Joshua Tree

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Joshua Tree National Park

The Guide

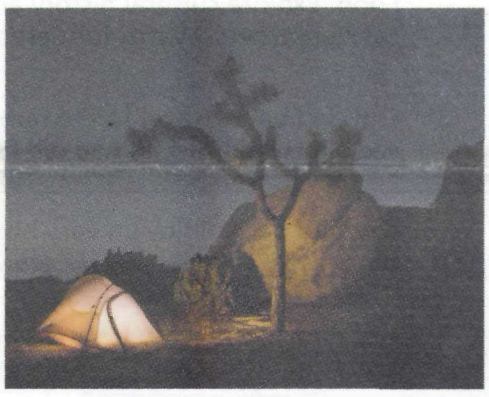
Desert landscape under harsh sun Photo: NPS / Brad Sutton

What to See and Do

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

Relax Visit Cottonwood Springs to relax in a desert oasis.

Camp Spend the night in a campground under the stars.

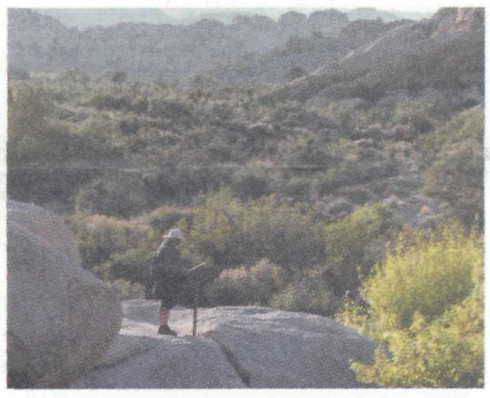


Enjoy Visit the Pinto Basin to see Cholla Cactus Garden and Ocotillo Patch.

Hike Enjoy hikes in the early morning and finish before it is too hot.

Learn Join a ranger program to learn more about the park.

Stroll Enjoy an easy walk on one of the gentler trails in the park.



Support Your Park

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. High winds may require fire bans.

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 and may need a permit to do so. For more information about climbing, bolting, and the permit process, visit:
nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/climbing.htm

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 decades. Red and green sticker dirt bikes, ATVs, and UTVs are prohibited in the park.

Watch for tortoises
The desert tortoise is a threatened species, and in the past year a number have been killed by cars. Tortoises may drink from puddles on the roads after rains or take shelter from the hot sun under vehicles. Drive carefully in the park and look under your vehicle before moving it: small tortoises on the road look like rocks.

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 are not permitted in campgrounds. Do not climb Joshua trees.

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

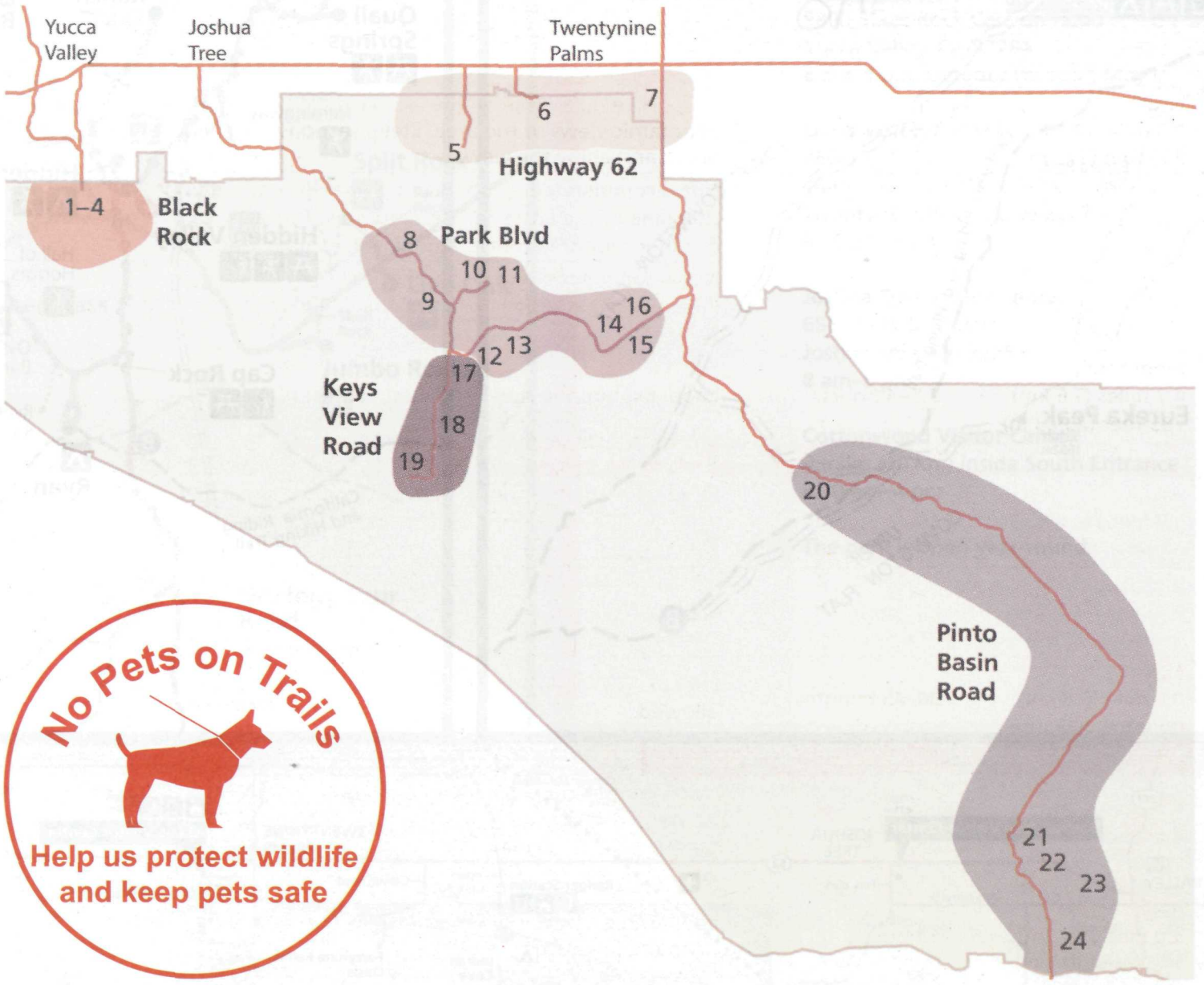
No graffiti
Over the last few years there has been an increase in graffiti and acts of intentional vandalism, including carving into rocks, trees, and historic structures in the park. This is illegal, it damages resources, and costs the park significant time and money to continually remove graffiti from rocks. Report incidents of graffiti to:
jotr_graffiti@nps.gov

