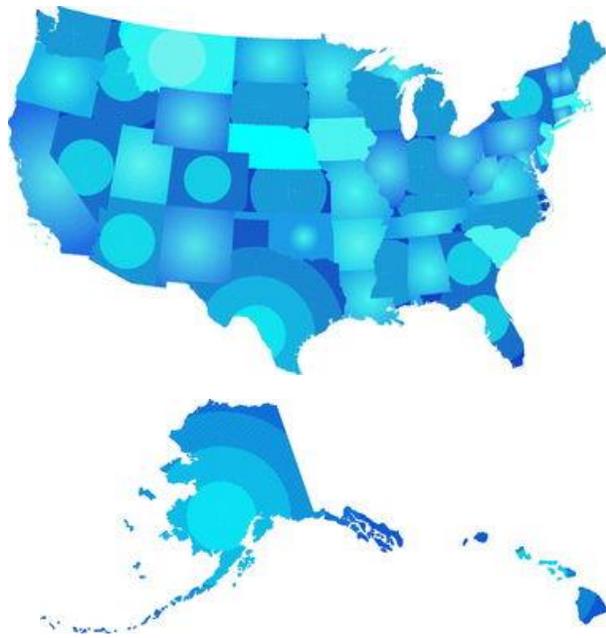


Parents

State Secrets: 50 Little-Known Local Destinations

We asked 2,000 parents to share their local go-tos so you can be in the know too. Check out our top pick per state—this is a list you'll definitely want to save!

By Liz Schnabolk from Family Fun



- **ALABAMA**
 - The expansive Cathedral Caverns State Park in Woodville features a stalagmite rock formation that's 243 feet around!
- **ALASKA**
 - Meet Santa and his reindeer at the real-life Christmas village in North Pole, near Fairbanks. "It's a must-do for our family once a year," says one mom.
- **ARIZONA**
 - Dramatic pinnacles and spires, formed from eroded volcanic rocks, create an otherworldly landscape at Chiricahua National Monument in southeast Arizona.
- **ARKANSAS**
 - The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville has fun activities for kids, including a gallery scavenger hunt.
- **CALIFORNIA**
 - The so-called "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island, in the San Francisco Bay, gives kids a look at the country's immigration history.
- **COLORADO**
 - "It's fascinating to [learn] how coins are made." Find out how it happens on a free tour for kids 7 and up at The Denver Mint. (Be sure to make a reservation!)
- **CONNECTICUT**
 - A perfect spot for make-believe play! Tour the medieval-style Gillette Castle in East Haddam, and spend some time walking around the gorgeous grounds.
- **DELAWARE**
 - Get your beach and woods fix at Holly Lake Campsites. Near Rehoboth Beach, it also has an on-site swimming pool and mini-golf course.
- **FLORIDA**
 - One mom raved about the Gulf Coast's Cape San Blas for its lack of crowds and awesome scalloping. Kids will love looking for shells—the beaches are full of 'em!
- **GEORGIA**
 - Amicalola Falls State Park's great hiking trails and beautiful waterfall are irresistible.
- **HAWAII**
 - There's more here than waves and beaches! Get some island history at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Don't miss the daily lava-pour demonstration.

