# **Common Frequently Asked Questions**

**Where can we soak in the thermal springs?**

There are only three locations to see and touch the thermal springs. The natural springs are about 143F, which is too hot for soaking, so the only way to soak in the thermal water is to use one of the two Bathhouses on the Row that still offer bathing experiences – the Quapaw and the Buckstaff.

**Where can we see the springs?**

There is a display spring in the Fordyce basement, outdoors behind the Fordyce, at the back of Arlington Lawn, and on the Grand Promenade behind the Quapaw bathhouse.

**How hot are the Hot Springs?**

Hot Springs National Park is best known for the 47 hot springs that comes out of the Hot Springs Mountain at an average 143° Fahrenheit.

**How much water is used every day?**

Hot Springs National Park goes through about 700,000 gallons of water per day. Several Bathhouses and drinking fountains have been built so people can enjoy the water that has given the park and the city its name.

**Where can we sample / fill jugs of water?**

You can sample the thermal water at the seashell fountain between the Fordyce and Maurice or at the Noble Fountain near the Grand Promenade south trailhead. There is a thermal water fountain outside the administration building on Reserve Street or at Hill-Wheatley Plaza. Cold water filling stations are located at Happy Hollow on Fountain Street or next to Whittington Park on Whittington Ave.

**What are the two bathhouses you can soak in the water?**

Quapaw and Buckstaff Bathhouses offer traditional and modern bathing experiences.

**Where is the free bathhouse?**

The Government Free Bathhouse closed in 1948.

**How is the water heated?**

Geologists and hydrologists tell us that this is not a volcanic area. This water is heated in a different way, a process known as geothermal gradient. When rain falls on the mountains around Hot Springs, pores and cracks in the rock take some of the water deep into the Earth. As the water goes deeper and deeper, its heat increases about 4 degrees [Fahrenheit] for every 300 feet it descends. This heated water dissolves minerals from the rocks it passes through them. Eventually the water seeps into joints and cracks leading it back up. The water comes to the surface right here, at the base of Hot Springs Mountain.

**Which bathhouse did Al Capone use?**

None, Al Capone and most of the gangsters in this area were not allowed on federal property. Al Capone stayed at the Arlington Hotel where he had his own suite and he bathed at the Majestic Hotel.

**Where is the waterfall?**

Hot Springs National Park does not have a waterfall; the Hot Water Cascade is the largest water feature in the park. There is a waterfall at Lake Catherine State Park or the 80’ waterfall at Petit Jean State Park is popular as well.

**Where are the caves?**

There are no caves in Hot Springs National Park. There are many rock structures and formation on the mountains that may look like caves, but the park does not recommend exploring these areas, for these areas are perfect habitat for foxes, coyotes, snakes, black widows, and bats.

**How many acres is Hot Springs NP?**

5,549.1 acres

**What is the big building on the hill?**

That towering structure is the old Army / Navy hospital refurbished under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It was also home to the former Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI).

**Who founded the park? / By when was it created?**

In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson was putting together a great expedition, led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and as he was working on getting this great expedition on its way, he started to hear talk from the French and Spanish trappers about hot water coming straight from the ground. And because of this talk, President Jefferson decided to send another expedition out, led by George Hunter and William Dunbar. We refer to it as the Forgotten Expedition. Because of their report President Jefferson decided that the Federal Government needed to protect the springs. However, it was not until Andrew Jackson became President that this area was set aside in 1832 to protect the hot waters for future use. This type of Reservation was an early version of the National Park idea. Hot Springs was the first area in the United States to be set aside for its natural features. After Yellowstone was formed in 1872, Hot Springs was managed with it. In 1916 the National Park Service was formed and in 1921, Hot Springs Reservation changed its name to Hot Springs National Park, becoming the eighteenth National Park.

**Where can I park?**

Free parking can be found at 128 Exchange Street. The only parking in Hot Springs National Park is located on the top of Hot Springs and North Mountain and on West Mountain as well.

**Where can I park an RV or bus?**

The only RV and bus parking are in the city’s visitor center parking lot between Reserve Street and Spring Street. Other parking can be found along Reserve Street, Spring Street, and Fountain Street.

**What is the best time to visit Hot Springs?**

Hot Springs National Park is open all year. The spring and the fall are the prettiest with new blossoms and fall colors. The summer is the busiest with thousands of park visitors and winter is nice because there are no ticks and chiggers on the trails.

**How many miles of trails are there in the Park?**

There are twenty-six miles of trails to explore.

