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== *green pearls® - unique places* ==

16. May 2023

## NATIONAL PARK VACATION – OUR 7 RECOMMENDATIONS



Océano Health Spa Hotel

“I wish everybody had the chance to visit a national park,” says Barack Obama in the Netflix series “Our Great National Parks”. Here you could “experience the sheer joy and wonder of nature.” But national parks are not only places for recreation and adventure, they play an important role in protecting species on land and in the water. We would like to introduce you to 7 international protected areas and their sustainable accommodations for a national park vacation.

## NATIONAL PARKS FOR ENJOYMENT

One of the goals of a national park is to provide a place for people to enjoy. The natural landscapes worthy of protection are very diverse: snow-capped mountain peaks and glaciers, water-protected areas with giant turtles, volcanoes, rain forests, or sandy beaches. Each protected area has its own special characteristics and is home to unique flora and fauna



Berger Kogel Scheifel in Osttirol © Nationalpark Hohe Tauern

## ONE OF EUROPE'S LARGEST PROTECTED AREAS: THE HOHE TAUERN ALPINE NATIONAL PARK

Although the first national parks were established in the early 20th century, most of the world's national parks were created after World War II. According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (IUCN), there are now more than 6,500 national parks (category II) and other protected areas.

In Austria, the first national park, the Hohe Tauern National Park, was established in 1981. It is one of the largest and most impressive in Central Europe. Outstanding (in the truest sense of the word) is the Großglockner, the highest mountain in Austria. At 3,798 meters, it dominates the panorama along with a whole group of three thousand meter peaks.

### QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK

**Country:** Austria (Salzburg, Tyrol, Carinthia)

**Size:** 1,800 qkm

**Special features:** Characteristic of the Hohe Tauern National Park are the dream peaks of the Großglockner (3,798 m), Großvenediger (3,657 m) and Kitzsteinhorn (3,203 m), as well as glacier fields and glacially formed valleys and valley heads.

**Animals:** Due to its size, almost all species of animals and plants in the Alps can be found here. Despite the high altitude and long winters (up to eight months), there are about 10,000 different species. Apart from the ibex and the chamois, tourist love especially the golden eagle and the marmots. The latter had become rare due to the hunting of marmot fat, but has been successfully reintroduced. Since 1986, the bearded vulture has been seen again in the sky.

**Plants:** Up to the tree line at about 2,000 m there are extensive forests of spruce, larch and Swiss stone pine. From April to July, the purple Rudolph's saxifrage blooms, which is unique to the Hohe Tauern.

### YOUR SUSTAINABLE ACCOMMODATION IN THE HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK

If you want to spend your National Park vacation in the Hohe Tauern, we recommend the **Naturhotel Outside** (<https://green-travel-blog.com/tips-and-destinations-for-a-sustainable-climbing-vacation-in-europe/>), located right in it. Here you can explore the Alps with the hotel's mountain and hiking experts. You can also enjoy regional cuisine and a wellness area. The family-run hotel is now in its third generation.





© Berghotel Rehlegg

## BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK: ONE OF THE OLDEST NATIONAL PARKS IN GERMANY

Germany had its first national park in 1970 (Bavarian Forest National Park) and the second followed in 1978: Berchtesgaden National Park. It is the only German national park in the Alps with the Watzmann massif as its highest point. The sustainable **Berghotel Rehlegg** (<https://green-travel-blog.com/a-weekend-at-the-berghotel-rehlegg/>) is located in the middle of the Berchtesgaden National Park. Here you'll have a direct view of the Watzmann from your balcony (or heated outdoor pool).

### HIKE TO THE WATZMANN

You don't need any special skills to hike from the Berghotel Rehlegg to the Watzmann. Even a beginner can do this beautiful hike in about 3 to 3.5 hours. If you have alpine experience, you can climb from the Watzmannhaus to the summit in another 3 hours.

Also close to the Berchtesgaden Alpine National Park (about 20 kilometers away) is the **Klosterhof – Alpine Hideaway & Spa** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/de/hotels/klosterhof-alpine-hideaway-spa/>) in Bayerisch Gmain. This family-run hotel is beautifully secluded amidst the alpine panorama and caters to the health-conscious. After an active day in nature, you can relax in the large spa area with sauna landscape, outdoor pool, indoor pool and brine bath.

