



Summer Guide



Sunset over Queen Valley. NPS/Brad Sutton



Hot Dog!

While park regulations don't allow pets to join you on trails, in the backcountry, or in park buildings, there are alternative areas to explore.

Places to go

- Paved and unpaved roads
- Picnic areas and campgrounds

Things to remember

- **Pets must remain on a leash at all times.** Leashes may be no longer than 6 feet (1.8 m).
- Pets may go no more than 100 feet (30.5 m) from any road, picnic area, or campground.
- Owners must pick up any droppings. Leave no trace.
- Bring plenty of water for your pet. **Dogs have died in the park from dehydration and heat illness.**
- **Do not leave your dogs in your vehicle unattended,** even for short periods of time.
- Paved areas heat up fast and can be harsh on paws.

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/pets.htm>

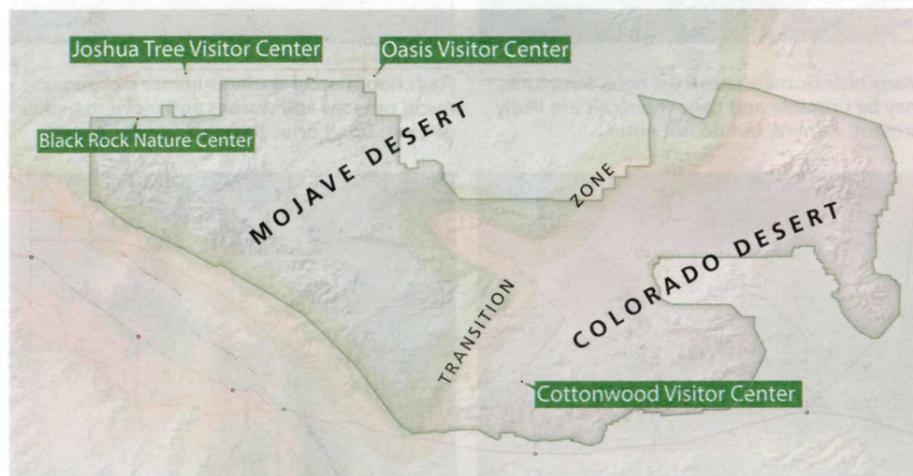


As the National Park Service embarks on a second century of preserving your public lands, I want to invite you to enjoy your park. For the hardy folks like yourselves who make the trek to Joshua Tree in the summer, we have quite an adventure in store for you. Summertime is the quiet season at the park. Sunrise at an oasis can be magical as the sounds of bird calls fill the air. The peace and quiet of the Pinto Basin on a hot summer day can be overwhelming. As the day draws to a close, visitors are rewarded with sunsets that stretch from one side of the park to the other. The night time skies at Jumbo Rocks campground and the clarity of the Milky Way overhead are a welcome reward for the hearty souls who spend a night out under the stars.

With a little preparation, a summertime visit to a desert park can be a very special experience. Without it, it can be very risky. If you are planning an extended hike, please plan on an early start. Leave the trail before temperatures become too excessive. Bring at least one liter of water per hour, per person. Protect your skin with big shade hats, loose-fitting clothes, and ample sunscreen. Please leave pets at home and off the trails for both their safety and the safety of wildlife. Each year, park rescuers respond to hikers in distress or even worse when they are overcome by the heat. Help us help you by not becoming a victim of a heat related injury.

I look forward to seeing you as you enjoy your park.

David Smith
David Smith
Superintendent



The Colorado Desert is a subsection of the larger Sonoran Desert (left). The transition zone between the Colorado and Mojave Deserts hosts a wealth of biological diversity and is home to species characteristic of both deserts (right).

Camping

Learn more about park campgrounds and alternative options on [page 3](#).

Hiking

Suggestions for short and moderate hikes are available on [page 6](#). Remember to drink water, eat salty snacks, and avoid the heat of the day.

Maps

Park overview and detail maps are located on [pages 4-5](#).

Ranger-led Programs

Ranger programs are listed on [page 8](#).

Safety

Safety information is located on [page 2](#). Dehydration is a key worry in the desert sun. Drink plenty of water and eat salty snacks.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Joshua Tree National Park preserves and protects the scenic, natural, and cultural resources representative of the Colorado and Mojave Deserts' rich biological and geological diversity, cultural history, wilderness, recreational values, and outstanding opportunities for education and scientific study.

Superintendent
David Smith

74485 National Park Drive
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

760-367-5500
www.nps.gov/jotr
jotr_info@nps.gov

Emergency
Dial 909-383-5651 or 911

Social Media
@JoshuaTreeNPS
@JoshuaTreeNP
joshuatreenps.tumblr.com

Lost & Found
www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/lostandfound.htm
jotr_lost_and_found@nps.gov

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Rules and Regulations



Watch wildlife respectfully

Stay at least 75 feet (23 m) from wildlife. If an animal reacts to your presence by changing its behavior, you are too close. Remember, this is home for wild animals. We are visitors.



Never feed any wild animals

Consuming human food is unhealthy for wildlife and may encourage aggressive behavior. Food, trash, scented products, and cooking tools must be stored securely in a vehicle or hard-sided container.



