

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park



Frequently Asked Questions

Kennesaw Mountain

BASIC KEMO INFORMATION

1. When is Kennesaw Mountain Road open?
 - The mountain road is closed to personal vehicles (including bicycles) on Saturdays, Sundays, and all federal holidays.
 - You can drive your vehicle or ride your bicycle to the top of the mountain weekdays when the road is open. 9am – 7pm (summer hours) and 9am – 5pm (winter hours).
 - The road may be closed during the week due to safety concerns such as inclement weather or emergencies; in this case the gate will be closed.
 - Inquiries regarding the mountain road closures can be answered at the Visitor Center.
2. Are there restrooms or water available at the mountain top?
 - No, the only restrooms are in the Visitor Center and Cheatham Hill/Illinois Monument parking lot.
3. Can I carry my gun in the park?
 - Yes, only if you have a “conceal and carry” permit.
4. Can I carry my gun in the Visitor Center?
 - No, all park buildings are considered Federal buildings, thus weapons are not permitted.
5. Where are the restrooms located?
 - The restrooms are located in the Visitor Center, to the left as you enter the vestibule from the main doors, and Cheatham Hill/Illinois Monument Parking lot.
6. How do I get back to the “parking lot”?
 - This depends on which parking lot the visitor is inquiring about. Volunteers need to be aware of their location in order to provide adequate directions. There are 2 parking areas in the Northern Section, 1 parking area in the Middle Section, and 4 parking areas (1 being for horse trailers only) in the Southern Section.
7. How can I volunteer?
 - Provide them with an NPS Volunteer brochure and/or the park’s volunteer email address: kemo_volunteer@nps.gov or www.Volunteer.gov.
8. I need to buy a Civil War book for someone. Could you help me pick it out?
 - Direct the visitor to an Eastern National Representative.
9. Where is the drinking water?
 - There are 5 water fountains located in the park. 1 in the Visitor Center, 1 on the trail directly behind the Visitor Center, 1 at the Pigeon Hill parking lot, 1 at the

Cheatham Hill Drive (Illinois Monument) parking lot, 1 at the southern tip of the park. Water also may be purchased in the Visitor Center gift shop.

10. How often do we provide civil war demonstrations?

- We provide free demonstrations typically from April to November. We post full lists online via our Facebook and webpage when we get the finalized schedule.

11. Where is more parking?

- We have additional parking in the overflow lot on Old 41, just north of Stilesboro, as well as parking in the Central Section at Burnt Hickory, and in our Southern Section on Cheatham Hill Dr and 2 on Cheatham Hill Road. The horse trailer parking is located at Cheatham Hill Road and Powder Springs Rd.

12. Why doesn't the park have garbage cans on trails?

- The park is unable to properly service garbage cans that are on the trails. The garbage cans are located at main trail heads which can be serviced easily.

13. What is the difference between Kennesaw Mountain NBP and State/Local parks?

- Kennesaw Mountain is a National Battlefield Park protected by the National Park Service which is a United States government agency. State/Local parks fall under the state and local jurisdiction.

14. Do you have a tour of the battlefield?

- Currently, we do not provide a guided tour of the battlefield; however, there is a self-driving tour offered in the park's brochure, which is available at the Visitor Center, and the NPS app. Site specific guided tours are offered throughout the year. Please contact the visitor center, social media, or the park website.

15. How far is it to the Illinois Monument, walking & to drive over there?

- The Illinois Monument is about 5 miles from the Visitor Center. You can refer to the brochure map for directions on how to drive there. It is approximately a 10-mile round trip hike from the Visitor Center to the Illinois Monument and back. The trail maps highlight which trails to use.

16. How can I reserve space for a group in the picnic area, activity area, etc.?

- All outdoor space is open to the public and therefore are not available to be reserved. All outdoor space is based on first come first served. If a group sets up for a party, they are welcome to do so; however, they must allow other visitors to use the unoccupied area of that same space.

Fee Questions

1. How much is the fee?

- \$5 daily or \$40 for the year (*Fees to change in October 2025).

2. Do I need to pay the fee today?

- Yes. We started collecting fees in November 2019. It was paused due to the COVID crisis but was resumed on July 24, 2020.

