

## Explore - Top 25 Summer Fun Ideas



How can you have a fantastic time in Illinois this summer? Let us count the ways.

When it comes to working a vacation into your family's summer agenda, you can always count on Illinois for great ideas. With its beautiful state parks, world-renowned architectural treasures and kid-pleasing attractions galore, the Prairie State offers a host of options. Here we play by the numbers. Giving you 25 of the best ideas for travel across the state.

Start from No. 1 or skip around the list. You'll love what adds up.

**1. Oak Street Beach** - Soak up the rays at Oak Street Beach. Located along the shore of Lake Michigan in Chicago, where Oak Street meets Lake Shore Drive, this stretch of beach is as picturesque as they come.

**2. Six Flags Great America** - Celebrate Mardi Gras at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee. This theme park, known for its daredevil roller coasters, just unveiled an area transporting you to the streets of New Orleans.

**3. Peoria's Riverfront** - Take in the sights and sounds of Peoria's Riverfront where the banks of the Illinois River really make a splash. Start your day at the new Peoria Riverfront Market and be sure to take in the shops and antiques.



**4. Galena On The Fly** - Get ready for lift off at Galena On The Fly. You'll float up and away in a massive hot air balloon and drift across the rolling landscape of Jo Daviess County.

**5. Raging Rivers Water Park** - Take the plunge at Raging Rivers Water Park in Grafton. Built into the bluffs that flank the Mississippi River, you'll find rides that both relax and thrill.

**6. Abraham Lincoln** - Follow in Abraham Lincoln's footsteps in Springfield. See where the freedom-loving president lived and worked in Illinois' capital city via tour-friendly historic sites such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

**7. Oak Park** - Design you Oak Park visit around architecture. The near-west Chicago suburb is home to many historic marvels, such as the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Unity Temple and the famed architect's Home & Studio.

**8. Shawnee National Forest** - Unleash your outdoorsy nature at the Shawnee National Forest. Whether you opt for a bird's-eye view from the bluffs of the Garden of the Gods or walk through the wetlands of the Cache River State Natural Area, there's much to experience in Illinois' largest natural treasure.

**9. Wrigley Field** - Cheer for the home team this season at one of Chicago's great ballparks. On the North Side, visit historic Wrigley Field also know as "the friendly confines," where the Chicago Cubs do their swinging.

**10. World Free Fall Skydiving Convention** - Go to dizzying heights in Rantoul at the World Free Fall Skydiving Convention. This annual event, taking place August 6-14 this year, brings together some 3,000 professional skydivers from around the world.

**11. Great River Road Golf Club** - Go "fore" it at the Great River Road Golf Club. Situated along the Great River Road's scenic byway between Quincy and Nauvoo, this 18-hole golf course is as photogenic as it is playable.

**12. Silver Creek, Stephenson Railroad** - Do the locomotion aboard the Silver Creek & Stephenson Railroad. Board a flat car or the red caboose at the Silver Creek Depot in Freeport and enjoy the ride though Stephenson County.



**13. Tempel Lipizzan** - Prance over to Wadsworth for a look at the Tempel Lipizzan stallions. The ancient art of dressage, or skilled precision horsemanship, comes alive at Tempel Farms.

Styled after the performances of Vienna's Spanish Riding School, the show is paired with visits to historic stables and an antique carriage collection.



**14. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** - Pay homage to an ancient civilization at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Collinsville. History buffs will dig this site, considering it holds the remains of the largest prehistoric Native American city north of Mexico.

**15. Shawnee Hills Wine Trail** - Plan a grape escape to the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail. Tastings and tours are regular happenings at the palate-pleasing wineries found on a 25-mile scenic drive though the Shawnee National Forest.

**16. Rockome Gardens** - Check out what's blooming at Arcola's Rockome Gardens. Set in the heart of Illinois' Amish country, Rockome is a popular theme park with family-gearred rides, as well as manicured gardens and stone walls.

**17. Wildlife Prairie State Park** - Cavort with the animals at Wildlife Prairie State Park. This Peoria-area zoological park is home to elk, bison, cougar and deer.

**18. Grant Park** - Go alfresco at festivals in Chicago's Grant Park. Music lovers flock to the downtown park ready to dance, shout and let it all out at the Petrillo MusicShell. The festival season begins with the Chicago Gospel Festival June 4-6.

**19. Decatur Celebration** - Gear up for fun as Decatur Celebration returns August 6-8. This three-day celebration is Illinois' largest free family street festival, offering 22 blocks packed with more than a dozen live entertainment stages, 127 arts and crafts vendors, more than 67 food booths, a carnival and even a Kids Block.



**20. Magic Waters Water Park** - Make waves in Rockford at Magic Waters Water Park an epicenter of all things splashy. This summer Magic Waters rolls out a new tube ride called The Abyss.



**21. Metropolis** - Harness your inner superhero in Metropolis, the Southern Illinois town known as the "Home of Superman." Clark Kent would feel right at home thanks to the Super Museum, which exhibits a full range of Superman memorabilia.

**22. Chicagoland Speedway & Route 66 Raceway** - Start your engine at the Chicagoland Speedway & Route 66 Raceway. Joliet's two pro racetracks get fans revved up for the waving of the green flag.

**23. John Deere** - Do the John Deere circuit in Moline. The famed tractor maker built his business in Moline and visitor friendly sights make it easy to trace Deere history.



**24. Architecture Boat** - Come marvel at Chicago's famed cityscape while on a guided architecture Boat Tour. Chicago Architecture Foundation guides point out the sites as you cruise the Chicago River.

**25. National Great Rivers Museum** - Experience life on the



river at the National Great Rivers Museum. Alton's newest cultural attraction is packed with exhibits that illustrate the impact of the mighty Mississippi River.

