



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: **Balch Creek Canyon in Forest Park**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **3 miles roundtrip, 440 feet of elevation gain.**

Why this hike: This is a favorite family hike and a wonderful introduction to Forest Park. The Stone House is a great place for little explorers.

Hike Description: From the trailhead beneath the Thurman Street Bridge, follow the Lower Macleay Trail along Balch Creek. Watch for water ouzels in the creek, and look for cutthroat trout in the pool beneath the wooden footbridge halfway up the trail. Kids might want to bring a journal, keeping count of the newts, slugs and squirrels they see on the way to the Old Stone House. Built by the WPA in the 1930s, it's a fun place to spend a few extra minutes climbing, scrambling and playing make-believe. From there, continue on the Lower Macleay Trail to the Upper Macleay Trail parking lot. This is a good spot for a break before heading back down the trail. Older kids may enjoy continuing on Upper Macleay Trail to Pittock Mansion. From the mansion lawn, you can see Mount St. Helens, Mount Hood and downtown Portland. Follow the trail back to Lower Macleay.

Driving Directions: From I-405 in downtown Portland, take Exit 3 (US Hwy. 30W). At the end of the off-ramp, stay in the right lane, which turns into NW Vaughn Street. Go 0.6 miles and turn left onto NW 28th Street. Go one block and turn right onto NW Upshur Street. Proceed 0.2 miles to a parking area at the road's end at Lower Macleay Park. Parking is free.

Tips: If you have time, stop by the No Ivy Project Field House. You'll see ivy logs removed from the park, and cheerful young volunteers share loads of information about the project. The Lower Macleay parking lot is quite small, so you might have better luck parking along NW Upshur. There are restrooms at both the Lower and Upper Macleay parking lots.

Hike Two: **Oak Trail (Tualatin Hills Nature Park)**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, no elevation gain.**

Why this hike: The trail passes through a wildlife preserve, giving young adventurers a firsthand look at cattail marshes, a tadpole pond and perhaps a beaver or two.

Hike Description: From the parking lot, go past the interpretive center on the Vine Maple Trail. After entering the forest, when the trail forks, go right onto the Oak Trail. You'll walk through one of the largest white-oak forests still standing in the Portland area. Between the first and second boardwalks on this trail, you'll find the Tadpole Ponds Trail off to your right. Take this short loop for a view of an open meadow. Look for red-tailed hawks, killdeer and other birds. After you return to the Oak Trail, cross the second boardwalk. Notice a peculiar smell? It's skunk cabbage. Continue on until you enter a grove of Western red cedar. Here you'll find the longest boardwalk in the park. You'll also have a good chance of seeing wildlife. (Have kids look for signs of beaver.) The grove is the turnaround point of the hike. For a longer variation, you can create a loop by following the Creek and Vine Maple trails back to the parking lot.

Driving Directions: The interpretive center is at 15655 SW Millikan Boulevard in Beaverton. From Hwy. 26, go south on Murray for approximately 1.5 miles. Turn right (west) on SW Millikan Way, which becomes SW Millikan Boulevard. The interpretive center is approximately 0.75 miles from the intersection, about 200' past the second set of railroad tracks, on the right side of the road.

Tips: Be sure to pick up a park map at the entrance. There are restrooms at the interpretive center.

Hike Three: **Mt. Talbert Nature Park**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **4.2 miles of connected trails, moderate elevation gain.**

Why this hike: A series of interpretive signs along the trails provides visitors with information about the plants and animals that can be seen – and heard – at the nature park.

Hike Description: This park offers miles of new hiking trails and access to nature close to home. A 0.5 mile stroller-friendly gravel trail leads from the park entrance to a small native prairie that blooms with wildflowers such as camas and woolly sunshine in the spring. There is a good chance of seeing many of the resident wildlife species, including deer, coyotes, raccoons, gray squirrels, woodpeckers, nuthatches, tanagers and more. A revitalized oak savanna and wet prairie meadow, two increasingly rare habitats in the northern Willamette Valley, are found at Mount Talbert.

Driving Directions: The park is just east of I-205 and south of Sunnyside Road. From southeast Sunnyside Road turn south on 97th Avenue and follow until it becomes Mather Road. The park entrance is on the left, off Mather Road.

Tips: Mount Talbert Nature Park is free and open daily a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour past sunset. Many of the park facilities are wheelchair accessible, including the parking area, restrooms, picnic shelter and paved trails. Dogs and bikes are not permitted.

Hike Four: **Tryon Creek State Natural Area**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **1.5 miles roundtrip, 125 feet of elevation gain.**

Why this hike: This wilderness park between Portland and Lake Oswego is a natural refuge for all kinds of wildlife, including more than 50 species of birds. It's a great place to introduce kids to nature and stewardship.

Hike Description: Start at the nature center and head south on the Old Main Trail until you reach the junction with Middle Creek Trail. Take Middle Creek Trail as it follows along and then crosses Tryon Creek at Beaver Bridge and again at High Bridge. Kids will enjoy spotting animal homes in old downed trees. Salamanders, newts and frogs are plentiful near the water. After crossing High Bridge, you can continue on Middle Creek Trail past Jackson Shelter to the nature center. For an optional 0.5-mile hike, take the Maple Ridge Trail that's 0.15 miles past High Bridge. There are two connector trails to Old Main off Maple Ridge: one at 0.28 miles and one at 0.47 miles. For older, more adventurous kids, try the 0.96-mile Cedar Trail. It connects to Old Main via the Red Fox Trail and has lots of ups and downs.

Driving Directions: The park is located in southwest Portland. Take I-5 to Exit 297 (Terwilliger Boulevard/Lewis & Clark College). Turn southeast onto Terwilliger. Go about two miles, following the brown-and-white Tryon Creek State Park signs. Cross Boones Ferry at a "Y" intersection, staying left on Terwilliger. Just past Lewis & Clark Northwestern School of Law, there's a traffic circle. Stay right on Terwilliger. The park is about 0.75 miles further, on the right. Parking is free.

Tips: Visit the nature center for park information, unique gifts and lots of fun, educational exhibits and programs. There are restrooms just outside the nature center.

Hike Five: **Townsite Trail in Champoeg State Heritage Park**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, no elevation gain.**

Why this hike: With its history, beautiful surroundings and easy grade, this is a terrific hike for families.

Hike Description: This gentle loop takes you beside the Willamette River, through forests and oak groves, and across open fields. It's a wonderful place to see birds and other wildlife. It's also a stroll through Oregon history. Near the trail junction with the bike path is the Pioneer Mothers Cabin Museum. Along the way, you'll pass through the historic site of Champoeg, one of Oregon's first towns. It was here in 1843 that pioneers voted to form Oregon's first government. Partially paved and partially soft bark dust, the trail has sections that are open to both hikers and cyclists.

Driving Directions: Champoeg State Heritage Park is approximately 30 miles south of downtown Portland. From I-5, take Exit 278 (Donald/Aurora) and go west. Follow the signs to the park. (It's seven miles east of Newberg, off US 99W). There is a \$3 entrance fee to the park.

Tips: Be sure to visit the Butteville General Store in the park for refreshments before or after your hike (or both!). And if you're going to birdwatch, pick up a Birds of Champoeg checklist in the visitor center. There are lots of special weekend programs at the park from late June through Labor Day. For details, call the park's visitor center at (503) 678-1251, ext. 221. There are restrooms at the trailhead.



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.