

SOUTHERN IDAHO NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Home to four of the most interesting and diverse National Monuments in the Nation

Southern Idaho is home to **four** of the most interesting and diverse national monuments in the nation, all rich in history – both natural and human. Each one is packed with **educational** and **recreational** opportunities, from learning about ancient eras to exploring one of the darkest chapters of our recent past.



Craters of the Moon National Monument in Arco, ID

Craters of the Moon

Stand in this vast ocean of lava flows and you really do feel as if you're on the moon – in fact, astronauts Alan Shepherd, Edgar Mitchell, Eugene Cernan and Joe Engle came here as part of their training for the moon landing. Craters of the Moon's beautiful, alien terrain was created by eight major volcanic flows that occurred between 15,000 and 20,000 years ago. The resulting swathes of black rock are both mesmerizing and full of surprises: Come here in the spring and you'll see hardy, colorful wildflowers that manage to thrive in this harsh landscape.

There are many great ways to explore Craters of the Moon: Drive the loop that winds through the monument, hike to caves and impressive craters, or ski and snowshoe in the winter.



Fossil Beds National Monument in Hagerman, ID

Hagerman Fossil Beds

The Hagerman area is beautiful and tranquil now, with gorgeous waterfalls and bubbling, cool springs. But thousands of years ago, this idyllic spot was teeming with ferocious wildlife such as sabertooth cats, bears, and mastodons. You can find evidence of them (and less-terrifying species like camels and ground sloths) at the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument.

The fossil beds are still an active site: More than 3,000 new fossil fragments are found each year. The beds are most famous for their Hagerman Horse fossils. The Hagerman Horse, or *Equus simplicidens*, was the link between prehistoric equines and modern horses – it was about the size of an Arabian horse, but is thought to have had stripes similar to a zebra. Three million years ago, when Hagerman was a grassy floodplain, these ancient horses flocked to the area.

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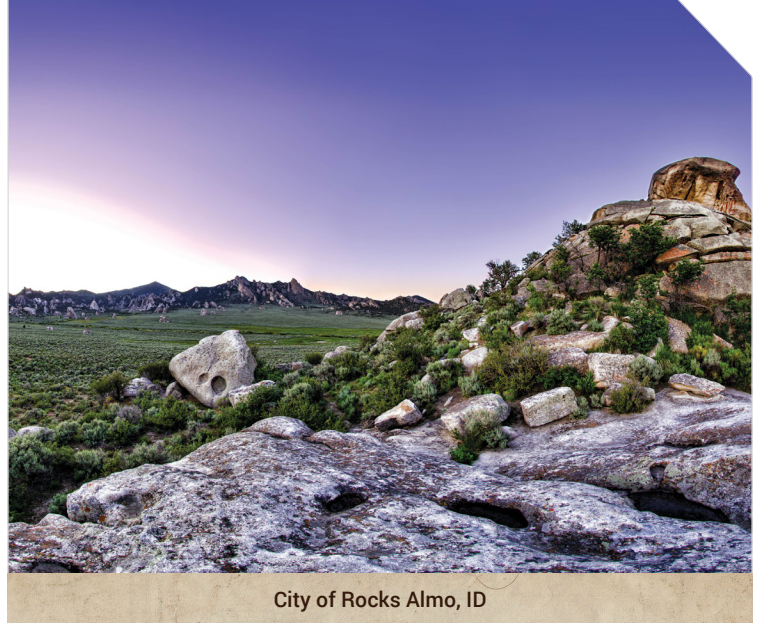
Minidoka Internment Camp in Jerome, ID

Minidoka Internment Camp

The Minidoka National Monument is one of Idaho's newest parks and marks one of the most painful chapters in the nation's history: The forced internment of thousands of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Between 1942 and 1945, this remote site served as a detention center during the relocation of 120,000 West Coast residents of Japanese ancestry. More than 10,000 internees were transferred to this spot in the high desert of Southern Idaho under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt. Internees included many ordinary families and notable people, including William K. Nakamura, a Medal of Honor recipient; Newton K. Wesley, who helped develop the contact lens; and composer Paul Chihara, among many others.

When the war against Japan ended in 1945, the internees were released; survivors and their descendants still farm in the area. The site became a national monument in 2001, and it's still being developed.



City of Rocks Almo, ID

City of Rocks Nation Reserve

Pioneers traveling west in covered wagons were stunned by the amazing natural spires and rock formations in what is now known as the City of Rocks National Reserve – and this incredible landscape is just as intriguing to visitors today.

This 14,407-acre reserve is a haven for hikers, bikers, amateur geologists, and rock climbers from around the world. Towering pinnacles and domes lord over this area at the south end of the Albion Mountains, where climbers can find more than 600 routes ranging from 5.6 (relatively easy) to 5.14 (most difficult). Campers and hikers flock to the area from the spring through early winter, so be sure to snag a campsite reservation before going.

Birders will find hours of entertainment here, because the City of Rocks is home to the Greater Sage Grouse, Pinyon Jay, Virginia's Warbler, Gray Flycatcher, Bushtit, Plumbeous Vireo, and Black-Throated Gray Warblers – among many, many others (163 species!). City of Rocks is also a perfect escape for horseback riders, hunters, and photographers. Feel like just sitting back and taking in the landscape? The City of Rocks Backcountry Byway starts in Albion and wends through the reserve for 49 miles.

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