Hiking

*** Day-use Only Trail:** Trails marked with an asterisk are closed sunset to sunrise. After sunset, all other trails are open only to backpackers with a vaild Wilderness Backpacking permit.

Hike		Distance Elevation	Time	Description
Black Rock				
1	**Hi-View**	easy 1.3 miles (2.1 km) 400 feet (122 m)	1.5 hours	Loop. Hike up a ridge on the western side of the park and take in panoramic views of the area. Steep sections with benches to take a break and enjoy the view.
2	**Panorama Loop**	strenuous 6.6 miles (10.6 km) 1,100 feet (336 m)	3.5–4.5 hours	**Not recommended.** Loop. Hike up a sandy wash, then follow the ridgeline of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Enjoy scenic views, dense Joshua tree forest, and pinyon-juniper woodland.
3	**Warren Peak**	strenuous 6.3 miles (10.1 km) 1,110 feet (338.3 m)	3.5–4.5 hours	**Not recommended.** Out and back. Hike to the summit of Warren Peak. Enjoy panoramic views of the quiet western part of Joshua Tree National Park.
4	**West Side Loop**	moderate 4.7 miles (7.6 km) 785 feet (239.3 m)	2.5–4 hours	Loop. Explore the ridge and washes west of Black Rock.
Highway 62				
5	**Indian Cove***	easy 0.6 miles (1.0 km) 50 feet (15.2 m)	30–45 minutes	Road to access this trail is closed during the summer. Loop. Walk on a gently rolling path with a few steps. Take a closer look at desert plants and learn about their traditional uses by Native Americans.
6	**Fortynine Palms Oasis***	moderate 3.0 miles (4.8 km) 300 feet (91 m)	2–3 hours	**Not recommended.** Out and back. There is a 300-foot (91-m) elevation gain in both directions, as you hike up and over a ridge. Descend to a fan palm oasis. Avoid this trail when it's hot.
7	**Oasis of Mara**	easy 0.5 mile (0.8 km) minimal elevation	30–45 minutes	Loop. Enjoy a relaxing walk through the Oasis of Mara. Pets on leash allowed.
Park Blvd				
8	**Boy Scout Trail**	strenuous 8.0 miles (12.9 km) 1,190 feet (362.7 m)	6 hours	**Not recommended.** One way. Stay on trail to avoid getting lost. Most hikers prefer to start at the south trailhead and finish at Indian Cove. Vehicle shuttle strongly recommended for hikers interested in doing the full length of the trail.
9	**Hidden Valley***	easy 1.0 mile (1.6 km) 100 feet (30.5 m)	1 hour	Loop. Discover a rock-enclosed valley that was once rumored to have been used by cattle rustlers.
10	**Barker Dam***	easy 1.1 miles (1.8 km) 50 feet (15.2 m)	1 hour	Loop. Explore cultural history and view a historic dam built by early cattle ranchers. Watch for desert bighorn sheep.
11	**Wall Street Mill***	moderate 2.0 miles (3.2 km) 80 feet (24.4 m)	1.5–2.5 hours	Out and back. Travel to the remains of a historic gold milling site and see old rusted cars and an old homestead. Leave what you find.
12	**Ryan Ranch***	easy 1.0 mile (1.6 km) 135 feet (41.1 m)	1 hour	Out and back. Enjoy an easy hike along an old ranch road and see a historic adobe structure. Leave what you find.
13	**Ryan Mountain***	strenuous 3.0 miles (4.8 km) 1,050 feet (320 m)	1.5–2.5 hours	**Not recommended.** Out and back. Hike to the summit of Ryan Mountain. This is one of the most popular hikes.
14	**Discovery Trail***	easy 0.7 mile (1.1 km) 70 feet (21.3 m)	30–45 minutes	Loop. Connects Skull Rock and Split Rock trails. Visit Face Rock between Discovery and Split Rock trails.
15	**Skull Rock***	easy 1.7 miles (2.7 km) 160 feet (48.8 m)	1–2 hours	Loop. Take an easy hike and explore boulder piles, desert washes, and the trail's namesake. The trail goes through Jumbo Rocks Campground.
16	**Split Rock Loop***	moderate 2.5 miles (4.0 km) 150 feet (45.7 m)	1.5–2.5 hours	Loop with small spur to Face Rock. Explore the park's geology.
Keys View Road				
17	**Cap Rock**	easy 0.4 miles (0.6 km) 20 feet (6.1 m)	30–45 minutes	Loop. View boulder piles, Joshua trees, and other desert plants.
18	**Lost Horse Mine**	moderate 4.0 miles (6.4 km) 550 ft (168 m)	2–3 hours	Out and back to mine. See one of the most productive gold mines in the park. Stay outside fenced area. Full-loop option is 6.5 miles (10.5 km). Leave what you find.
19	**Keys View**	easy 0.25 mile (0.4 km) 25 feet (7.6 m)	15–20 minutes	Loop. Short, paved, steep path. Breathtaking views of the San Andreas Fault, Mt San Jacinto, Mt San Gorgonio, and the Salton Sea.
Pinto Basin Road				
20	**Cholla Cactus Garden**	easy 0.25 miles (0.4 km) 10 feet (3 m)	15–30 minutes	Loop. View thousands of densely concentrated, naturally growing, cholla cactus. Stay on the trail, wear closed-toe shoes, and be aware of prickly cactus.
21	**Cottonwood Spring**	easy 0.1 mile (0.2 km) 25 feet (7.6 m)	10 minutes	Out and back. Short walk to fan palm oasis with cottonwood trees. Fantastic birding location with plentiful shade.
22	**Mastodon Peak**	moderate 3.0 miles (4.8 km) 375 ft (115 m)	1.5–2.5 hours	Loop. An optional rock scramble takes you to the top of a craggy granite peak. The trail then loops around past an old gold mine. Leave what you find.
23	**Lost Palms Oasis***	strenuous 7.5 miles (12.0 km) 500 feet (152 m)	5–6 hours	**Not recommended.** Out and back. Enjoy sandy washes and rolling terrain, then hike down into a canyon to explore a fan palm oasis. Climbing back out of the canyon is strenuous.
24	**Bajada**	easy 0.25 mile (0.4 km) 20 feet (6.1 m)	15–20 minutes	Loop. Walk on a bajada and discover plants of the Colorado Desert.

