



# Camping in the Park

The number of annual overnight stays in Joshua Tree National Park rose by 50% since 2013. Most visitors camp in the park's nine campgrounds, which often fill up during the peak season. The number of visitors backpacking in the backcountry or wilderness has doubled since 2013.

Park staff took several steps to maintain or improve camping experiences under increased demand, including implementing campground reservations and improving communication about campground conditions.

## Current Management Strategies

- Nine campgrounds provide a variety of experiences, including reservations and walk-up camping, RV and tent camping, individual and group sites, equestrian and bike camping, and a range of facilities and development.
- Campground reservations can be made up to six months in advance for individual sites and one year in advance for group sites.
- Backcountry camping is allowed 1 mile (1.6 km) from roads and 500 feet (152 m) from trails and water sources, except in areas designated as day use only.
- Free self-registration permits are required for backcountry camping. Overnight parking is restricted to 13 parking lots associated with wilderness backpacking trailheads.

## Recent Changes

- Implemented reservations at Jumbo Rocks, Black Rock, Indian Cove, and Cottonwood campgrounds during spring, winter, and fall.
- Increased fees to cover costs for managing campgrounds.
- Established a bicycle campsite at Ryan Campground.
- Increased frequency of toilet cleaning and pumping.
- Added volunteer campground host at Jumbo Rocks Campground.
- Improving infrastructure at Cottonwood and Black Rock campgrounds (in progress).
- Improving informational materials at wilderness backpacking trailheads and permit boxes (in progress).

## We Invite You to Share Your Thoughts

As you prepare your comments about camping, please consider the following:

- Suggest specific strategies that can/should be considered for managing reservations, fees, and overnight use in the park.
- Identify specific strategies that can/should be considered for the park's campground reservation system. Share observations about what works and what needs improvement.
- Consider whether all campgrounds can/should be managed under the same reservation strategy.
- Identify specific strategies that can/should be considered for wilderness backpacking. Suggest permit strategies that can/should be considered. Share specific facility preferences for wilderness backpacking.