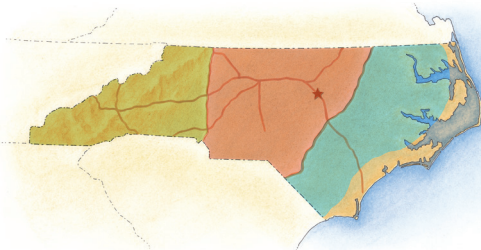




Our State GUIDE — TO — NC STATE PARKS

North Carolina's first state park, Mount Mitchell, offers the same spectacular views today as it did in 1916.

North Carolina's state parks are packed with opportunities: for adventure and leisure, recreation and education. From our highest peaks to our most pristine shorelines, there's a park for everyone, right here at home.



● **CAROLINA BEACH STATE PARK**

CAROLINA BEACH // This coastal park is home to the Venus flytrap, a carnivorous plant unique to the wetlands of the Carolinas. Located along the Cape Fear River, this secluded area is no less dynamic than the nearby Atlantic. (910) 458-8206 ncparks.gov/carolina-beach-state-park

● **CARVERS CREEK STATE PARK**

SPRING LAKE // A historic Rockefeller family vacation home is set among the longleaf pines of this park, whose scenic landscape spans more than 4,000 acres, rich with natural and historical beauty. (910) 436-4681 ncparks.gov/carvers-creek-state-park

● **CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK**

CHIMNEY ROCK // Protruding from the mountainous landscape, Chimney Rock is aptly named for its geologic form. And while this granite feature is the main attraction, waterfalls and a wealth of flora and fauna are captivating, too. (828) 625-1823 chimneyrockpark.com

● **CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE STATE PARK**

SEVEN SPRINGS // Over time, erosion has carved out these 90-foot cliffs that loom above the Neuse River. This land was once occupied by Tuscarora and Saponi tribes, who used the river for travel and the surrounding land as ceremonial grounds and gathering places. (919) 778-6234 ncparks.gov/cliffs-of-the-neuse-state-park

● **CROWDERS MOUNTAIN STATE PARK**

KINGS MOUNTAIN // When drilling and excavation in nearby areas threatened the beloved Crowdres Mountain, local residents convened to protect it, and this state park was established in 1973. (704) 853-5375 ncparks.gov/crowders-mountain-state-park

● **DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK**

SOUTH MILLS // Once a site of extensive logging, this now-protected land has rebounded. Sixteen miles of trails lead visitors around this hauntingly beautiful landscape, and a 2,000-foot boardwalk ventures into the Great Dismal Swamp itself. (252) 771-6593 ncparks.gov/dismal-swamp-state-park

● **ELK KNOB STATE PARK**

TODD // Elk Knob is the only park in the state that offers cross-country skiing during the winter. Dramatic elevation changes create an endurance challenge rewarded by beautiful forests and summit views. (828) 297-7261 ncparks.gov/elk-knob-state-park

● **ENO RIVER STATE PARK**

DURHAM // The Eno River is tucked away amid the bustle of Durham and Orange counties, and curves along nearly 30 miles of trails. This Piedmont gem is also home to a historic mill site. (919) 383-1686 ncparks.gov/eno-river-state-park

● **FALLS LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA**

WAKE FOREST // Initially created to control flooding and act as a reservoir for surrounding communities, Falls Lake quickly became a popular spot for outdoor fun. Today, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail weaves in and out of the area, attracting hikers and leisurely walkers. (919) 676-1027 ncparks.gov/falls-lake-state-recreation-area

● **FORT FISHER STATE RECREATION AREA**

KURE BEACH // Catch a glimpse of Loggerhead sea turtles on the protected portions of the area's oceanfront, or explore the trails that weave through the salt marsh. (910) 458-5798 ncparks.gov/fort-fisher-state-recreation-area

ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES		CAMPING	CABINS	HIKING MORE THAN 5 MILES	HORSEBACK RIDING	BICYCLING	ROCK CLIMBING	FISHING	SWIMMING	PICNIC SHELTER	VISITOR CENTER	HISTORIC SITE
WESTERN	CHIMNEY ROCK						●	●	●	●		
	CROWDERS MOUNTAIN	●	●				●	●	●	●		
	ELK KNOB	●	●									
	GORGES	●		●	●		●	●	●	●		
	GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN	●	●									
	HANGING ROCK	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	LAKE JAMES	●			●	●	●	●	●			
	LAKE NORMAN	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	MORROW MOUNTAIN	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
	MOUNT JEFFERSON								●			
	MOUNT MITCHELL	●						●	●	●		
	NEW RIVER	●	●				●	●	●	●		
	PILOT MOUNTAIN	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			
CENTRAL	SOUTH MOUNTAIN	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	STONE MOUNTAIN	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	CARVERS CREEK						●	●	●	●	●	●
	ENO RIVER	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
	FALLS LAKE	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
	HAW RIVER						●					
	JORDAN LAKE	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
	KERR LAKE	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
	LUMBER RIVER	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
	MAYO RIVER						●	●	●	●	●	●
	OCCONECHEE MOUNTAIN						●					
EASTERN	RAVEN ROCK	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
	WEYMOUTH WOODS		●							●		
	WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
	DISMAL SWAMP		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	GOOSE CREEK	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
	JONES LAKE	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
COASTAL	LAKE WACCAMAW	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
	MEDOC MOUNTAIN	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
	MERCHANTS MILL POND	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	PETTIGREW	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	SINGLETARY LAKE	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
	CAROLINA BEACH	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
	FORT FISHER						●	●	●	●	●	●
	FORT MACON						●	●	●	●	●	●
	HAMMOCKS BEACH	●					●	●	●	●	●	●
	JOCKEY'S RIDGE						●	●	●	●	●	●



Make sure to scan the trees and sky at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area — it's home to the largest concentration of bald eagles on the East Coast.

● FORT MACON STATE PARK

ATLANTIC BEACH // Step into Fort Macon's casemates and immerse yourself in Civil War history. Or venture over to the undisturbed shoreline for a peaceful swim. (252) 726-3775
ncparks.gov/fort-macon-state-park

● GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK

WASHINGTON // Live oaks draped with Spanish moss frame the trails of this park, located in an area once home to the Tuscarora Indians, royal governors, and, later, subsistence farmers. (252) 923-2191
ncparks.gov/goose-creek-state-park

● GORGES STATE PARK

SAPPHIRE // This rugged landscape was long used for industrial purposes, until conservation efforts began in the late 1970s. Subsequent years of land donation and protection led to the creation of the park, which is now a haven for many rare species. (828) 966-9099
ncparks.gov/gorges-state-park

● GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

BANNER ELK // Home to more than 70 rare and endangered species, Grandfather Mountain has long attracted global attention for its distinctive ecology and physical grandeur. Severe weather, cliff-climbing ladders, and intense terrain make for a uniquely challenging experience. (828) 963-9522
grandfather.com

● HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK

SWANSBORO // Accessible only by boat, this undeveloped barrier island was first recognized as a valuable spot by Native Americans. Dugout canoes, pirate ships, and World War II Coast Guardsmen have all prowled the surrounding shallow waters. Nowadays, visitors can still explore paddling trails and enjoy nature, undisturbed. (910) 326-4881
ncparks.gov/hammocks-beach-state-park

● HANGING ROCK STATE PARK

DANBURY // This park's namesake rock juts out from the earth like the bow of a large ship, overlooking the wooded lands below. The park is set among the Sauratown Mountains, known as the "mountains away from the mountains" for their distance from the Blue Ridge. (336) 593-8480
ncparks.gov/hanging-rock-state-park

● HAW RIVER STATE PARK

BROWNS SUMMIT // This park is a serene getaway for the Triad region, set along the Haw River with miles of trails for exploring. A boardwalk to the river stretches from the Piedmont Loop Trail, a scenic and short hike through the park. (336) 342-6163
ncparks.gov/haw-river-state-park

● JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK

NAGS HEAD // The steep, sandy slope of this dune may inspire an urge to tumble all the way down. Many do just that, or opt to hang glide, a more graceful approach to the East Coast's tallest sand dune. Roanoke Sound meets the park on its inland side, where paddling, sunbathing, and sandy shoreline trails encourage visitors to relax. (252) 441-7132
ncparks.gov/jockeys-ridge-state-park

● JONES LAKE STATE PARK

ELIZABETHTOWN // The Southeastern United States is home to around 500,000 bays, best described as slight topographical depressions in the Coastal Plains. Jones Lake is one of these features that still contain shallow open water, which invites reptiles, birds, and vegetation to settle in permanently. (910) 588-4550
ncparks.gov/jones-lake-state-park

● JORDAN LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

APEX // B. Everett Jordan Lake proves itself to be a generous resource for both practical and recreational use. Surrounding communities rely on this 14,000-acre reservoir for its water supply and a host of fun activities on and off the water. (919) 362-0586
ncparks.gov/jordan-lake-state-recreation-area

● KERR LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

HENDERSON // This 50,000-acre reservoir, located along the Virginia state line, is known to Virginians as Buggs Island Lake, after an early settler of the area. (252) 438-7791
ncparks.gov/kerr-lake-state-recreation-area



In the 1800s, Medoc Mountain was used for grape cultivation. It was named after a region of France that is famous for its vineyards.

● LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

NEBO // Set at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lake James has been a hydro-electric power source for Duke Energy since the early 1900s. Fittingly, it was named after the company's cofounder, James B. Duke. (828) 584-7728
ncparks.gov/lake-james-state-park

● LAKE NORMAN STATE PARK

TROUTMAN // In addition to North Carolina's largest man-made lake, this state park also boasts one of the region's most popular mountain biking networks. (704) 528-6350
ncparks.gov/lake-norman-state-park

● LAKE WACCAMAW STATE PARK

LAKE WACCAMAW // This Carolina bay is home to at least five species on the state's rare plant list, along with some aquatic species you won't find anywhere else in the world. A boardwalk trail extends 375 feet into the lake, perfect for taking in the natural surroundings. (910) 646-4748
ncparks.gov/lake-waccamaw-state-park

● LUMBER RIVER STATE PARK

ORRUM // True to its name, Lumber River was an 18th-century hotspot for timber harvest and transport. Many communities cropped up along the riverbanks as a result, some of which are still around. The park is now sectioned into three parts: scenic, recreational, and natural, all varying in public accessibility. (910) 628-4564
ncparks.gov/lumber-river-state-park

● MAYO RIVER STATE PARK

MAYODAN // Smooth rocks pepper the Mayo River, where falls and flowing waters have rounded the river's edges over time. Look for well-preserved Native American fish traps, as well as leftover relics from local textile mills. (336) 427-2530
ncparks.gov/mayo-river-state-park

● MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

HOLLISTER // Standing just 325 feet above sea level, Medoc Mountain is what remains of a mighty mountain range formed during the Paleozoic Era. Years of withstanding the elements has softened its peak, but up-close exploration reveals still-rugged terrain and steep slopes. (252) 586-6588
ncparks.gov/medoc-mountain-state-park

● MERCHANTS MILLPOND STATE PARK

GATESVILLE // A certain eerie beauty is cast upon this swamp-like environment, where bald cypress trees create winding paths for both turtles and kayaks. The primarily aquatic environment is home to many species of flora and fauna, including two primitive fish species: the longnose gar and the bowfin. (252) 357-1191
ncparks.gov/merchants-millpond-state-park

● MORROW MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

ALBEMARLE // The four major peaks within this park — Morrow, Sugarloaf, Hattaway, and Fall — are all less than 1,000 feet tall. Morrow Mountain has the highest elevation within the park, rising 936 feet. (704) 982-4402
ncparks.gov/morrow-mountain-state-park