Hiking Trailheads



National Park Service
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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
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™

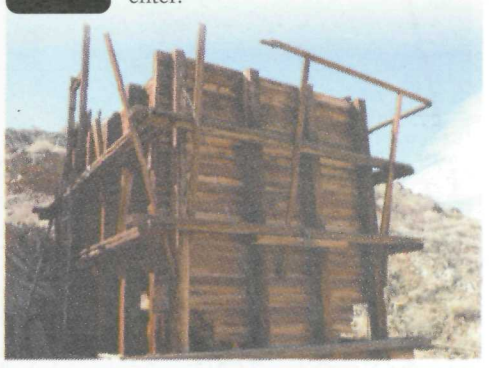
Safety

Water is available at:
- Oasis Visitor Center
- Black Rock Campground
- Cottonwood Campground
- Cottonwood Visitor Center
- West Entrance
- Indian Cove Ranger Station

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

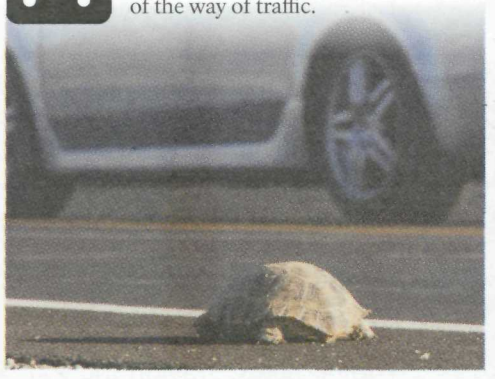
Use sunscreen and reapply often. Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat.

Many historic mine sites exist here. Structures may be unstable and may contain toxic chemicals. Do not enter.



Never put your hands or feet into rock crevices or onto ledges where you can not see. Use a flashlight.

