

KINGS MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

gets into the Holiday spirit

WORDS/ SHERRY JACKSON

As the weather hints of cooler days to come, leaves will soon begin their change to brilliant shades of red, purple and gold, announcing that fall is here and that it is a perfect time to get outdoors and visit Kings Mountain State Park.

With a Blacksburg, S.C., address, but only a couple of miles from Kings Mountain, N.C., the park is one of 16 state parks in S.C. built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). With 6,885 acres, the park boasts two lakes for fishing, plus camping, hiking and horseback riding AND an 1800s living history farm. You can also visit the adjacent Kings Mountain National Military Park, which offers a peek into the history of the Battle of Kings Mountain, considered a major turning point in the Revolutionary War.

Camping is a main draw at Kings Mountain State Park and the park gets into the holiday spirit for Halloween with campers decorating their campsites and offering trick-or-treating for kids on Oct. 26. What started out as an informal annual event has now become a sold out, all-day camper-sponsored event, says Jim Prokash, a staff member at the park. Campsites sell out quickly; in fact, for the past several years, they are generally booked by the end of December for the following year. Jim says that the park's employees pitch in and help direct traffic and park cars.

The park features 115 standard sites, 10 tent sites, 15 equestrian sites and a primitive group camping area for up to 30 people. The campground also has restroom facilities with hot showers and packed-gravel sites with water and electrical hookups.

Down at the Farm

The Living History Farm is a replica of an 1800s South Carolina yeoman farm and includes a barn, cotton gin, weave shop and blacksmith/carpenter shop. It also has two herb gardens, a vegetable garden and field to depict how essential it was for lower-class yeoman farmers to grow their own food for their families and animals, make their own medicines from herbs and grow enough cotton to make clothing. Self-guided tours of the farm are available during September and October.

The Farm also gets in on the holiday action with a Haunted Farm on Oct. 26 from 7-9 p.m. This is a family-friendly activity that allows visitors to stroll through the farm with ghosts and goblins from years past. The park offers free hayrides from the campground to the living history area for this event.

Christmas at the Farm will be held on Nov. 16, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and offers visitors a step back to the 1850s and gives people a chance to help decorate the farm for the holidays.


Hike the Trails

Hiking opportunities abound at the park with over 20 miles of trails. The 1.5 mile Farm Trail is probably the most popular, taking hikers by Lake Crawford, the old bathhouse and around to the Living History Farm. The 1.8-mile Ridgeline Trail is also popular and connects two states (South Carolina and North Carolina) and three parks (Kings Mountain State Park, Kings Mountain National Military Park and Crowders Mountain State Park in North Carolina). The park also has a 16-mile trail that traverses the entire park; this trail is shared with horseback riders. Hikers are warned with signs that they need to allow plenty of time if they are going to try to tackle this hike.

The Kings Mountain Gateway Trail is also nearby and part of the new Carolina Thread Trail, a regional trail network named for the rich regional heritage of weaving fabric. This trail will eventually link the City of Kings Mountain to Crowders Mountain State Park, Kings Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain National Military Park. Officials recently opened an additional 2.26 miles of the trail to the public.

Cast a line

Fishing is another popular activity at the park with both the 63-acre Lake York and the 13-acre Lake Crawford available; both were built by the CCC. Bass, bream, crappie and catfish are the top catches and fishing is allowed from the bank of Lake Crawford. You can also rent a fishing boat, pedal boat or canoe on Lake York. State fishing regulations apply.

So bring your hiking boots, fishing poles and camping gear and enjoy the cooler weather and holiday activities at Kings Mountain State Park. 

DETAILS

The Halloween and Christmas events are no additional charge with regular park admission. For campground rates, trail maps, directions and other information, visit the website at www.southcarolinaparks.com/kingsmountain.

The Kings Mountain Gateway trail head is located about ½ of a mile south of Downtown Kings Mountain at 807 S. Battleground Avenue at the corner of Quarry Road.



- 1 Campers turn their RV into a pirate ship during the Halloween truck or treat at Kings Mountain State Park.
- 2 Lake Crawford is a perfect spot for fishing for bass, bream, crappie and catfish.
- 3 Old Bathhouse inside Kings Mountain State Park.
- 4 Guests getting ready for the Halloween truck or treat.
- 5 This ghoulish crew poses for a picture during the truck or treat.
- 6 Rent a fishing boat, pedal boat or canoe and explore Lake Crawford.

