

19 of the Warmest US National Parks To Visit in Winter

If you have lived a considerable amount of time in the United States, you have most likely visited at least one of the 61 US National Parks. A large number of US population visits national parks each year. Most visit for recreational purposes such as camping, fishing, hunting, skiing, hiking, trekking, mountain climbing, etc. Each park is unique in its geological features, climate, terrain as well as the activities you can take part in. However, one thing is constant among all parks – their beauty. Many famous writers, poets, painters and photographers have used these parks as their inspiration to create timeless pieces of art. While some of us might even have had our first kiss at a camping trip at one of these parks.

This list of national parks has been carefully compiled based on being the warmest US National Parks to visit in winter months – December through March. Average low temperatures of the individual months of December, January, February and March were entered for all 61 national parks to calculate the overall average low winter temperatures. From those results, we have picked top 19 warmest US National Parks. 6 of the 19 parks are also UNESCO World Heritage Sites which adds to their significance. The lowest average winter low temperature was at Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska of -2 degrees Fahrenheit and the highest average winter low temperature was at Everglades National Park, Florida at 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

So without further ado, here is the list in alphabetical order to help you plan your next winter getaway. Please note that some of the parks may only have limited access during winters.

1. Carlsbad Caverns National Park

Carlsbad Caverns is a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated in the Guadalupe Mountains in New Mexico. One of its main attractions is the show cave known as the Carlsbad Cavern. Visitors can either hike or take an elevator to the cavern. The park also includes a large limestone chamber called the Big Room. The park has an average winter low temperature of 35 degrees.

2. Channel Islands National Park

With a winter average low of 46 degrees, Channel Islands of California are located in the Pacific Ocean stretching from the coast of Santa Barbara to San Pedro in Los Angeles. The park comprises of 5 islands out of which Santa Rosa has shown evidence in the form of carbon dating of human occupation from 37,000 years ago. Due to its very temperate climate, there are a lot of activities offered such as kayaking through its caves, backpacking and scuba diving.

3. Congaree National Park

Situated in South Carolina, Congaree National Park has one of the highest forest canopies and one of the largest concentrations of champion trees in the world. Some of the recreational activities offered at the park include simple campsites, canoeing, hiking, bird watching, and kayaking. It has an average winter low temperature of 37 degrees.

4. Death Valley National Park

Death Valley, located on the border of California and Nevada, is the hottest as well as the driest location in North America. It had the highest air temperature ever recorded on Earth at a whopping 134 degrees back in 1913. You can also find ancient rock drawings dating back 10,000 years. One of the most popular activities in Death Valley is riding the dunes on motorcycles, ATVs or mountain bikes. It also has 9 designated campsites. It has an average winter low temperature of 45 degrees.

5. Dry Tortugas National Park

Dry Tortugas is located in the Florida Keys and is known for its abundance of sea life, tropical birds, coral reefs and folklores of sunken treasures. The park can only be accessed by seaplane or boat and includes activities such as camping, fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving and bird-watching. It boasts one of the warmest winters and is a tie with Death Valley at 45 degrees average winter low temperature.

6. Everglades National Park

Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Everglades in Florida is the biggest tropical wilderness in the US. It has a significant ecosystem consisting of crocodiles, panthers, manatees, numerous species of birds and fish and about 50 some species of reptilians. It is known for its trails, campsites, water vehicle activities, and dark skies site which allows for one of the best viewing locations of the Milky Way. It also boasts as the warmest US National Park on this list with an average low winter temperature of 58 degrees.

7. Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas is located in the same mountain range as Carlsbad Caverns. It houses the highest natural point in the state called the Guadalupe Peak. The park has a rich human history of Apache Indians and has some 16th century Spanish architecture still standing. It offers backpacking, campsites, hiking and exploration of its wilderness. The average winter temperature reaches a low of 33 degrees.

