

ACADIA



What is a national park?

The national park system has been called "America's Best Idea." A national park is a place that has been set aside and protected from most human development. This protects the landscape, plants, animals, and history of the area for future generations.

Yellowstone, America's first national park, was established in 1872. Since then, America has established more than 60 official national parks and set aside more than 350 other areas as national monuments, preserves, historic sites, historical parks, memorials, battlefields, cemeteries, recreation areas, seashores, lakeshores, rivers, parkways, trails, and other areas. People come to these sites within the national park system in order to learn, play, hike, snorkel, ride horses, reflect, bike, meditate, climb, explore, spelunk, kayak, fish, camp, view wildlife, relax, remember, and more.

History of Acadia

Acadia National Park preserves about half of Mount Desert Island and the tallest mountain along the Atlantic Coast, Cadillac Mountain. The diverse terrain contributes to a vast biodiversity of plants and animals. The Wabanaki people have history in Acadia dating back more than 10,000 years. The Wabanaki people spent time in Acadia year-round but not in one site. They would travel around harvesting sea and land animals and plants.

Fur traders and other European explorers came in the 17th century and the 19th century brought summer visitors and then wealthy families. Acadia was the first national park east of the Mississippi River. George B. Dorr was among those who worked to establish Acadia as a national park and is known as "The Father of Acadia National Park."

Fast Facts:

- Location: Maine
- Established: 1916
- Size: 76.6 sq. miles
- Annual Visitors: 3.4 million



Things to Do in the Park

Acadia hosts numerous recreational activities from spring to autumn including hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, rock climbing, kayaking and swimming. They also provide guided boat tours, and various other ranger-led programs. There are also winter activities in the park like skiing and ice fishing. Camping is another activity to do within the park, and there are two campgrounds and several lean-tos.



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Flora

The plants of a particular region are known as flora. The flora found in national parks usually includes many different types of trees, flowers, and other plants.

More than 1100 different species of plants live in Acadia. Some of the most common plants are the lowbush blueberry, Canadian bunchberry, hobblebush, and bluehead lily. Acadia is situated in the transition zone of two ecoregions: the northern boreal forest and the eastern deciduous forest. The boreal influence means much of the park is covered by spruce and fir, and the deciduous brings oak, maple, and beech.

Fauna

The animals of a particular region are known as fauna. National parks often have over hundreds of different species. These range from small insects like dragonflies to large mammals such as elk or grizzly bears. Different bird and insect species usually make up a large portion of the fauna.

Acadia is home to 40 species of mammals, more than 330 species of birds, 30 species of fish, 7 reptiles, and 11 amphibians. Most frequently seen mammals include deer and squirrels. With patience, you may see fox, mink, otters, and other small mammals.

Because of its wide variety of habitats and location on the eastern seaboard, Acadia is considered a premier bird watching location. It is a breeding ground and stop over site for a large variety of bird species. There are many small forest birds like warblers, birds of prey, shorebirds, and waterfowl. The birding opportunities change with the seasons, and in the winter, you can even find a snowy owl.



Physical Features

Physical features are naturally created features of the Earth such as mountains, lakes, mesas, geysers, and rivers. Physical features are often some of the most popular things to see in a national park. The mountains of Acadia National Park offer hikers beautiful views of the ocean, lakes, and forests. Cadillac Mountain, the tallest mountain along the eastern coastline of the United States, is 1530 ft tall. The park has a 27-mile Park Loop Road that takes visitors through forests and to the top of Cadillac Mountain.