3. Where does the fee money go?

- 80% of what we collect in the park stays in Kennesaw to enhance your experience in the park. This includes trail maintenance. The other 20% goes to the other non-fee parks in the National Park Service.
4. What happens if I don't pay?
 - You'll either have a fee notice (warning) or a citation on your car when you return.
 5. What are the ways I can purchase a pass?
 - You can purchase one in person at the Visitor Center during operating hours, Recreation.gov (digitally that's tied to your license plate number), or fee boxes located at parking lots.
 6. What if I have more than one car and I want to purchase the annual pass?
 - The physical passes can be moved from car to car. It still only works for one car in the park, but you can choose which car to drive on any given day.
 7. What if I have the digital pass, can I use it on different cars?
 - No. The digital pass is tied to one vehicle. If you purchased one and have multiple vehicles, you can exchange it for a physical pass when the Visitor Center is open.
 8. Do you have a senior discount?
 - No, but if you're 62 or older and an American citizen or permanent resident, you can purchase the America the Beautiful Senior Pass that works for all National Parks. There are two options: \$80 for a lifetime pass or \$20 for an annual pass.
 9. Does the parking/entrance fee include the overflow parking lot?
 - Yes. We have ten parking lots within the boundaries of the battlefield that are subject to the fee.
 10. Does the fee guarantee parking?
 - No. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee parking. If you only want to come for the day, we suggest waiting until you park to purchase the day pass.
 11. Does my Georgia State Park Pass work here?
 - No. The State Park Pass only works for State Parks and Kennesaw Mountain is a National Park subject to federal regulations.
 12. What if I lose my physical pass?
 - Unfortunately, you will need to purchase another one. There's no database for the cards.
 13. What passes do you offer in the Visitor Center?
 - The \$40 KEMO Annual Pass, \$80 National Park Annual Pass, \$80 Senior Lifetime Pass, \$20 Senior Annual Pass, Access Pass, Active Military Pass, 4th Grade Pass.

HISTORY

1. My ancestor fought here; how can I find out where he was?
 - If you know which side they fought for and the regiment they were in, you can come to the front desk in the Visitor Center and the Rangers can help you locate where your ancestor would have been stationed during the time of the battle. It is advisable to make an appointment when possible to ensure that we will have someone to help you.
2. How do I get to the battle sites mentioned in the park film?
 - You can drive to the different sites by following the driving tour in our brochure as well as our hiking trails.
3. Who won the battle here?
 - Our site is considered a Confederate victory because the Union troops were never able to break through the Confederate lines, in terms of loss of life, there were significantly more Union casualties.
4. Is that real gun?
 - Apart from 3 cannon tubes, the cannons throughout the park are originally tubes placed on reproduction carriages. There is one reproduction Henry Repeating Rifle in the museum; however, the handguns and long guns are original artifacts. The only cannon tube known to be used here at Kennesaw Mountain is located in the park's museum directly to the right when you enter the exhibit area and is mounted on a reproduction carriage. All weapons used for living history demonstrations (cannon and small arms) are reproductions. The NPS does not permit original artifacts to be used in live black powder demonstrations.
5. Differences in the cannons?
 - There were two kinds of cannons (and muskets!) that were prevalent during the Civil War: smoothbore and rifled cannons.
 - Smoothbore: range approximately 1 mile, smooth inside which makes the projectile come out in any direction (like a basketball being thrown – may go in the direction desired but not hit the target one is aiming), weight: 1200-1300 lbs., made of bronze (green due to the patina, originally a bright shiny bronze color).
 - Rifled: range approximately 3 miles, has rifled grooves that make the projectile spin (like a football spiral – more accurate and more likely to hit the target), weight: 800-900 lbs., made of iron (painted black).
 - Even with different ranges, a cannon crew can only aim and fire at what they can see. Example: you are unable to see past a tree line, which is blocking your view of the approaching enemy.
 - To learn more about these you can visit the museum inside the Visitor Center or speak to one of the Rangers.

6. What made Kennesaw and Atlanta so important to each side?
 - Kennesaw is conveniently located right next to the railroad that Sherman was following south from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The railroad served as the transportation hub of the South. Atlanta was so important because it was the strategic center of the South and was one of the Confederacy's largest industrialized cities, meaning it was one of the few places they could mass produce war goods.
7. What were the weather and other conditions in 1864?
 - Highs were in the mid 90's with high humidity and lots of rain (it had been raining for 3 weeks). These conditions of course would make the temperature feel as though it was much higher.
8. What types of weapons were used?
 - Many different weapons were used during the Civil War, the two most common and recognizable being rifled muskets and cannons (both smoothbore and rifled). To learn more about Civil War weapons you can visit the museum inside the Visitor Center or speak to one of the Rangers.
9. How were supplies transported?
 - Some of the most common methods of transporting supplies were via railroad and wagon.
10. What kinds of food and medical care were used?
 - Most men ate hardtack and salt pork, which were staples in Civil War life. Men also received food rations saying how much food they would be provided. Medical care was far different from how it is today because they lacked any concept of germ theory and general sanitation which led to infections and disease becoming regular themes in antebellum life. To learn more about these you can visit the museum inside the Visitor Center or speak to one of the Rangers.
11. Why were so many battles fought on National Parks?
 - The National Park Service came about after the Civil War and started protecting Civil War sites. So National Parks are AT Civil War sites.
12. Were the Civil War uniforms hot?
 - Yes, Civil War uniforms are hot, but not as hot as one might think. They were made of natural fibers, typically wool and cotton, and therefore were able to breathe a little bit better.
13. Why was Atlanta, such a small city, of such importance?
 - Atlanta was so important because it was the strategic center of the South and was one of the Confederacy's largest industrialized cities, meaning it was one of the few places they could mass produce war goods. It was also housing a lot of the confederate refugees and women workers, so a lot of the confederate population was there.