Travel responsibly with your pet

Pets must be on a leash at all times. They cannot go more than 100 feet (30 m) from roads, picnic areas, and campgrounds. *Pets are not allowed on hiking trails or in the backcountry.* Owners must never leave a pet unattended or tied to an object. Bag and properly dispose of pet waste.



No drones or remote controlled vehicles

Remote-controlled vehicles, including aircraft and rockcrawlers, are prohibited. Drones and other remotely-operated craft can disturb wildlife and disrupt the visitor experience.



Campfires

Campfires are allowed only in designated fire rings or grills found in campgrounds and picnic areas. Campfires are not allowed in the backcountry. Bring your own firewood and extra water to douse your campfire. Do not use park vegetation, living or dead, for fuel.



No collecting park resources

Leave everything in the park as it is for others to enjoy. Do not destroy, deface, dig, collect, or otherwise disturb any park resources including plants or animals (whether they are dead or alive), rocks, fossils, or artifacts.



Rock climbing

Climbers may replace existing bolts if they are unsafe. New bolts may be placed in non-wilderness areas in accordance with the bolting checklist, available on the park website. Bolting in wilderness requires a permit.



All vehicles and bicycles must stay on roads

The desert environment is more fragile than it may look. Ruts and scars left by vehicles and bicycles illegally taken off-road can last for years. Red and green sticker dirt bikes, ATVs, and UTVs are prohibited in the park.



Watch for tortoises

The desert tortoise is a threatened species that often dies from being hit by cars. Drive carefully in the park: small tortoises on the road look like rocks. Tortoises may drink from puddles on the roads after rains or take shelter from the hot sun under vehicles.



Protect the trees

Attaching lines to vegetation, including Joshua trees and junipers, is prohibited. Hammocks, slacklines, and other horizontal ropes must be tied to rocks and climbing bolts, and are not permitted in campgrounds.



Firearms and weapons

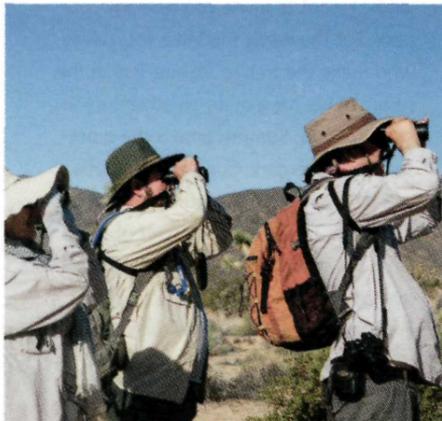
Firearms may be possessed in accordance with California state and federal laws. However, they may not be discharged in the park. Fireworks, traps, bows, BB guns, paintball guns, smoke bombs, and slingshots are not allowed in the park.



No graffiti

Over the last few years there has been an increase in graffiti and acts of intentional vandalism, including carving into rocks, trees, and historic structures within the park. This is illegal, it damages resources, and costs the park significant time and money to continually remove graffiti from rocks. Report incidents of graffiti to jotr_graffiti@nps.gov or use the form on page 7.

Safety



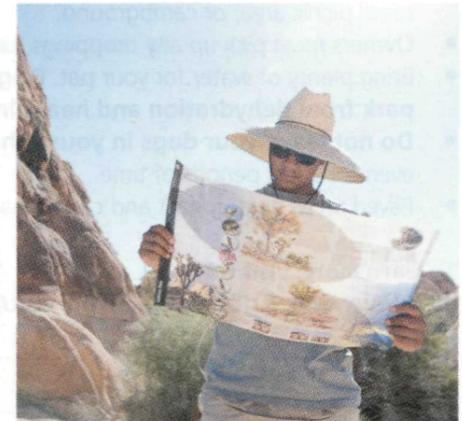
Be generous in using sunscreen, and reapply often. Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat.



Many historic mine sites exist here. Structures may be unstable and toxic chemicals are likely present. Admire, but do not enter.



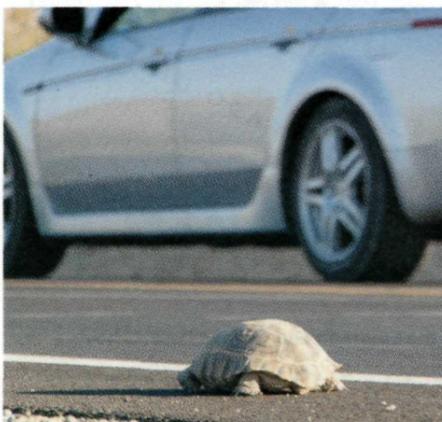
Flash floods occur during summer monsoons. Avoid canyons and washes and move to higher ground. Don't drive through moving water.



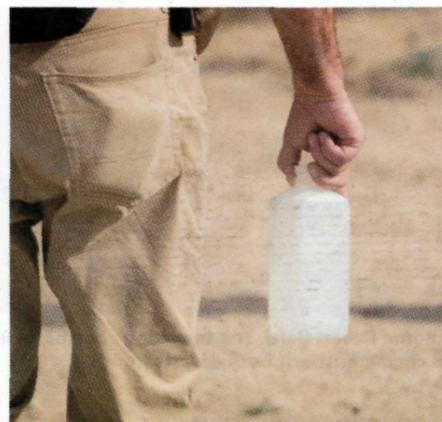
GPS units and navigation apps are not reliable in the park and may direct you to unsafe roads. Refer to the park map for navigation.



