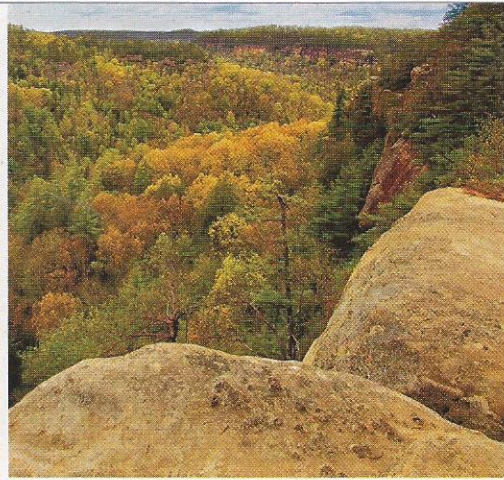
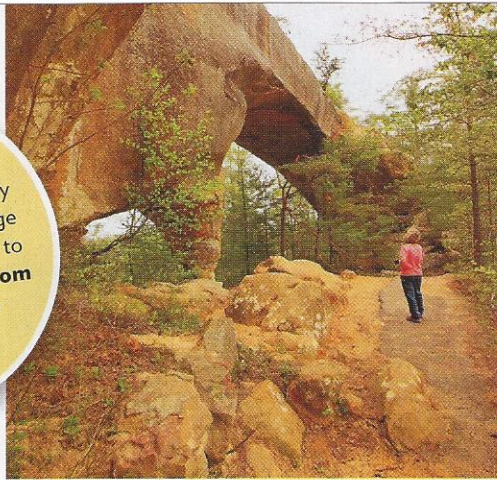


ZIP & ZOOM!

Soar over the gorge on an exhilarating canopy tour with Red River Gorge Zipline Tours. Go online to redrivergorgezipline.com to fly on five ziplines and walk three sky bridges.



RED RIVER GORGE

Explore Kentucky's rocky wonderland of stone arches, towering cliffs and plunging ravines.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAT & CHUCK BLACKLEY

With more than 100 natural sandstone arches, Kentucky's Red River Gorge Geological Area boasts one of America's largest collections of these picturesque wonders.

Carved out of the Cumberland Plateau, the gorge, with its massive forested cliffs and narrow ravines, is part of the Daniel Boone National Forest and one of the state's most popular hiking areas. The Red River makes a fabulous avenue for canoeists and kayakers to wind through the gorge.

You can see many of the arches along the gorge's 60 miles of hiking trails. One of the most impressive and widely known, Sky Bridge, is easily reached via a scenic loop trail of less than a mile that offers awesome views into the gorge. The trail passes over and beneath this 75-foot-long, 23-foot-high natural stone bridge.



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Sky Bridge and the other arches were sculpted by weather and water when the softer shale and siltstone layers eroded away, leaving only the harder sandstone layers standing the test of time.

After exploring the gorge, we like to visit the adjacent Natural Bridge State Resort Park, home of more rock formations, including Kentucky's best-known sandstone arch, Natural Bridge. A spectacular 78 feet long, 65 feet high and 20 feet wide, it can be reached by a short scenic trail.

The park's Hemlock Lodge, with its attached restaurant, is a convenient and welcoming place to end a day of discovery. ♦

⚡ Hikers taking to the Red River Gorge trails enjoy splendid marvels such as Sky Bridge, above left, and Devil's Canyon, above right.