



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: **Brice Creek Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3.4-mile loop or up to 11 miles roundtrip, 600' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: The water features on this trail are fantastic! A perfect summer hike, it has smooth rock terraces along the way that are great for picnics, sunbathing and swimming.

Hike Description: From the parking area, cross the road to the trailhead. The path begins on a dry slope but soon plunges into an old-growth forest of Douglas fir, with sword ferns, oxalis and twinflower on the forest floor. You'll follow the lovely creek past small waterfalls and several swimming holes under the canopy of the trees. An especially fun route for kids, the trail is open even in winter. Consider starting at the upper trailhead for the shorter 3.4-mile loop. It climbs to Trestle Creek where it ducks behind the spectacular upper falls. Even with older kids, if you're taking the longer route, I recommend that you cut your hiking distance in half by leaving a shuttle car up the road at the upper trailhead.

Driving Directions: From Eugene, take I-5 south to Exit 174 (Cottage Grove). Follow signs to Dorena Lake. Continue on the main, paved road through Culp Creek. Bear right at Disston, for a total of 21.7 miles from the freeway. One mile past the entrance sign to Umpqua National Forest, you reach the first bridge over Brice Creek. Pull into the parking area here, on the right. This is the lower (longer) trailhead. For the upper trailhead and the shorter loop trail, continue up Road 22 to the next bridge, near Champion Creek. There's a parking pullout there, with access on the right to the trailhead. Parking is free.

Tips: Trestle Creek Falls are gorgeous, and the rock formations in the area create the feeling of being in another world. In the summer, swimsuits are a must (but the water is still freezing cold!). There are no restrooms at the trailheads.

Hike Two: **Spencer Butte Park**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **1.5-mile loop or 2 miles round-trip, 800' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: The summit offers a stunning panoramic view of the skyline. Kids enjoy the challenge of "climbing a mountain."

Hike Description: The trailhead for Spencer Butte is by the stairs at the east side of the parking lot. The trail shows off a variety of flora and fauna that's native to the Northwest. You'll walk through fern-filled gullies and across meadows alive with wildflowers in season. There are also large conifers, big-leaf maples and all sorts of blooming craziness during the spring and early summer. But ouch! Keep your eyes open for poison oak, especially toward the summit and in open grassy areas. On a clear day, you can see virtually the entire Oregon Cascade Range from the top. It's a great spot for kids to view raptors, including eagles, hawks and falcons. If you go in the early spring, you might also see a lot of butterflies at the summit (they like to hang out there during mating season).

Driving Directions: From downtown Eugene, drive five miles south on Willamette Street. Turn left into the parking lot for Spencer Butte Park. Parking is free.

Tips: Save your picnic for the summit! (Reward small children for their efforts by giving them a special treat at the top.) There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Three: **Mount Pisgah**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **1.7-mile loop or 3 miles round-trip, 100' to 1,000' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: For little ones, the arboretum loop offers a fun, easy stroll. For older kids, the hike up this historic grassy knoll has dramatic views and one of the last remaining oak savannah stands in the Willamette Valley.

Hike Description: For the arboretum walk, simply go to the large, covered shelter and follow the system of trails that loop gently along the riverbanks and surrounding hills. Start your hike to the summit at the brown metal gate at the upper left edge of the parking lot. As you climb you'll see giant grassy slopes and wide-open fields dotted with white oaks, Douglas firs and blackberries. The hills are wet and green with tiny springs during the rainy season. Wildflowers are everywhere in the spring, including purple irises, fuzzy cat's ears, blue camas and wild strawberries. A bronze sighting pedestal identifies mountains and other landmarks that are visible from the summit.

Driving Directions: From Eugene, take I-5 south to Exit 189 (30th Avenue). Just past the Shell gas station on the east side of the freeway, turn right onto Franklin Boulevard. Go 0.4 miles and turn left onto Seavey Loop Road (marked by a sign for Buford Park). Drive 1.5 miles until you cross the Coast Fork Willamette River bridge. After crossing the bridge, turn right and go 0.4 miles to the arboretum parking area. Parking is \$2 from May 1 to September 30.

Tips: There are lots of U-pick farms (yum!) along the country roads leading to Mount Pisgah. The arboretum offers several fun, educational programs. Call ahead to find out about guided nature tours and classes. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Four: **McKenzie River Trail to Tamolitch Pool**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **4.2 miles roundtrip, 200' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: This is perhaps the most astonishing section of the 26.5-mile McKenzie River Trail. The river vanishes into a lava flow, tumbles over an eerily dry, phantom "waterfall," and reemerges from a small turquoise lake.

Hike Description: From the west end of the parking lot, walk across the highway. Take an obvious but unsigned trail 50 yards to the riverbank. Turn right onto the McKenzie River Trail. The first mile winds through an old-growth forest of Douglas fir and droopy red cedar. Lichens, ferns, mushrooms and thick tufts of moss seem to flow from tree branch to forest floor. The trail also follows closely alongside the rushing waters of the river. Look for small "beaches" on the riverbank. They're ideal spots for an unforgettable family picnic. The trail eventually climbs through a moss-covered lava flow to an overlook of blue-green—and mysterious—Tamolitch Pool. Ask your kids, "Where does the water in the pool come from?" It's from the river!

Driving Directions: From Eugene, take Hwy. 126 east to the McKenzie River Ranger Station, 2.2 miles east of McKenzie Bridge. Park free at the ranger station.

Tips: Remember to bring a pack with extra water and snacks. (And bring your camera!) On the way back, you may want to stop at Belknap Hot Springs for a soak (swimsuits are required). There are restrooms at the ranger station.

Hike Five: **Salt Creek Falls**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **3.4-mile loop, 400' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: This is a pretty easy hike for kids, and it's a beautiful destination with the two waterfalls.

Hike Description: The trail begins at 286' Salt Creek Falls, Oregon's second-tallest waterfall. Just after the falls, it hits a junction with the Diamond Creek Falls Trail and climbs for about 0.2 miles to a viewpoint of Salt Creek Canyon. It then loops along the canyon rim past Too Much Bear Lake to lacy Diamond Creek Falls, hidden in a mossy grotto. For a longer, more demanding hike, you can continue up a steep trail past the churning Fall Creek Falls to Vivian Lake. There, you can see Mt. Yoran reflected in the calm waters.

Driving Directions: From Eugene, take Hwy. 58 east to milepost 57, one mile east of the highway tunnel or five miles west of Willamette Pass. Turn off at a sign for Salt Creek Falls and follow the paved entrance road to a turnaround with an information kiosk, restrooms and picnic tables. Park here and walk 100' past the kiosk to an overlook of Salt Creek Falls. Parking is \$5 for the day (or you can use your Northwest Forest Pass).

Tips: June is a great time to come. For the first mile of the trail, you'll be walking through rhododendrons in full bloom. There are 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.