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

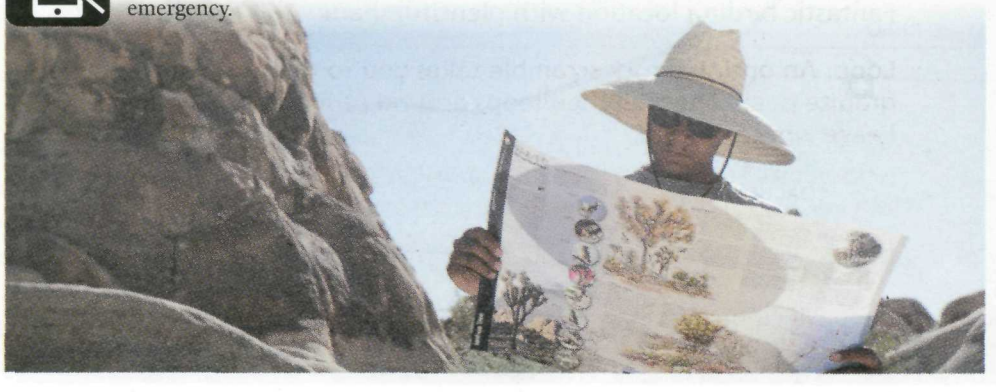


Bees are common and attracted to moisture. Roll up windows and exit vehicles quickly to minimize the likelihood of bees in your car.

Flash floods occur during summer monsoons. Avoid canyons and washes and move to higher ground. Do not drive through water.

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

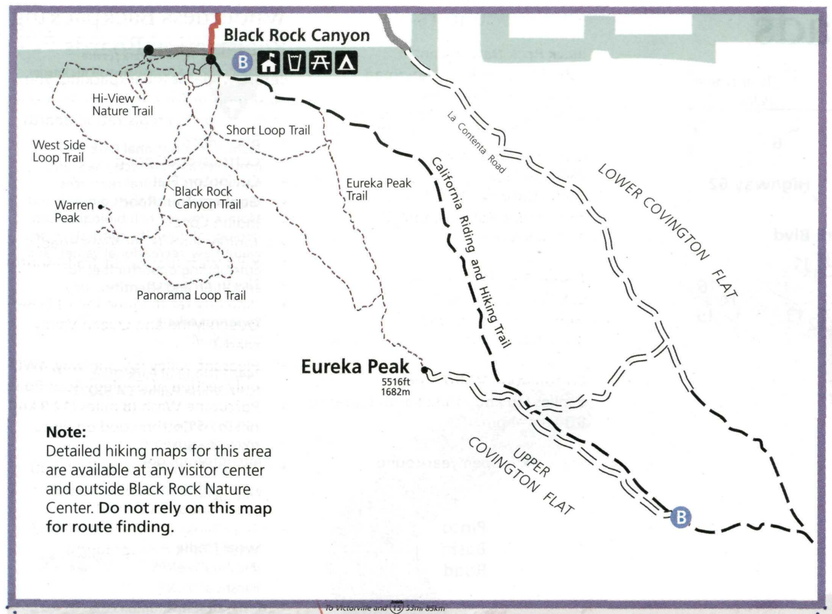
GPS units and navigation apps are not reliable in the park and may direct you to unsafe roads. Refer to the park map for navigation.

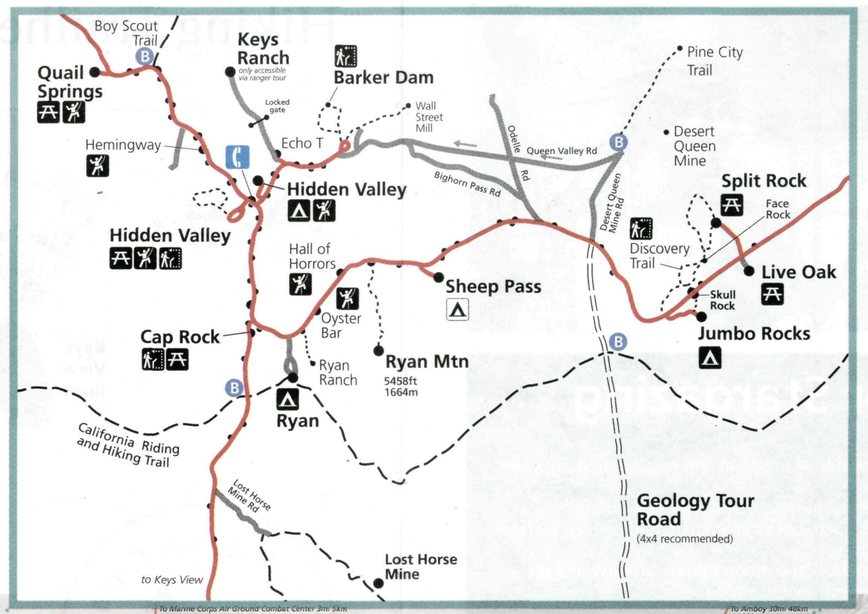


Emergency Phones

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

In an emergency, if you have cell service, dial 911 for assistance.