Never put your hands or feet into rock crevices or onto ledges where you can't see. Use a flashlight at night.



Drive slowly to protect wildlife. When stopping to view animals or scenery use a pullout and move out of the way of traffic.



Stay hydrated; drink at least **one gallon (4 L) of water per person, per day and lots of salty snacks or electrolyte drinks** when active.



Water is available at Oasis Visitor Center, Black Rock Campground, Cottonwood Campground, Cottonwood Visitor Center, West Entrance, & Indian Cove Ranger Station.

Emergency Phones

- Indian Cove Ranger Station
- Intersection Rock parking area near Hidden Valley Campground

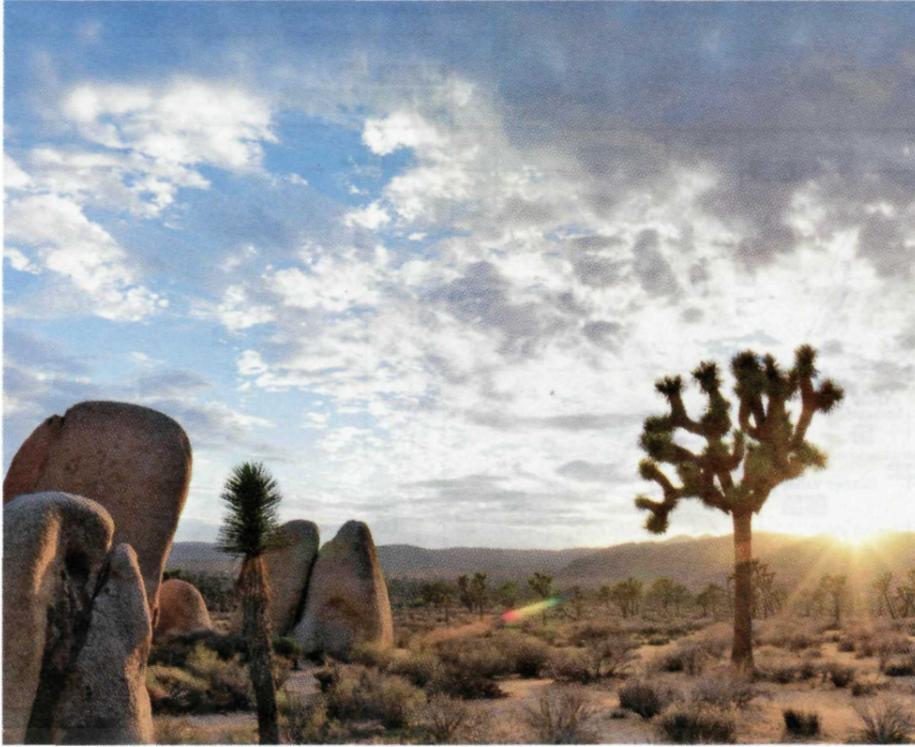
In an emergency, if you have cell service, dial 909-383-5651 or 911 for assistance.

Cell Phones

In most of the park there is no cell coverage. Do not count on your phone for navigation or in case of emergency.



What to See and Do



Drive between West and North entrances to see our famous Joshua trees and boulder fields. To stop and take photos, use paved pulloffs and get completely out of the flow of traffic.



Drive to Keys View for a lovely view of the Coachella Valley and San Andreas Fault.



Visit the Pinto Basin and see the Cholla Cactus Garden and Ocotillo Patch.



Kids of all ages are invited to participate in the Junior Ranger program (page 6).



Enjoy a short walk on one of the nature trails in the park (page 6).



Attend a ranger-led activity and learn more about the amazing resources protected here.



Spend the night in a campground and enjoy the park under the light of the stars.



Enjoy moderate hikes in the early morning and plan to finish before the heat of the day.



Enjoy the wonders of the desert through the lens of your camera.

Camping

Visitors staying overnight in the park must camp in a designated campground or backcountry camping area (see page 6). A maximum of six people, three tents, and two cars may occupy an individual campsite, if there is space. Some sites only have enough parking for one vehicle.



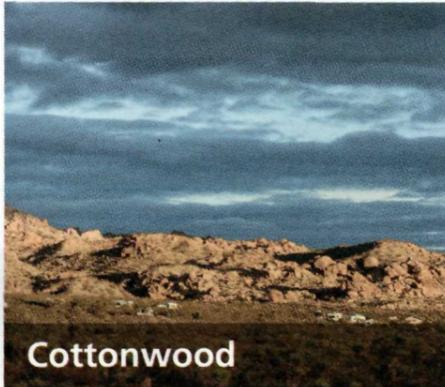
Belle

This campground is typically closed throughout the summer.



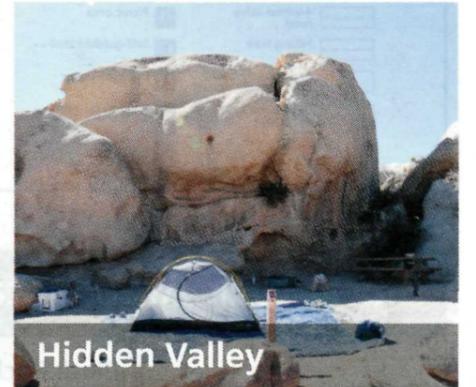
Black Rock

99 sites. \$20 per night. 4,000 feet in elevation. Water, flush toilets, tables, fire grates, and a dump station.



