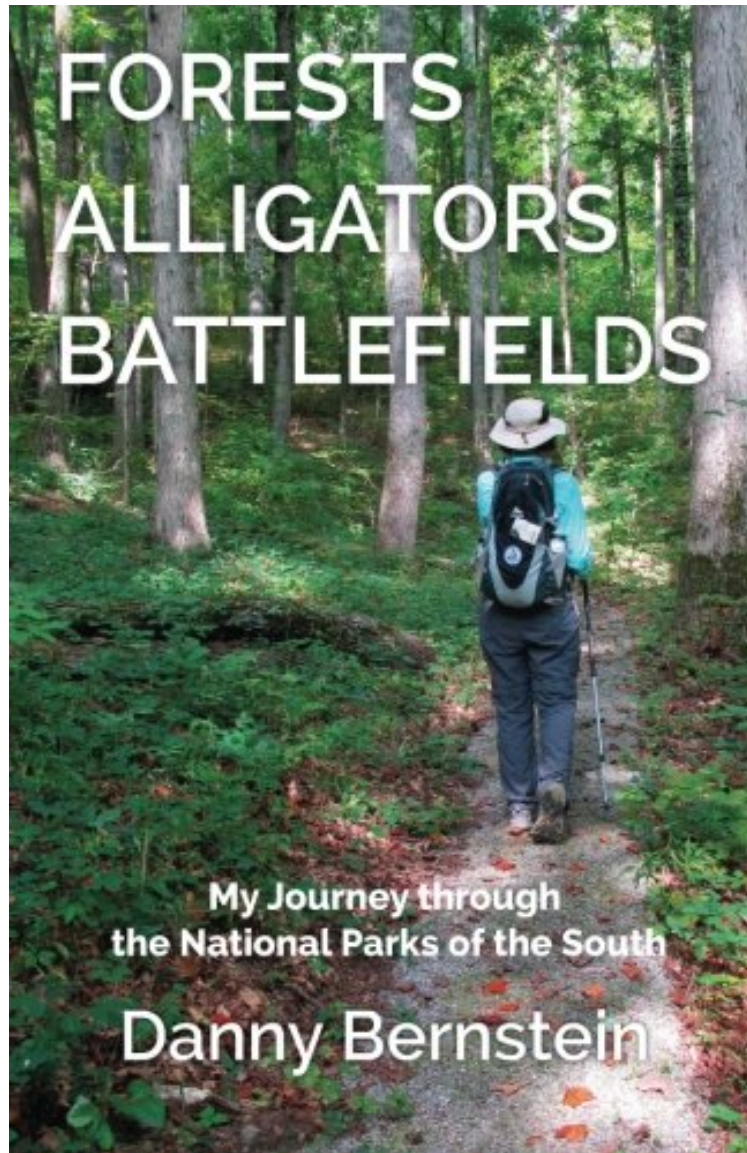


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Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey through the National Parks of the South

Danny Bernstein

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Danny Bernstein : Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey through the National Parks of the South before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey through the National Parks of the South:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A fine compilation, reference, and education.By DouginNCI just

finished this delightful conversation with Danny Bernstein. The author did all the talking via the pages of her story "Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey Through the National Parks of the South." I was engaged throughout as though she were in my midst relaying her views, responding to my wonderings about one place versus another, and providing details I wanted to know but hadn't yet thought to question. This book is a treat, not a treatise. It's a dialogue, not a diatribe. It does not just list, it enlivens. You learn just enough history and just enough "when you go" guidelines while benefitting from one person's pursuit. Danny walks and talks every "National" property in the South. If you're a casual vacationer like me, you have seen some of them, heard the names of many others, and will marvel that there is much unknown to you but significant in some special way to the United States and perhaps the world. Parks are covered as though they are the author's children, with an emphasis on each one being unique and special in their own way, clearly held close to the heart. Succinct virtual visits are organized by category to keep the reader focused on the commonalities that bind groups of them together like a family, such as battles, nature, events, or historical figures. The Parks system includes places that aren't pretty, but 'portant, such as "Camp Sumter at Andersonville ... a sad, depressing, horrible place." She covers them all. Author Bernstein intrigued me through her stories to look for more information on places and persons such as John Muir and understand terms like "live oak." She mentioned why the Tortugas islands off Florida have the word "dry" in their name, which had intrigued me, and described the location that put the "dead" in "deadline." I finished this book with an education about much more than parks. What could I criticize? The book lacks maps, at least my Kindle edition. This tour of land and sea has not so much as one orientation diagram. Let's not lose sight of the value of visuals. Fun quotes: "[The Rangers' approach] is a very optimistic view of the world -- just educate people and they'll protect the parks and not litter, harass a bear, or carve their names on a cabin wall." "A magnificent gumbo limbo tree ... known as the tourist tree because 'it stands in the sun, turns red, and peels.'" 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An homage to our beloved National Parks By Patrick Cumby The author begins the book: "You know that one tree that grows in Brooklyn? I didn't live close to that tree." I knew from that first line that I would be in for a treat. As a hiker myself and a lover of travel and all things outdoors, I appreciated the book's information about each of the national parks. But this book is far more than just a travel guide, it's a travelogue, a personal journey that is at times exciting and funny. Having been to most of the places the author describes, I considered myself an expert, but as I read this book I realized how little I actually knew. The book is broken into short sections, each of which describes a visit to a particular national park or monument. Each section is rich in anecdotes and history, filled with poems song lyrics and quotes and other fascinating tidbits. Danny Bernstein takes the reader along on her own explorations, and she has a unique passion for these national treasures that manifests itself in compelling stories. She loves the National Park System, and this book is an homage to that love. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lacks structure By D. T. Snoopy Perhaps I misunderstood the purpose of this book...let's give it the benefit of doubt. If it's meant to be memories of various parks the author has visited, it might be okay. The chapters jump from one park or trail to another quickly and I think I expected a chapter to be about one park at a time. Even the chapter on the Blue Ridge Parkway jumps to the trail across North Carolina and difficulties of creating trails, then to the Smokey Mountains and back again. For lack of structure I did not enjoy this book.