14. Why did Sherman choose to fight at Kennesaw rather than flank like he had before?
 - In his own words, Sherman said his men were getting complacent after a series of out flanking and wanted to combat that complacency with actual fighting.
15. What is the significance of the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain?
 - Kennesaw Mountain was one of the stops on Sherman's Campaign to get to Atlanta. To learn more about the significance of Kennesaw Mountain during the Civil War, you can visit the Visitor Center, tour the museum, and check out our film.
16. Are there people buried here at the mountain?
 - We have one body still buried here at this site and it is the grave of the Unknown Soldier down in the Southern Section by the Illinois Monument. We also have the Kolb family plot by Kolb's Farm in our Southern Section. The other bodies were reinterred after the war in the Marietta National Cemetery and Marietta Confederate Cemetery.
17. Do you really fire a real cannon ball?
 - No, at our artillery demos we do not fire any projectiles. We only fire black powder blanks.
18. Where's the battlefield or did they fight at the mountain?
 - The battle lines stretched about 11 miles long, beginning about 1.5 miles to the northeast of the park's northern boundary extending over the mountain peaks, crossing Burnt Hickory Road, south to Dallas Hwy./Whitlock Ave. over Cheatham Hill and ending roughly 1 mile southeast of Kolb's Farm. The fighting which occurred on Kennesaw Mountain consisted mostly of artillery firings, a small demonstration to test the strength of the line, and well-placed rifle pits.

TRAILS

1. Where is the trail up the mountain?
 - The trail starts to the left of the Visitor Center. It heads across from the pavilion over the black top road.
2. Where does this trail go?
 - The trail will take you to the top of the mountain but will also turn into a 5.8-mile loop if you continue following the red arrows when you reach the top. A hiker is also able to continue south on the trail and hike the entire park loop which is roughly 18-mile loop.
3. How far is it to hike to the top of the mountain (road/trail)?
 - It is 1.2 miles to the top following the trail up and 1.45 miles to the top following the road up.

4. How far is it to the Visitor Center? (usually asked by people traveling the wrong way on trails)
 - From the top it is 1.2 miles back down the trail to the Visitor Center. From the road it is 1.45 miles back down to the Visitor Center.
5. How long does it take the average person to walk?
 - It takes the average walker 45 minutes to walk up the mountain and 20 minutes to walk back down resulting in about an hour to an hour and fifteen-minute hike.
6. Is this trail a loop? (possibly regarding the northern section)
 - There is. We have trail loops in all three of our sections. A 5.8-mile loop in the Northern Section, a 3.6-mile loop in the Central Section, and a 5-mile loop in the Southern Section. We also have a larger trail loop that incorporates all 3 sections and is 18 miles round trip. All maps for those are available in the Visitor Center.
7. Are there restrooms on the trail?
 - Yes. Restrooms are at the Visitor Center and at the Cheatham Hill/Illinois Monument parking lot.
8. Where do the trails begin and end and how long are they?
 - We have trails that begin in all 3 of our sections as well as a larger trail loop that incorporates all 3 sections. For more details, please refer to trail maps.
9. When are “they” going to fix the trail?
 - We do trail clean-up and repairs the 2nd Saturday of every month. It is a clean-up led by the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club and anyone can register to volunteer for these Trail Workdays.
10. How many miles of trails are there?
 - We have over 22 miles of trails at our site.
11. I have heard that some of the coyotes here, maybe as large as wolves. Could it be true?
 - No. While the eastern coyote may have some wolf-like appearances, it is about half the size of a wolf weighing only between 30 and 40 pounds. It also has different characteristics and behaviors than an American Wolf.
12. Various Trail/road distances and trail hazards/points of interests?
 - We have over 22 miles of trail here and within those 22 miles we have varying degrees of length and difficulty. It is best to gauge the number of miles a visitor wants to hike, see/avoid, and then refer to the map to point out trails that will satisfy the requested difficulty and/or distance.
13. Where do you suggest I hike for:
 - a. Ten-mile run
 - Combine the Northern and Central Sections for elevated terrain. Combine the Central and Southern Sections for a flatter terrain.
 - b. With three kids under 5
 - The Environmental Trail in the Northern Section is a 1.3-mile loop that is great for young children.

- c. For the best view
 - The main Mountain Trail in the Northern Section is best for the view at the top (you can see all three of Atlanta's skylines!).
- d. Away from the crowds, etc.
 - The Central and Southern Sections tend to be less crowded.