### QUICK FACTS ABOUT BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK:

**Country:** Germany (Bavaria)

**Size:** 208 qkm

**Special features:** Alpine national park with the Watzmann, Göll and Brett mountains.

**Animals:** There are about 80 species of mammals and 100 species of birds in the Alps. You'll meet the "King of the Alps", the ibex, as well as roe deer, red deer, chamois and in the sky circles the golden eagle.

**Plants:** A large part of the National Park is forest, with the most famous conifer being the Swiss stone pine, whose essential oils are said to have many beneficial properties. You will also find many beautiful and sometimes rare alpine plants such as edelweiss and gentian.





Cerf Island on the Seychelles © Cerf Island Resort

## SAINTE ANNE MARINE NATIONAL PARK – SEYCHELLES' WATER PARADISE

A very different natural landscape from the Alps can be found in the Seychelles. The archipelago off East Africa consists of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean. It's a tropical dream of white beaches and coconut palms!

The Sainte Anne Marine National Park was established in 1973 and includes eight islands and a protected marine area where water-skiing and fishing are not allowed.

## VACATION IN THE NATIONAL PARK AT CERF ISLAND RESORT

The beautiful villas of **Cerf Island Resort** (<https://green-travel-blog.com/relaxed-and-sustainable-vacation/>) are located on the Seychelles island of Cerf Island, which is only 1.5 km x 1 km in size. From here, you can explore the fascinating underwater world by diving or canoeing with the resort's guides. Authentic architecture, professional spa treatments, and local organic cuisine await you at the resort. By vacationing in the Cerf Island National Park, you'll also be supporting the local staff, who are paid a fair (and above-average) wage by the resort.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT SAINTE ANNE MARINE NATIONAL PARK

**Country:** Seychelles (Islands: Ste. Anne Island, Cerf Island, Île Cachée, Round Island, Long Island, Moyenne Island, Sèche Island, Harrison Rock)

**Size:** The 8 islands have a surface area of less than 4 qkm and the entire national park, including the water protection area, has a surface area of 14.43 qkm.

**Special features:** White sandy beaches, tropical flair and rare animals.

**Animals:** Among the rare and endangered species is the Aldabra giant tortoise. It grows over 1 meter tall and weighs up to 250 kg. In addition, the giant tortoise can live up to 120 years! In the water are the whale shark, the stingray, the lion fish and in the skies fly tropical birds like the Seychelles vasa parrot and water birds like the fairy tern.

**Plants:** One of the largest seagrass fields in the Seychelles thrives underwater. On the islands you will find coconut palms, bananas, mangoes, papayas and passion fruit.

## A VOLCANIC LANDSCAPE IN THE TEIDE NATIONAL PARK ON TENERIFE

The contrast to the tropical islands can be found on the Canary Island of Tenerife on the west side of Africa. Tenerife is dominated by the volcano Teide, the highest mountain in Spain. It is considered harmless (the last eruption was in 1909) and shapes the whole landscape with volcanic rocks.





The beaches of Tenerife have different colors, from gold to red and black. The **Oceano Health Spa Hotel** ([https://green-travel-blog.com/green\\_pearls\\_insights/oceano-health-spa-hotel-relaxation-in-just-six-days/](https://green-travel-blog.com/green_pearls_insights/oceano-health-spa-hotel-relaxation-in-just-six-days/)) is located on the northeast coast, about 45 kilometers from the Teide National Park. If you're planning an enjoyable time out, you'll find the perfect setting here, with several saltwater pools and daily yoga offerings.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT TEIDE NATIONAL PARK

**Country:** Spain (Canary Islands Tenerife)

**Size:** 189.9 qkm

**Special features:** The “Pico del Teide” is a dormant volcano and, at 3,715 m, the highest point in all of Spain and the third-highest island volcano in the world. In the national park you will find 38 hiking trails into the volcanic massif. A cable car takes you up to 3,555 meters.

