



# 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: Cedar Woods Trail in Cedars of Lebanon State Park

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** This state park includes the largest cedar forest remaining in the U.S. The trail also passes through hardwood forests and natural limestone rock gardens, and passes several sinkholes.

**Hike Description:** Revolutionary War veterans came to this area after receiving land grants for their service. The cedars here reminded them of the biblical “Cedars of Lebanon,” and so they named their town “Lebanon.” This loop trail gives kids a chance to see those trees up-close. The area’s interesting geology is also on display. Kids love the sinkholes, and the unusual formations in the rock gardens offer plenty of fun exploration. If you come early in the day, you might encounter fox, deer, squirrels and rabbits, as well as a variety of birds, including wild turkeys. The easy dirt and rock trail has a few mild climbs and descents, but nothing strenuous.

**Driving Directions:** From Nashville, go east on I-40 to Exit 238. Drive south on US 231 for six miles to the entrance of Cedars of Lebanon State Park (on the left). The trailhead is 0.8 miles from the entrance, at Picnic Shelter #1. The parking/entrance fee is \$3 (a \$30 annual pass is also available).

**Tips:** The park has a nice campground for longer stays, as well as multiple picnic areas and shelters. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

### Hike Two: Couchville Lake Loop in Long Hunter State Park

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** There are lots of side trails leading to small piers on the lake’s edge that are fun to explore. There are also signs along the way pointing out different species of plants and trees.

**Hike Description:** Even the very youngest hikers can navigate this popular trail. It’s paved and 8’ wide, making it ideal for strollers, as well as self-propelled bipeds with backpacks. Be sure to bring your camera, because even though the hike is easy, it doesn’t scrimp on beautiful scenery. There are wonderful views of Couchville Lake, especially from the 300’ wooden bridge that spans the water. If you go in the mornings, when it’s still quiet, you may see wildlife both on the lake and in the woods surrounding it.

**Driving Directions:** From Nashville, go east on I-40 to Exit 226. Drive south on TN 171 for 4.2 miles. Stay right at the split, as TN 171 becomes Hobson Pike. Continue for 2.4 miles, then turn left into the Couchville Day Use Area. Go 0.4 miles further and turn left into Area Two, where you’ll soon come to the parking area and trailhead. Parking is \$3 (free on Wednesdays). A \$30 annual pass is also available.

**Tips:** Canoes and Johnboats can be rented—a great way to extend your day before or after your hike. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

Hike Three: **Harpeth Woods Trail in Edwin Warner Park**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **2.5 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** This moderate hike is easy to get to and has lots to offer. The nature center in the park also has some great pre- or post-hike activities.

**Hike Description:** You can begin this trail at any one of three different trailheads (the main one is at the nature center). Along the 2.5-mile trek you'll have some flats, some hills, some cool geology and a rich variety of forest types—especially large beech, oak and cedar trees. There's even an old rock quarry that was active in the 1930s and early 1940s when the WPA was doing stonework and building roads in the parks. Part of this trail follows the historic Natchez Trace—a "highway" of trails used by Native Americans for hundreds of years, and by Kentucky boatmen in the 18th and 19th centuries. Kids can learn about plant, tree and bird identification through some of the programs offered at the nature center. It gets warm, so be sure to bring plenty of water.

**Driving Directions:** In Nashville, take West End Avenue away from downtown and through Belle Meade. Stay left at "the split" on Hwy. 100. The nature center is shortly after the traffic light at Old Hickory Boulevard, on the left. Parking is free at the nature center.

**Tips:** There are some nice picnic shelters along the Little Harpeth River where kids can fish or play in the water. There are restrooms at the nature center trailhead.

Hike Four: **Radnor Lake Spillway Trail & Lake Trail**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **2.65 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** This combination of trails offers the best views of Radnor Lake, as well as lots of wildlife—deer, turtles, owls, hawks and both migratory and local songbirds.

**Hike Description:** Young, novice hikers will enjoy this nice, wide, mulch-covered trail. Older kids and adults will find plenty to admire, too. The easy path is handicap-accessible with the all-terrain wheelchairs that are available at the visitor center. You begin from the west parking lot on the 0.25-mile Spillway Trail. This takes you to the lake and to the 1.4-mile Lake Trail, which offers great views of the lake as it follows the north shoreline. The trail ends at the paved park road. To shorten the walk back to the car to one mile, return by way of the road. If your kids are older, stronger and more ambitious, there are other moderate and strenuous hikes in Radnor Lake State Natural Area where you can walk some of the highest hills in the Nashville Basin. One is the Ganier Ridge Trail, which can be accessed either from the Lake Trail or from the east parking lot. Note that since this is a nature sanctuary, dogs are not allowed, so leave Fido home on this one.

**Driving Directions:** From Nashville, take I-65 south to Exit 78 (Harding Place). Go west on Harding Place (or Battery Lane) to Granny White Pike. Turn left and drive south to Otter Creek Road and turn left (across from Granny White Market) to the west parking lot and visitor center on Otter Creek Road. Parking is \$3 (a \$30 annual pass is available).

**Tips:** Check out the many programs and activities, including guided tours, slide shows, seasonal wildflower walks and canoeing. There are restrooms at the trailhead. The Granny White Market is a good place to stock up on snacks before or after the hike.

Hike Five: **Old Stone Fort Loop Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **2.6 miles roundtrip, moderate elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** Views of the Old Stone Fort—a 2,000-year-old ceremonial site built by Native Americans—make this fun scenic trek a history lesson too.

**Hike Description:** The Old Stone Fort of the park's name is a series of mounds and walls that, combined with the surrounding cliffs and rivers, formed a 1.25-mile enclosure. For hundreds of years, it served as a ceremonial gathering site for Native Americans in the area. From the trailhead by the museum, the loop takes you by several waterfalls on the Duck and Little Duck rivers. Some fine views of the countryside, as well as the "fort" and its striking evidence of ancient human history, make the hike a first-rate family adventure. The trail is made of wood chips, leaves and rocks, with some occasional roots (just for fun).

**Driving Directions:** From Nashville, go east on I-24 to Exit 111 (Manchester). Drive west on TN 55 for 0.8 miles, then turn right (north) on US 41. Continue for 1.7 miles and turn left into Old Stone Fort State Park. Free parking is available at the museum.

**Tips:** Be sure to spend some time in the museum. There are restrooms at the trailhead (in the museum).



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.