

# A Kids' Guide to California National Parks

By Big Pine Elementary School,  
Second Grade

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## Channel Islands National Park

**Description:** There are 8 Channel Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Five of the islands are in Channel Islands National Park. The islands are pretty. They are covered with grass, pine stands, and oak woodlands. There are island foxes, lizards, bald eagles, and shore birds.

**Things to Do and See:** You can tidepool, kayak, or swim with the fish. You can go scuba diving. You can also visit sea caves. One of the largest is Painted Cave. Three places you should visit are Castle Cornet, Jersey Heritage, and the Fort Grey Museum.

**Best Time to Visit:** You can visit any time of the year, but the largest groups of blue whales gather in the summer.





## Death Valley National Park

**Description:** Death Valley National Park is hot. In July 1913, it was 134 degrees! Death Valley is a desert surrounded by mountains. Some parts of the park have large sand dunes. The Eureka Dunes are over 680 feet tall. Badwater Basin is the lowest point in the park at 282 feet below sea level. Bobcats, kit foxes, spiders, and bats make their homes in the park. Joshua trees grow in the park, and you can see wildflowers in the spring.

**Things to Do and See:** Hiking, backpacking, running, and rolling down sand dunes are the best things to do in Death Valley. You can also visit Scotty's Castle or watch the sunset at Dante's View.

**Best Time to Visit:** The best time to visit is in fall or spring.





## **Devil's Postpile National Monument**

**Description:** Devil's Postpile National Monument looks like a pile of rock posts standing up. One interesting fact about the monument is that the postpile was formed by lava. It is in a forest habitat with meadows. In the meadows there are coyotes and mule deer. In the forest, there are black bears, pine martens, and dark eyed junckos. The plants that live there are quaking aspen, alder, and willows.

**Things to Do and See:** You can fish, ride horses, and hike. The postpile and Rainbow Falls are the most popular places to visit there.

**Best Time to Visit:** Summer is the best time to go to Devils Postpile.





## **Golden Gate National Recreation Area**

**Description:** Golden Gate National Recreation Area is by the Pacific Ocean. There are lots of plants and animals in the park. Poppies, pearly everlasting flowers, and spruce trees are just a few of the plants there. Bobcats, hawks, gray whales, and coyotes all live in the park.

**Things to Do and See:** You can go horseback riding, hiking, camping, or bicycling in the park.

**Best Time to Visit:** You can visit the park year round.





## **John Muir National Historic Site**

**Description:** John Muir National Historic Site was John Muir's home and ranch. The house was built by John's father-in-law. There are many apple, pear, and fruit trees. It is surrounded by grassy hills and wildflowers. There are black-tailed deer, little brown bats, bobcats, skunks, foxes, and deer mice.

**Things to Do and See:** You can take tours of the house and ranch. You can also hike on Mount Wanda.

**Best Time to Visit:** You can visit the park year round.





## Joshua Tree National Park

**Description:** Joshua Tree National Park is a sunny, sandy, rocky desert park. There are Joshua trees, cholla cactus, and yuccas. Coyotes, black-tailed jackrabbits, big horn sheep, giant desert scorpions, tarantulas, and desert tortoises all live in the park. The rock formations in the park were formed more than 100 million years ago.

**Things to Do and See:** Some things to do in the park are hike, climb, camp, and stargaze. The most popular places for tourists are Skull Rock, Keys View, and Cottonwood Springs.

**Best Time to Visit:** The best time to visit Joshua Tree is in early spring or late fall.





## **Lassen Volcanic National Park**

**Description:** Lassen Volcanic National Park surrounds Lassen Peak, a volcano. There was a volcanic eruption there from 1914-1917. The park has redwood, fir, and pine trees. Black bears, red foxes, salamanders, banana slugs, and white headed woodpeckers live in the park.

**Things to Do and See:** You can fish, hike, and visit hot springs. In the winter, you can ski. You should go see the Terminal Geyser, King Creek Falls, and Fantastic Lava Beds.

