



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



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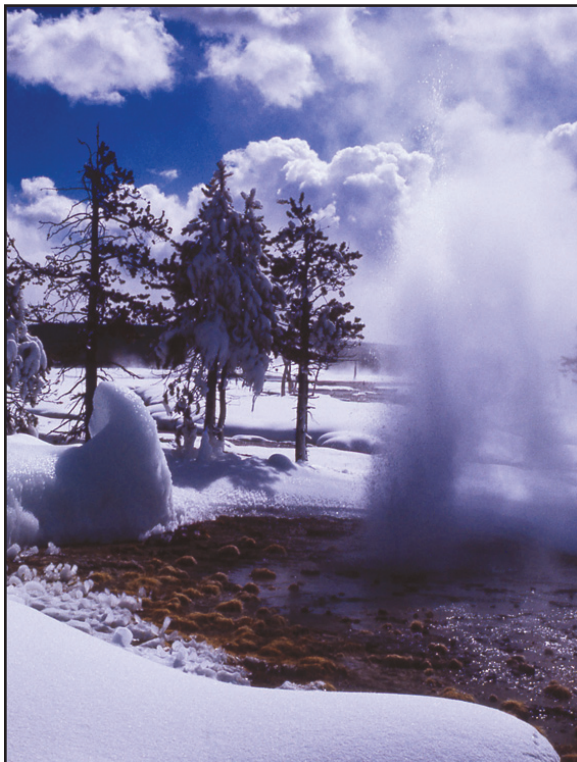
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Winter Kingdoms

Explore Your National Parks

In the winter, many of our 401 national parks are transformed into magical lands. In colder areas, animals come out to play, and everything grows peaceful, quiet and sparkling with crystals of snow and ice.

The Mini Page talked with a National Park Service ranger to find out more about our national parks in the winter.



In Yellowstone National Park, steam and spray from geysers begin to freeze on the way down. Visitors can hear ice crystals clink as they fall to the ground.

photo by Schultz, courtesy NPS



photo courtesy NPS

The Gibbon wolf pack comes out to play in the winter quiet of Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone spreads through parts of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

In 1973, the northern Rocky Mountain wolf was listed as endangered. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service named Yellowstone as an area where wolves could recover. Its efforts were successful, and the wolf is no longer endangered.

Winter wonderlands

In the north and on the mountains, winter has a dramatic effect. National parks such as Denali in Alaska and Rocky Mountain in Colorado are snow-covered. Although snow and ice may cut off some parks from the rest of the world, many remain open.

Trails and campgrounds are less crowded in parks in colder climates. The snow makes it easier to spot tracks from animals such as bobcats and deer.

In parks in warmer climates, such as Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, leaves fall off the trees. This allows visitors to gain a clear vision of the landscape and wildlife.

In the warmest climates, many parks have their **peak**, or top, season in the winter. People flock to parks such as the Everglades in Florida to escape the cold.



photo courtesy NPS

Death Valley National Park in California and Nevada is about 70 degrees on winter days. In the summer, it's often the hottest spot in America, reaching up to 134 degrees.

Winter Safety Tips

Winter visits

Some parks close most of their entrances to cars during the winter. For example, in Yellowstone, only one road, on the northern edge, is open after heavy snowfalls. That road is plowed so residents of a nearby town are not stranded.

Some park lodges remain open during the winter. Many parks allow people to camp out in the winter, but some of those parks do not allow campers to build fires. Winter camping requires special gear.



photo by J. Burger, courtesy NPS

This skier is learning on the bunny slope at Olympic National Park in Washington.



photo courtesy NPS

Cross-country skiers in Acadia National Park in Maine seem to be alone in the winter wilderness. Skiers can travel over snow-packed carriage roads. Along the roads, they can view mountains and the sea.

Staying safe

Be sure to check with a park ranger before exploring a park in winter. Learn what routes are safe, and stay with adults.

Some areas may close temporarily to protect the land and animals. In the winter, some wildlife and plants may be especially fragile.

Take lessons before trying a new skill, such as snowboarding or skiing.

In cold-area parks, wear layers of clothes, including warm socks, shoes

or boots, gloves or mittens, and hats. Some areas are so cold that you will need to wear special winter clothing. Be sure to wear proper safety gear for all activities.



