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Top 5 Underrated National Parks to Discover

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All

Yosemite. Yellowstone. Grand Canyon. Grand Teton. Glacier. We all know the big-name national parks. What about some of the less celebrated but equally awesome national parks out there? Stray from the beaten path without sacrificing adventure and make a visit to these five underrated national parks.

Big Bend National Park, Texas

This often-overlooked gem in Southwest Texas is an unbeatable place to escape the grid and adventure hard. Paddle the Rio Grande River, embark on an epic backcountry adventure, tackle rolling hills with your road bike, hit the trails atop your mountain bike, or just take in views of the rugged desert landscape. This amazing national park has a little something for everyone.

Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve, Colorado

If you love shredding the slopes in Colorado, you're sure to love shredding the dunes at this underrated destination. That's right. Sandboarding is a favorite activity among visitors to this unique national park in Southern Colorado, which is home to the tallest dunes in North America. Just make sure to pack your sandboard – or be prepared to rent one from one of several retailers in the area. You'll find plenty else to do at Great Sand Dunes, including unreal hiking along rugged alpine trails, skimboarding in Medano Creek, and off-boarding the park's adventure-packed primitive roads.

Channel Islands National Park, California

Lost in California's endless inventory of iconic national parks is Channel Islands National Park, a coastal escape off the Ventura coast in Southern California. While a visit requires some advance planning, particularly for the getting-there part of your trip, the payoff is well worth it. Backpacking. Camping. Hiking. Scuba diving. Whale watching. Sea cave exploring. There's so much to do and see at this awesome national park, which spans five of the eight total Channel Islands. Most adventurers get there via park concessionaire boats that operate out of Ventura and Oxnard harbors. Do your research and make a visit to Channel Islands National Park happen. It's worth the extra work.

North Cascades National Park, Washington

Like California, Washington has its share of big-name national parks. Don't let North Cascades get lost in the mix. Often called the "North American Alps," the North Cascades offer up a mesmerizing landscape you won't find elsewhere in the contiguous United States. From jagged mountain peaks and endless forest to colorful alpine meadows and more than 300 glaciers, this national park is unmistakably epic.

Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida

Another remote gem, Dry Tortugas is a stunning retreat off the South Florida coast, about 70 miles west of Key

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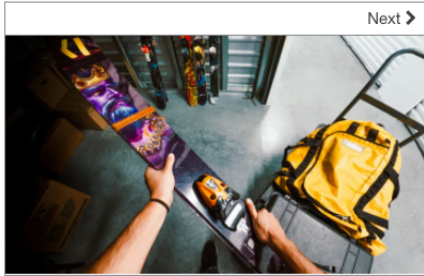
West. This 100-square-mile park, which spans seven small islands and features one of the nation's largest 19th-century forts, packs a lot of adventure. Get decked out in snorkel gear and explore vast coral reefs. Fish for snapper, snook, mahi mahi, and other prized saltwater catches. Climb in a kayak for an up-close look at the region's rich wildlife and amazing coastal landscape. As with Channel Islands, getting to Dry Tortugas requires some planning and effort – you can only travel there via boat or seaplane – but it's worth it to check out one of the most remote and awesome national parks around.

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by StorQuest Self Storage



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