



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



New River Gorge National Park and Preserve Turns Two. Here are 12 Things You Didn't Know about this Southern West Virginia Treasure

FAYETTEVILLE, W. Va., December 15, 2022 - The country's newest national park, New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, is full of secrets, surprises, historic sites and charming quirks. And chances are good that all of these secrets, surprises, historic sites and quirks are within just a day's drive of you.

Situated in Southern West Virginia, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve was named a national park in December 2020. The destination is within an eight-hour drive of about 60 percent of the U.S. population. Drive time is five hours from Cleveland, 4 ½ hours from Cincinnati, 3 ¾



One of the oldest rivers in the world, the New River is renowned for its rafting.

hours from Charlotte, five hours from Washington D.C., six hours from Indianapolis and eight hours from New York.

Roger Wilson has roamed the New River Gorge for most of his life, as did generations of his family before him. When he's not running [Adventures on the Gorge](#), an adventure resort adjacent to the park boundaries, Wilson, is an avid hiker who enjoys exploring the vast Appalachian destination that has become a mecca for outdoor recreation. Here's a [video](#) of Wilson exploring Beury, W. Va., one of dozens of ghost towns in the region.

"This is a wild place, and it seems like there's historical significance or wonderful weirdness around every bend in the river or along a trail," said Wilson. "The New River Gorge begs to be explored slowly, immersively and with wonder."

Here are 12 surprising facts about the New River Gorge:

1. The New River is among the oldest rivers in the world, with some estimates dating it back 360 million years.
2. The region is tied to Black History Month. Groundbreaking historian and scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson shoveled coal in the Nuttallburg and Kaymoor mines prior to founding Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month. The historian is known as the "Father of Black History." Visitors can learn more about the black heritage of the region through an [audio driving tour](#) with stops at 17 sites such as the Quinnimont Missionary Baptist Church, Hawks Nest Workers Memorial and Grave Site, John Henry Park and Hinton Depot.
3. The town of [Thurmond](#), now a well-preserved ghost town, was incorporated in 1903, and it will mark its 120th anniversary in 2023. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the town was considered the heart of the region and the primary stop along the C&O Railway. At its peak the town boasted two hotels, two banks, restaurants, clothing store, dry-goods stores and business offices. The boomtown went bust with the onset of the Great Depression coupled with the increasing popularity of travel by private automobile. The National Park Service (NPS) has preserved many of the town's buildings including the depot, which is now a visitor center.
4. Thurmond had a seedy side too. One hotel situated in the town's bustling red light district, the Lafayette, was known locally as the "Lay-flat." The other hotel, the Dun Glen, was the site of a 14-year-long poker party, which Ripley's Believe It or Not claimed was the world's longest-lasting card game.
5. Henry Ford once leased the mines in the town of [Nuttallburg](#), as part of the automobile tycoon's efforts to control all aspects of automobile production. His Fordson Coal Company improved the mine and town over an eight-year period, but Ford sold his interests in the mines when railroad transportation of the coal became unreliable.
6. Completely surrounded by water whenever the river is running high, [Red Ash Island](#) was a quarantine site during a smallpox epidemic during the 1870s. Some 30 percent of people living in New River Gorge communities were infected. Patients were sent to the island to live until they recovered or they died. You can still see gravestones of the victims of smallpox as well as victims of mine disasters and the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic.
7. The [New River Gorge Bridge](#) is the most-photographed site in the state of West Virginia. The distinctive 3,030-foot-long, 876-foot-high bridge is the longest single-arch bridge in the Western hemisphere and the third-longest single-arch bridge in the world. For a bird's-eye view of the New River Gorge, visitors can take a guided walk along the bridge on a catwalk beneath its surface.

- The life-changing bridge cut travel time across the gorge from 45 minutes to less than one minute, positively impacting the lives and improving travel safety for local residents.
8. The park's [Sandstone Visitor Center](#) is a registered monarch waystation, with a well-maintained native garden planted with milkweed to attract the endangered butterflies to the site. Monarch populations have been in decline due to habitat loss. One of four NPS visitor centers in the park, the Sandstone Visitor Center is dedicated to showcasing the region's natural and culture history.
 9. A well-known union leader and advocate for workers' rights, [Mother Jones](#) trekked from coal camp to coal camp as a delegate for the United Mine Workers of America.
 10. In 1755, [Mary Draper Ingles](#) endured and survived captivity by the Shawnee nation of Ohio and eventually made her way back to the New River after a harrowing escape.
 11. The region is home to one of the world's first resorts dedicated to outdoor adventures, [Adventures on the Gorge](#). Located adjacent to the national park boundaries and less than three miles from the Canyon Rim Visitor Center, the resort features more than two dozen guided adventures, a variety of accommodations, restaurants and shops.
 12. [Commercial whitewater rafting](#) began in 1968, and as the sport grew in popularity, the region became known as a whitewater rafting destination. It still is, with rafting from spring to fall on the New River as well as the nearby Gauley River.

What to know about Adventures on the Gorge

Named one of the top adventure resorts in the country by [U.S. News & World Report](#), Adventures on the Gorge is located on more than 350 acres along the rim of the majestic New River Gorge near Fayetteville, W.Va. The resort provides an array of outdoor experiences including whitewater rafting on the New and Gauley Rivers, aerial adventures, rock climbing, rappelling, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, fishing, mountain biking and hiking.

There are also restaurants, bars and shops as well as a small-group conference center. Visitors can choose from a variety of [accommodations](#) and [vacation packages](#).

Travelers can find out more about Adventures on the Gorge [online](#), by calling 1-855-379-8738, or connecting on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TripAdvisor](#), [YouTube](#), and [Vimeo](#) and signing up for AOTG [e-newsletter](#).

Media Links (please credit Adventures on the Gorge)

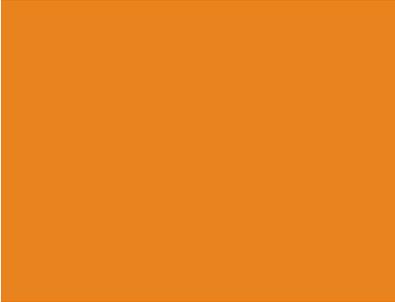
Video:

[Scenic spring summer](#)
[Scenic fall winter](#)
[Rafting](#)
[Adventures on the Gorge](#)
[New River Gorge Bridge](#)

Photos:

[360 Tours](#)
[Rafting](#)
[Rock climbing](#)
[Fishing](#)
[Hiking](#)
[Scenics](#)

Related hashtags:



#AdventuresOnTheGorge
#AlmostHeaven
#VisitWV
#NewRiverNPS
#OnTheGorge

Media contact:

Mesereau Travel Public Relations

mona@mesereaupr.com

tom@mesereaupr.com