8. Hot Springs National Park

Located in Arkansas, Hot Springs is home to many spa-style bathhouses taking advantage of the natural hot spring water that is available at the park. Earlier bathhouses were made merely out of brush huts and wooden cabins. It was believed that the hot spring water cured diseases. The water composition actually does contain many natural chemicals and minerals that are beneficial to humans. Its average winter low temperatures reach 34 degrees.

9. Joshua Tree National Park

You may have heard of or listened to the band U2's album called Joshua Tree. The album name is based on the Joshua trees that are found here. The park is mostly desert and is located about 1.5 hours east of Los Angeles, California. It is also home to many interesting rock formations. It features activities such as hiking, camping, rock climbing and sky watching. The average low winter temperature here is 37 degrees.

10. Kings Canyon National Park

Kings Canyon in California as the name implies is a mile deep valley of rugged mountainous terrain, rivers and giant sequoia trees. It is known for its beautiful mountains, valleys and wildlife. Many artists have painted its scenery onto canvas. Activities here include hiking, camping, rock and mountain climbing and water sports. The average low winter temperature here reaches 28 degrees.

11. Mammoth Cave National Park

Also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Mammoth Cave in Kentucky boasts as having the longest cave system in the world. You can get guided tours of the limestone caves where you can marvel at the stalactites and stalagmites formations hanging from the cave roof. The average winter low temperatures reach around 29 degrees here.

12. North Cascades National Park

North Cascades in Washington State is home to the beautiful Cascade Pass and Pelton Basin, numerous high mountain peaks, rivers and glaciers. Its mountains are a major tourist attraction for mountain climbers. It is also great for camping, hiking and biking. The average low temperature in winter reaches around 32 degrees.

13. Olympic National Park

Another park in the State of Washington, Olympic National Park is home to numerous glaciated mountains, temperate rainforests, meadows, rivers as well as rugged coastlines. Some of the activities you can do are hiking, camping, picnicking and rafting. This park is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site with an average low winter temperature of 33 degrees.

14. Pinnacles National Park

As the name implies, Pinnacles National Park in Central California is a haven for mountain and rock climbers offering numerous climbing opportunities. It provides amazing hiking paths in the beautiful wilderness which houses diverse wildlife and vegetation. Popular activities here are hiking, camping and mountain climbing. The average low winter temperature reaches 29 degrees.

15. Redwood National and State Parks

Home to the tallest and some of the oldest trees in the world, Redwood National and State Parks comprises of several states parks in California. The most famous feature of the park are the immensely tall and wide Redwood trees, some of which are wide enough to have carved car tunnels in them. It is also home to numerous animal species and features activities such as back country camping, horseback riding, kayaking, fishing and mountain biking. The average low winter temperatures here are 36 degrees.

16. Saguaro National Park

This park gets its name from the giant Saguaro cactus that is found here. It is located in the deserts of Arizona and is open every day, all year round except Christmas. It has your usual campsites, hiking trails, and includes horseback riding through its rocky desert landscape. The average winter low temperature here reaches 42 degrees.

17. Sequoia National Park

Sequoia National Park is a forested mountainous park home to giant sequoia trees. It includes the largest tree on Earth called the General Sherman tree. In fact, 5 of the 10 largest trees in the world are found in this park. The park includes features such as the Tokopah Falls, the Sherman Tree Trail, Tunnel Log, Crescent Meadow, Moro Rock, campgrounds and the Giant Forest Museum. The average low winter temperature is 30 degrees here.

18. Yosemite National Park

The famous photographer Ansel Adams has used this park for a lot of his famous photographs. It is known worldwide for its beauty which includes beautiful granite cliffs, some of the largest concentrations of waterfalls, clear water streams, beautiful lakes surrounded by mountains, lush green meadows, and icy glaciers. It is also home to one of the largest volcanic cauldrons in the world. The average winter low temperatures reach around 28 degrees here.

19. Zion National Park

Last but not least, Zion National Park in Utah is known for its red sandstone cliffs and is considered one of the most beautiful national parks in the US. It is a haven for climbers with its steep rocks and mountains. Some of the activities you can do here are rock climbing, hiking, horseback riding and camping. It has an average low winter temperature of 33 degrees.