Ready Resources

The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

On the Web:

- bit.ly/1972fXu
- nps.gov/webrangers
- nps.gov

At the library:

- "The National Parks: America's Best Idea," DVD
- "National Geographic Kids National Parks Guide U.S.A." by National Geographic
- "Mysteries in Our National Parks: Wolf Stalker" by Gloria Skurzynski and Alane Ferguson



National Parks TRY 'N' FIND

Words that remind us of the national parks in winter are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find: ACADIA, BISON, CAMP, COLD, DENALI, ELK, FESTIVALS, FOX, HOLIDAY, ICE, MOUNTAINS, OLYMPIC, PARKS, SEA, SKI, SKIJOR, SKY, SNOW, SNOWBOARD, SNOWSHOE, WINTER, WOLVES, YELLOWSTONE.



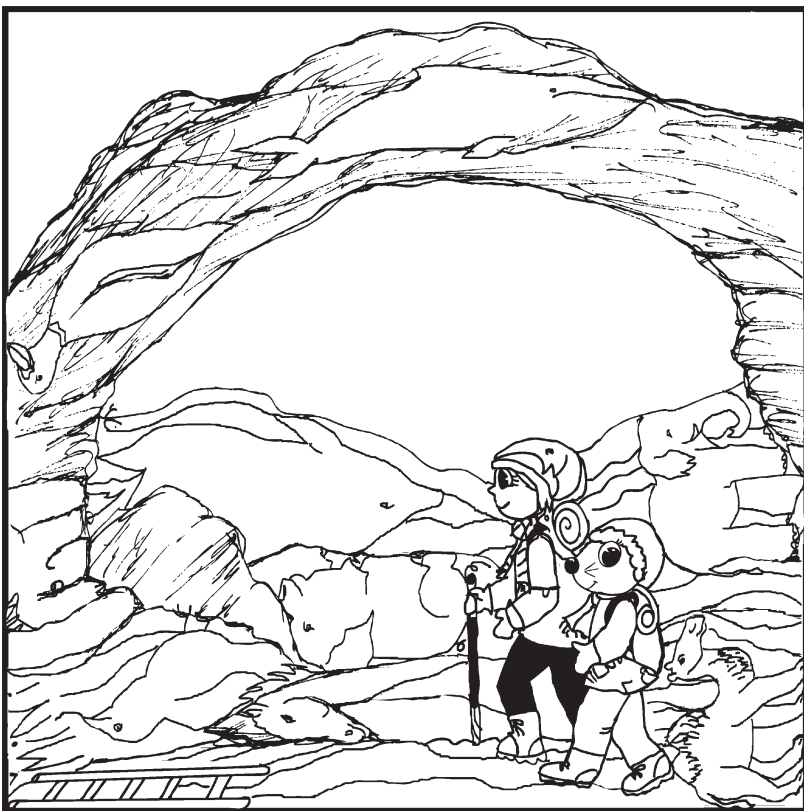
P	C	I	L	A	N	E	D	Y	K	S	E	F	O	X
H	A	A	D	R	A	O	B	W	O	N	S	L	L	V
O	W	R	M	A	E	S	A	I	D	A	C	A	K	S
L	I	S	K	P	M	V	C	I	P	M	Y	L	O	K
I	N	K	K	S	S	L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	I
D	T	I	W	O	L	V	E	S	N	O	S	I	B	J
A	E	E	O	H	S	W	O	N	S	D	L	O	C	O
Y	R	S	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	E	C	I	R
W	O	N	S	E	N	O	T	S	W	O	L	L	E	Y

Mini Spy . . .



Mini Spy and Alpha Betty are visiting Arches National Park in Utah during the winter. See if you can find:

- exclamation mark
- man in the moon
- dolphin
- camel
- elephant
- pig
- horse's head
- bird
- duck
- whale
- word MINI
- snail
- bell
- man's face
- ladder
- number 9
- lips
- snake



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Roasted Sweet Potatoes

You'll need:

- 3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- juice of 1/2 lime

What to do:

1. Cut peeled sweet potatoes into 1-inch chunks.
2. Heat oil in 9-by-13-inch baking dish in a preheated 375-degree oven for 5 minutes.
3. Place cut sweet potatoes in heated oil and bake for 20 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking time.
4. Meanwhile, mix together brown sugar and spices.
5. After 20 minutes are up, stir to coat potatoes with brown sugar mixture.
6. Roast for another 10 minutes until potatoes are light brown.
7. Drain potatoes on paper towels; transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with lime juice. Serves 6 to 8.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.



