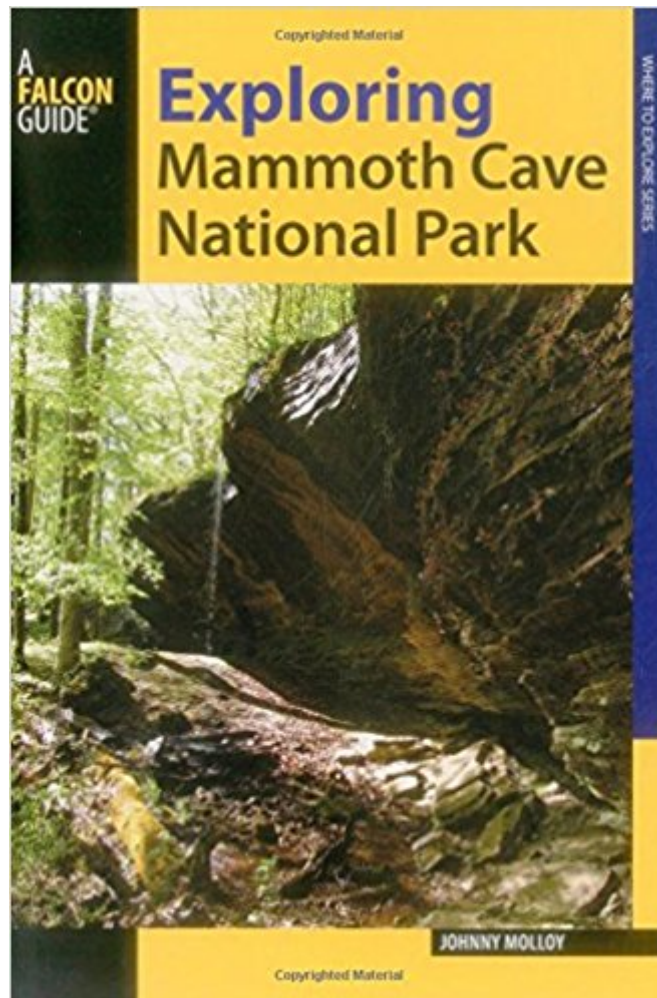




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# Exploring Mammoth Cave National Park (Exploring Series)



## Synopsis

Recognized for having the largest known cave system in the world, Mammoth Cave National Park, in southwestern Kentucky, has become a destination for nearly two million recreationalists every year. Exploring Mammoth Cave National Park, 2nd covers in detail all of the aboveground and belowground activities in this 50,000-acre national park, including hiking, biking, scenic driving, camping, paddling, fishing, and of course, caving.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For more than twenty-five years, FalconGuide<sup>®</sup> has set the standard for outdoor recreation guidebooks. Written by top outdoors experts and enthusiasts, each guide invites you to experience the endless adventure and rugged beauty of the great outdoors. Belowground, Mammoth Cave National Park in southwestern Kentucky is part of the largest known cave system in the world. Aboveground, the park offers two winding rivers, numerous creeks, and a lush forest full of trails waiting to be explored. Discover all of the activities available in this 50,000-acre wonderland with A FalconGuide<sup>®</sup> to Mammoth Cave National Park. Look inside to find: Cave tours, boat tours, scenic drives, and picnic areas Where to walk, hike, bike, paddle, fish, and ride a horse Facts about the area's weather, history, flora, and fauna Lists of park accommodations, campsites, and area B&Bs

Johnny Molloy is an outdoor writer based in Tennessee. He has averaged over one hundred nights in the wild per year since the early 1980s, backpacking and canoe camping throughout the country, in nearly every state. The result of his efforts are numerous books, including hiking guides to Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee as well as tent camping guides to Colorado, Wisconsin, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Georgia, and the Smokies. He continues to write and travel extensively to all four corners of the United States, endeavoring in a variety of outdoor pursuits. For the latest on Molloy, visit [www.johnnymolloy.com](http://www.johnnymolloy.com).

I like Johnny Molloy books. His gives details about the trails that inform you and makes you want to hike them

Very helpful book, we were able to plan our day at the park before ever being there. We knew which tour we wanted to take and what trails to hike.

Good guide. I wanted more info on the above ground trails however than the book had.