**Are dogs allowed on the trails?**

Yes, dogs are welcome on all of the trails as long as they are on a six-foot leash and you pick up after them. Service animals are allowed in the buildings.

**Where is the city visitors center?**

On the corner of Spring Street and Central Avenue.

**I want to have a wedding in the park what do I need to do?**

You’ll need to obtain a special use permit. Learn more at <https://www.nps.gov/hosp/planyourvisit/permits.htm>

**What can I do while I am here?**

There are many things to do in Hot Springs National Park. Consider taking a tour of the Fordyce Bathhouse, watch the park movie, see the springs, and taste the thermal water. Soak in the thermal water by taking a bath in the one or both of the park’s operating bathhouses. Experience the new uses of the historic bathhouses, enjoy a beverage made with the thermal water, shop at the park store or enjoy the artwork of the park’s artist in residence program. Visit the Mountain Tower for an amazing view of the park and city. Hike on the many trails in the park.

**Is there anything living found in the thermal springs?**

Ostracods, blue-green algae, and Nano-bacteria have been found in the thermal water. Ostracods are small crustaceans with jellybean-shaped shell about the size of a sharp pencil point that live in the bottom of the exposed hot spring pools. The blue-green algae are found only in few other places in the world. The Nano-bacteria are one billionth of a meter in size.

**Do you have any cold springs in the park?**

Yes, we have two cold water springs available to the public: Happy Hollow Spring on the southeast slope of North Mountain and Whittington Spring at the base of West Mountain.

**What Native-American tribes are affiliated with Hot Springs National Park?**

The Quapaw and Caddo tribes are affiliated with our park. The Quapaw consider the park area to be culturally significant. The Caddo lived in the Hot Springs vicinity for many centuries prior to Quapaw influence in the area.

**If I need to call Law Enforcement what is the number?**

888-692-1162 or 911 in the event of an emergency.

**What are the different buildings used for today?**

Superior – Brewery

Hale – Boutique restaurant / hotel

Maurice – Vacant

Fordyce – Museum / Visitors Center

Quapaw – Operational Bathhouse

Ozark – Art museum

Buckstaff – Operational Bathhouse

Lamar – Bookstore

**When did the individual bathhouses open / close?**

The Lamar Bathhouse – Opened in 1923, Closed in 1985

The Buckstaff Bathhouse – Opened in 1912, Is still in operation today.

The Ozark Bathhouse – Opened in 1922, Closed in 1977

The Quapaw Bathhouse – Opened in 1922, Closed in 1984

The Fordyce Bathhouse – Opened in 1915, Closed in 1962

The Maurice Bathhouse – Opened in 1911, Closed in 1974

The Hale Bathhouse – Opened in 1893, Closed in 1978

The Superior Bathhouse – Opened in 1916, Closed in 1983

## **Fordyce Specific Questions**

**When did the Fordyce close?**

1962

**When did the Fordyce open?**

March 1st, 1915

**Where did the marble come from?**

Italy

**Who made the water features in the lobby and men’s Bath hall?**

American Encaustic Tile Company – Zanesville Ohio

**Who installed the tile and water features?**

The company is Southwestern Tile Company from Little Rock.

**Did Franklin Roosevelt use the baths?**

No, he took his baths at Warm Springs, GA. He did however visit here in 1936 and was instrumental in recommending the Hubbard tub on the third floor.

**Is the stained-glass original to the building?**

The glass is about 98% original, there has only been one window fully replace and that is located in the women’s bath hall.

**Who made the stained glass?**

Condie-Neale art glass company from St. Louis, MO.

**What are the boxes behind the front desk?**

They are lock boxes that people used to store valuables during their baths when this was an operating bathhouse.

## **America the Beautiful Pass Questions**

**Where can I buy the different America The Beautiful passes?**

You can purchase a pass at Hot Springs National Park at the Lamar Bathhouse, or [online](https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm).   
These are the prices for each pass (current as of May 2020):

* + Senior Lifetime Pass – ($80.00), for U.S. citizens or permanent residents, 62 years and up
  + Senior Annual Pass – ($20.00), for U.S. citizens or permanent residents, 62 years and up
  + Access Pass (FREE) - for U.S. citizens or permanent residents medically determined to have a permanent disability
  + Annual Pass ($80.00)
  + Military Annual Pass (FREE) - for Active Duty U.S. military members only
  + Every Kid Outdoors 4th Grade Annual Pass (FREE) - for current 4th grade students

To learn more about the differences between the passes and to stay up to date with latest news, be sure to visit the [America the Beautiful website.](https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm)