

HIKING AND BACKPACKING

INTRODUCTION

Guadalupe Mountains National Park offers you some of the best hiking opportunities in the Southwest. With over 80 miles of trails and ten backcountry campgrounds, in addition to many outstanding day hikes, you will surely want to return to the park time and again.

All hikes and backpacking trips require preparation. Improper equipment, poor conditioning, and disregard for weather conditions can result in an unpleasant or dangerous outing. Respect for the environment you hike through, will help us carry out our mission of protecting the park for you and future visitors.

HIKER CHECKLIST

- Many of the hikes in the park have some elevation gain. This gain varies from 400 feet to 3,000 feet. Pushing yourself could be dangerous. Please rest as often as you feel the need.
- There is *no water* available on the trails or in the backcountry. If you are hiking for less than a full day, carry 1/2 gallon of water. Full day hikes require one gallon.
- Temperatures vary widely in the park. Have proper clothing with you. Summer season you should have a hat, sun glasses, and sunscreen. Winter season you should have warm wool clothing used in the layering effect and foul weather gear.
- Always carry some basic First Aid supplies with you.

BACKPACKER CHECKLIST

- All overnight backpackers must have a free Backcountry Use Permit. These can be obtained at the Frijole Visitor Center, McKittrick Canyon (summer only) and Dog Canyon. Permits are issued first come, first served, and are issued no more than one day in advance. Late afternoon permit requests will be honored for the following day only.
- We ask that you practice minimum impact camping at all of the backcountry campgrounds throughout the park.
- Because of the park's no fire policy, you are required to use a backpacking stove if you cook.
- You will have to carry all your water. The one gallon per day rule is suggested for your safety.
- Dispose of human waste in a 4-6 inch hole, covering it with top soil for quick decomposition. Carry out other trash.
- Weather conditions change rapidly. Be prepared for extreme weather by having the proper clothing with you.
- Prepare for emergencies — carry the essentials: compass, map, emergency matches, knife, rain gear, extra food, flashlight, sleeping shelter, spare clothing, signal device (whistle or mirror).
- Always carry some basic First Aid supplies with you.

McKITTRICK CANYON

Because of the pristine and delicate environment of McKittrick Canyon, it is a day use area. The road to the canyon is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm daily, longer during summer.

The stream bed, banks, and visible water in the canyon are all elements of a fragile aquatic ecosystem. Walking in or on them is destructive. Help us preserve these and other features by staying on established trails.

SUGGESTED READING

1. Trails of the Guadalupe — A Hiker's Guide to the Trails of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Kurtz and Goran, 1986
2. The Guadalupe — Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Murphy, 1984.
3. Guadalupe Mountains National Park Topographical Map, Trails Illustrated, 1988.

The above items can be purchased by mail from:
Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains Association
3225 National Parks Highway
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(505) 785-2318