Danny Bernstein makes a great national park buddy as she takes you through the seventy-one parks in the South. In her attempt to become a Southerner one park at a time, Danny shows that every national park has a human story as well as great scenery. In the Smokies, she leads us to long-forgotten cemeteries. She walks around New Orleans to find the story of jazz. She meets Henry Allen, who marched from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. At Natchez National Historical Park, Ranger Schoby explains how free African-Americans survived before the Civil War. After she finally finds the national park at Salt River Bay, she stands where Christopher Columbus landed on his second voyage. In the Southeast, you'll drop in on icons like Mammoth Cave National Park and the Everglades, along with the one square block of Tupelo National Battlefield, and Wright Brothers National Memorial, where the first flight took off. The coal mines at Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area brings to mind the song "I owe my soul to the company store." Visiting the Southeastern parks is a very different experience from the once in a lifetime trip to Yosemite or Yellowstone. Here, folks come often, volunteer, adopt a trail, and support their parks. *Forests, Alligators, Battlefields: My Journey through the National Parks of the South* is Danny's contribution to the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. She's an engaged, questioning national park companion, who puts a historical and personal spin on her travels.

"Danny's adventures are a must-read for any outdoor enthusiast. No one has logged more miles in national parks or explored them so thoroughly. She asks tough questions and goes beyond the visitor center to uncover highlights and hidden treasures across 70 national park units across the South. At each park, she powerfully weaves together natural and human histories-including her own. This is not a superficial overview. Danny gets her boots muddy-and her hands dirty-clearing trails, viewing wildlife, and hiking deep into the region's wildest and most rugged terrain. It is a timely and critically important book that celebrates the South's enduring park legacies, delves deep into their storied past, and

offers a candid, clear-eyed vision for their future." -Will Harlan, author of *Untamed: The Wildest Woman in America and the Fight for Cumberland Island*"Danny's book written from a true love of our national parks reflects not only the author's enthusiasm for the special places preserved, but the people and the stories reflected in those places, stories both past and present. The author as narrator weaves her own personal adventures about exploring the national parks with humor and wry observation. While revealing her own story, Danny never overshadows the true stars of the book, the national parks themselves. It's as if Danny invites you along for the adventure, leading you throughout the South, from the beaches of Puerto Rico to the Civil War battlefields to the Natchez Trace of Mississippi to the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee, to lesser parks of which you've never heard, but will want to go after reading this book. And whether we are traipsing through a visitor center, along a trail or visiting a pioneer cabin, with Danny in the lead, we learn tales of how and why these national parks came to be. Her conversational yet informative writing style leads you on a learning experience far removed from dull, dry historical textbooks. Grab this narrative! It will make you eager to experience these national parks for yourself." -Johnny Molloy, author of over fifty outdoor hiking, camping and paddling guides"

Danny Bernstein is an ideal National Parks guide. She loves the parks and believes in the public purpose they serve. She is insatiably curious about both their hiking trails and outdoor spaces and the complicated histories they preserve and tell. And she is ever mindful of the now century-long saga of the National Park Service as the agency that manages them. In this personal and intimate book, she blends these things in an engaging account that invites us to make our own journey through the parks of the southeast. I am eager to follow her." -Anne Mitchell Whisnant, author of *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History*"Danny Bernstein has penned an enjoyable read of her personal journeys to all the National Park Service units within the southeast region of the United States. The book is a mixture of travel guide and American history, with a generous dose of Danny's personal adventures at each location." -Terry Maddox, Executive Director of Great Smoky Mountains Association, retired, in his foreword to the book.

About the Author Danny Bernstein's mission is to get people out of their cars and walking. She's been a committed hiker for over forty years, completing the Appalachian Trail, all the trails in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST), and many other hiking challenges. Danny hikes and leads hikes for the Carolina Mountain Club, Friends of the Smokies, and other outdoor groups. She's written two hiking guides, "Hiking the Carolina Mountains" and "Hiking North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains", and a narrative on her MST hike, "The Mountains-to-Sea Trail across North Carolina." She blogs at hikertohiker.com. In her previous life, she worked in computer science for thirty-five years, long before computing was cool, first as a software developer, then as a professor of computer science. Her motto is "no place is too far to walk if you have the time." She plans to die with her boots on.