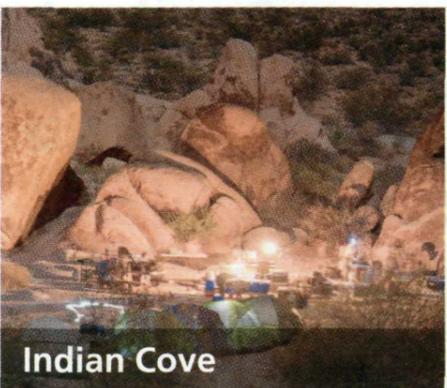
Cottonwood

62 sites. \$20 per night. 3,000 feet in elevation. Water, flush toilets, tables, fire grates, and a dump station. **Half of this campground closes in summer.**



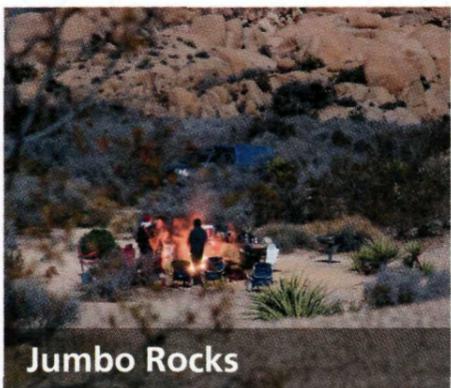
Hidden Valley

44 sites. \$15 per night. 4,200 feet. Pit toilets, tables, and fire grates. No water.



Indian Cove

101 sites. \$20 per night. 3,200 feet in elevation. Pit toilets, tables, and fire grates. No water. **Half of this campground closes in summer.**



Jumbo Rocks

124 sites. \$15 per night. 4,400 feet in elevation. Pit toilets, tables, and fire grates. No water.



Ryan

This campground is typically closed throughout the summer.



White Tank

15 sites. \$15 per night. 3,800 feet in elevation. Pit toilets, tables, and fire grates. No water.

Can't Find a Campsite?

If you are unable to get a site in a designated campground, you can:

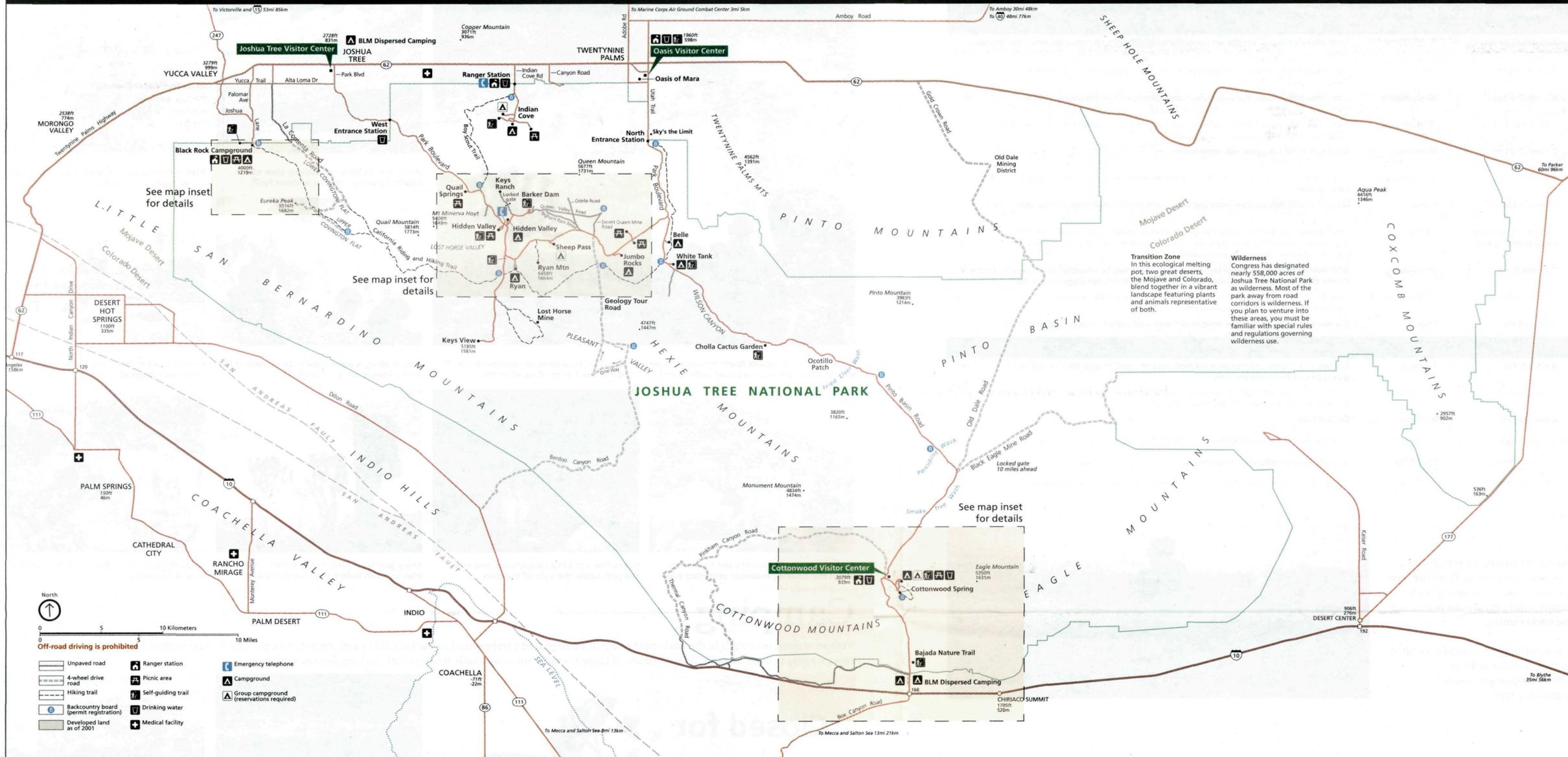
- Camp on Bureau of Land Management lands outside the park
- Go to a private campground or stay in lodging in gateway communities.