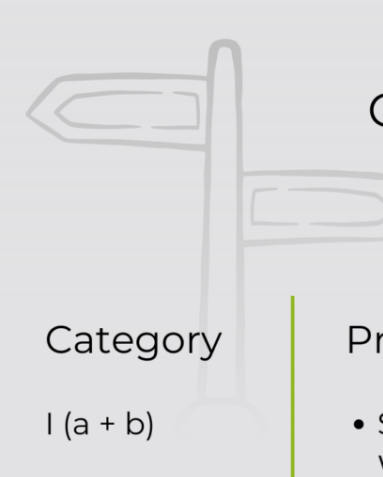
**Animals:** You will not find big animals here, but special species of lizards like the Lagarto Tizon with its blue neck, rare species of birds (e.g. the blue-feathered Pinzón azul del Teide), butterflies and bats.

**Plants:** The Teide National Park is characterized by its lava and rock formations. The high mountain massif looks more like a barren lunar landscape. Only in the lower area there are pine trees and pine forest. At higher altitudes, you will find some rare plant species, some of which grow exclusively on Tenerife. Above 3,000 meters grows the Teide violet.

## NOT EVERY NATURE RESERVE IS A NATIONAL PARK

A national park is a protected area of category II of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN is the same organization that maintains the list of endangered species.

Protected areas are classified according to their objectives:



## Categories of Protected Areas

*Nature reserves are divided into different categories by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) depending on their orientation and objectives.*

Category	Protected Area	Example
I (a + b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strict Nature Reserve and Wilderness Area</li> </ul>	Swiss National Park
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected areas of ecosystems that also serve recreational purposes (national parks)</li> </ul>	Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald (Germany)
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Monument</li> </ul>	Grünes Band Thüringen
IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat &amp; Species Protection Areas</li> </ul>	Yen Bai (Thailand)
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected landscape areas and biosphere reserves</li> </ul>	Biosphärenreservat Rhoen (Germany)
VI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource conservation areas with management</li> </ul>	Wilderness Reserve Hammastunturi (Finland)

Table by: ©Green Pearls® Unique Places

As mentioned above, a national park is both about preserving biodiversity and providing recreational space for people. Many national parks run small research stations or have ranger-trained guides to educate tourists about nature.

Size has nothing to do with it. As you have seen, the national park around Cerf Island is only 14 qkm. The Reserva Nacional Tambopata (<https://green-travel-blog.com/einheitsbuddeln-planting-trees-germany/>), in the Amazon region of Peru, on the other hand, is over 2,700 qkm and is listed in IUCN Category VI: Protected Area with Management. It is aimed at conserving the tropical rainforest





inkaterra-canopy-walkway

## DISCOVER THE JUNGLE AT INKATERRA RESERVA AMAZÓNICA

**Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica** is located in the heart of the Tambopata National Rainforest. As one of the pioneers of ecotourism in Peru, Inkaterra is committed to preserving the environment and respecting nature in all of its accommodations, as well as preserving the cultural heritage of the Incas. At the lodge of Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica (<https://green-travel->

[blog.com/waste-prevention-in-tourism-and-zero-waste-travel-tips/](https://green-travel-blog.com/waste-prevention-in-tourism-and-zero-waste-travel-tips/)), a guide will be waiting for you to explore the Amazon on guided excursions. There are challenging jungle trails as well as kid-friendly tours if you're traveling with your family.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT RESERVA NACIONAL TAMBOPATA

**Country:** Peru

**Size:** 2746.9 qkm

**Special features:** The Amazon Rainforest around the Amazon River is the largest rainforest area in the world, spanning 9 countries in South America.

**Animals:** The reserve alone is home to approximately 1,200 species of butterflies and 632 species of birds. There are also amphibians, reptiles (such as crocodiles), fish and 169 species of mammals. Mammals include puma, jaguar, ocelot, and many monkeys such as the red howler monkey, Caesarian tamarin, and squirrel monkey.

**Plants:** You will find famous jungle trees such as the rubber tree, elephant tree, cacao tree and mahogany. This is also the home of beautiful plants such as orchids.

