

# CARLSBAD CAVERNS NP OFFERS STUNNING VIEWS



There are nature lovers all over the planet. Human beings strive to explore the peaks of mountains along with the depths of the deepest oceans. Forests, mountains and coastal areas are usually the most popular destinations. However, in New Mexico there is a very different kind of nature tourism: caves in the Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Caves may not seem, at first sight, to be the most attractive destinations for those looking to enjoy holiday time in peaceful and beautiful surroundings. Let's face it, the sun very rarely protrudes the cave entrance, the animals dwelling in the caves can either be ugly or dangerous (bats/bears) and the odors can be far from pleasant. Despite these apparent horrors, the caves of New Mexico attract more than 300 000 visitors yearly.

There are 300 known caves in New Mexico, 113 of which belong to the National Park founded in 1930. Visitors do not have to worry about temperatures in the caves as the caves enjoy a stable 56°F all year round. The positive result is that visitors know exactly what to expect upon arrival. For many, the seemingly gruesome nature is a plus. New Mexico is the scene of the infamous daily exodus of masses of Mexican free-tail bats. Some of the photographs from the caves during such events are absolutely stunning.

Two thirds of the Park is now an official wilderness area, in order to protect the changes to the habitat, some of which are caused by tourism. For those more interested in geography and geology, the caves provide another source of fascination: unlike regular caves the New Mexico caves have been formed by dissolving sulphuric acid and not by running water streams. It seems that caves can offer the same amount of interest as the regular natural attractions.

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