- **IDAHO**
 - The Wild West is alive and well in Idaho City! Tour this old mining town's original buildings, including a post office, prison, and blacksmith's.
- **ILLINOIS**
 - Check out 18 gorgeous canyons from the hiking trails in Starved Rock State Park in Oglesby.
- **INDIANA**
 - The Conner Prairie living history park, in Fishers, teaches kids about life in 19th-century Indiana. "They do a great job of acting out history!"
- **IOWA**
 - Baseball fan in tow? You can tour the real Field of Dreams in Dyersville.
- **KANSAS**
 - Take a spin on the ice-skating rink, see a show at the kids' theater, or visit the free kids' crafting area at the Crown Center in Kansas City.
- **KENTUCKY**
 - Kangaroos, dingoes, and lemurs, oh my! Kids can get up-close with exotic animals at Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo in Horse Cave.
- **LOUISIANA**
 - Head to Camp Salmen Nature Park in Slidell to spot wildlife and enjoy the playground built to accommodate kids with special needs.
- **MAINE**
 - Bigfoot believer? Check out the International Cryptozoology Museum in Portland, dedicated to the study of hidden or unknown animals.
- **MARYLAND**
 - To get away from it all, one mom suggests the lake town of Flintstone: "The night sky has so many stars, I could spend hours just looking at them."
- **MASSACHUSETTS**
 - Head out on a free walking tour of New Bedford Whaling Historical Park to learn about the lure and legend of whalers going to sea.
- **MICHIGAN**
 - At The Lumberman's Monument in Oscoda, kids can climb through a logjam, use a peavey hook, and more. "Our boys love the logs, and the history."
- **MINNESOTA**
 - The Whitetail Woods Camper Cabins are veritable tree houses—but with real beds. Best of both worlds!
- **MISSISSIPPI**
 - The Gulfport area Lynn Meadows Discovery Center's "Kids Street" exhibit takes playing house to the extreme with an entire kid-size suburban
- **MISSOURI**
 - Stroll through towering statues of giant eyeballs, balloon poodles, and more at the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis. Bonus: It's free!
- **MONTANA**
 - For swimming, sunbathing, fishing, birdwatching, and more, head to the gorgeous Spring Meadow Lake State Park in Helena.
- **NEBRASKA**
 - Fontenelle Forest in Omaha recently opened the Raptor Woodland Refuge, where you can spot birds from walkways suspended high above the ground.
- **NEVADA**
 - "Everyone hears 'Vegas' and can't think past the Strip," explains one mom, who says the city's Springs Preserve nature center is her favorite spot for families.
- **NEW HAMPSHIRE**
 - We may never know for sure who built America's Stonehenge in Salem, but this mystical maze of manmade rock formations sure is cool to explore.
- **NEW JERSEY**
 - Cuddle up in the car and get ready to enjoy a double feature at Vineland's family-friendly Delsea Drive-In. "Cheap and fun!"

- **NEW MEXICO**
 - Interactive exhibits on everything from animation to bubbles bring hours of fun at the Explora science center in Albuquerque.
- **NEW YORK**
 - Sneak away to Covewood Lodge on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks for scavenger hunts, capture the flag, and weekly campfires!
- **NORTH CAROLINA**
 - Don't miss the sea turtle rescue hospital on Topsail Island, where kids can view the creatures and learn about the island's conservation efforts.
- **NORTH DAKOTA**
 - Top-notch, family-friendly biking and hiking trails draw visitors to the Turtle River State Park in Arvilla.
- **OHIO**
 - Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens in Akron, which was once owned by The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company cofounder, has a children's play area and numerous walking paths.
- **OKLAHOMA**
 - Robbers Cave State Park in Wilburton was once the hideout for outlaws Jesse James and Belle Starr. Now families can head there for hiking and camping.
- **OREGON**
 - The World Forestry Center in Portland really speaks for the trees! Learn about sustainability and wildlife through interactive exhibits.
- **PENNSYLVANIA**
 - Find out how old-time coal miners lived and worked at the Eckley Miners' Village. Spoiler alert: It wasn't easy.
- **RHODE ISLAND**
 - How does your garden grow? The Green Animals Topiary Garden in Portsmouth sprouts elephants, bears, and even a unicorn!
- **SOUTH CAROLINA**
 - Skip the more developed state beaches and head to Edisto Beach, where simple seaside pleasures like swimming and boating reign supreme.
- **SOUTH DAKOTA**
 - The Children's Museum in Brookings offers "so many things to do!" Pick corn at the toy farm, play in a sensory room, and more.
- **TENNESSEE**
 - Fort Donelson battlefield in Dover gives kids a firsthand look at the Civil War with a log hut like the ones soldiers lived in and cannons that were used in battle.
- **TEXAS**
 - Yes, there is sledding in Texas! Sand-dune sledding, that is, in the hills of Monahans Sandhills State Park.
- **UTAH**
 - Learn about space exploration at the Clark Planetarium in Salt Lake City. No time for a show? It also has free hands-on activities open to the public.
- **VERMONT**
 - Don't miss the children's farmyard at Shelburne Farms, a 1,400-acre nonprofit working farm focused on sustainability.
- **VIRGINIA**
 - It's all about the sea at Nauticus in Norfolk. Touch real horseshoe crabs, build a remotecontrolled underwater vehicle, or tour the battleship Wisconsin.
- **WASHINGTON**
 - Little conductors will go choo choo for the exhibits at the Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie.
- **WEST VIRGINIA**
 - Check out an art block party or the special preschooler day at The Clay Center for Arts & Sciences of West Virginia in Charleston.
- **WISCONSIN**

- “We love Bay Beach Amusement Park in Green Bay,” says one mom of this classic spot that still has 25-cent rides!
- **WYOMING**
- View hundreds of Native American petroglyphs and pictographs on the sandstone cliffs of Medicine Lodge State Archaeological Site.