

# The Best Hikes In Joshua Tree

It is not easy to determine which trails offer the best hikes in Joshua Tree National Park, as the park covers a lot of territory and has a total of 122 hiking trails. Most of the trails are easy for beginning hikers, but some are for moderately skilled and skilled hikers too. No matter your level of experience, there's a trail for you to enjoy in this gorgeous and historic park.

But how do you determine which is the best for you? Continue reading to learn about the best hikes in Joshua Tree, and which trails are right for you.

## Where is Joshua Tree National Park

Joshua Tree National Park is situated in southeastern California, just 40 miles from Palm Springs and a couple of hours from Los Angeles. It is named for the Joshua tree, a yucca plant that grows in the Mojave Desert. In total, the park is about 800,000 acres of land comprising the Mojave and Colorado Deserts.

With its beautiful rock formations, panoramic views, wildlife, and various wildflowers and cacti, Joshua Tree has a lot to offer an adventurous family. There are nine campgrounds throughout the park, so you can stay the night, enjoy the spectacular sunsets, and gaze at the stars. Then, wake up early the next morning for a sunrise hike, or you can pack a picnic and plenty of water and bring your family for the day.

## The Best Hikes In Joshua Tree National Park

With 122 trails, Joshua Tree is known for its world-class hiking. There is plenty to experience and learn while you are in the park. Pack your day hike pack because the first three trails on this list are within close proximity of each other, and make a perfect day trip for you and your family.

These three trails are considered the best hikes in Joshua Tree for history buffs. Your kids will have fun exploring the abandoned cattle ranch that is still relatively intact. You can learn about the Keys Ranch at the National Park Service sign at the Barker Dam trailhead.

Barker Dam Nature Trail is a popular trail for all family members. This short, easy hike is rich in plant life, making it one of the most scenic trails in the park. If you visit in the winter

or spring, you will see a small lake that is formed by the dam, although, during the summer and autumn, the weather is often too dry for a lake.

Wall Street Mill Trail is a 2.4-mile hike. One of the two trailheads also leads to Barker Dam Nature Trail. The Wall Street Mill Trail is unmarked, which can make it a challenging hike. Be sure to download a map of the trail on your phone before you enter the park.

Wonderland Wash is between Barker Dam and Wall Street Mill Trail and can be hiked as part of the Wall Street Mill/Wonderland Wash Loop.

Arch Rock Nature Trail is another popular hike. It is great for all skill levels and a good walk for the whole family. This trail does require some basic scrambling skills, but the rock formations are breathtaking to look at. You may also spot a few bighorn sheep on your hike.

Cholla Cactus Garden Loop is one of the best hikes in Joshua Tree for observing and appreciating cacti. It is a short, flat walk through a dense grove of cholla cacti or teddy-bear cholla.

Ryan Mountain Trail is considered one of the best hikes in Joshua Tree as it is one of the most popular trails in the park. It is an uphill climb with clearly marked stone steps for most of the ascent. However, the big payoff is the breathtaking 360-degree view of the park when you reach the summit.

Black Rock Canyon Trail to Warren Peak becomes a bit more challenging as the last .5 mile leads straight uphill to Warren Peak. However, this is definitely one of the best trails in Joshua Tree for families with older kids who are craving a challenge. At almost 6 miles, it clocks in as one of the longer trails in the park, but once you reach the peak, the view is spectacular. Likewise, the view on the way back down is even better than the hike up.

Desert Queen Mine Trail is the site of one of several gold mines in the park. The area that comprises Joshua Tree was once a site for mining gold and silver and processing those precious metals. This is a short hike that promises an old goldmine at the end to observe.

Contact Mine Trail is another trail for moderately skilled hikers. This trail boasts many artifacts from Joshua Tree's mining days, including old railroad tracks and a few covered mines that have been out of commission since the early 20th century.

High View Nature Trail offers views of Black Rock Canyon and Yucca Valley. This is definitely one of the best hikes in Joshua Tree for spotting wildflowers. Pick up a trail guide at the visitor's center to help you identify the flora on this hike.

## Ways to Make Your Trip to Joshua Tree Even More Kid-Friendly

To make your trip to Joshua Tree even more fun for your kids, the park offers a couple of programs designed for children.

- Children 5 to 13 can earn their Junior Ranger badge by completing activities featured in the Junior Ranger booklet. You can find these booklets at all park entrance stations and visitors centers.
- Every Kid Outdoors allows 4th graders and their families to explore public lands for free for a year. You can visit [everykidoutdoors.gov](https://www.everykidoutdoors.gov) for all the information, including links to locations that accept the pass.

## Get Out And Enjoy Nature Today!

With 122 trails for hikers of all skill levels, Joshua Tree truly serves as a paradise for hikers, a reprieve from the hustle and bustle of one of the largest cities in the world. Just remember, Joshua Tree is in the high desert—so be sure to pack your hiking day pack with more food and water than you think you'll need, and don't forget the sunscreen too.

Getting out and enjoying nature doesn't have to be complicated, and the benefits of doing so are immeasurable. With these tips and a bit of planning, you'll be prepared to walk the best hikes in Joshua Tree National Park.