

Tips for Enjoying a National Park During Peak Season

(NAPSA)—The busy summer travel season is around the corner and topping the list for many is a visit to a national park. According to the Travel Industry Association (TIA), close to 40 percent of U.S. adults have visited a national park at least once in the past five years. And it's no wonder. National parks offer an affordable way to see pristine natural landscapes, enjoy an abundance of outdoor activities and experience the nation's rich cultural heritage. Park concessioners like ARAMARK Parks & Resorts are working diligently to help travelers make the most of their national park vacation this year by offering lodging, food service and activities to maximize summer fun.

Here are a few tips on making the most of a national park visit:

Tip #1: Plan ahead and check the park concessioner's Web sites (e.g., www.aramarkparks.com) for Internet specials and package deals. Denali, Mesa Verde, Shenandoah, and Lake Powell often offer mid-week specials and packages that include meals, lodging and entertainment. Also, keep an eye out for online sweepstakes offers. It also pays to think early or late. Early fall or late spring are great times to visit national parks. The weather is



great, parks are less crowded and many properties have special package deals for pre-Memorial Day, post-Labor Day lodging.

Tip #2: Capture the cultural heritage of a park location by enjoying seasonal events, receptions and presentations. Check out calendar listings at Web sites like Shenandoah (www.visitshenandoah.com), Lake Powell (www.lakepowell.com) and Mesa Verde (www.visitmesaverde.com) for special events like the annual Apple Butter Festival and "Tea with the First Ladies" receptions at Shenandoah, presentations by the Navajo Code Talkers at Lake Powell and the Indian Art & Western Cultural Festival at Mesa Verde.

Tip #3: Enjoy dining in the park for a unique flavor of the area. In-park restaurants offer visitors a special treat—from simple snacks and beverages to four-

star dining. Park concessioners like ARAMARK have invested thousands of dollars in their culinary operations, including chef training and menu design. With menus focused on regional specialties, often with a twist, park restaurants like the Metate Room at Mesa Verde, The Rainbow Room at Lake Powell or the Nenana Grille in Denali offer the perfect way to enhance your visit—whether you're there for a day, camping out or staying in one of the park's lodges.

Tip #4: Get a National Parks Pass. If you plan to visit a number of national parks and monuments during the year, a \$50 National Parks Pass will save you a bundle. Seniors over the age of 62 can purchase a Golden Age Passport for a one-time charge of \$10. Visit www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm for information about benefits and restrictions.

Tip #5: Plan your route. Visit www.seeamerica.org for suggested itineraries and driving routes to most of the major U.S. national parks and their most popular attractions. This site offers suggested driving plans that include the most scenic park routes, where to eat, what to do, the most popular trails, and more for visits that range from a few hours to a few days.