Visitor Centers

Black Rock Nature Center
9800 Black Rock Canyon Road
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
8 am–4 pm, October through May

Oasis Visitor Center
760-367-5522
74485 National Park Drive
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
8:30 am–5 pm

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

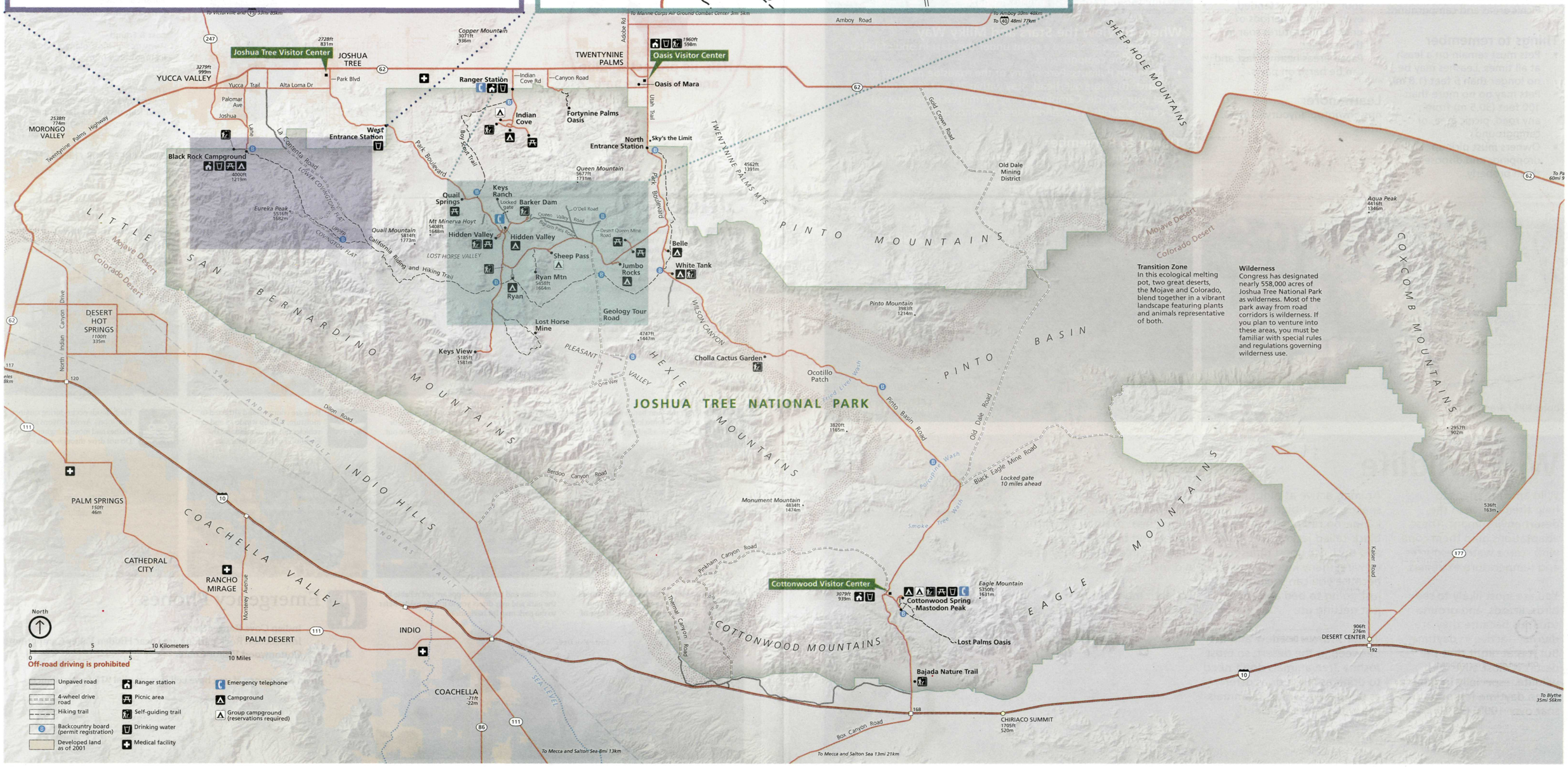
Cottonwood Visitor Center
6 miles (10 km) inside South Entrance
8:30 am–4 pm

The park is open year-round.

Wilderness Backpacking Registration Boards

Before wilderness backpacking, you must register for a free permit at one of the following registration boards:

- Black Rock
- Cottonwood Spring
- Covington Flat
- Geology 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, 4WD-only section of Geology Tour Road)
- Porcupine Wash (8 miles (12.9 km) north of Cottonwood on Pinto Basin Road)
- Turkey Flats (13 miles (20.9 km) north of Cottonwood on Pinto Basin Road)
- Twin Tanks (between Belle and White Tank campgrounds)



Ranger Programs

Check in visitor centers for dates and times.

Learn about history, geology, plants, and more. Program offerings vary throughout the season. Updated schedules are available on the park website: **nps.gov/jotr.**

Pets

Park regulations do not allow pets on trails or in park buildings. There are alternate 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 droppings and dispose of them properly.

Things to remember (continued)

- Bring plenty of water for your pet. Dogs have died in the park from dehydration/ heat illness.
- Do not leave your dogs in your vehicle unattended, even for short periods of time. Temperatures soar in the summer.
- Paved areas heat up fast and can be harsh on paws.

