



PRESS RELEASE

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Illinois Office of Tourism Offers Spring and Summer Travel Inspiration for National Plan for Vacation Day

CHICAGO – In celebration of National Plan for Vacation Day on Tuesday Jan. 29, Illinois Office of Tourism is encouraging everyone to start making vacation plans for spring and summer with ideas for trips across the state. Established by the U.S. Travel Association, [National Plan for Vacation Day](#) is a nationwide effort to encourage people to plan ahead and commit to using their time off for the year.

Why it Matters

Each year, more than half of Illinois workers, 55 percent, fail to use all their time off, leaving behind more than 25 million unused vacation days, according to [the U.S. Travel Association](#). While the average employee in Illinois takes 17.4 days of vacation throughout the year, less than half of that time – just seven days – is used for travel. Out of 50 states, Illinois [ranks 5th](#) in the amount of vacation time left behind.

To help inspire vacation planning in 2019 and beyond, Illinois Office of Tourism is promoting spring and summer trip ideas featuring new and popular attractions.

Spring Trip Ideas

Springfield

A getaway to Springfield has something for the whole family to enjoy. Explore the [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum](#) to learn more about Lincoln's accomplishments and see the new exhibit, [commemorating President Kennedy](#). Visit the new [Kidzeum of Health and Science](#) to explore innovative and interactive science exhibits or enjoy a free tour of the newly renovated [Illinois Governor's Mansion](#), the third-oldest governor's home in the nation.

Gurnee

Splash around in the indoor water park at [Great Wolf Lodge](#), featuring an 80,000-foot waterslide, roaring wave pool and raft rides. Premium suites at the Great Wolf Lodge can accommodate parties of all sizes. For a spring-inspired shopping spree, visit [Gurnee Mills](#) – a retail outlet mall offering up to 70 percent off brands like Nike, Saks Fifth Avenue and Levi's.

Six Flags Great America in Gurnee opens April 19-21 (weekends only until Memorial Day weekend). This summer, be among the first to ride on Six Flags new [MAXX Force](#) roller coaster where you can go from 0 to 78 miles per hour in two seconds. The ride will offer thrill-seekers the world's fastest inversion and tallest double inversion. Continue the adventure at Hurricane Harbor and Riptide Bay – home to more than thirty water rides.

Chicago

Give your family an iconic Chicago experience they won't soon forget! Take in incredible views from the top of the Ferris Wheel at [Navy Pier](#) or [The Ledge at Skydeck Chicago](#). Make your trip both fun and educational with a trip to the [Field Museum](#), the [Museum of Science and Industry](#), the [Art Institute of Chicago](#) or the [Shedd Aquarium](#). Shop 'til you drop along the Magnificent Mile with stops at American Girl Place and The LEGO Store at Water Tower Place.

Summer Trip Ideas

Shawnee Forest Country

With seven wilderness areas and nine state parks, plus lakes, rivers, waterfalls and even a swamp to explore, the gorgeously green area surrounding [Shawnee National Forest](#) is the ideal spot to unplug and reconnect through recreation. Outdoor activities include ziplining through the trees near Makanda with the [Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour](#), paddling through the [Cache River State Natural Area](#) and saddling up for a one-hour trail ride with [Giant City Stables](#). Stay at [Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins](#) with rustic log cabin accommodations dating back to 1852 and several tree houses with picturesque views overlooking the forest.

Pere Marquette State Park

At 8,000 acres, Pere Marquette State Park offers amazing wooded trails, biking along picturesque bluffs, fishing and boating on the Illinois River and even horseback riding through the forest. This summer, you can reach new heights riding the new Grafton Sky Tour, a gondola ride [at Aerie's Resort](#) allowing visitors to experience the park from a bird's eye view. [Pere Marquette Lodge and Conference Center](#) is an ideal retreat for visitors, featuring a 1930s Great Room with a 700-ton stone fireplace.

Galena

Galena's [Historic Main Street](#) is home to more than 125 unique boutiques, eateries, wineries and galleries. Taste locally-made wine at [Galena Cellars](#), an [Illinois Made](#) maker. Stay at [Jail Hill Inn](#) – recently named the #1 Inn/B&B in the U.S. by Trip Advisor's 2019 Travelers' Choice Awards. In honor of the 150th anniversary of Ulysses S. Grant being sworn in as president, spend a day exploring the [Galena & U.S. Grant Museum](#). Chesnut Mountain Resort offers segway tours, ziplining, scenic hiking trails, mini golf and Alpine slide rides. In June, don't miss the [Great Galena Balloon Race](#) (June 21-23), featuring more than 20 hot air balloons, races, and a night glow extravaganza.

Starved Rock State Park

With seasonal waterfalls, awe-inspiring bluffs and rugged canyons dominating the landscape, adventure awaits at Starved Rock State Park along the Illinois River. Outdoor activities include hiking, canoeing, paddle boat cruises, and fishing. For an unforgettable family getaway, stay at the historic [Starved Rock Lodge](#) or [Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Grand Bear Resort](#), located approximately 90 miles from Chicago in Utica.

For more information on these and other vacation ideas, download the new spring/summer 2019 *Travel Illinois* magazine, [here](#) and find more travel inspiration at EnjoyIllinois.com.

To download images of select locations above, click [here](#).

About the Illinois Office of Tourism

The Illinois Office of Tourism is the government agency responsible for marketing Illinois to domestic and international visitors. We're Illinois – Are YOU up for amazing? For more information, visit our website at EnjoyIllinois.com

[About National Plan for Vacation Day](#)

National Plan for Vacation Day is celebrated the last Tuesday in January as a day to encourage Americans to plan their vacation days for the rest of the year at the start of the year. Every year more than half of Americans (52%) fail to use all their time off, creating a stock pile of 705 million unused vacation days, up from 662 million days the year before. [For more information and national statistics click here.](#)

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.