



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: **Badger Mountain Trail at Westcliffe Park**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **2.4 miles roundtrip, about 800' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: You'll love the concept: Conscientious community members pooled resources to purchase these 575 acres in order to stop encroaching development. The trail is also a favorite because it provides a workout if you want to push it.

Hike Description: Built in 2005 by more than 60 enthusiastic volunteers, the trail is situated on a slope with rapid elevation gains at times. Switchbacks wrap around the mountain and give astonishing, panoramic views of the Tri-Cities, the river or the surrounding mountains at virtually every turn. At the top, kids will be wowed by the spectacle of Washington's largest volcanoes, including Rainier and Adams, as well as the convergence of the Columbia, Snake and Yakima rivers. So just eat an apple, drink some water and take in those wide open spaces. And say a silent thanks to the volunteers who hauled nearly 30 tons of gravel onto and up the trail to provide better footing and traction for us hikers.

Driving Directions: From Kennewick, go north on Hwy. 240 and take the Queensgate South exit to Keene Road. Follow Keene Road to Shockley Road (at Bethel Chapel) and turn right. Continue until you reach the parking lot at Westcliffe Park where you'll find the trailhead. Parking is free.

Tips: This summer, the City of Richland and Benton County plan to open family-oriented Westcliffe Park just below the trailhead. There'll be playground equipment, shelters, picnic areas and a comfort station. Construction may temporarily change access to the trailhead, so just follow the signs.

Hike Two: **Bateman Island Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.5 miles roundtrip, no elevation gain**

Why This Hike: The island has a rich history, and was described by Lewis and Clark on their expedition. It also presents kids with lots of learning opportunities with its diverse ecology.

Hike Description: From the parking lot, you pass through a gate and walk across a causeway to the island. To the left of the causeway is the backwater of the Yakima River; to the right is the Columbia River. Several waterfowl, including herons, can be seen here. Once across, the hardpack trail circles the island and has many side paths that can be taken for water views. The foundation of the pioneer Bateman family home is still visible on the southeast side of the island where they raised cattle and turkeys. The island trail is maintained by those who love it, so consider bringing a small bag and teaching your kids Leave No Trace principles by having them collect any refuse they find.

Driving Directions: From Kennewick, drive north on Hwy. 240 and take the Columbia Center Blvd. exit. Turn north (toward the river) on Columbia Center Blvd. and go 0.3 miles. Turn left on Columbia Park Trail and go 0.2 miles to the Wye Neighborhood parking lot. Parking is free.

Tips: Bateman Island is a designated wildlife viewing area, so you may want to have your kids bring a journal to record all the migratory waterfowl they see. At the confluence of the Columbia and Yakima rivers, the island's rich ecosystem includes salmon returning to spawn in season.

Hike Three: **Chamna Natural Preserve**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **Multiple loops of various lengths, 11 miles total, no elevation gain**

Why This Hike: The river, trees, meadows and desert elements display the balance of nature that defines Eastern Washington.

Hike Description: The preserve is a 530-acre park along the Yakima River, with 11 miles of intersecting trails suitable for hiking, jogging, mountain biking and horseback riding. It's possible to visit Chamna several times and never travel the same route twice because the trails are laid out in sections that loop back to one another—you can explore different combinations each time you come. In the summer, it's a wonderful place to watch birds, both local residents and migrating waterfowl. You may also see the occasional beaver, mule deer, river otter or snake. One unique activity is to have kids count the bat houses they see along the trail. All trails are clear and beautifully maintained with interpretive signage describing the indigenous flora and fauna of Eastern Washington.

Driving Directions: From Kennewick, go north on Hwy. 240 and take the Aaron Street exit. At Beaver Bark, take the overpass and turn right at the "T." Proceed down the slope to the stone sign for Chamna. Follow the unmarked pavement to the right until you reach the parking lot at the end of the road. There's a kiosk with information about the preserve. Parking is free.

Tips: Watch for the resident otter couple playing on the banks of the river. Also along the river are willow trees offering shade and open areas begging for a blanket and a family of picnickers. Be sure to bring water—there's no drinking water in the preserve.

Hike Four: **Columbia Park Trail Loop**

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

Distance: **0–24 miles, no elevation gain**

Why This Hike: This immensely popular, iconic Tri-Cities park and trail system has many trailside activities that are suitable for all ages and skill levels.

Hike Description: Go for a family hike or bike ride, or just take a short stroll. With 24 miles of riverfront trail to choose from, you can be sure to find a section to your liking that's suitable for your kids' energy level. There are access and turnaround points all along the way, so you can explore different sections on different days. The 606-acre Columbia Park includes both landscaped and natural beauty. In addition to the multipurpose trail, it features playgrounds, castles, swings and a free water park (not that kids would be interested in that!).

Driving Directions: From Kennewick, take the Columbia Trail exit off Hwy. 240. Go toward the river until you loop around to the park. There are several large parking lots along the trail. Parking is free.

Tips: Go early for your hike, bike or stroll, and then spend the afternoon in the park (bring your bathing suits). Another big hit on a hot day is the ice cream available at the concession stand (celebrate all that great exercise with a little sugar).

Hike Five: **McNary Wildlife Refuge**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1 mile roundtrip, no elevation gain**

Why This Hike: There's so much here! Plus, Kennewick REI employees have invested a lot of personal time building, cleaning and maintaining the trails.

Hike Description: In recognition of the area's rich human history, there's a reconstruction of a teepee near the trailhead. From there, the wetlands nature trail explores the most accessible of the refuge's 15,000 acres. The path is relatively flat and lined with ecologically sound bark. There are some side trails that provide additional avenues of exploration. At the interpretive center, kids will love the cool workshops and group sessions, including a 2-hour nature walk called "The Nature Safari." They can also handle real feathers, bones and pelts at the center. More than 200 species of birds are regularly seen at the refuge. And if that's not enough to amaze the youngsters, bring them back between October and December when McNary is a stop-off point for up to 100,000 migratory waterfowl.

Driving Directions: Take US 12 south of Pasco across the Snake River. Turn left on SR 124 toward Ice Harbor Dam. Proceed 1 mile to the Burbank Fire Station, then turn right and follow Lake Road across the pond. The refuge's interpretive center is the first building on the right and has an ample, free parking lot.

Tips: Don't miss the photo blind where you can observe and photograph birds without disturbing them. Special camera holes allow young, novice shutterbugs to get great shots of birds in their natural setting.



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.