Learn more:

nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/pets.htm

Photo: NPS / Brad Sutton

Tips for Stargazing

What to Bring

- Bring Food and Water: Plan ahead. There is no running water in the park.
- Layer Up: Temperatures drop quickly in the evening.
- Watch Your Step: Cacti, noctural animals, and uneven surfaces may be difficult to see.
- Avoid the Moon: Check the moon's phase and rise and set times to find the best time to stargaze.

Where to View the Stars and Milky Way

- Campgrounds: Spend a night under the stars in one of Joshua Tree's nine campgrounds.
- Roadside Pullouts: Park in any of the roadside pullouts to watch the stars overhead. Stay within 20 feet (6 meters) of your vehicle. Camping is only permitted in designated campgrounds. You cannot sleep in roadside pullouts.

Things to Remember

- Overnight camping is not allowed along roadsides or in parking lots.
- Day-Use Only areas are closed from dusk to dawn.

Photo: NPS / Lian Law

Wild Wildlife

Wild animals adapt to help them thrive in the desert environment. These adaptations help them cope with scarce water resources and temperature extremes.

You are most likely to see birds, lizards, and ground squirrels because they are diurnal—active in daytime. But it is at night that the desert is most alive with wildlife, especially in summer when daytime temperatures soar over 100°F (38°C).

Animals active at night include snakes, desert bighorn sheep, kangaroo rats, coyotes, and black-tailed jackrabbits. Dawn and dusk are good times for viewing many kinds of animals, because you can see both those just going to bed and those just getting up.

Water sources are few and far between in the desert, so most Joshua Tree animals don't need to drink as much or as often as people do. Desert mammals use water more efficiently than humans. Reptiles have physiological adaptations that allow them to drink very little water, and birds can fly to water sources when they need a drink.

To learn more about the wildlife that call this area home and see species lists: **nps.gov/jotr/learn/nature**

Camping Inside the Park

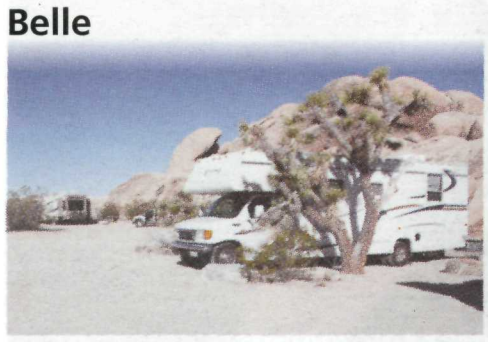
Camping Regulations

- A maximum of six people, three tents, and two licensed vehicles may occupy an individual campsite, if there is space. Some sites only have enough parking for one vehicle. A vehicle towing a trailer, popup, tent trailer, or fifth wheel—or a motorhome towing a vehicle—is considered two vehicles.
- Attaching lines to vegetation, including Joshua trees and junipers, is prohibited. Hammocks, slacklines, and other horizontal ropes are not permitted in campgrounds.
- Quiet hours: 10 pm–6 am.
- Generators permitted: 7–9 am, noon–2 pm, 5–7 pm.
- There is a 30-day camping limit each year. Only 14 of these nights may take place from October through May.
- Campsites left vacant for 24 hours will be treated as vacant. Holding/reserving campsites for persons not present is not allowed.
- Pets must remain on leash at all times and may not be left unattended.
- At Hidden Valley and White Tank campgrounds, RVs and trailers may not exceed a combined maximum length of 25 feet (7.6 m). Other campgrounds have length restrictions not to exceed 35 feet (10.7 m), unless otherwise noted.

Campgrounds

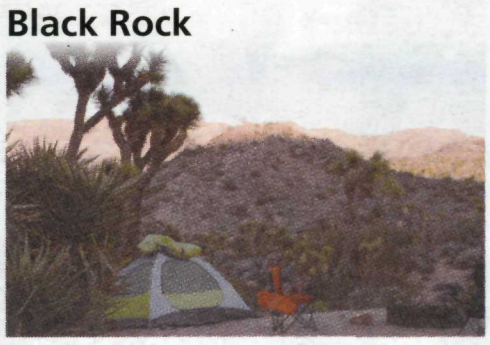
If a "Campground Full" sign is displayed at the campground, please try a different campground. Campgrounds are first-come, first-served June 10 through August 29. Starting August 30, some campgrounds require reservations on recreation.gov.

Belle



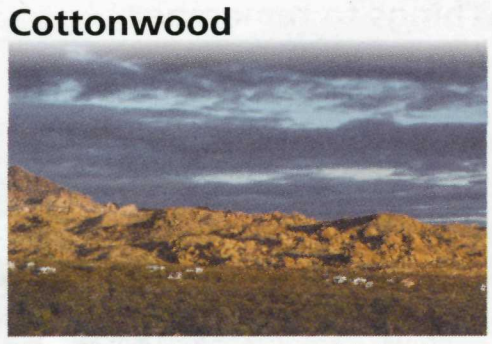
6/10–8/29: campground closed. Starting 8/30: all sites are first-come, first-served. 18 sites. $15 per night. Pit toilets. No water.