● MOUNT JEFFERSON STATE NATURAL AREA

WEST JEFFERSON // This mountain, covered in a variety of wildflowers, trees, and shrubs, was once named Panther Mountain, inspired by a local legend. Later, it was renamed in honor of Thomas Jefferson and his father, Peter, who owned and surveyed nearby lands. (336) 246-9653
ncparks.gov/mount-jefferson-state-natural-area

● MOUNT MITCHELL STATE PARK

BURNSVILLE // The strenuous six-mile hike to the summit of Mount Mitchell, the highest point east of the Mississippi River, rewards those who brave it with spectacular views. (828) 675-4611
ncparks.gov/mount-mitchell-state-park

● NEW RIVER STATE PARK

LAUREL SPRINGS // This park encompasses a scenic portion of the New River, which was named a National Wild and Scenic River in 1976. Despite its name, the New River is thought to be one of the oldest rivers in North America, predating the mountains it now winds through. (336) 982-2587
ncparks.gov/new-river-state-park

● OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN STATE NATURAL AREA

HILLSBOROUGH // Keep an eye out for the Brown Elfin, a rare species of butterfly, while strolling this area's wooded trail. Due to this species' seasonal presence, researchers believe that the habitats of Occoneechee Mountain have remained largely unchanged since the last Ice Age. (919) 383-1686
ncparks.gov/occonechee-mountain-state-natural-area

● PETTIGREW STATE PARK

CRESWELL // This park encompasses Lake Phelps, an ecologically and archaeologically fascinating site that has witnessed thousands of years of human history. Artifacts like dugout canoes, found sunken in the lake's shallow water, provide insight into the past. (252) 797-4475
ncparks.gov/pettigrew-state-park

● PILOT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

PINNACLE // The protruding form of Pilot Mountain has long been a landmark for travelers. When the Saura Indians lived in the region, they used it as the "Great Guide" or "Pilot." (336) 325-2355
ncparks.gov/pilot-mountain-state-park

● RAVEN ROCK STATE PARK

LILLINGTON // Rising 150 feet above the Cape Fear River, the impressive Raven Rock was named for the, yes, ravens that once roosted atop it. Many other unique rocky features are seen throughout the park, too. (910) 893-4888
ncparks.gov/raven-rock-state-park

● SINGLETARY LAKE STATE PARK

KELLY // Carolina bays are known to be shallow, and at just 11.8 feet deep, Singletary Lake, surrounded by old cypress trees, currently holds the title for the deepest bay lake in North Carolina. (910) 669-2928
ncparks.gov/singletary-lake-state-park

● SOUTH MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

CONNELLY SPRINGS // This area was once the site of a gold rush when the mineral was found at Brindle Creek in 1828. Today, there are hikers instead of miners. The park's beautiful landscape includes elevations up to 3,000 feet, as well as an impressive 80-foot waterfall. (828) 433-4772
ncparks.gov/south-mountains-state-park

● STONE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

ROARING GAP // The center of this 14,000-acre park is Stone Mountain, a bald-faced dome. A restored mountain farm stands on the land below, welcoming visitors to delve into the lives of the area's early settlers. (336) 957-8185
ncparks.gov/stone-mountain-state-park

● WEYMOUTH WOODS SANDHILLS NATURE PRESERVE

SOUTHERN PINES // The longleaf pine forests of this area once spanned across the Southeast. Although the longleaf population has dwindled, this preserve provides a window into the landscape and ecology of the past. (910) 692-2167
ncparks.gov/weymouth-woods-sandhills-nature-preserve

● WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD STATE PARK

RALEIGH // Established in the wake of poor farming practices and the onset of the Great Depression, this land was purchased by the Resettlement Administration to create a public recreational area. Now bordered by Raleigh's bustling highways, this surprisingly serene land is a perfect way for city dwellers to get outside without going far. (919) 571-4170
ncparks.gov/william-b-umstead-state-park



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