Sleeping in your vehicle overnight along the road or in a parking area is not allowed and violators may be subject to citation.

For more information, visit:

www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/camping-outside-of-the-park.htm

Map of Joshua Tree National Park



Visitor Centers

Oasis Visitor Center
760-367-5500
74485 National Park Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
8:30 am-5 pm

Joshua Tree Visitor Center
6554 Park Boulevard
Joshua Tree, CA 92252
8 am-5 pm

Cottonwood Visitor Center
6 miles (10 km) inside South Entrance;
access from I-10
8:30 am-4 pm

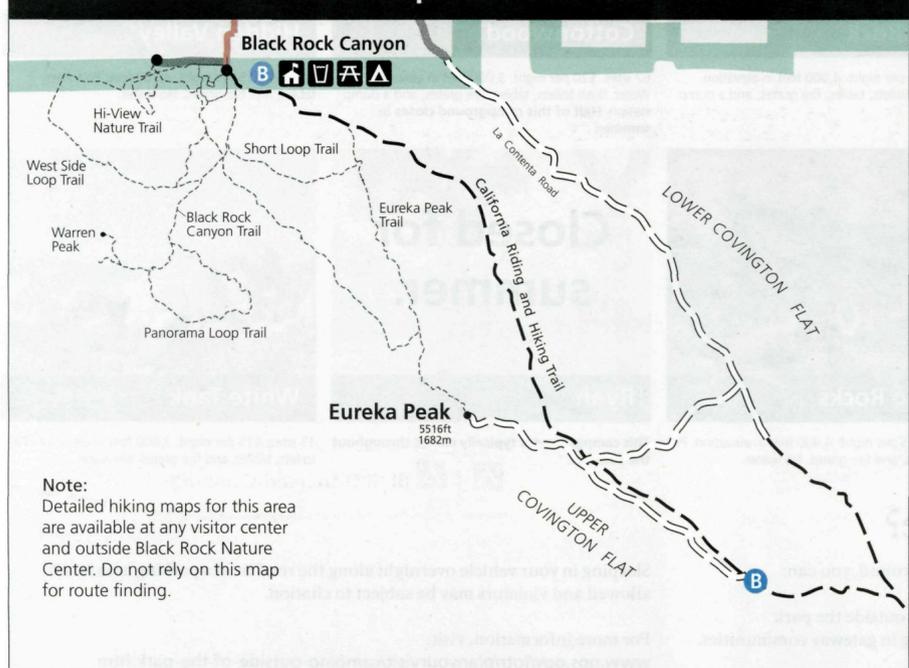
The park is always open.

Backcountry Boards

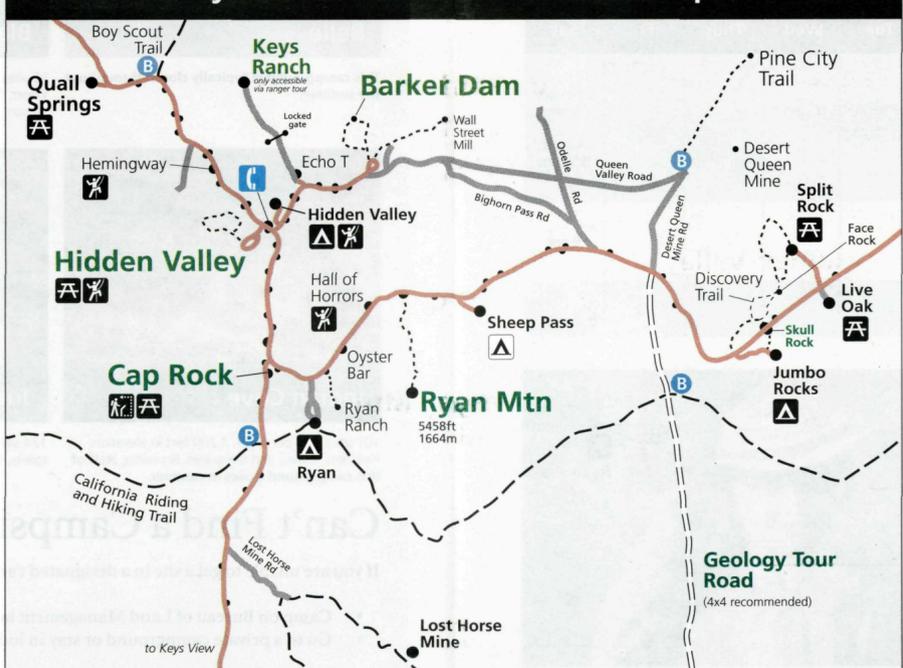
There are 13 backcountry registration boards located throughout the park.