Black Rock



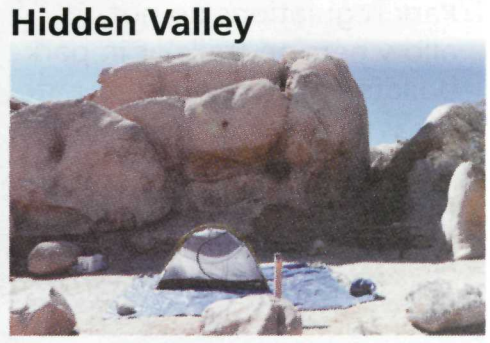
6/10–8/29: Sites 40–60 and 69–99 are closed. All other sites are first-come, first-served. Starting 8/30: all sites are reservation only. 99 sites. $20 per night. Water, flush toilets, fire grates, dump station.

Cottonwood



6/10–8/29: Loop B sites are closed. All other sites are first-come, first-served. Starting 8/30: all sites are reservation only. 62 sites. $20 per night. Water and flush toilets.

Hidden Valley



First-come, first-served. 44 sites. $15 per night. Pit toilets. No water.

Indian Cove

6/10–8/29: sites 40–101 are closed. All other sites are first-come, first served. Starting 8/30: all sites are reservation only. 101 sites. $20 per night. Pit toilets. Water at ranger station.

Jumbo Rocks

6/10–8/29: all sites are first-come, first served. Starting 8/30: all sites are reservation only. 124 sites. $15 per night. Pit toilets. No water.

Ryan

6/10–8/29: Campground closed. Starting 8/30: all sites are reservation only. 31 sites. $15 per night. Pit toilets. No water.

White Tank

6/10–8/29: Campground closed. Starting 8/30: All sites are first-come, first-served. 15 sites. $15 per night. Pit toilets. No water.

Camping Outside the Park

Campgrounds are usually full on weekends October through May. From mid-February to mid-May (and during holidays) campgrounds usually fill throughout the week. To improve your chances of getting a campsite and avoid disappointment, visit during the off-season (June through September), reserve a site, and/or have alternate overnight plans ready.

Private Campgrounds

North of the Park

HipCamp
hipcamp.com

Joshua Tree Lake RV & Campground
2601 Sunfair Road
Joshua Tree, CA
760-366-1213
joshuatreelake.com
Hookups and dump station

JT Sportsman's Club
6225 Sunburst Avenue
Joshua Tree, CA
760-366-2915
jtsportsmansclub.com
Hookups and dump station

Twentynine Palms RV Resort
4949 Desert Knoll Avenue
Twentynine Palms, CA
760-367-3320
twentyninepalmsresort.com
Hookups and dump station

South of the Park

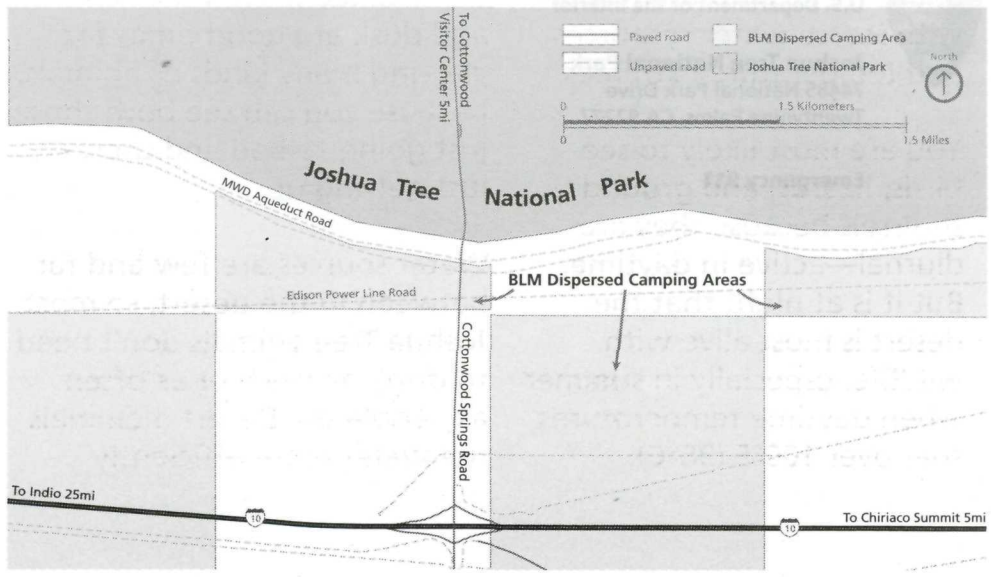
Chiriaco Summit
62450 Chiriaco Road
Chiriaco Summit, CA
760-227-3227

Dispersed Camping

Public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offer free dispersed camping south of the park. Camping is allowed within 300 feet (91 m) of roadways. There are no developed facilities in dispersed camping areas: no restrooms, no water, no trash collection. Bring what you need and pack out all your trash.

All vegetation, living or dead, is protected by law. Campfires require a permit, available from BLM offices or online. Use existing fire rings. Do not move rock. This area includes portions of Camp Young, part of General Patton's World War II training efforts.

