

Arkansas Natural Resources & Recreation

Labeled as “The Natural State,” Arkansas has a wide variety of resources and mixed geography which has a great part in the history of America’s recreation. Arkansas is adjacent on the north by Missouri; on the east it is covered by the beautiful and historic Mississippi River, which separates it from Mississippi and Tennessee; on the south end, are Louisiana swamps; and on the west the bountiful plains of Oklahoma and Texas; all these factors combined have helped shape Arkansas into one of the country’s most diversified and prized landscapes.

The actual size of Arkansas is over 53,000 square miles, and of these, over 600,000 acres are covered with lakes and the state has 9,740 miles of rivers and streams. The sheer quantity of these natural bodies of water makes fishing, canoeing, and whitewater rafting a big hit for the people who live in the state. Of course, if water sports are not your thing, Arkansas has plenty of other fun outdoor activities to keep you busy. Some of these include exploring hiking trails, on- and off-road biking, golfing, rock climbing, mining for keeper quartz crystals and diamonds, bird watching, and if you desire even more adventure, there is wild caving in underground limestone caverns. Arkansas offers recreation opportunities for every stage of life, from kids to older adults, singles, couples, families –you name it!

I’m sure by now it is obvious that tourism is a major industry for the state. For this reason alone, the state government has taken an active role in preserving its beautiful land. With six national park sites, three national forests, and many other parks scattered across the state, it is easy to see the splendor this state beholds. Some of the most popular places to tour include Hot Springs National Park and the country’s first national river, Buffalo.

Arkansas has undeniably been endowed with an abundance of natural resources that go beyond value for recreation. Under the top soils of the state are found a wide array of minerals, among which petroleum, natural gas, and bromine are the top three minerals produced. Annual production is valued in excess of \$1,000,000,000. Arkansas leads the nation in production of bauxite, the ore used to make aluminum, providing over 80% of this precious ore. Bauxite was discovered in Arkansas in 1887 by geologist John C. Branner. Mining began in 1899 and Arkansas soon led all other states in production. Arkansas also ranks first in production of bromine, accounting for about one-half of the world’s output. Another interesting fact, Murfreesboro, Arkansas is home to the only diamond mine in the world that is open to public!

The continued magnificence, productivity, and environmental health of this state depend upon the proper management of its natural resources. Right now you are passing through some of the nation’s most valuable land; outside your window you can see the natural wonders and know that hidden treasures can be found just underneath.

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