- Black Rock
- Cottonwood Spring
- Covington Flat
- Geology (Geo Tour Road)
- Indian Cove
- Juniper Flats (Keys View Road)
- Keys West (Boy Scout Trail - south)
- North Entrance
- Pine City (at the junction of Desert Queen Mine and Queen Valley roads)
- Pleasant Valley (by one-way section of Geo Tour Road)
- Porcupine Wash (8 miles north of Cottonwood on Pinto Basin Road)
- Turkey Flats (13 miles north of Cottonwood on Pinto Basin Road)
- Twin Tanks (between Belle and White Tank campgrounds)

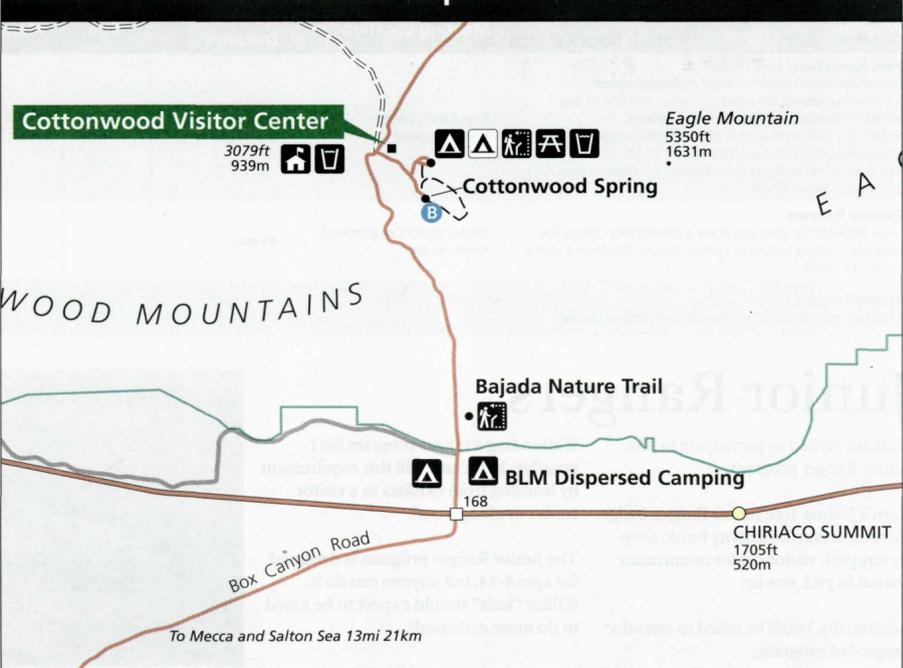
Black Rock Area Detail Map



Hidden Valley & Jumbo Rocks Area Detail Map



Cottonwood Area Detail Map



Hiking

Avoid the heat: Finish your hike before 10 am or start after 5 pm.
Stay hydrated: Drink at least one gallon (4L) of water per person, per day.
Snack time: You're sweating and losing salts. Eat salty snacks and drink electrolyte drinks.

Trail	Location	Distance (round trip)	Estimated Time	Description
Short Walks and Nature Trails				
Bajada 	0.5 mi (0.8 km) north of South Entrance	0.25 mile (0.4 km)	15–20 minutes	Loop. Walk on a bajada and discover plants of the Colorado Desert on this easy, wheelchair-accessible path.
Barker Dam	Barker Dam parking area	1.1 miles (1.8 km)	1 hour	Loop. Explore cultural history and view a water tank built by early cattle ranchers. Watch for bighorn sheep.
Cap Rock 	Cap Rock parking area	0.4 mile (0.6 km)	30–45 minutes	Loop. View boulder piles, Joshua trees, and other desert plants on this easy, wheelchair-accessible path.
Cholla Cactus Garden	20 mi (32 km) north of Cottonwood Visitor Center	0.25 mile (0.4 km)	15–30 minutes	Loop. View thousands of densely concentrated, naturally growing cholla cacti. Stay on the trail, wear closed-toe shoes, and be aware of prickly cacti.
Cottonwood Spring	Cottonwood Springs parking area	0.1 mile (0.2 km)	10 minutes	Short walk to fan palm oasis with cottonwood trees.
Discovery Trail	Skull Rock parking area	0.7 mile (1.1 km)	30–45 minutes	Loop. Connects Skull Rock and Split Rock Loop trails at Face Rock. Easy hike through boulder piles and desert washes.
Hidden Valley	Hidden Valley picnic area	1 mile (1.6 km)	1 hour	Loop. Discover a rock-enclosed valley that was once rumored to have been used by cattle rustlers.
Hi-View	Northwest of Black Rock Campground	1.3 miles (2.1 km) from board at parking area	1.5 hours	Loop. Discover the world of Joshua tree forests. Hike up a ridge on the western side of the park and take in panoramic views of the area. There are some steep sections, as well as several benches to take a break and enjoy the view. Elevation change is about 400 feet.
Keys View 	Keys View	0.25 mile (0.4 km)	30 minutes	Accessible overlook. Short, paved loop path is steeper and may be wheelchair-accessible with assistance. Breathtaking views of the San Andreas Fault, Mt. San Jacinto, Mt. San Gorgonio, and the Salton Sea.
Oasis of Mara 	Oasis Visitor Center	0.5 mile (0.8 km)	30–45 minutes	Loop. Explore a desert oasis on this easy, wheelchair-accessible walk. See how the Oasis of Mara has been used by wildlife and people throughout time.
Ryan Ranch	Ryan Ranch trailhead	1 mile (1.6 km)	1 hour	Out and back. Enjoy an easy hike along an old ranch road and see a historic adobe structure.
Moderate Hikes				
Lost Horse Mine	Lost Horse Mine trailhead	4 miles (6.4 km)	2–3 hours	Out and back. Explore around one of the most successful gold mines in the park. Stay outside the fenced area to protect the millsite and mine.
Mastodon Peak	Cottonwood Spring parking area	3 miles (4.8 km)	1.5–2.5 hours	Loop. An optional rock scramble takes you to the top of a craggy granite peak. The trail then loops past an old gold mine. Elevation change is about 400 feet.
Pine City	Pine City trailhead	4 miles (6.4 km)	2–3 hours	Out and back.
West Side Loop	Black Rock	4.7 miles (7.6 km)	2.5–4 hours	Loop. Explore the ridges and washes west of Black Rock campground.
Split Rock Loop	Split Rock picnic area	2.5 miles (4 km)	1.5–2.5 hours	Loop. Distance includes side trip to Face Rock.
Wall Street Mill	Barker Dam parking area	2 miles (3.2 km)	1.5–2.5 hours	Out and back. Travel to the remains of a historic gold milling site and see old rusted cars.

