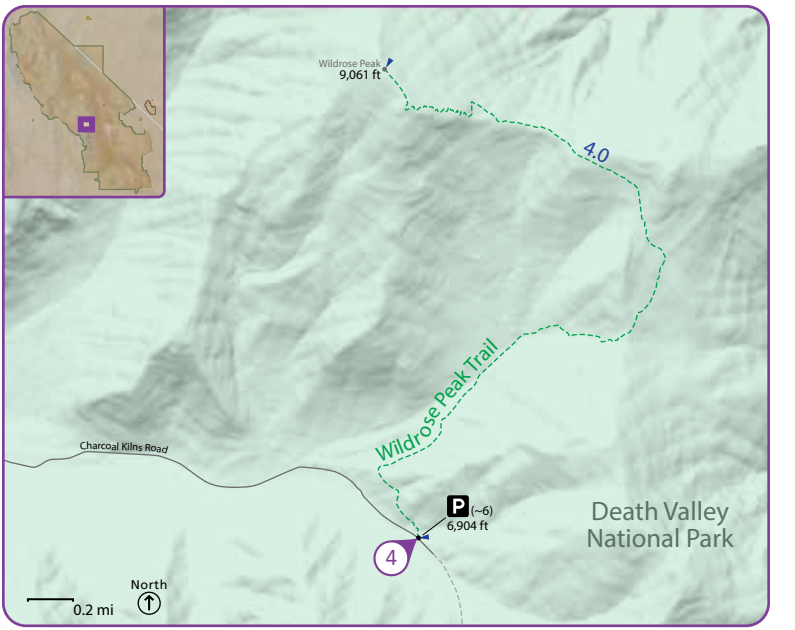
MESQUITE FLAT/MOSAIC CANYON



Mosaic Canyon | Moderate | 1.9–3.4 miles | 1,070 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Mosaic Canyon (3)

Mosaic Canyon begins simple enough, following a gravelly wash into a soon-to-be-narrowing canyon. Just about a mile into your hike you'll encounter a rock jumble. If you aren't comfortable scrambling around, this is the turn-around point. If you'd like to continue, look to the east side of the jumble for an access point to the alcove beyond. Back on track, you'll quickly reach a dry waterfall chute. Backtrack and scan the western wall for a faint bypass trail. This is the route. Cross the dryfall and get back into the wash. Continue south, where a few short scrambles lead into another alcove at the base of an impassable dryfall. Return the way you came, carefully scrambling down the smooth boulders. It's nice to carry very little on any hike involving scrambling. And Mosaic Canyon isn't particularly long or difficult so a minimalist approach should be fine. However, that might not be the best idea if it's deathly hot outside. You know your body. Do what works for you.

