

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Marriott encourages travelers to explore with new parks partnership

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Marriott Bonvoy is partnering with the National Park Foundation to encourage travelers to get outside. Image credit: Getty Images/Marriott Bonvoy

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Hotel group Marriott International is hoping to connect with travelers craving outdoor adventures through a new partnership.

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Marriott's loyalty program Bonvoy is teaming with the National Park Foundation (NPF), the nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, to encourage travelers to explore national parks across the United States. With the hospitality industry slowing due to the coronavirus pandemic, brands are pivoting to focus on staycations and outdoor experiences where it is easier for travelers to social distance.

"We are thrilled to offer Marriott Bonvoy members a convenient way to plan road trips and explore historical sites and national wonders with their friends and families with this one-of-a-kind travel partnership," said Brian King, global officer of digital, distribution, revenue strategy and global sales at Marriott International. "The opportunity to experience breathtaking scenery in pristine wilderness settings while giving back to the National Park Foundation is invaluable and will help preserve parks for future adventure seekers."

Marriott x National Parks

More than 400 Marriott properties are located near national parks, making this a natural partnership. Most Americans also live within 100 miles of a national park, making the destinations more easily accessible by private vehicles as travelers avoid commercial airlines.

Through Bonvoy, members can redeem points for The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass, an annual pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites. Alternatively, members can donate points to the National Park Foundation which works to preserve the lands for future generations.

Bonvoy's content vertical, **Marriott Bonvoy Traveler**, has content dedicated to national parks, including travel guides, photography advice and other listicles.

While the park partnership includes hotels at all price points, affluent travelers have several upscale lodging options

to choose from. The Ritz-Carlton, Denver is a 90-minute drive from Rocky Mountain National Park, while the Palace Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel in San Francisco is about two hours from Pinnacles National Park.

Bonvoy members can book their trips directly on the website to take advantage of discounted rates and earn points for future rewards.

The Marriott Bonvoy covers loyalty programs 30 hotel brands, including what was once Marriott Rewards, the Ritz-Carlton Rewards and Starwood Preferred Guest, and debuted in 2019. Since its inception, it has focused on digital content and experiential travel ([see story](#)).

Back to nature

Luxury hotel groups have been emphasizing socially-distanced outdoor activities, which limit the spread of the coronavirus, in a bid to reengage travelers.

For instance, LVMH-owned hotel group Belmond is helping travelers reconnect with nature by touting some of its experience offerings in partnership with high-end camera manufacturer Leica Sport Optics. "First Light" nature walks are available at different destinations, giving travelers opportunities to see breathtaking sites under unique circumstances ([see story](#)).

Strategies centered on nature excursions pre-date the pandemic, as younger affluent travelers have shown more interest in adventurous trips.

According to a 2019 report from Resonance Consultancy, Chinese travelers in particular have found themselves drawn to destinations that highlight unique natural environments, including the United States. After safety, quality of natural scenery was listed as the second most important consideration when making travel plans ([see story](#)).

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