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Meet Ming-Na



photo by Ron Tom, courtesy ABC

Ming-Na Wen stars as Agent Melinda May in the ABC-TV series "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D."

She has acted in other TV shows, including "ER," "Stargate Universe" and "Eureka." She was the voice of Mulan in the Disney movie "Mulan."

She learned to love acting when she appeared in a third-grade play as a clumsy bunny. She studied theater in college. She speaks Mandarin Chinese and English.

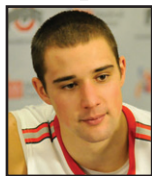
Ming-Na, 50, was born on Coloane Island, Macau, and lived parts of her childhood in Hong Kong, New York and Pittsburgh, Pa. Ming-Na goes by only her first name.

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Gus Goodsport's Report

Supersport: Aaron Craft



Height: 6-2 Weight: 195 Hometown: Findlay, Ohio

To most basketball observers, Aaron Craft is a point guard. To Ohio State opponents, he's a pest.

Although he has the ability to score and set up teammates, the aggressive Buckeyes senior has been especially noted as a basketball bandit. A two-time All-Defense All-American,

Craft entered this season with a school-record 248 career steals.

In three years at Ohio State, Craft has accomplished much. He has made Academic All-American twice, All-Big Ten, and won awards for sportsmanship and community service. In his downtime, he enjoys video games and hanging out with friends and his fiancée.

But now Craft, a preseason All-American, needs to finish strong, keep playing disruptive defense and help OSU have another big season. So keep an eye on this all-around Buckeye.

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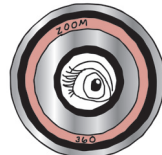
MIGHTY FUNNY'S

Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

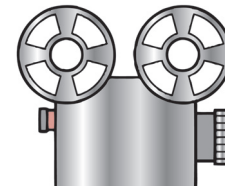
Caesar: What did the doctor say to the patient who swallowed his camera?

Connie: "Let's just see what develops!"



Conrad: What is the best way to borrow a camera?

Cathy: Someone lens it to you!



Carmen: What do a movie theater and an old camera have in common?

Charles: Film!

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Wonderful Wintertime

Winter wildlife

In the winter, wildlife viewing can be awesome. For example, in the summer, Yellowstone visitors



photo courtesy NPS

This red fox stands out against the snow in Yellowstone.

are lucky if they spot one bighorn sheep, but in the winter, visitors might see thousands of them. Animals often come down from the mountains in the winter.

In Denali, rangers use sled dogs to travel through the park.

Some animals go into hibernation in the winter. This means animals such as bears are usually absent.

If you are going wildlife watching, be respectful of the animals, and be careful. Winter can be a hard time, and people can scare animals away from their feeding grounds. This is the animals' home, so please don't disturb them.



photo courtesy NPS

Bison travel on the roads in Yellowstone National Park.



photo courtesy NPS

This mountain climber in Denali National Park in Alaska has a prime view of the park. Denali has 6 million acres of wilderness, including Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America, at about 20,320 feet.

Winter sports

Many national parks offer lessons in winter sports, such as snowshoeing. Rangers lead hiking, skiing and other tours.

There are different activities in different parks. Visitors can climb mountains, climb ice, ice fish, snowshoe, cross-country ski, downhill ski, snowboard, ice skate, sled, hike, ride with sled dogs and go snowmobiling. In Acadia National Park, visitors can bring their own dogs to **skijor** (SKI-jor), a sport where dogs pull people on skis over the ice and snow.



photo courtesy NPS

Kids snowtube at Olympic National Park.

Winter celebrations

Some national parks have special winter and holiday festivals. For example, Denali has a winter festival that features winter camping demonstrations. Rangers plow the roads deeper into the park so people can explore. Historical sites may put up special holiday decorations.

Many parks offer winter sky-viewing parties where people can view the night skies through telescopes. In the winter, the air is drier and skies are clearer. People can enjoy spectacular views away from city lights.



photo courtesy NPS

The U.S. National Christmas tree lights up the President's Park in Washington, D.C., during the 2010 winter holidays. On the outer edge of the fence, 56 trees represent U.S. states and territories. The White House is in the background.

The Mini Page thanks Kathy Kupper, ranger, National Park Service, for help with this issue.

Look through your newspaper for stories and pictures about parks.

Next week, The Mini Page is about constellations.

The Mini Page Staff

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