

Nature

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Plan 3-1/2 hours for a walk-in tour and 1-1/2 hours for Big Room tour of the Caverns. Cost is \$10 (free or ages 15 and younger). The park's audio self-guided tour is \$3 extra (also available in Spanish).

The "bat season" generally lasts from April or May through mid-October. Daily bat flight talks begin at 7:30 p.m. (about 15 minutes long) are offered just before sunset at the amphitheater outside the natural entrance. Admission is free. Then — bats willing — visitors are treated to the sunset spectacle of clouds of bats flying out of the cave entrance. Best flights are usually in August and September.

Bird banding of the cave swallows is the first Friday of the month through October in the amphitheater.

Other guided tours are available; call or check website for details.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park

— 110 miles east of El Paso on the way to Carlsbad, the 86,416-acre park includes the highest point in Texas: Guadalupe Peak, 8,749 feet. Entry fee: \$5 for ages 16 and older, good for one week and all trails. Pine Springs Visitor Center hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Camping is \$8 per site per night. Information: (915) 828-3251 or nps.gov.

New Mexico State Parks — Day-use fee is \$5 when visiting any state park. All programs are free with park entrance, unless otherwise listed. Information: (575) 744-5998 or nmparks.com.

• Elephant Butte Lake State Park, Information: (575) 744-5923.
Boating Safety Class is 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, **Aug. 12.**

American Bass Fishing Tournament is 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 12.**

Cobblestone Wacky Triathlon is 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 12.**

• Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. 5000 Calle del Norte in Mesilla. Information: (575) 523-4398. Audubon Bird Walks are 7:15 a.m.

Saturdays, led by park volunteers. Ranger-led Nature Hikes are 2:30 p.m. Sundays. Fitness in Nature walks with the Second Chance Walker Program are 8:30 a.m. every Saturday beginning at the Visitor Center.

• Rockhound State Park, five miles south of Deming on SR 11 and then east on Rockhound Road (State Road 141) for nine miles. Day hours: 7:30 a.m. to sunset. Information: (575) 546-6182 or (575) 744-5998.

Mariachi program is 6 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, **Sept. 16**, showcasing Deming High School mariachi musicians.

• Bottomless Lakes State Park — 13 miles east of Roswell, N.M. via US 380. Information: (575) 624-6058.

The 31st Annual Paddle Boat Races are 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 5.**

Bottomless Bubblefest scuba diving event is 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, **Sept. 2-3.**

An Ochos Millas bike ride around the park is 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, **Sept. 9.**

Enchanted Evening presentations are 8 to 9 p.m. Saturdays, through Sept. 2, at the pavilion area.

Camping fees at state parks are \$8 for primitive site; \$10 for developed site (electrical hookup \$4 extra).

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park

— 1504 Miehl Drive N., Carlsbad, N.M. Admission: \$5 (\$3 ages 7-12; free 6 and under). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily (last entry at 3:30

p.m.). Information: (575) 887-5516.

Full Moon Walks: 8 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 5**; 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, **Sept. 5.**

Bottomless Bubblefest — Bottomless Lake State Park, 13 miles east of Roswell, (via U.S. Hwy 380 and NM Hwy 409), will host its annual Labor Day weekend event 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, **Sept. 2-3**, featuring underwater "dive poker," underwater games, snorkeling, beach volleyball, nature hikes, ranger talks and more. Day-use fee is \$5. Camping fees (reservations recommended): \$8 for primitive site; \$10 for developed site (electrical hookup \$4 extra). Information: (575) 624-6058 or nmparks.com.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

— 44 miles north of Silver City on NM Highway 15 in the middle of the majestic Gila Wilderness, the first and one of the largest wilderness areas. Entrance fee: \$5 per person; \$10 per family. Information: (575) 536-9461 or nps.gov/gicl.

The trail to the cliff dwellings is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. year round. Everyone must be off the trail by 5 p.m. Visitor center is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Alameda Park Zoo

— Alameda Park, 1321 North White Sands Blvd. (U.S. 54/70), Alamogordo. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission: \$2.50 (\$1.50 ages 3-11 and 60 and older; free for ages 2 and younger). Information: (575) 439-4290.

Aguirre Spring Campground

— The Organ Mountain recreational area, run by the federal Bureau of Land Management, is off U.S. 70 about 15 miles east of Las Cruces. Fifty-five family camping and picnic sites, plus two group areas. Day-use fee is \$3 per vehicle. Information: (575) 525-4300.

Dripping Springs Natural Area — The recreational area is at the base of the Organ Mountains at the end of Dripping Springs Road (the eastern extension of University Avenue), about 10 miles east of Las Cruces. The area, run by the federal Bureau of Land Management in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy, includes the A.B. Cox Visitors' Center, several hiking trails, and La Cueva Picnic Area.

April through September the entrance gate is open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission is \$3 per vehicle. No pets allowed (except for assistance animals). Information: (575) 522-1219.



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