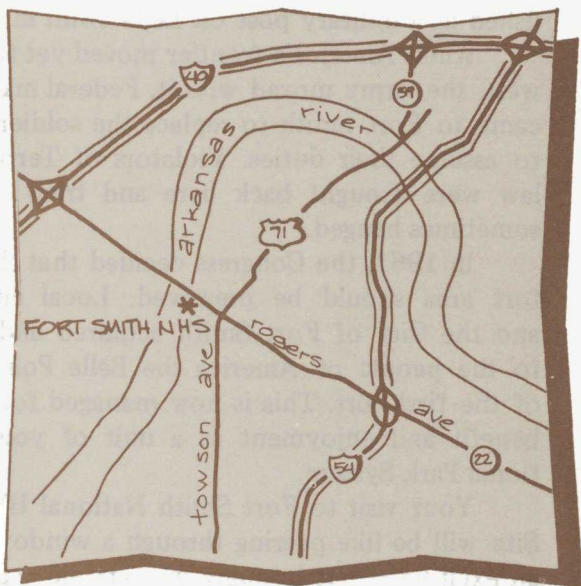


your SUPER 77 visit planner for

# Fort Smith National Historic Site



have a SUPER visit

**Safely  
Use  
Preserve  
Enjoy  
this Resource**

When the white settlers took over Indian lands and hunting grounds along the Atlantic coast, the Cherokee Nation asked for and was given a new home west of the Mississippi River. Soon many other tribes migrated to these western lands to escape from the white man and his confusing ways. Eventually, the Federal government required all the Eastern Indians to move into Indian Territory.

Differences in life styles of the many tribes often resulted in disagreements and sometimes in bloodshed. To maintain peace among the tribes, and to prevent white hunters and settlers from violating the treaties our country had made with them, Fort Smith was established as a military post on Belle Point in 1817.

When America's frontier moved yet farther west, the Army moved with it. Federal marshals came to Fort Smith to replace the soldiers and to assume their duties. Violators of Territorial law were brought back here and tried — and sometimes hanged.

In 1961, the Congress decided that the old fort area should be preserved. Local citizens and the City of Fort Smith acquired and gave to the people of America the Belle Point site of the first fort. This is now managed for your benefit and enjoyment as a unit of your National Park System.

Your visit to Fort Smith National Historic Site will be like peering through a window into an exciting — but in many ways tragic — period of America's past.

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The original Fort Smith was a log stockade that long ago vanished from the scene. But you can stroll over Belle Point and visit the site where a company of the U.S. Rifle Regiment landed on Christmas Day, 1817, and began work on the first post. The

archeological ruins are preserved just as they were excavated.

Parts of the second Fort Smith, begun in 1838, still stand and you'll see them on your visit. The oldest structure is the old Commissary, now the Old Fort Museum.

The major preservation is a two-story red brick building that was the enlisted men's barracks and later served as the U.S. Federal Court and Jail. You can visit the old jail, restored to what it was like when it was in use and frequently filled. In the old barracks the park operates a small museum and offers an audio-visual presentation on the history of old Fort Smith.

A high point of your visit will be the restored courtroom of Judge Isaac C. Parker. Stand before his bench and imagine the lives and fates of the more than 13,000 people who were tried here. Then go outside to the replica of the gallows on which 79 were hanged for their crimes.

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The Old Fort Museum, in the Commissary of the Second Fort. It's located across Rogers Avenue and Second Street, within the park. This is a private museum and a small fee is charged.

Fort Smith National Cemetery, two blocks south on Rogers Avenue. Judge Isaac C. Parker is buried here. On most national holidays you'll be inspired by the Avenue of Flags.

Fort Smith Art Center, 423 North 6th Street, in an area in which many of the old homes are being restored. The building housing the Center was built in 1855. From the old barracks, walk down Rogers Avenue 3 blocks, then turn left for 6 blocks on 6th Street.

North and east of the City of Fort Smith are units of the Ozark National Forest and the Ouachita National Forest is to the south. Both offer recreational opportunities, including camping.

Lake Fort Smith is the nearest State Park. It offers picnicking, camping, fishing and swimming. It is about 28 miles north of downtown Fort Smith, off State Route 282 or U.S. 71. U.S. 71 intersects with I-40 about 6 miles east of the City.

