You’re gonna need a bigger photo album

Are we there yet? How much longer? How do you avoid road trip questions? Go down a speeding waterslide. Head to the country to feed adorable animals. Explore captivating museum exhibits. Kids, parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, everyone will have the time of their lives in Illinois.

3 days
146mi
(Approx)
Day 1-2  Gurnee/Lake County

For an unforgettable stay, start by booking a room at Great Wolf Lodge in Gurnee. More than a hotel, Great Wolf Lodge is a water park resort experience the whole family will love. Thrilling tube rides, slides, a multi-level splash-loaded treehouse, wave pool and more—the kids won’t want to leave!

When you need a break from the thrills, take in a bit of nature by visiting the Independence Grove Forest Preserve or the Chicago Botanic Garden. Step back in time at the Superdawg Drive-In, the perfect roadside diner to get you in the road trip mood.

Nothing adds to a good family road trip like bragging rights, so try out Lincolnshire's Par-King Skill Golf, self-titled as “the world's most unusual golf course.” The Cheesecake Factory is right nearby if you need to refuel. Also close by is Lambs Farm where your little ones can meet the residents of their petting zoo and get a sweet treat at their bakery.

For a great family dinner, head up to Wadsworth to The Shanty, which was featured on Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives.

Day 3  Rockford

Let nature be your guide today. The Anderson Japanese Gardens is the perfect place to start your day with some serenity, and the Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens are a great place to continue the good vibes. Be sure to stop by Illinois Made maker Rockford Art Deli for a souvenir. The Rockmen Guardians are also a great unique photo opportunity.

For lunch, try Ciao Bella Italian Kitchen and then grab a quick pastry from Crust and Crumbles before you continue your adventure.

Inquisitive minds need to look no further than the Burpee Museum of Natural History to dive into our distant past. For those who need a little bit more activity, try the Discovery Center Museum which has over 250 interactive exhibits for your kids to explore. If you need a coffee to keep up with the kids, Illinois Made maker Rockford Roasting Company has got you covered. And when you’re all wiped out, have your family rest at the new Embassy Suites Hotel sitting right on the Rockford riverfront.