

April 2024

NATIONAL PARK WEEK

What is National Park Week?

National Park Week is a celebration and recognition of our National Parks and this year it will be observed from Sunday, April 14 through Saturday, April 20 2024. The [National Park Service](https://www.nps.gov/) states, “Your National Parks are living examples of the best this Nation has to offer-our magnificent natural landscapes and our varied yet interrelated heritage. Parks can provide recreational experiences, opportunities to learn and grow, and places of quiet refuge.”

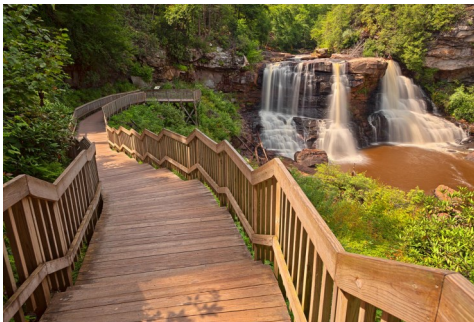


[Find a National Park event!](#)

[Free National Park Entrance Days!](#)

Benefits of the Great Outdoors:

- According to [UC Davis Health](#), nature can:
 - ◇ Improve our thinking, reasoning and other mental abilities (our minds and bodies relax in nature and it can also boost our creative and problem-solving abilities!)
 - ◇ Improve our physical wellness by walking, biking, hiking and more
 - ◆ Nature can also reduce our cortisol levels, the demands on our cardiovascular systems (lower heart rate/blood pressure), and increase our Vitamin D level
 - ◇ Improve our mental health by decreasing our anxiety, lessen stress, and even help us sleep better
 - ◆ Green spaces have also been linked to lower risks of depression and improve concentration and attention
- [UW Medicine](#) shared that outdoor time even benefits children in areas of mental health and may also be crucial for normal eye development
- Heather Eliassen, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#) noted the following benefits: “improvements in sleep, blood pressure, cognitive function and physical activity, as well as reduced risks of chronic disease, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.”



Adventure Awaits:

- Visit a local, state or national park
- Discover a community garden or start your own garden
- Plan a picnic with friends or family
- Go on a hike (pick a new trail)
- Play games outside with your kids or kids in your care (you can even read books by a shade tree)
- Visit the ocean, mountains or rain forest
- Start a walking club or join one
- Lay and watch the stars or clouds
- See what outdoor activities your community offers

Resources

- [National Park Service](#)
- [UC Davis Health: 3 ways getting outside into nature helps improve your health](#)
- [Right as Rain by UW Medicine: How Going Outside Can Benefit Your Health](#)
- [Harvard T.H. Chan: Spend time outdoors. It'll improve your health, say experts](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Benefits of Physical Activity](#)