



Guide to The Texas Outdoors – National
Parks/Forests
University of Houston - Outdoor Adventure

Welcome

Welcome to University of Houston Outdoor Adventure's National Parks and National Forests guide on where to explore the outdoors in Texas!

Leave No Trace (LNT)

UH Outdoor Adventure actively practices Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace is a set of outdoor ethics that consists of seven principles. The seven principles are:

- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Respect Wildlife
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Leave What You Find
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

We kindly ask that you learn about and then follow these simple principles while enjoying the outdoors.

Visit the [Leave No Trace website](#) for more information.

Annual Pass

The National Park Service offers an annual pass as well and it goes a long way! You will gain access to over 2,000 federal recreation sites. Visit famous National Parks such as Yosemite, Zion, Grand Canyon, and so much more. The pass covers the entrance fees at all national parks and national wildlife refuges for the passholder and up to three guests. Please visit their [website](#) for more information.

Pass	Price
Annual National Park pass	\$80

Questions? Call us at 713.743.9512 or email us at outdoors@uh.edu

Outdoor Adventure Trips

Don't feel comfortable exploring the outdoors by yourself? No worries! UH Outdoor Adventure offers various trips around the Greater Houston area and around Texas each semester for enrolled students, members and sponsored! We aim to teach you all that is needed to comfortably and safely explore the outdoors. Visit our [website](#) for the most up to date information on our trips.

What to Bring

In the outdoor industry there are ten items that are deemed to be "essential" to any outdoor outing. You may or may not use them, however, it is considered best practice to bring these items along on your adventures. Overall, use your best judgement to decide what is needed for your adventure.

The Ten Essentials

- Navigation
- Headlamp/light source
- Sun Protection
- First Aid
- Knife
- Fire
- Shelter
- Extra Food
- Extra Water
- Extra Clothes

For more information about the ten essentials, please visit [REI's website](#).

Outdoor Adventure recommends bringing the following items on adventures to State Parks:

- Close-toed Shoes
- Food/water
- Bugspray
- Reservation Information
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Extra clothes
- Equipment

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A large, weathered arrowhead-shaped sign mounted on a concrete post. The sign is orange with a green silhouette of a sequoia tree on the left, a white mountain peak in the center, and a white bison silhouette at the bottom. The words "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE" are written in white capital letters on the right side of the arrowhead. The sign is set in a dry, grassy landscape with a paved road curving in the background under a clear blue sky.

National Parks/National Forests

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Sam Houston National Forest

Location: 394 FM 1375 West, New Waverly, Texas 77358
Distance from University of Houston Campus: 63 miles

Overview

Sam Houston is one of four national forests located in the state of Texas. It is home to the Lone Star hiking trail. The Lone Star hiking trail is the longest continuous trail in Texas, and it is 128 miles long. It is the perfect length for a weeklong backpacking trip. One could expect to be surrounded by nature and not see another person for miles. The national forest offers 85 miles of multi-use trails to hike or bike on. Come explore this forest and try to catch a glimpse of a bald eagle and red-cockaded woodpecker; two endangered species that call this forest home.

Activities: Hiking, Backpacking, Biking, and Kayaking

Facilities: Restrooms (only at some access areas)

Price

- Entrance Fee - Free -\$7 (may vary depending on what area you are accessing)
- Camping - Free-\$30 each night
- UH Outdoor Adventure rental options

Item	Daily	Weekend (Fri-Mon)
Tent 3 person	\$5	\$10
Tent 4 person	\$8	\$16
Tent 5 person	\$10	\$20
Sleeping Bag 20	\$6	\$10
Sleeping Bag 45	\$4	\$8
Sleeping Pad	\$2	\$3
Stove	\$5	\$10
Pot Set	\$2	\$4
Backpack	\$6	\$12
Canoe Package	\$20	\$40
Kayak Package	\$18	\$36

For more information about Sam Houston National Forest click [HERE](#)

For a map of Sam Houston National Forest click [HERE](#)

For other maps of Sam Houston National Forest click [HERE](#)

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Big Thicket National Preserve

Location: FM 420, Kountze, TX 77625

Distance from University of Houston Campus: 100 miles

Overview

Big Thicket National Preserve is a beautiful forested area in southeast Texas home to nine different ecosystems. This preserve is home to approximately 1,320 species of trees, shrubs, vines and grasses, 60 mammal species, 97 fish species and a minimum of 300 bird species. With an array of activities, Big Thicket National Preserve is an ideal location to step away from the business of the city and into the outdoors. There are over 40 miles of trails, miles of paddling trails through creeks, bayous and the Neches River, Ranger led programs, fishing, backcountry camping and a rich Texas history waiting to be explored.

