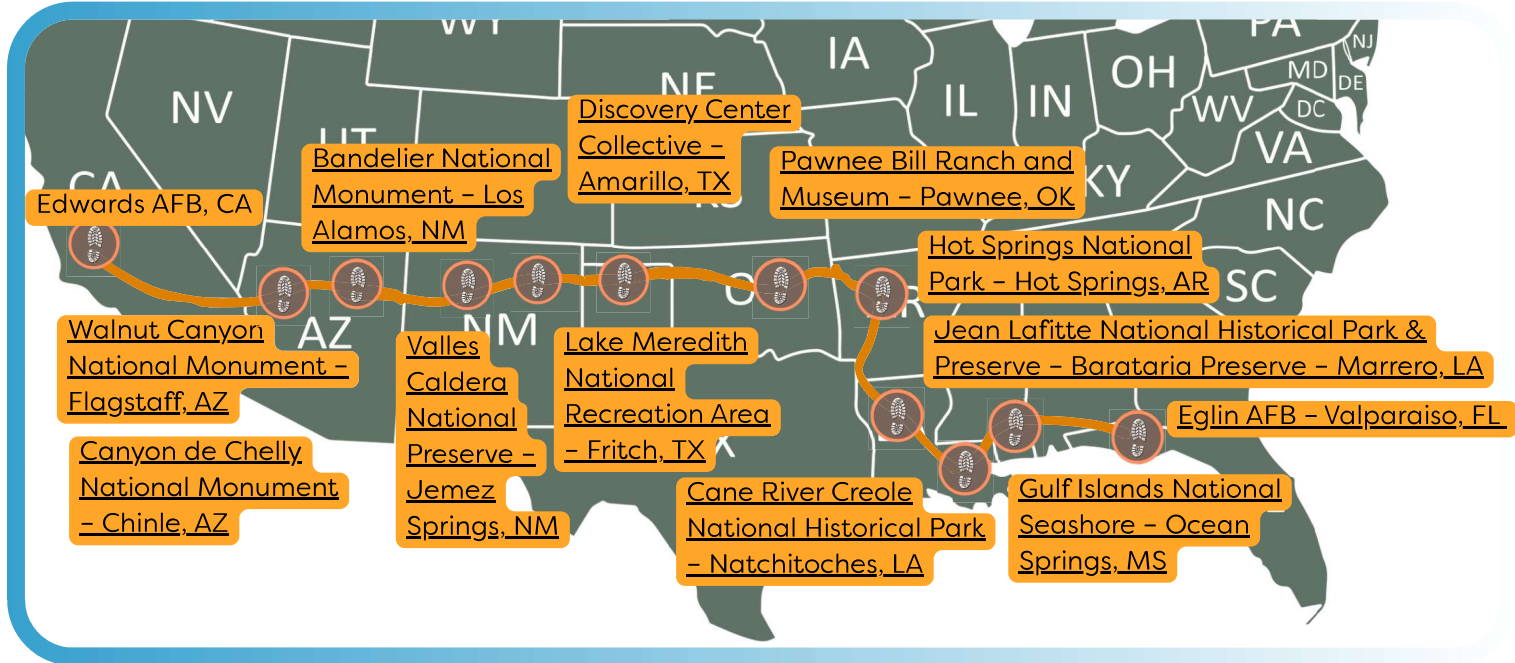




Edwards AFB, CA → Eglin AFB, FL

From deserts to forests and bayous to beaches, this PCS journey offers much more than a long drive. These carefully selected stops help you recharge, connect as a family, and make space for joy and reflection along the way. Whether you have 30 minutes or half a day, nature is here to support your transition.



📍 Walnut Canyon National Monument – Flagstaff, AZ

Start your trip with a stretch and a sense of awe. The Rim Trail offers stunning views with little effort, while the Island Trail invites curious adventurers to explore ancient cliff dwellings (note: lots of stairs included!)



Mindful Minute: Stand at the canyon’s edge and take five deep breaths, noticing how far you can see.



📍 Canyon de Chelly National Monument – Chinle, AZ

Red rock cliffs rise above cottonwood-lined canyon floors at this Navajo-managed site. Drive the South Rim to overlook ancestral homes or schedule a guided hike for deeper connection.



Family Tip: Bring sketchbooks or notepads and let kids draw the view while you relax.

