



# Family Hike Recommendations

There are some great nearby hiking trails just waiting to be explored! To get your family started on the right foot, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

**Be sure to bring these necessities along in your daypack:**

- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Extra clothing layers
- Map and compass
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Whistle
- Headlamp or flashlight



For a complete day hiking checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.

Content provided by **FALCONGUIDES**

## Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Hikes

Hike One: **Dale Ball Trail – North**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **3.25 miles one way, significant elevation gain.**

**Why this hike:** This hike is easily accessed from the city.

**Hike Description:** The well-maintained trail meanders around the Santa Fe hills. There are lots of up and down slopes, but they add value to the views the hills provide. This is a wonderful evening hike, as it can get a little hot during the day. The hike’s biggest payoff is the wonderful view of the Rio Grande Valley.

**Driving Directions:** From Santa Fe Plaza drive north on Washington Avenue. At the first light after Paseo de Peralta, turn right onto Artist’s Road which becomes Highway 475 and Hyde Park Road. Drive 2.6 miles to the junction with Sierra del Norte and turn left. Make an immediate right into the trailhead parking lot.

**Tips:** If you bring your dog make sure to keep it leashed, as this rule is strictly enforced.

Hike Two: **Cave Creek Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **3.6 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain.**

**Why this hike:** Because you will actually get to go spelunking.

**Hike Description:** Follow the trail to a set of caves along Cave Creek. It’s a favorite family spot, but keep a close eye on kids during spring and early summer run-off, as water levels are higher. Approximately 1.5 miles into the hike you’ll arrive at a bridge of logs that offers a beautiful place to stop and rest. The first set of caves lies about 0.4 miles ahead on your left.

**Driving Directions:** From Santa Fe take I-25 toward Las Vegas. Take Exit 299 for Highway 50. Follow Highway 50 to the town of Pecos and the intersection with Highway 63. Turn left over the bridge crossing the Pecos River, then take the first right onto single lane, paved Forest Road 305 to Panchuela campground. Follow the signs to the trailhead.

**Tips:** Be very mindful of slippery rocks and wear appropriate footwear.

Hike Three: **Falls Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **5 miles roundtrip, 700 feet elevation gain.**

**Why this hike:** Waterfalls and geologic history all rolled into one.

**Hike Description:** The hike begins close to the Bandelier National Monument bookstore and museum, giving you the opportunity to pick up guides or maps before setting out. The trek is an easy roundtrip hike, gaining only 700 feet in elevation. At the top overlook of the first falls you'll see both the waterfall and unique geology. Turn around and to see the second set of falls behind you. One fun aspect of this hike is the many stream crossings you will make on your journey.

**Driving Directions:** From Santa Fe take US Highway 285/84 north to Pojoaque. At Pojoaque take Highway 502 west following signs to Los Alamos. Proceed to the junction with Highway 4. Take Highway 4 south to Bandelier National Monument.

**Tips:** Keep in mind that the monument closes at dusk and parking is \$10.

Hike Four: **Black Canyon Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.5 miles roundtrip, 360 feet elevation gain.**

**Why this hike:** A great introduction to hiking for children of all ages.

**Hike Description:** Well shaded and a good introduction to mountain terrain, this hike is visually appealing with fir and aspen belt vegetation and wildflowers. The overall elevation gain is 360 feet with an easy ascent rate. Once you reach the highest point and begin the final loop around to descend, you'll pass through a beautiful aspen grove. You'll soon intersect with the trail you took on the hike up, following it to return to the campsite.

**Driving Directions:** From Santa Fe Plaza drive north on Washington Avenue. At the first light after Paseo de Peralta, turn right onto Artist's Road which becomes Highway 475. Follow for approximately seven miles and turn right into the Black Canyon Campground.

**Tips:** This area continues to receive trail updates. Call ahead to make sure it is open: 505-753-7331.

Hike Five: **Chamisa Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **4.5 miles roundtrip, 1,200 feet elevation gain.**

**Why this hike:** The reward provided by this hike is available at the peak.

**Hike Description:** Since the hike is so close to the city, it has become a popular spot for many people. The overall elevation gain is roughly 1,200 feet – a decent span for a shorter ascension distance. There is plenty of shade during most of the day. The reward for making it up the hill is the Big Tesuque Creek basin, where you can rest amid cool water, wildflowers and a green meadow.

**Driving Directions:** From Santa Fe Plaza drive north on Washington Avenue. Proceed through Paseo de Peralta and turn right at the first light onto Artist's Road, which becomes Highway 475. At 5.6 miles you'll see a large parking area on the left. The trailhead is located at the east end of the parking lot.

**Tips:** If the day is warm, consider waiting until late afternoon to start this hike.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit [www.rei.com/PEAK](http://www.rei.com/PEAK) for more information.



**First Saturday in June** The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) for more information.