



*Darius in  
Death Valley*

# PARKAPALOOZA

Two friends quit their jobs—to become serious national-parks groupies. *By Megan McCrea*

**A CANYON SO DEEP**, wide, and vast, it's visible from outer space. Geysers so powerful, they shoot water hundreds of feet in the air. Trees so ancient, they've watched empires rise and fall. Yes, we know—treasures abound in the national parks. The only trouble is, with so many of them, how could you possibly see them all?

Well, you could quit your job and crisscross the country in a truck on a quest to see all 59, maybe even creating an extra challenge by limiting your trip to 59 weeks. At least that's how two former

Virginians, Darius Nabors and Trevor Kemp, are tackling them. One year into their #59in59 challenge, they've rafted the Colorado River and swum in the Arctic Ocean. They've encountered foxes, whales, and a bull elk during rutting season. And did we mention they've crossed paths with President Obama (who signaled his approval for their American-flag onesies)? The park hoppers shared their national-parks-road-tour highlights with us during downtime in New Mexico's Carlsbad Caverns. [instagram.com/dariusnabors](https://www.instagram.com/dariusnabors). →



## Parkapalooza moments

### DEATH VALLEY



We caught the rare superbloom, when many years' worth of seeds bloomed at once. We stopped so often to snap photos that our emergency brake died.

### GLACIER

On a hike, we heard a high-pitched *reeeeeeeeeee*. Then a brown marmot sprinted downhill and bared its teeth at us, letting out the same marmot war cry. Our hearts were pounding. Luckily, it ran off. Afterward, we realized we'd been terrified by a 2-foot-tall animal.

### OLYMPIC

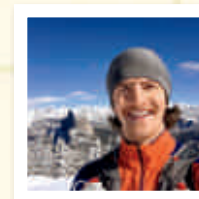
I practically ran a marathon to see the Valley of 10,000 Waterfalls. The trail is 13 miles each way, and we didn't have time to camp there. It was pouring rain, and I was running through huge maples cloaked in ferns. The temperate rain forest has a higher biomass density than the

Amazon. It was like sprinting through a fairy tale.

### KINGS CANYON

We hiked past some of the biggest sequoia stumps in the world, near the Big Stump Picnic Area. One, the Mark Twain Tree, is so impressive, there's a cross section of it at the American Museum of Natural History. When the museum received it in 1891, they thought it was a fake. I've seen photos of 50 people standing on it at once. It's one thing to look up at a sequoia; it's another to stand on its stump.

### YOSEMITE



Each time I stopped along the Pohono Trail—a path connecting Glacier Point and Inspiration Point—the sun was at a different angle, my perspective on the valley shifted, and the colors changed. At the end, the sun was setting on El Capitan, turning it yellow, then orange, then pink.

## Tips for your own road tour

Park websites have good information, but for the best intel, call the park.

Put matches in resealable plastic bags and keep them in different places. That way, you'll always have some dry matches.

Avoid doing dishes. Put a tortilla in a bowl and put your food over it. That way, your dish will stay clean.

Go backcountry camping. You'll have the wilderness all to yourself. 🏕️