WILDROSE PEAK



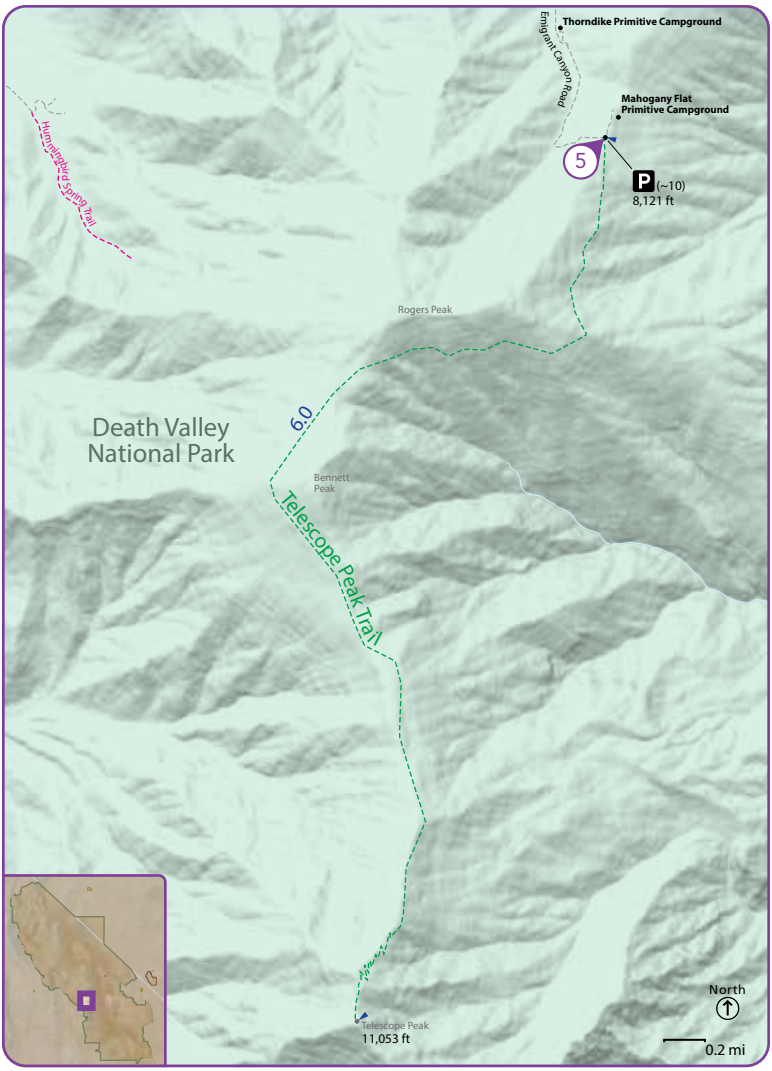
Wildrose Peak | Strenuous | 8.0 miles | 2,200 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Charcoal Kilns, Emigrant Canyon Road (4)

The trailhead is located along Emigrant Canyon Road at the Wildrose Charcoal Kilns parking area. This is the less-strenuous alternative to hiking Telescope Peak, the park's highest point, which begins just to the south at Mahogany Flat Campground. Along this well-worn path, you're treated to nearly-continuous, far-reaching views. A set of switchbacks quickly ascend to a more gradual final approach to the summit, where on a clear day you'll have 360-degree views spanning from the highest point in the Lower 48 (Mount Whitney) to the west, and the lowest point in the Americas (Badwater) to the east. It's a tremendous vantage point, enjoy it, and then return the way you came. You shouldn't have to worry about snow or ice summer through October, but it's always a good idea to check conditions when hiking at elevation.

Telescope Peak | Strenuous | 12.0 miles | 2,950 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Telescope Peak (5)

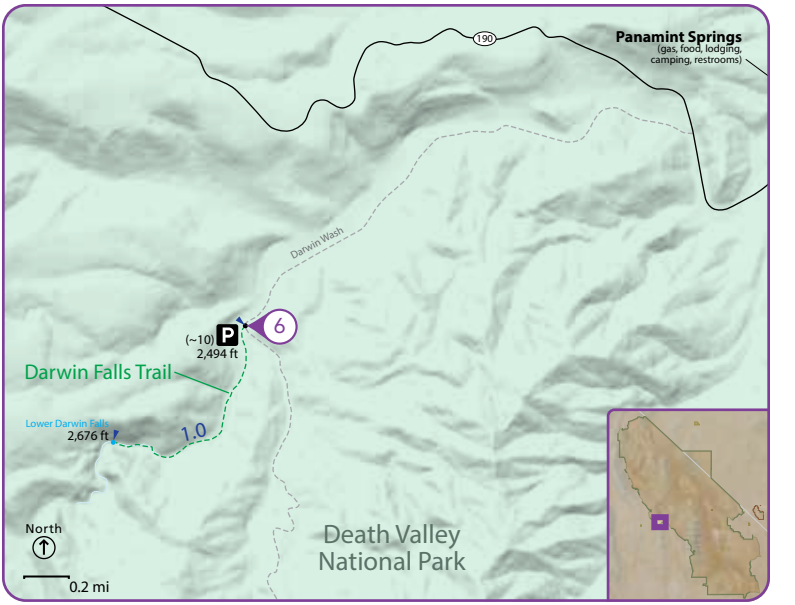
Stepping things up a notch from Wildrose Peak is the trek to its neighboring summit, Telescope Peak. To reach the trailhead, take Emigrant Canyon Road past Charcoal Kilns, and Thorndike and Mahogany Flat Campgrounds. At a gaited intersection, you'll see the trailhead on your left. The road beyond the gait continues to Rogers Peak. Road conditions change, and the park suggests a high-clearance vehicle beyond Thorndike, but ordinary cars regularly make the trip to Telescope Trailhead. Although this is a serious