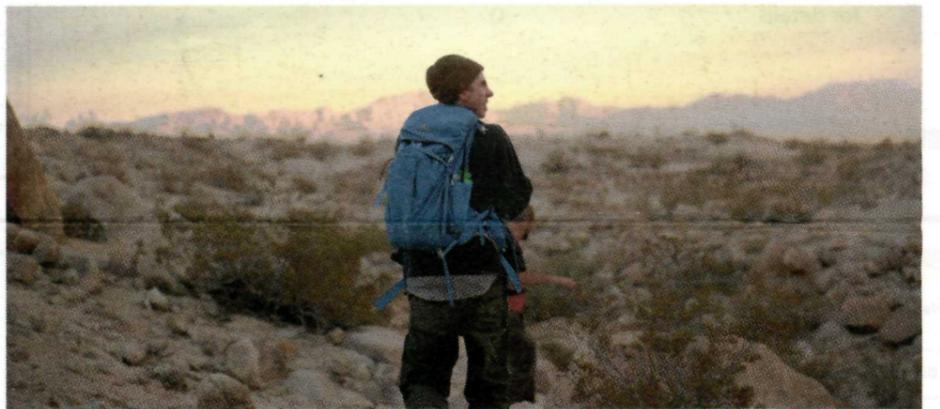
Backpacking

Covering an area of more than 792,000 acres, almost 85% of which is managed as wilderness, Joshua Tree National Park is a backpacker's dream.

Backcountry camps must be located at least one mile (1.6 km) from the road and 500 feet (152 m) from any trail. Campfires and pets are not permitted in the backcountry.

You must self-register for a free permit at a backcountry board (for locations, see park map). Park your vehicle at a backcountry board.

For more information, stop by a visitor center, or visit our website: nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/backpacking.htm



Ranger Programs

Program	Meeting Location	Duration/Distance	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Keys Ranch Tour <i>June–August</i> (ask at Oasis Visitor Center about additional dates) Explore the colorful story and numerous artifacts of this premier historical site. Tickets are required. Tickets must be purchased in person on the day of the tour at the Oasis Visitor Center starting at 8:30 am. Adults (12 & up) \$10; Senior Pass or Access Pass holders \$5; children ages 6–11 \$5; children under 6 free.	Keys Ranch Gate; tickets required	1.5 hours 0.5 mi (0.8 km)							June–July 6 pm August 5:30 pm
Evening Program Relax beneath the stars and enjoy a presentation about the park's fascinating natural or cultural history. Check at a visitor center for topics.	Jumbo Rocks Campground Amphitheater	45 min							9 pm
Special Programs Check at any visitor center for additional program listings.									

Junior Rangers

Kids are invited to participate in the Junior Ranger program.

Earn a Joshua Tree Junior Ranger badge by completing the activity book. Stop by any park visitor center or entrance station to pick one up.

Additionally, you'll be asked to attend a ranger-led program.

If attending a ranger program isn't possible, kids can fulfill this requirement by learning from exhibits in a visitor center or along a trail.

The Junior Ranger program is designed for ages 4–14, but anyone can do it. (Older "kids" should expect to be asked to do more activities!)



Joshua Tree National Park Association

Be a Part of the Adventure

The Joshua Tree National Park Association has been supporting preservation, scientific research, and education since 1962. We operate four bookstores, offer a field institute with classes taught by experts in natural sciences, cultural history, and the arts, and raise funds for the park through public events and our membership program.