Lock and Dam No. 13 is part of the project that made the Arkansas River navigable from the Mississippi to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Follow Rogers Avenue (Star Route 22) east about 7 miles to Barling.

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Fort Smith National Historic Site is located on the bank of the Arkansas River in the extreme western part of the City of Fort Smith. The City is just south of I-40, on the Oklahoma border. Eastbound visitors on I-40 should exit onto U.S. 64 East in Oklahoma. As soon as you cross the Arkansas River Bridge, turn right onto 2nd Street for one block, then left to the Park.

Westbound visitors on I-40 should exit onto I-540 and continue south about 9 miles to Rogers Avenue (State Route 22) Exit. Turn west about 4 miles; as you approach the Arkansas River Bridge the Park will be on your left. Turn left one block on 3rd Street.

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You will find many motels and restaurants in the City of Fort Smith within a few miles of the Park.

The nearest State Park offering camping facilities is Fort Smith State

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directions

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try weather food  
be safe

Park, described elsewhere. Campers might want to stay in one of the National Forest campgrounds and make their visit to Fort Smith a day trip.

There are numerous facilities for refreshments near the Park. In the Visitor Center you can purchase a cold drink or candy from a machine dispenser.

The climate of Fort Smith is generally mild. There are, of course, periods of extreme cold in winter and heat in summer.

Half of the visitors to Fort Smith National Historic Site come here during the summer months of June, July and August. The balance of the year averages only about 165 people a day. So if you want a leisurely visit, with lots of time to look and reflect, and for personal interpretation by the trained staff, consider an off-season visit.

Fort Smith National Historic Site is located in a downtown area; there is much traffic on the streets within the park. Please be careful when walking or crossing these streets.

When going to the Belle Point area, be very careful as you cross the two sets of railroad tracks.

Beyond the Park you will see the rivers, the Poteau and the Arkansas. Both are unsafe for swimming or water sports. Caution your family accordingly.

Due to the closeness to the river, snakes have been seen in the tall grass surrounding the Park on rare occasions.

## rules

Have a good time and help us keep the park in good shape for the next visitors.

Please don't

Litter

Build Fires

Molest Wildlife

Disturb Historical Structures

You may bring your pets, but keep them on a leash or otherwise restrained.

### PARKS AND FORESTS

When you are enjoying yourself, what difference does it make if you are in a National Park or a National Forest? Both offer outstanding recreational opportunities and special facilities and services to enhance your visit.

Differences are in concept — which determines the way they are managed. National Forests are managed as renewable natural resources — timber, forage, water, wildlife. National Parks are set aside to be preserved, as they are, in perpetuity.

National Forests are managed for your benefit by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The National Park Service is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

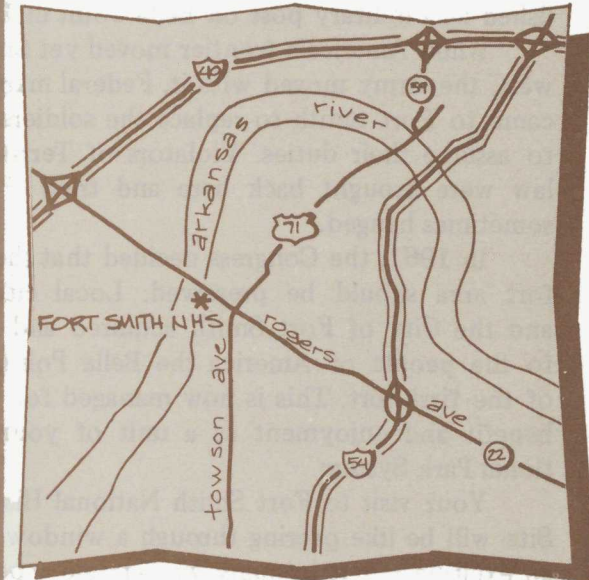
Included in the National Park System are great natural areas, as Parks, Monuments, Seashores, Lakeshores, Rivers and Riverways. The System also includes prehistoric and historic areas, as Monuments, Memorials, Memorial Parks, Historic Sites, Historical Parks, Battlefields and Battlefield Sites. "National" is generally part of their title.

National Park Service ★★★★★  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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