

# National Park Checklist

Checklist · 26 items · 8 sections

Visiting a US national park requires more preparation than a regular trip. This national park checklist covers everything: from booking permits and choosing gear to trail safety, Leave No Trace principles, and what to pack for a day hike or multi-day visit.

Open the editable version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/national-park-checklist>

## BEFORE YOU GO

- Book required entry permits in advance (timed entry for popular parks like Yosemite, Arches)

HIGH

*Many parks require timed entry reservations months in advance: check recreation.gov*

- Purchase America the Beautiful annual pass if visiting multiple parks (\$80)
- Download offline maps: Google Maps, AllTrails, or Gaia GPS (cell service limited)

HIGH

- Check trail conditions, closures, and weather forecast before departing

HIGH

- Make campground reservations (recreation.gov): fills months ahead for peak season

HIGH

- Notify someone of your itinerary and expected return time

HIGH

## WATER & FOOD

- Water: carry at least 2 liters per person per day (more in hot/dry parks)

HIGH

- Water filter or purification tablets for backcountry water sources

HIGH

- Snacks and meals: high-energy trail food (nuts, bars, jerky, sandwiches)

HIGH

## CLOTHING

- Layers: base layer, insulating layer, waterproof outer layer

HIGH

- Sturdy hiking boots or trail shoes (broken in before the trip)

HIGH

- Hat with brim for sun protection  
**HIGH**
- Rain jacket or poncho even if forecast is clear  
**HIGH**
- Warm extra layer for high-elevation or evening temperatures

## SUN & INSECT PROTECTION

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- Sunscreen SPF 30+ and lip balm with SPF  
**HIGH**
- Insect repellent: DEET or Picaridin based  
**HIGH**
- Sunglasses with UV protection  
**HIGH**

## SAFETY & NAVIGATION

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- Headlamp with extra batteries (start hikes early: be back before dark)  
**HIGH**
- First aid kit: blister care, bandages, pain relievers, moleskin  
**HIGH**
- Paper trail map of the park (as backup for offline maps)
- Emergency whistle and signal mirror

## WILDLIFE SAFETY

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- Bear canister or bear spray (required in many western parks)  
**HIGH**
- Learn wildlife safety: how to react to bears, mountain lions, rattlesnakes  
**HIGH**

## LEAVE NO TRACE

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- Pack out all trash: follow Leave No Trace principles  
**HIGH**
- Stay on marked trails: do not cut switchbacks or trample vegetation  
**HIGH**

## ELECTRONICS

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- Portable charger/power bank for phone and camera