



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: **Grove of the Patriarchs**

Rating: **Easy**

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

Why This Hike: Kids and adults alike will be fascinated and awed by this virgin forest of gigantic, ancient Douglas firs, western hemlocks and western red cedars—some estimated to be 1,000 years old and more than 25 feet in diameter.

Hike Description: The trail goes 0.5 miles through the forest to a junction. It then turns right and crosses a suspension bridge onto an island in the Ohanapecoh River. Interpretive signs identify plants and points of interest. The boardwalk path (to protect the forest roots) goes through small trees and then forks (you can go either way—it's a loop). From that point, be prepared to crane your necks and stretch your jaws. Protected from fire by their island refuge, the trees have grown uninhibited. You'll be walking among living giants. AMAZING!

Driving Directions: Drive to the Stevens Canyon entrance of Mt. Rainier National Park. Just 0.2 miles west of the entrance on Stevens Canyon Road is a large parking lot beyond the Ohanapecoh River bridge. The trail starts behind the restrooms. Parents should plan for approximately a 2-hour car trip each way from Tacoma or Seattle for this one, but it's worth it. Plan to spend the day. Entrance fee to the national park is \$15 per car for the day.

Tips: Enjoy a picnic at the benches at the end of the loop trail. On a hot summer day, plan on shallow river access. Water shoes and a change of clothes are recommended.

Hike Two: **Squak Mountain State Park Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1 mile roundtrip (with longer, steeper options), minimal elevation gain**

Why This Hike: This trail will become a well-remembered favorite due to its incredible interpretive signage, easy loop and beautiful forest canopy.

Hike Description: This trail is truly a hidden treasure. The "Pretzel Tree Trail" is beautifully designed and illustrated to lead kids through the wonders of the forest. Young children will want to linger on the 0.33-mile loop and possibly go around several times. More adventure can be found by following the gravel road 0.5 miles uphill through the yellow gate to a series of well-marked trails often used by equestrians. Most trails loop back to the South Access Road.

Driving Directions: From Tacoma, follow I-5 north to I-405 north to exit 5 in Renton (Sunset Blvd. NE/SR-900 East.) Follow 900 east 5.3 miles to May Valley Road. Turn right on May Valley Road and travel 2.3 miles. Find the state park on the north side of the road. The trailhead is on the west side of the parking lot. Parking is \$5 for the day or a State Park Annual Pass can be purchased.

Tips: Pleasant surprises abound, such as bridges crossing streams lined with wild raspberries and resting benches. Be respectful of horses, keep dogs on leashes and don't let kids run too far ahead.

Hike Three: **Talapus Lake Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **4.4 miles roundtrip, 900' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: All the kids I've taken on this hike love it! It's beautiful year-round, and super kid-friendly, whether you're hiking in the summer or snowshoeing in the winter.

Hike Description: The trail starts out wide and then narrows as it switchbacks up the eastern shoulder of Bandera Mountain. You'll be walking under tree cover the entire route, so watch your step! (There are exposed tree roots in some places that love to catch unwary toes.) At 1.2 miles, the switchbacks get close to Talapus Creek and provide a nice view of it. At 1.9 miles, you cross over the creek, and at 2.2 miles you come to Talapus Lake. There are several small trails that go down to the lake's edge, which is a good spot for a lunch break.

Driving Directions: From Seattle, take I-90 east to Exit 45 (about 13 miles east of North Bend). At the end of the exit ramp, set your trip odometer to zero and turn left to go north under I-90. At 0.5 miles, the road turns to dirt, and at 0.9 miles, it reaches a fork. Take the right fork onto Forest Road 9030. At 3.4 miles you will reach the parking area for the trailhead. A Northwest Forest Pass is required.

Tips: As the trail nears Talapus Creek, there are good places to stop and take a break. Be sure to enjoy the sounds and cool breezes of the creek, and keep your eyes open for wildlife. If you continue up the main trail, at 2.4 miles you'll reach a fork. Go left, and after a short ascent, you'll come to Olallie Lake at 2.9 miles. It's another good picnic spot for those who want to hike a little farther.

Hike Four: **Twin Falls Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip, 500' elevation gain**

Why This Hike: This hike has it all: old-growth forests, a pair of waterfalls, a challenging climb and a long flat.

Hike Description: This trail follows the south fork of the Snoqualmie River traveling along a flat section for about 0.5 miles before rising steeply uphill to 2 dramatic waterfalls. About a mile from the trailhead, you pass the Grandfather Tree—an ancient Douglas fir that's now protected by a fence. A little farther, a stairway leads down to an overlook of the lower falls. The main trail continues to the bridge over the river. About 100 yards beyond the bridge is an overlook of the upper falls. The trail is well-traveled hardpack, wide enough to travel 2 abreast in most places. Little ones will need to be pushed, pulled and probably carried on parts of this one, but the payoff is big.

Driving Directions: Follow I-90 east to Exit 34 (Edgewick Rd.) Turn right onto 468th Ave. SE and go 0.6 miles. Turn left onto SE 159th. Follow the road another 0.5 miles to the state park parking area. Parking is \$5 for the day, or a State Park Annual Pass can be purchased.

Tips: Besides the 2 waterfalls there are cool, rushing wading areas on the lower portion of the trail that come in handy on a hot summer day. The top of the trail intersects with the Iron Horse Trail for the more adventuresome who would like to add mileage.

Hike Five: **Weyerhaeuser HQ Trail**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **0.3 to 4.6 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

Why This Hike: The Weyerhaeuser loops are an urban forested treat appropriate for all ages and abilities. There are several enticing water features along the gravel and hardpack-dirt trails. Centrally located, they provide easy access to a morning hike or even after work on a summer evening.

Hike Description: Nearly 5 miles of well-maintained trails loop through private Weyerhaeuser acreage. You'll cross open meadows and forested areas, and walk along trailside streams in the spring and winter, as well as 2 picturesque lakes. Some sections of the trails are accessible to strollers and wheelchairs. If you bring Fido, bring a leash too, because dogs are not allowed to run free. These trails are popular and well used, and although they pass very near I-5, the forested areas offer a welcome respite and ample adventure for pint-sized explorers.

Driving Directions: From Tacoma, drive north on I-5 and take the SR-18 exit east toward Auburn. Take the first exit to Weyerhaeuser Way South. Turn left (north) and follow directional signs to the East HQ visitor parking area. (Other areas may be gated and locked on weekends.) Parking is free.

Tips: Pack a picnic and allow some extra time for the bonsai and rhododendron gardens on the premises. The Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection is open year-round and is free of charge. For hours and more information, contact the garden directly: (253) 924-5206



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.