Facilities: Visitor Center

Price

- Entrance Fee - Free
- Parking - Free
- UH Outdoor Adventure rental options

Item	Daily	Weekend (Fri-Mon)
Canoe Package	\$20	\$40
Kayak Package	\$18	\$36
Tent 3 person	\$5	\$10
Tent 4 person	\$8	\$16
Tent 5 person	\$10	\$20
Sleeping Bag 20	\$6	\$10
Sleeping Bag 45	\$4	\$8
Sleeping Pad	\$2	\$3
Stove	\$5	\$10
Pot Set	\$2	\$4
Backpack	\$6	\$12

For more information about the Big Thicket National Preserve click [HERE](#)

For more information about the Big Thicket National Preserve hiking trails and maps click [HERE](#)

For a more information on backcountry camping through Big Thicket National Preserve, click [HERE](#)

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Big Bend National Park

Location: 394 FM 1375 West, New Waverly, Texas 77358
Distance from University of Houston Campus: 600 miles

Overview

Big Bend National Park is an incredibly diverse national park on the US-Mexico border. The Rio Grande river is the natural border that separates the United States from Mexico. The park has 201 miles of hiking trails and is well known for its natural resources and recreational opportunities. However, the park has an incredibly rich history. This land has been inhabited by native people for thousands of years. Archeological sites prove their presence here and are a must see! If you want to experience smaller crowds at this national park avoid the busy season which runs from January until April.

Activities: Hiking, Backpacking, Camping, Canoeing, Stargazing, and Mountain Biking.

Facilities: Showers, Restrooms, Restaurant, and Wi-Fi

Price

- Entrance Fee - \$30 valid for 7 days
- Camping - \$10-\$16 each night
- UH Outdoor Adventure rental options

Item	Daily	Weekend (Fri-Mon)
Tent 3 person	\$5	\$10
Tent 4 person	\$8	\$16
Tent 5 person	\$10	\$20
Sleeping Bag 20	\$6	\$10
Sleeping Bag 45	\$4	\$8
Sleeping Pad	\$2	\$3
Stove	\$5	\$10
Pot Set	\$2	\$4
Canoe Package	\$20	\$40
Kayak Package	\$18	\$36
Bicycle & Helmet	\$8	\$16
Backpack	\$6	\$12

For more information about Big Bend National Park click [HERE](#)

For a map of Big Bend National Park click [HERE](#)

For a map of Big Bend National Park Trails click [HERE](#)

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Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Location: 400 Pine Canyon, Salt Flat, TX 79847
Distance from University of Houston Campus: 670 miles

Overview

Guadalupe Mountains National Park is considered by some as America's best-kept secret. This national park houses four of the largest peaks in Texas. It has a deep and rich history that dates back to 265 million years ago. This national park used to be a vibrant and flourishing coral reef when this entire region was covered by a tropical sea. Experience remnants of this coral reef and observe other fossilized marine life. The national park has several different ecosystems that provide habitat for over 1000 species of plants, 60 species of mammals, 290 species of birds, and 55 species of reptiles. Visit this national park in the fall to see a beautiful change in scenery as the leaves around the park start to change color.

Activities: Camping, Hiking, Backpacking, Birding, Stargazing

Facilities: Restrooms, Primitive Campsites, and Wi-Fi

Price

- Entrance Fee - \$10 per person (good for 7 days)
- Camping - \$15 each night (First come, first serve)
- UH Outdoor Adventure rental options

Item	Daily	Weekend (Fri-Mon)
Tent 3 person	\$5	\$10
Tent 4 person	\$8	\$16
Tent 5 person	\$10	\$20
Sleeping Bag 20	\$6	\$10
Sleeping Bag 45	\$4	\$8
Sleeping Pad	\$2	\$3
Stove	\$5	\$10
Pot Set	\$2	\$4
Backpack	\$6	\$12

For more information about Guadalupe Mountains National Park click [HERE](#)

For a map of Guadalupe Mountains National Park click [HERE](#)

For a map of Guadalupe Mountains National Park Trails click [HERE](#)

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A photograph of a field of yellow flowers, likely Black-eyed Susans, with green foliage and trees in the background. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the text.

Flora

Questions? Call us at 713.743.9512 or email us at outdoors@uh.edu

Flora

Poison Ivy



American Beauty Berry



Texas Bluebonnet



Cheerful Sunflower



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Texas Mountain Laurel



Apache Plumes



Purple Passionflower



Pitcher Plant (Carnivorous)