**Best Time to Visit:** The best time to visit is from July - October.





## **Lava Beds National Park**

**Description:** At Lava Beds National Monument, there are more than 700 caves. Lava Beds National Monument is named after the lava on the top. They have ladders and steps to help you see the caves. Yellow Bells are a type of wildflowers at Lava Beds. You can also see sagebrush, buttercup, woodland stars, biscuitroot and daggerpods. White-headed woodpeckers, Boreal toads, and mountain lions live there.

**Things to Do and See:** It is fun to hike, bike, and look for animals and flowers at Lava Beds. Some popular places to go are the Crystal Ice Cave, Fern Cave, and Valentine Cave.

**Best Time to Visit:** You can visit Lava Beds any time of year.





## **Mojave National Preserve**

**Description:** Mojave National Preserve is a really cool places. It looks like desert dunes, with mountains in the distance. There are snakes, red spotted toads, foxes, bats, and kangaroo rats. The desert habitat has creosote, cholla, and other plants.

**Things to Do and See:** You can see underground lava tubes, abandoned mines, and Mesquite Springs Campground. You can see the Coso Petroglyphs, the largest collection of ahncient rock art in America. You can also see the world's largest thermometer, which is 135 feet tall!

**Best Time to Visit:** Spring is the best time to visit.





## **Muir Woods National Monument**

**Description:** There are redwood trees to climb in Muir Woods National Monument. Muir Woods National Monument is by the Pacific Ocean. It has redwood trees, ferns, and moss. Deer, bears, bobcats, banana slugs, chipmunks, spotted owls, and bats, all live in Muir Woods.

**Things to Do and See:** If you visit Muir Woods, you can climb cliffs and trees, see the Marine Mammal Center or Cathedral Grove, or take a hiking tour. One of the redwood trees is 252 feet tall and 14 feet wide.

**Best Time to Visit:** You can visit Muir Woods any time of year.





## **Point Reyes National Seashore**

**Description:** Point Reyes National Seashore is by the beach. It is windy a lot. There are Douglas firs and coastal scrubs, and grasslands. You might see coyotes, raccoons, white deer, river otters, and foxes. The park was created in 1962. There are 71,000 acres.

**Things to Do and See:** There are hiking, finding sand dollars, and swimming at the beach. Visiting Hearts Desire Beach, the Bear Valley Trail, and the lighthouse would be fun.

**Best Time to Visit:** The best time to visit is in the winter.





## **Redwoods National Park**

**Description:** Redwoods National Park is a forest with some of the tallest trees in the world. Some of the redwoods are taller than the Statue of Liberty! Sometimes it is foggy there, but it is always beautiful. Coyotes, beavers, mountain lions, bobcats, elk, and bears all make their home in the park. You can also see ferns, wildflowers, and poison oak.

**Things to Do and See:** If you visit, go see the Trillium Falls, the California Coastal Trail and Enderts Beach.

**Best Time to Visit:** Any time of year is good to visit.





## **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks**

**Description:** Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks has a forest with the world's largest trees, mountains, lakes, and waterfalls. Bears, deer, lizards, millipedes, and turtles live there.

**Things to Do and See:** You can go hiking, horseback riding, or tour the crystal caves.

**Best Time to Visit:** July through mid-September is the most popular time to visit Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.





## Yosemite National Park

**Description:** Yosemite National Park is fun to visit. There are giant Sequoia trees, wildflowers, tall mountains, and grassy valleys. I think Yosemite is very pretty. Cougars, black bears, coyotes, and birds make their home in the park.

**Things to Do and See:** You can go hiking, swimming, ice skating, and rock climbing in Yosemite. A waterfall of fire was popular in 1870. Now people like to see the waterfalls, or visit Half Dome, Glacier Point, or Tuolumne Meadows.

**Best Time to Visit:** The best time to is in spring, summer, or fall.



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