Bandelier National Monument – Los Alamos, NM

Wander through Frijoles Canyon, where ladders lead into ancient cliffside dwellings carved into volcanic rock. This is a favorite for kids who love climbing and stories from long ago.



Valles Caldera National Preserve – Jemez Springs, NM

Wide open meadows, bubbling streams, and elk sightings await in this peaceful volcanic caldera. It's a breath of fresh mountain air and the perfect spot for a picnic or an easy family hike.



Photo Idea: Capture the whole family standing in the middle of the caldera meadow for a memory you'll keep forever.



Lake Meredith National Recreation Area – Fritch, TX

A calm spot to camp, stretch your legs, or picnic by the water. There are short trails to walk, birds to watch, and lots of sky to enjoy.



Mindful Minute: Find a shady spot near the lake, close your eyes, and count ten slow breaths.

Discovery Center Collective – Amarillo, TX

A dynamic two-site experience perfect for families seeking both indoor learning and outdoor play. Explore interactive science exhibits, a planetarium, and the Helium Monument at the Don Harrington Discovery Center, then head outdoors to Wildcat Bluff Nature Center for shaded trails and riverside boardwalks.



Family Tip: This site participates in Blue Star Museums, so military families enjoy free admission.



Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum – Pawnee, OK

Explore Oklahoma's Wild West roots at Pawnee Bill Ranch, where wide-open prairies, grazing bison, and a historic 14-room mansion bring frontier stories to life. Wander the grounds to see longhorn cattle, tour the original home of showman Pawnee Bill, and let kids run off some energy.




Family Tip: This site participates in Blue Star Museums, so military families enjoy free admission. And, check the events calendar for living history days that often feature blacksmith demos, chuckwagons, and wagon rides that kids will love.

Hot Springs National Park – Hot Springs, AR

Steeped in wellness and history, this park offers shaded walking paths, historic bathhouses, and natural thermal springs. A great place to recharge your body and mind. Be sure to stroll Bathhouse Row, then relax on the Grand Promenade or explore the woodland trails nearby.



 Family Tip: Pick up a Junior Ranger booklet at the visitor center or join a ranger-led program.

Cane River Creole National Historical Park – Natchitoches, LA

Set along a scenic river, this site tells the story of Creole culture and rural life. The grounds are expansive and quiet, which is perfect for an afternoon picnic or a reflective walk among the buildings. Savor the Spanish moss and stillness.

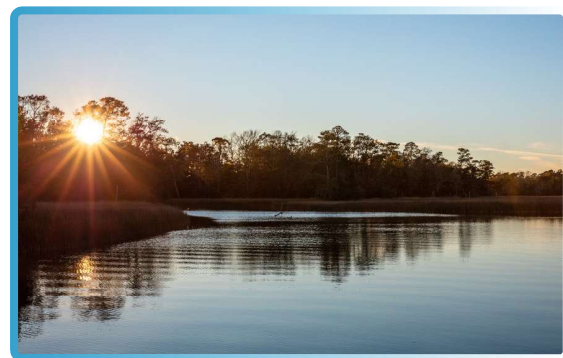


Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve – Barataria Preserve – Marrero, LA

Experience Louisiana’s wetlands on boardwalks and shaded trails that wind past bayous, cypress swamps, and wildlife-rich marshes. Located just outside New Orleans, Barataria Preserve offers a peaceful escape where kids can look for alligators, frogs, and wading birds and keep an eye out for where pirate Jean Lafitte hid his legendary treasure.

Gulf Islands National Seashore – Ocean Springs, MS

Welcome to the Gulf Coast! Stop in at the William M. Comer Visitor Center, the gateway to Mississippi’s stretch of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Learn about coastal wildlife and barrier island ecosystems, then stroll nearby trails through maritime forests and salt marshes. Kids will love spotting crabs and wading birds along the boardwalks.



Eglin AFB – Valparaiso, FL (Arrival)

You made it! Once you are settled, be sure to check out Blackwater River State Park or Eglin Reservation trails for some bonus nature time as you transition into your new home.

Don’t forget to share your PCS journey with [#MilitaryFamiliesOutdoors](https://www.instagram.com/militaryfamiliesoutdoors), and visit [MilitaryFamiliesOutdoors.com](https://www.militaryfamiliesoutdoors.com) for more ideas and wellness stops to make your move a little less stressful—and a lot more memorable.