We just returned from a trip to Mammoth Cave NP. We used this book extensively to prepare. It provided the general and hiking trail information we needed. Trail descriptions are detailed. But, it would have been more helpful with maps. We needed to find maps online and print them out and go to the visitor center to obtain maps. However, the book was very useful.

Excellent resource. A little more information on mileages would be useful

Three national parks in the United States were founded principally to protect and celebrate a cave. They are Carlsbad Caverns NP, Wind Cave NP, and Mammoth Cave NP. All three cover areas of significant size and are of great interest aboveground as well as under-, though their appeal is more subtle than many other Park Service units. Mammoth Cave NP was the first national park I ever visited, back in the Sixties. I visited it again, all too briefly, this past Fall on the way back to Chicago from the Blue Ridge and the Cumberlands. Some would think it was anticlimactic, but for me it was well worth the visit, and not just for reasons of nostalgia. The Park preserves a sizeable tract of East Central woodlands, semi-humid, geologically of course karst or partially so, so it is atypical of those woodlands in some ways, though the forest can be taken as pretty representative of a mature sort, with signs of farming and other Euro-American intervention fading after 80 or 90 years of Park

status. I saw the biggest sycamores in my memory by the Green River, and there are some other giants out there. These woods are hilly, with steep descents to the Green and Nolan Rivers which enter the Park from the East and North. Surface water is otherwise rare or non-existent. Almost everybody comes for the Cave. I didn't set foot in it, this time around, though I did visit the "Historic Entrance", remembered vividly from my childhood and representative of the cave entrances that filled in the summers with townsfolk of every central Kentucky town at one time. At least it seemed so to John Muir when he walked through the state in the late 1800's. I also visited the graveyard, where the most prominent of the early guides is buried; tourism of the Cave began early and, interestingly, most of these guides were African American. History looms large everywhere here, the Cave is full of it: theater, tuberculosis patients, saltpeter mining and lot of other things. I came to hike a bit. I was surprised and pleased to see that I had company in this activity, quite a bit more than in Wind Cave and Carlsbad. This book, the second edition now, was of good use. The trails fall into two clumps: one honeycombing the area between the Visitor Center/Historic Entrance and the Green River, and another north of the River, much the larger of the two. The first group totals up to about five miles so can be covered in afternoon by an enthusiastic walker. The second group is much larger and probably the main thing such enthusiasts would use this book for. There are, in addition, some interesting trails a way off, going to the Cedar Sink and the Turnhole Bend, for example. Both of these latter visit karst features, and will be noticed by anyone who explores all the Park roads. The first section covers the Cave tours (much subject to change, over the years), and briefly describe some nearby commercial caves. There are sections on biking, "scenic driving" (I saw tobacco in leaf for the first time since childhood, on such a drive), and canoeing and kayaking. There used to be steamboat traffic to the Cave, hard to imagine now, but the rivers here are good for novice canoeists, these days. I used the book only for hiking really, though much of the other information came in handy, at least tangentially. Another reviewer had a problem with the lack of mileages, but the book has trail mileages, in any event. Author Molloy has produced quite a number of books by now, several of which I've used. This book is a good job, and was even more useful to me for a fact which I'm sorry to relate and perhaps was just a fluke: the attendant staff working the desks in the visitor center and the campground were not very helpful. I had to approach two employees to get the literature which was available on the trails north of the Green River, and, on the second pass, was given to understand that there wasn't much up there, "there aren't any waterfalls, or anything". Author Molloy lists one, and I found another one, probably temporary, as we'd had a good rain the previous night and lasting into the day I spent hiking. I'm pleased to say that professional NPS staff were just as helpful as they almost always are, in suite with the fabulous job the National Park

Service does for the country. As for the ancillary staff, I add that cave NP visitor centers are hectic places and perhaps people were just burned out. In any event, using this book I could have gotten week's worth of exploration with little or no help from interpretative staff. This book is quite recent, but some things have already gone out of date, I'm afraid. The Houchins Ferry has been shut down, a real inconvenience since it makes the eponymous campground less practical for park exploration. I had planned to stay in this campground but was fortunately able to extract the information about the defunct ferry from the desk staff. There doesn't seem to be a lot of difference between this 2nd edition and the 1st. The first had a nice fold-out map in the back which the new doesn't. But the maps available in the new edition are sufficient.

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