

CLIMB, REPEL, DIVE, SWING, HIKE, PADDLE, HOLD ON TIGHT– ILLINOIS' OUTDOOR RECREATION IS AN ADVENTURE

Escape to the “Great Outdoors” of Illinois for Your Next Weekend Getaway

(CHICAGO, IL) -- Now that the weather is warmer, the sun is shining and nature is beginning to bloom, it is the perfect time to get up, get out and go experience a weekend getaway adventure. Visit a place with rugged bluffs, glacier-carved canyons, flowing rivers and underground caves without leaving your own back yard.

Whether it's Chicago's lakefront, Northern Illinois' rolling hills, the prairie land of the Central region, the raging Mississippi that forms the state's western border, or the lush forests that blanket the south, Illinois has all the elements for an unforgettable outdoor adventure.

All Trails Lead to Illinois

Saddle up a horse, jump on a bike, or put on your walking shoes to travel along the paved and unpaved trails of Illinois. Along the way, bask in the scenery of the lush forests, colorful wildflower fields, streams and waterfalls, and keep an eye out for all the wildlife you're sure to spot.

The Botanic Gardens in Glencoe, I & M Canal Trail in Joliet, Fox River Trail in St. Charles, Illinois Prairie Path in Wheaton and Aurora Bicycle Trail are great places to enjoy the Chicago skyline and the peaceful suburban nature all in one trip.

Step off the beaten path and into Northern Illinois to explore the Pecatonica Prairie Path, which runs from Freeport to Rockford, or follow the tracks through the Stephenson-Black Hawk Trail in Lena and the trails of Kankakee River State Park in Bourbonnais.

Middle Fork National Scenic River in Danville, Hidden Springs State Forest in Strasburg, Beaver Dam State Park in Plainview and Fox Ridge State Park in Charleston provide outdoor enthusiasts with the best pathways and scenery in Central Illinois.

Follow the Mighty Mississippi along the Quad Cities' Great River Trail, trek inland to the Jubilee College State Park in Brimfield and Johnson-Sauk Trail in Kewanee or relax in the solitude of Nauvoo State Park.

For a subterranean adventure, go underground at Caverns Mammoth Cave in Waterloo or stay above ground with a journey through Garden of the Gods and Cave in Rock State Parks in the Shawnee National Forest.

It's Just A Short "Drive" To Championship Golf Courses

Play like a Tiger on any of Illinois' 685 golf courses. Take a swing at a nine, 18 or 27-hole course and get hooked on wide-open fairways or links-style courses. No matter what skill level, Illinois has a course for every golfer.

Chicagoland's golf courses rank among some of the country's best with Long Grove's Kemper Lakes Golf and Tennis Club, Cog Hill in Lemont, Medinah Country Club and Olympia Fields Golf Club.

Sink a hole-in-two in Lena with Park Hills Golf Course and Lena Golf Club or head to Rockford to play the Aldeen Golf Club. Plum Tree National Golf Course in Harvard, Lost Nation Golf Course in Dixon and Galena's Eagle Ridge Inn and Resort also rank among the best courses in Northern Illinois.

Located in the heart of Illinois, Eagle Creek Resort sits on the shores of Lake Shelbyville in Findlay. In addition to its golf course, the resort offers an outdoor pool, saunas, tennis courts and various water sports.

Your golf game will play in Peoria at any of the area's six courses. Take a swing at Lick Creek Golf Course in Pekin, Westview Golf Course in Quincy and Bunker Links in Galesburg.

Tee off in Southern Illinois at Rend Lake Golf Course in Whittington, Alton's Spencer T. Olin Golf Course or any of Mount Vernon's four courses.

Stop and Smell the Roses...and the Daylilies...and the Irises

Follow the rainbow of red roses, orange geraniums, yellow tulips, violet orchids, green forests and blue skies throughout the gardens of Illinois.

Discover the colors of Chicagoland at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Cuneo Museum and Gardens in Vernon Hills, and Cantigny Estate in Wheaton.

Unearth Rockford's green thumb at the Anderson Japanese Gardens, Klehm Arboretum and Sinnissippi Gardens. The flowering fields of Blue Hollow Farm in Stockton, Timber Ridge Gardens in Elizabeth and Lakewood Resort and Gardens in Savanna signal that Spring has arrived in Northern Illinois.

Springfield, home to Abraham Lincoln, also is home to beautiful gardens including the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon, Lincoln Memorial Garden and

Nature Center, and Washington Park Conservatory. Take home herbs and flowers from Mari Mann Herb Farm in Decatur, then head south to Amish Country to visit Rockome Gardens.

Open your eyes to the beauty of Western Illinois at Hornbaker Gardens in Princeton, George L. Luthy Memorial Botanic Gardens in Peoria and the Quad City Botanical Center.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Alwerdt's Gardens in Altamont and Dongola's Fragrant Fields are perennial favorites of nature lovers in Southern Illinois.

Illinois Reels You In -- Hook, Line and Sinker

Cast a line, catch a wave and jump right in. With more than 60,000 miles of shoreline, Illinois has plenty of open water for fishing, boating, water and jet skiing, and swimming.

Lay a course for Northern Illinois to fish and boat at Chain O' Lakes State Park in Spring Grove, Shabonna Lake State Park in Shabonna, Rock Cut State Park in Loves Park, Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park and Kankakee River State Park in Bradley.

Lake Shelbyville in Findlay, Kickapoo State Park in Oakwood, Lake Jacksonville in Jacksonville and Shoal Creek Nature Conservation Area in Litchfield lure boaters to Central Illinois.

Conquer the Mississippi River or navigate the waters of Argyle Lake State Park in Colchester, Lake Storey Recreational Area in Galesburg, Big River State Forest in Oquawka and Hennepin Canal State Parkway in Sheffield.

Find out why Southern Illinois is the "Bass Capital of the Midwest" by casting your favorite lure in Rend Lake near Mt. Vernon, Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge in Carterville, Kinkaid Lake Recreation Area and Marina in Murphysboro, Cedar Lake in Carbondale, and Raccoon Lake in Centralia.

Grab the Phone, Get Online, Plan Your Weekend Getaway

This Spring, get adventurous with your vacation plans: Take a weekend getaway in Illinois. Explore different cultures, visit historic sites, shop 'til you drop, eat like a king, camp, cozy up in a B&B or rough it at a State Park Lodge, and most important of all -- get up, get out and go! For detailed information on

destinations, accommodations, attractions and outdoor recreation across Illinois, or to plan a customized getaway, call the Illinois Travel Center at 1-800-2CONNECT (TTY: 1-800-406-6418) or visit the Illinois Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs Bureau of Tourism, works to enhance the economic development climate for the citizens of Illinois

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