## TORRE SALSA: SICILY'S WWF RESERVE PROTECTS WILD BEACH

Independent of the IUCN, there are other conservation organizations that manage nature reserves. The WWF (World Wildlife Fund), for example, has established the Torre Salsa reserve. It is a 6 km stretch of beach in Sicily that is difficult to access due to dense vegetation that hardly any tourists come here, and the beach has remained unspoiled. It has a sandy beach, shallow sea and high cliffs.





@ADLER Spa Resort SICILIA

## ADLER SPA RESORT SICILIA TAKES CARE OF THE BEACH

The Torre Salsa nature reserve is accessible almost exclusively from ADLER Spa Resort SICILIA (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/adler-spa-resort-sicilia/>). The sustainable yet luxurious resort has taken on the responsibility of caring for the beach and regularly cleans the beach of washed up marine plastic with its own staff.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE TORRE SALSA WWF RESERVE



**Country:** Italy (Sicily)

**Size:** 7.61 skm

**Special features:** The “wildest beach” of Sicily, it is only accessible from the ADLER Spa Resort SICILIA. You won’t find rubbish bins here and you are not allowed to light fires, but you will experience an unspoiled beach where turtles come to lay their eggs.

**Animals:** In the air you can see (with some luck) birds of prey such as hawks, buzzards and owls, and on the cliffs, Cannaiola. In the water, on dives (also with luck, of course) you’ll meet octopus, squid and swordfish. The small sea turtles *Caretta caretta* can be found both in the water and on the beach.

**Plants:** Lemon and orange trees, olives, pines, lavender and many herbs grow around the WWF Reserve Torre Salsa. Part of the concept of the ADLER Spa Resort SICILIA is the cultivation of local plants, which are then used in the restaurant according to the “fork to table” principle.

## NATIONAL PARK VACATION ETIQUETTE: WHAT CAN I DO AND WHAT CANNOT?

If you are planning a vacation in a national park, you should be aware of the rules. These include, for example

Taking everything you bring into the park back with you.

Staying on trails and in areas designated for soft tourism

Be aware of the rules regarding flash photography and issues such as lighting and making fires.

Fishing and motorboats are often not allowed

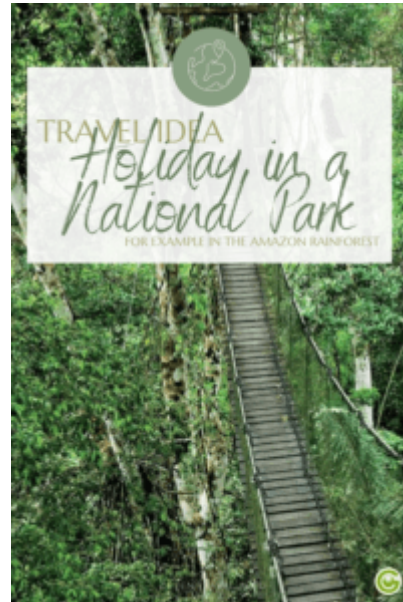
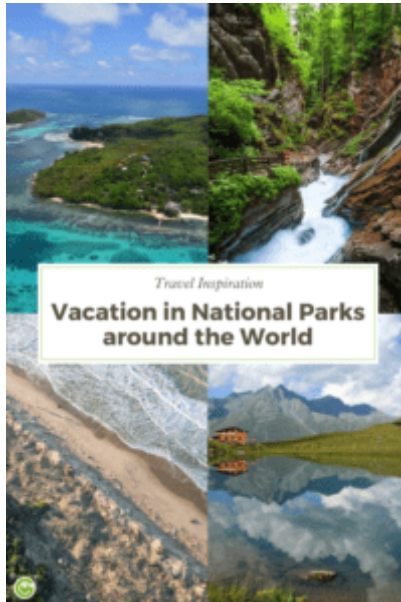
Be aware of noise restrictions

Find out about camping regulations

Finally, we recommend this article on how to [deal with wildlife](https://green-travel-blog.com/animal-friendly-travel/). (<https://green-travel-blog.com/animal-friendly-travel/>).

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