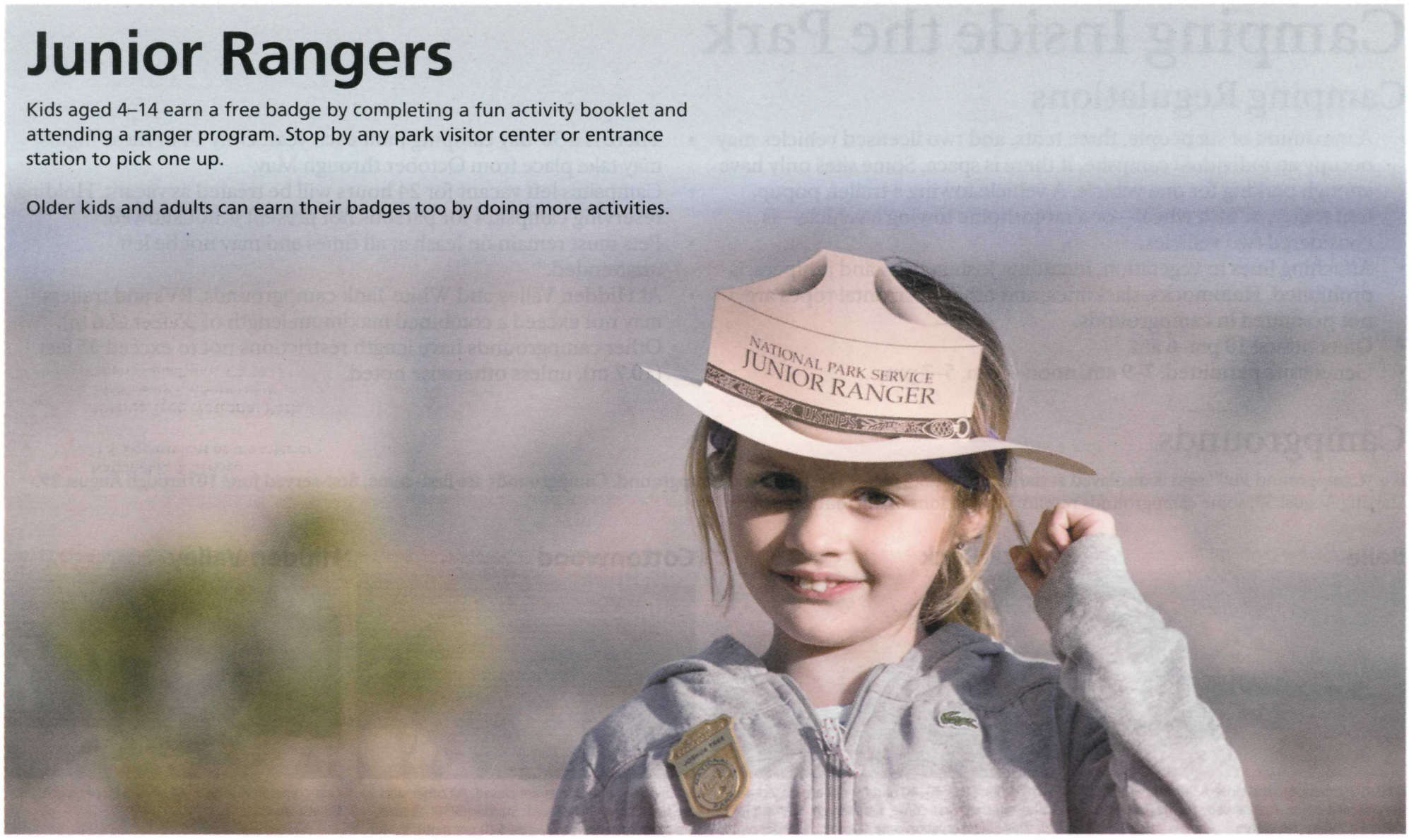
Dispersed Camping South of the Park
Accessible from Cottonwood Springs Road. See the map (right) for dispersed camping areas.



Junior Rangers

Kids aged 4–14 earn a free badge by completing a fun activity booklet and attending a ranger program. Stop by any park visitor center or entrance station to pick one up.

Older kids and adults can earn their badges too by doing more activities.



Joshua Tree National Park Association

Be a Part of the Adventure

The Joshua Tree National Park Association has been supporting interpretation, education, preservation, and scientific research since 1962. They operate four bookstores, offer a field institute with classes taught by experts, and raise funds for the park through donations and a membership program.

Experience the Great Outdoors

Pick up a trail guide or sign up for a Desert Institute field class and make the park your classroom. Take home a schedule and plan ahead.

Become a Member

Join the Joshua Tree National Park Association and you will help support park programs and projects while enjoying some great benefits. Members receive a 15% discount on merchandise at Joshua Tree National Park Association bookstores, as well as a discount on all Desert Institute classes. In turn, your gift helps support youth programs, scientific research, and historical collections, and you will assist in the preservation of our fragile desert environment for generations to come.

760-367-5535
joshuatree.org

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Joshua Tree National Park
74485 National Park Drive
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Emergency 911

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