



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.

Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Hikes

Hike One: Delaware Canal Towpath at New Hope

Rating: **Easy to moderate, depending on length**

Distance: **Up to 12.6 miles roundtrip, 20' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's a smooth, even trail that's perfect for the whole family. You can easily choose your own distance.

Hike Description: Running alongside the historic Delaware Canal, this crushed-redstone towpath is suitable for the youngest explorers—even those in a stroller. And you can walk as long or short of a distance as you'd like. It's also a great place for family bike rides. The northern part of this trail section has picnic pavilions, Bowman's Wildflower Preserve and a historical monument in honor of the soldiers of Washington's Army who died of exposure while camped here. The southern segment includes more picnic pavilions and the site where Washington made his historic crossing of the Delaware River.

Driving Directions: Located north of the metro area, the 60-mile towpath has numerous access points, but the one at New Hope is most centrally located. The New Hope parking lot is at a restaurant where Rte. 232 intersects with Rte. 32. Parking is also available further south, just before Rte. 532 enters the town of Washington's Crossing. Parking is free.

Tips: Visit the Delaware Canal State Park Visitor Center in New Hope for information on environmental education and interpretive programs.

Hike Two: Eastern French Creek State Park

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **6.94 miles roundtrip, 1,291' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's a quiet hike with lots of ups and downs and interesting rock formations.

Hike Description: There are several trails (more than 30 miles total) available throughout the 7,339-acre French Creek State Park. This one presents some challenges with its elevation gain, but it can be done by older kids. And you can always turn around whenever anyone begins to tire. On this loop hike, kids will get a chance to climb some cool rock formations. Miller's Point, for example, is easily climbable and, if the foliage hasn't completely filled out yet, offers nice views of the Schuylkill River Valley. Note that the trail is open to mountain bikers, so you'll need to be watchful.

Driving Directions: The park is about one hour west of Philadelphia. Go west on the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) and take Exit 312 to PA 100 North. Turn west onto PA 23, then north onto PA 345. From there, it's about 4.6 miles to the east entrance of French Creek State Park. The trailhead and parking area are another 0.2 miles beyond, at the intersection on PA 345 and Shed Road. Parking is free.

Tips: Before hiking, be sure to stop at the State Park's main office (inside the South Entrance, off PA 345) to get a park trail map. Trails in the eastern part of the park are generally less crowded than others, so you may enjoy some seclusion.

Hike Three: **Fort Washington State Park**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **4.58 miles roundtrip, 103' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: There's an abundance of wildlife here, as well as a rich historical legacy. And it's just outside the city limits.

Hike Description: In the fall of 1777, George Washington and 12,000 of his men camped here where the state park now lies, after their defeat at Germantown. They successfully defended the highlands for several months before moving on to Valley Forge. The hike begins on the Green Ribbon Preserve Trail, meandering north along Wissahickon Creek from the parking area. Along the way, you'll have a great chance to explore the countryside and its history. When you get to the Militia Hill day-use area, there's a hawk-watch platform off the trail on the south side of the hill. Kids will love the many opportunities to watch birds and other critters, including deer, all along the route.

Driving Directions: From I-276 (Pennsylvania Turnpike), take Exit 339 to Rte. 309 south. Follow 309 south about 1.5 miles to Rte. 73 (West Church Road). Turn right on Rte. 73, and then make a quick left onto East Mill Road, which turns into West Mill Road. Go west on West Mill Road about one mile to Stenton Avenue. Turn right on Stenton and then a quick right onto West Valley Green Road. After 0.6 miles you'll come to a parking area on the right, across from the Philadelphia Cricket Club. Parking is free.

Tips: Be sure to bring your binoculars and camera. The best time to see wildlife is early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Hike Four: **Wissahickon River Gorge**

Rating: **Easy to moderate, depending on length**

Distance: **Up to 13 miles roundtrip, 212' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It has an abundance of native vegetation and wildlife. There are also several statues and interesting historic structures along the way.

Hike Description: Located in the northwestern corner of the fifth-largest city in the U.S., the trail is easily accessible by public transportation or bike (easier than by car). While it stretches for more than 6.5 miles from point to point, you can choose any length of hike that suits your time and your kids' energy. There's plenty to see no matter how short or long you walk. Birdwatching, fishing and horseback riding are all popular trail activities. And for history buffs, there are several structures along the trail where you can give kids a firsthand history lesson. Dogs are welcome too, so bring Fido (and his leash).

Driving Directions: The gorge is in Fairmount Park, which is easily accessible by public transportation. It also makes a nice bike ride from downtown Philadelphia: Start at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, located at the north end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Take the bike path north from the museum, following Kelly Drive on your right and the Schuylkill River on your left. Staying on the bike path, continue north past the Falls Bridge in East Falls. Go another 0.7 miles to Ridge Avenue and make a left. Continue one block to the first stop light, and cross Ridge Avenue. The start of the trail is to the left of the Wissahickon Creek. If driving by car, there's parking off Bells Mill Road and at a few other locations.

Tips: Historic structures along the trail include a covered bridge, springhouses and WPA shelters. There are no restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Five: **Indian Springs Trail**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **1.9 miles roundtrip, 240' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: It's a beautiful forest hike to Brandywine Creek, and follows along the historic du Pont family farm.

Hike Description: This charming, pastoral trek goes up and down gentle hills and along the stone-fence borders of the old du Pont farm. Blazed with yellow markers, the trail begins behind the nature center. You'll walk down the hill toward Brandywine Creek. Along the way you'll see an old springhouse (explain to your kids about life before refrigerators!). Leaving the river, the trail leads you up a steep hill and through a stand of impressive tulip trees in the Tulip Tree Woods Nature Preserve.

Driving Directions: The trail is located in Brandywine Creek State Park, about four miles north of Wilmington, Delaware. From US 202, go northwest on DE 92, passing over Brandywine Creek. Turn left on Adams Dam Road to the entrance of the park. Once you pass the fee booth (\$4 per vehicle during May through October, and if not from Delaware), turn left and follow the road to the nature center, where there's ample parking.

Tips: You can extend the hike to more than five miles by crossing Thompson's Bridge to explore the park on the east side of the bank. There are no restrooms at the trailhead.



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 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 for more information.