

# America's worst national parks

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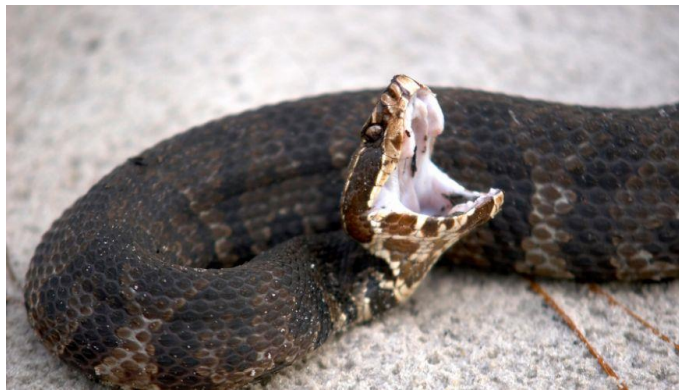
It's always fun to come up with rankings for the "best of" travel – and within the majesty of America's national park system, there is always a spirited competition between the likes of Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, and the Tetons, all of which I've enjoyed visiting multiple times.

But enough of praising "[America's Best Idea](#)."

It's much more fun to hate on things.

With 59 national parks in the U.S., someplace has got to be on the bottom of the list, right? Too many people. Lousy facilities. Ridiculously hostile weather. So based on a minimum of research and a heap of biased analysis, here's an authoritative list of America's Worst National Parks. Or, if you're a purist nature lover, you can just call this list "The 59th to 55th Most Awesome National Parks."

## 1. Congaree National Park, South Carolina



**Photo Source:** iStock

A small park with a boardwalk through a swamp (they prefer the polite term "floodplain") so you can stare at some trees. The main function of the boardwalk seems to be to better present visitors to the swarms of mosquitos. Step off the boardwalk and into the realm of the four varieties of venomous snake that inhabit the park, including the "ubiquitous" cottonmouth. Run from the snakes and find yourself in glades of poison ivy or stumbling into wasps' nests or webs of biting spiders that are "highly painful but not lethal." As a bonus, the trails are poorly marked (when they're not completely washed out), so as you run screaming in circles waving your hands to fend off mosquitos, you're likely as not to impale yourself on a jagged Cyprus stump.

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**Online Review:** “Their mosquito meter was on ‘war zone’ and they weren’t kidding. It was awful. If you stopped walking you were swarmed and bitten a million times.”

## 2. Gates of The Arctic, Alaska



**Photo Source:** iStock

More like the gates of hell: No roads reach the park, no trails traverse it. In winter there’s no warmth, just months of darkness and howling winds. But in summer at least it has plenty of man-eating mammals, clouds of biting bugs, and life-sucking swamplands. No thanks, I’ll leave it for the grizzlies. I hear there aren’t even any real gates here. That’s false advertising, man!

**Online Review:** “We landed on dunes used by NASA for Mars equivalents”

## 3. Badlands, South Dakota



**Photo Source:** iStock

You know, I hate to rag on South Dakota with two entries here, but after visiting the Badlands I have to say they aren’t “Bad” as in “Cool” but rather “Bad” as in “Skip it.” The place is a dusty monument to erosion, sort of a half-assed Grand Canyon without the majesty, but with extra rattlesnakes. You could

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really get much of the visual effect by going down to your local stream or beach and watch the water swirl around the dirt or sand. And the “mixed-grass prairie” that surrounds this dusty divot is just another way of saying “sad shrubbery as far as the horizon.” Sure, if you’re in the area, check it out, but it pales in comparison with basically every other (non-South Dakota) western national park.

**Online Review:** “This is it?! Badlands is basically washed out hills of 50,000 year-old mud.”

## 4. Wind Cave, South Dakota



**Photo Source:** iStock

It’s a cave. With wind. Surrounded by barren scrubland. What’s not to like? The caves don’t even have stalactites or stalagmites, which seems a terrible trick. Only in South Dakota would they make this into a national park. Visitors are told to be on the lookout for prairie dogs in the area, so you can savor the thrill of watching these fat dirt squirrels shuffle around. And the way the reviews have it, much of the wind in the cave is actually generated by the incessantly babbling park rangers during the tours.

**Online Reviews:** “Long tour and boring...not worth the time or money.”

## 5. Death Valley, California and Nevada



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**Photo Source:** iStock

Here's an idea: heat a pan full of sand to about 200 degrees, then pour it on your head. Congratulations, you've just simulated a visit to Death Valley National Park. This is a place that actually boasts about once having 43 consecutive days of temperatures above 120 degrees. One Yahoo editor visited, and became so delusional from the heat that he imagined he enjoyed the trip. When it's not hot, it's bitterly cold in Death Valley, so at least you can get some variety in your misery. "Oh, it has pretty rocks and mountains," say some. You where else has colorful rocks? Literally every single other national park, and you might actually enjoy visiting them.

**Source:** <http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2015/02/24/america-worst-national-parks/?intcmp=HPBucket>