



# 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: **Flintrock Trail, Blue Mound State Park**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.5 miles roundtrip, with some elevation gain at the beginning and end**

**Why This Hike:** You can learn about the geology of the area and see some large flintrock boulders as you follow this self-guided interpretive trail.

**Hike Description:** The trail begins at the top of Blue Mound State Park, the highest point in southern Wisconsin, and it's multi-directional, so you can travel to the north or the west to start your hike. After descending from the top of the mound you'll stroll through hardwood forests with giant flintrock boulders scattered throughout. The wide gravel trail features interpretive signs along the way that describe the interesting geology of the Blue Mound area.

**Driving Directions:** Access Blue Mound State Park via Highway 18/151, 25 miles west of Madison. From Highway 18/151, go north on County Highway F and turn left on County Highway ID into Blue Mounds. Go west on Highway ID about a half mile to Mounds Road. Turn right (north) on Mounds and follow it north one mile through town. (Mounds Road becomes Mounds Park Road once you leave the village.) Parking is available at the pool area or picnic area of the park. A Wisconsin State Park sticker or day pass is required and can be obtained at the park entrance.

**Tips:** Climb the 40-foot West Observation Tower at one end of the Flintrock Trail for 360-degree views. A landmark locator helps pinpoint various cities and geologic features. There is a restroom at the trailhead.

### Hike Two: **Leopold Interpretive Trail, Aldo Leopold Nature Center**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2-mile loop, with minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** The Aldo Leopold Nature Center is a peaceful oasis in the midst of the city, with trails that wind through a sampling of various different native landscapes.

**Hike Description:** The nature center is located on 21 acres of land and offers a rare opportunity to explore the outdoors without leaving the city. The interpretive trail offers an easy stroll through prairies, wetlands and woodlands. As you go, you'll spot signs that will help you learn about the different landscapes and terrain you'll encounter. There's also a great pond for children to explore and learn about.

**Driving Directions:** In Madison, take the South Beltline (Highway 12/18) to Monona Drive and go north. Continue past the Monona Drive/Broadway Street intersection to Femrite Drive. Turn right on Femrite and pull into the driveway after the Monona Meadows sign on the north side of the street. Look for a sign for the Aldo Leopold Nature Center and Monona's Woodland Park. Follow the driveway up the hill to the parking lot; the nature center is located near the main parking lot.

**Tips:** Enhance your interpretive trail experience with the Family Trailside Backpack Program. This self-guided program, which provides you with a backpack, an easy-to-understand exploration guide and a toolkit, lets you and your family learn together, at your leisure, as you wander the trail. There are restrooms in the nature center that are available during business hours.

Hike Three: **Meadow Trail, Lapham Peak Unit/Kettle Moraine State Forest**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **2-mile loop, with moderate elevation gains (optionally, you can bypass the hills and do a shorter hike)**

**Why This Hike:** The Meadow Trail offers families the opportunity to see some of the beautiful sights in Lapham Peak without too much “up and down” hiking.

**Hike Description:** This grassy trail winds through the meadows and wooded areas typical of southern Wisconsin. In fact, one of the best things about this trail is the variety of ecosystems and wildlife that you get to experience. Visitors will enjoy oak forests, beautiful spring flowers, Wisconsin prairies and a variety of birds and animals. The hills keep this hike interesting and offer a few small challenges for young hikers.

**Driving Directions:** Lapham Peak is located just south of I-94, near Delafield. From Madison, take I-94 east to the County Highway C exit and head south for about 1 mile. The park entrance is on the left side of the road. Parking is available at various lots throughout the Lapham Peak Unit. A Wisconsin State Park pass is required and can be purchased at the park entrance.

**Tips:** Climb the 45-foot fire tower for a beautiful, breathtaking view of the southern Wisconsin landscape. There is a restroom at the trailhead.

Hike Four: **Oak Leaf Trail, Lake Park**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1 mile roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** This section of the Oak Leaf Trail, which runs all over through Milwaukee, takes you along bluffs overlooking Lake Michigan and by several sandy beaches.

**Hike Description:** The paved Oak Leaf Trail features more than 100 miles of multiple loops through all of the major parkways and parks in the Milwaukee parks system. This section of the trail visits Lake Park, a beautiful wooded setting that features a lighthouse perched on the bluffs above Lake Michigan. The trail loops through Lake Park and can be taken down the hill along Memorial Drive to the beaches and marinas below.

**Driving Directions:** From Madison, take I-94 east to Milwaukee. Go left (north) on I-43, Exit 310B. Merge onto I-794 east via Exit 310C. Take the Lincoln Memorial Drive exit, on the left, Exit 1F. Merge onto N. Lincoln Memorial Drive. Turn right onto N. Lake Park Drive. Turn right onto Kenwood Drive. The park is located at the top of Lincoln Memorial Drive, just off of Lake Park Drive. Parking is available throughout the park.

**Tips:** For a longer hike, stay on the lakeshore path to the art museum, marina and several beaches. There is a restroom at the trailhead.

Hike Five: **Parfrey's Glen State Natural Area**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.5 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** Get an up-close look at the way glaciers carved the area's beautiful bluffs and amazing terrain as you hike through a cool, 100' deep ravine.

**Hike Description:** The trail is a paved and hard-packed surface—narrow in some spots—that winds through the steep sandstone walls of Parfrey's Glen. Because the glen (a Scottish word for a narrow, rocky ravine) contains many protected species of plants and animals, it's important that you and your children stay on the designated trail as it follows Parfrey's Glen Creek to a waterfall. As you go, you may notice trees and plants, such as the yellow birch, mountain maple and red elder, that are actually native to northern Wisconsin. They thrive in the glen because it's so shady and moist. The hike seems mystical and lush, a beautiful place that anyone can enjoy, and it's a cool oasis on a hot summer day.

**Driving Directions:** Starting from the intersection of highways 78 and 113 in Merrimac (north of Madison), go northwest on Hwy. 113 about 4.8 miles, then east on County DL another 2.1 miles to a parking area on the north side of the road. Parking is available at the trailhead in a designated lot. A Wisconsin State Park sticker or day pass is required and can be obtained at Parfrey's Glen or nearby Devil's Lake State Park.

**Tips:** Visit nearby Devil's Lake State Park and do some hiking along the bluffs, swimming in the lake or enjoy some of the best rock climbing in the Midwest. There is a restroom 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](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.