Connect with Nature

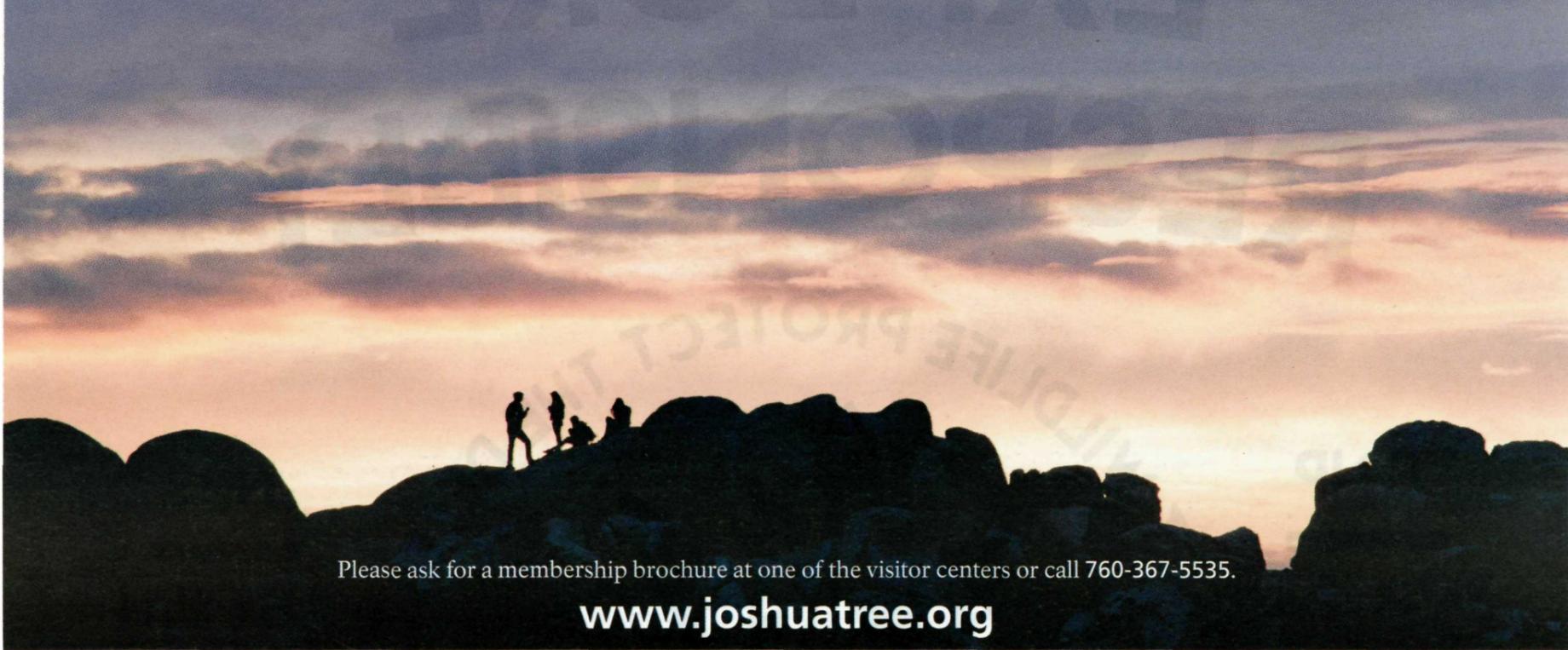
Learn more about Joshua Tree at our visitor center bookstores. Wildflower identification, climbing and hiking guides, birding, geology, stargazing, native plants, and local history are just a few of the topics. www.joshuatree.org/store/

Experience the Great Outdoors

Pick up a trail guide or sign up for a Desert Institute field class and make the park your classroom. Classes are not offered in the summer months, but take home a schedule and plan ahead.

Become a Member

Join the Joshua Tree National Park Association and you'll support park programs and projects while enjoying some great benefits. You are supporting youth programs, scientific research and historical collections, and you will assist in the preservation of our fragile desert environment for generations to come.



Please ask for a membership brochure at one of the visitor centers or call 760-367-5535.

www.joshuatree.org

Graffiti Report

Help keep your park clean and free of graffiti. Return this form to a visitor center or email your report to: jotr_graffiti@nps.gov

Contact Information

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone number _____

Date

When did you see graffiti? _____

Location

Where is it? Record GPS coordinates, geotag photos, draw a map, and/or describe surrounding landmarks.

Is it easy to reach and see? Write Yes or No.

- Can you walk to it?
- Can you reach it while standing on the ground?
- Will we need technical climbing gear to reach it?

Description

What does it look like? Are there identifiable colors, symbols, letters, or words? Feel free to draw a picture.

What was it done with? Circle all that apply.

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| Spray Paint | Chalk |
| Etched/Carved | Charcoal |
| Other | |

How big is it? Circle one.

- < 3 feet 3-5 feet > 5 feet
- Other

What roads, trails, or campgrounds is it visible from?

Photos

Overview and detail photos can be emailed to jotr_graffiti@nps.gov

EXPLORE RESPONSIBLY

JTNP
—
PACK IT IN
PACK IT
OUT

**PLAN
AHEAD**

**BRING
WATER**

NPS
—
USE SUN
PROTEC
TION

**LEAVE
PETS AT
HOME**

**PUT FOOD
AWAY**



@JOSHUATREENPS