

A Guide to Hiking Trails in Southwest Missouri

Barry County Trails
Camden County Trails
Christian County Trails
Dallas County Trails
Greene County Trails
Hickory County Trails
McDonald County Trails
Newton County Trails
Stone County Trails
Taney County Trails
Additional Resources

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Hiking in Southwest Missouri

Situated in the beautiful Ozark Mountains, southwest Missouri has a wealth of natural areas you can enjoy. You can go horseback riding, camping, boating, swimming, and canoeing in these parks and recreation areas. However, hiking is one of the best ways for you to explore the unique caves, valleys, springs, wildlife, and vegetation of the Ozarks.



This guide to hiking trails in southwest Missouri highlights several natural areas in the region. These natural areas are located in ten counties in southwest Missouri: [Barry](#), [Camden](#), [Christian](#), [Dallas](#), [Greene](#), [Hickory](#), [McDonald](#), [Newton](#), [Stone](#), and [Taney](#). I have highlighted these counties green in the Missouri map to your right.

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Missouri Climate

Southwest Missouri has a humid continental climate, with cool, dry winters and hot, wet summers. The area receives around 36-44 inches of precipitation each year. Summers and winters experience the most extreme temperatures, so the best times of the year for hiking are generally spring or fall.

Missouri temperatures can vary considerably throughout the year and change quickly, so check current weather conditions before hiking. The [National Weather Service](#) provides current weather forecasts for the area.

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Outdoor Safety

Southwest Missouri's diverse wildlife includes poisonous snakes, such as copperheads, rattlesnakes, and cottonmouths and venomous spiders, such as black widows and brown recluses. It is especially important to learn how to identify venomous and non-venomous snakes, since Missouri has 46 different species of snakes. To learn more about Missouri snakes, visit the [Missouri Department of Conservation's](#) snake page. The Missouri Department of Conservation also has a [guide about Missouri's spiders](#).



When you hike in southwest Missouri, observe standard hiking precautions. Caves and valleys are prone to flooding in Missouri, so check for flash flood warnings before hiking. Missouri's rugged terrain is often very rocky, so test each rock before you place your weight on it. You should also test loose limbs before walking under them.

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Hiking Essentials

When you set out on your hiking journey, be sure to pack a backpack or fannypack with with these ten essential items:

1. Map
2. Compass
3. Flashlights
4. Insect Repellant
5. First Aid Kit
6. Extra Food
7. Extra Water
8. Sunscreen
9. Whistle (in case you get lost)
10. Matches (in a waterproof container)

For more information on hiking safety, visit "[Outdoor Hazards and Safety](#)"

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