TELESCOPE PEAK



hike at high elevation, the grade is not terrible. It isn't even relentless, with a long mostly flat stretch sandwiched between two steady grades. There's one set of switchbacks before the final summit, and then you're free to relax and enjoy the views across Nevada and California. On a clear day, the view ends at the Sierra Nevada, including the tallest point in the Lower 48, Mount Whitney. To the east, you'll look across Badwater and Death Valley, over the Amargosa Range all the way to the Spring Mountains near Las Vegas. Return as you came and take your time to appreciate the ancient bristlecone pines you'll pass along the way.

DARWIN FALLS



Darwin Falls | Easy | 2.0 miles | 200 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Darwin Falls (6)

Just east of Panamint Springs, there's a short, unpaved road (Old Toll Road) leading visitors on the path to a peculiar desert oasis. The trailhead quickly appears on the righthand side of the road. From here, it's an easy walk back to Lower Darwin Falls. It's a real treat to see water flowing in such a vast, seemingly-uninhabitable region. Although only about 20-feet tall, the lower falls is pretty, and seeing water and trees in such a harsh environment is a very enjoyable experience.

Titus Canyon | Moderate | 0–7.8 miles | Varies | Out-and-back
Fall Canyon | Moderate | 6.8 miles | 1,700 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Titus Canyon Mouth (7)

Titus Canyon is good fun (in a car or on your feet). The caveat here is Titus Canyon is a (mostly) one-way road driven by all kinds of vehicles and motorbikes. High-clearance will provide peace of mind. The rugged road is 26.8 miles, driven east to west. It's slow-going but 100% worth the time commitment. Not sure about it? Consider driving to the mouth of Titus Canyon (the lone stretch of road open to two-way traffic) to see what you think. Rambling along this stretch provides a good indicator if you can endure a couple hours of bouncing around in your vehicle to see some cool, colorful rocks. If the drive's a bad idea, stop at the trailhead and hike into the canyon as far as you care to go. This is the narrowest section, just barely wider than a large vehicle at several points.

TITUS CANYON/FALL CANYON



You can also hike up Fall Canyon from the Titus Canyon parking area. It's not as beautiful, but it also doesn't have a regular stream of cars and motorbikes flowing through it. The most difficult part of this hike is the initial climb and descent before reaching the wash you'll follow the rest of the way. The wash is mostly flat and easy going. There's a short side trail to a waterfall chute. After about three miles, the canyon narrows before reaching its conclusion at another dry waterfall chute. It didn't look insurmountable, but I wasn't willing to take an unnecessary risk trying to climb it. Note that Fall Canyon was closed when this book went to print.

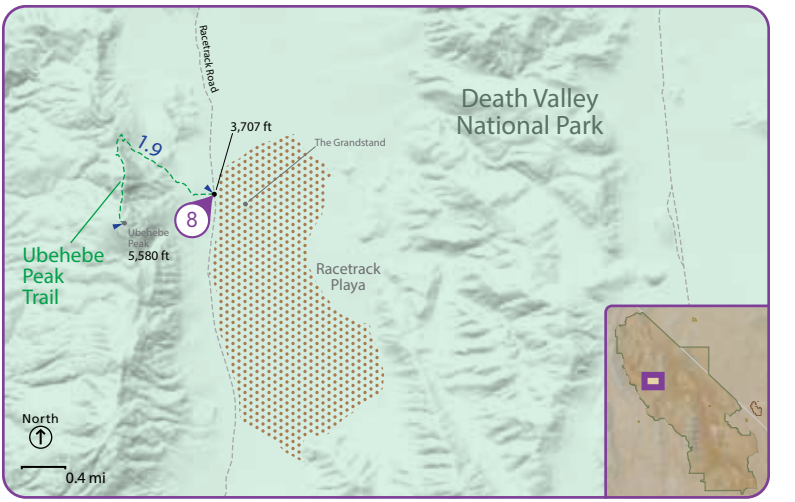
Conditions

Death Valley's weather extremes receive a disproportionate amount of the media's attention. For most of the year, it's a fantastic place to be. Even in summer, you can find a comfortable perch (like Telescope Peak) to enjoy unbelievable views. But don't completely ignore the weather. Exploring anything on (or near) the valley floor mid-day in summer is not a good idea. Temperature exceeded 130°F at Furnace Creek in August 2022. However, mornings can be bearable (80s°F) and it's usually about a 40°F temperature difference from the lowest point in the park (Badwater) to the highest (Telescope Peak). A more realistic approach to making the most of a Death Valley trip is to visit between fall and spring.

Off-Roading

Death Valley is an off-roader's paradise! The entry point is probably Titus Canyon Road. If you enjoyed that, it's time to consider heading to the Racetrack or some of the canyons accessed via West Side Road. If you'd like to take it easier and want to enjoy a less popular sand dune than Mesquite Flat, check out Ibex dunes in the park's southeast corner, Panamint Dunes (just north of Panamint Springs), or Eureka Dunes (at the northern end of the park). Unpaved roads explore nearly every corner of this massive park. Just come prepared. Off-roading Death Valley is not something to take lightly. Full-sized spare, jerry cans, compressor, tow strap, traction boards, and even an emergency beacon are good ideas, just in case. Self-recovery is much better than waiting for a tow or rescue.

UBEHEBE PEAK



Ubehebe Peak | Strenuous | 3.9 miles | 2,300 feet | Out-and-back
Trailhead: Grandstand Parking Area, Racetrack Road (8)

Ubehebe is a nice perk for anyone who makes the long off-road drive to The Racetrack. You gain quite a bit of elevation in a short amount of distance. It's rocky and kind of dangerous toward the top. But the 360-degree views from Racetrack Playa to Saline Valley are excellent. It's a long (and bumpy) journey to The Racetrack, whichever way you're coming from. The access road from the north is heavily washboarded. And the road from the south occasionally closes in winter due to snow. A summer visit? That's usually not a good idea. But it is a great idea to take your time once you arrive, get a little workout summiting Ubehebe Peak, and then hop back in your 4x4 and begin the journey to your next Death Valley destination.

More Trails

There are several trails that weren't mentioned because they're short and easy to access. At the top of the list is Badwater Salt Flat (easy, 1+ miles), where you can walk out to a perfectly flat basin and play with perspective. The crusty salt formations are fun to photograph as well. While it isn't exactly a hike, you also shouldn't skip a quick stop at Zabriskie Point, preferably for sunrise. Golden Canyon walks right past the prominent pinnacle, but the viewpoint is excellent too. Artist Palette (easy) is Instagram popular but still worth a stop to see the cool colorful rocks. And then there's Natural Bridge (easy, 1–2 miles), a short and fun hike to a massive stone bridge. But there's much more of everything. There are more canyons: Grotto, Sidewinder, Desolation, Marble, Star Wars. There are more dunes: Panamint, Eureka, Ibex, Saline Valley. And I'm sure there are plenty of things I don't know about. The park is more than 3 million acres! Death Valley is one of my all-time favorite places and it makes me sad whenever someone trashes it, probably because they went to the valley in summer or had the bad luck of showing up in the middle of a sandstorm. Or maybe something else? I don't know. What I do know is, it's like no other place on earth. And as testament to the park's otherworldly nature, it's been used as a setting for many space-based movies, including the original *Star Wars*.



Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes



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