

# Be a tourist in your own backyard

## Spring breaking in Ozaukee County

If you find yourself in Ozaukee County for spring break, don't lament – there's plenty to keep you and the kiddos busy. April is a wonderful time to explore the outdoors on trails, at nature preserves, parks and more, and many of our merchants offer great opportunities for the whole family to enjoy. Here's a list of just a few things to keep you (and your Facebook news feed) flush and busy.

### Hands-on fun

If your kids haven't been to glaze!, the Thiensville walk-in paint-your-own pottery and glass fusing studio, spring break is a great time to get them there. This fun art studio is extremely kid-friendly and offers everything from pottery painting to glass fusing, raw clay, silver clay and acrylic painting. Don't forget to check out the Purple Frog for delicious Cedar Crest ice cream or 14 varieties of amazing gourmet toast. You have to see (and taste) it to believe it.

Kids and adults alike are dazzled by the Gem Shop in Cedarburg – where else can you handle (and even buy) amazing finds like gemstones, dinosaur bones, sharks teeth and cool items made from rock. Check out their 8,000 pound log from the Petrified Wood Forest in Arizona, collected before it became a national park. Arrange for a tour or dig in the rock yard, which has thousands of rocks in barrels and bins. There's so much to see, you'll want to come back time and again.

The Thirsty Hammer in Cedarburg offers several kid-friendly workshops, including paint-your-own bunny bags April 6, cookie decorating April 13, cake decorating April 14 and a metal

garden stake workshop April 18. Or choose from any number of fun, custom wood signs you can make – from cool sports-related or themed room décor to happy signs welcoming the new season.

### Great eats

Wayne's Drive-In opens for the season April 1. Enjoy ice cream and frozen treats, burgers, fries and so much more at this classic 1950s-style restaurant with counter and outdoor seating.

They claim the burgers are "flippin' awesome" at Skippy's Burger Bar in Thiensville ... but we think the whole menu is pretty amazing. Summers also offer daily specials and the burger of the month and soup of the week will keep the whole family coming back time and again.

If you're ready to spoil the kids for chocolate forever, visit the Chocolate Chisel in Port Washington, where artisans are making chocolate and serving beautiful and delicious hand-crafted truffles, turtles, sea salt caramels and more every day. The ice cream is a big hit on warm days – and we do get some of those in April.

### Get out and get moving!

Lion's Den Gorge, located in the town of Grafton, offers beautiful views of Lake Michigan, along with dog-friendly trails, boardwalks, bridges and a staircase that weaves along the bluffs, over ravines and through wetlands to the shore of the lake. Bring along a list of native Wisconsin birds for bird watching – you may spot a variety of waterfowl, raptors and migrants. Don't forget your camera. You may even be able to rival your social media friends' vacation photos with those amazing bluff views.

The Mequon Nature Preserve offers 444 acres of natural beauty, 5-plus miles of diverse hiking trails that lead you through developing forests, wetlands, prairies, agricultural fields, a

40-foot observation tower and a pollinator's garden.

Harrington Beach State Park offers a 700-plus-acre beachfront. It may be too cold for camping, but the nature trails will take you around Quarry Lake, highlighting the history of Stonehaven, a mining community that was once located in the park. Puckett's Pond provides fishing opportunities, and the entire park is a great place for bird watching. A Wisconsin State Parks ticket or day pass is required for entry.

Birding is one of the fastest growing recreational activities in the nation, and kids love spotting our feathered friends with their eagle eyes. Ozaukee



County is listed by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology as one of the top-10 birding destinations in the state. Visit Mequon's Virmond Park to spot waterfowl and songbirds, Concordia University Wisconsin for hawks and waterfowl.

Port Washington Harbor for waterfowl and gulls, and Harrington Beach State Park for waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, terns and songbirds.

If flowers are your passion, parks and preserves designated as State Natural Areas have the best spring blooms, as its forest floors are relatively untouched by modern settlements.

Kurtz Woods in Grafton offers sweeping flows of spring blooms in late April and early May. Lion's Den Gorge near the staircase to the lake, and the Shady Hills area in Hawthorne Hills County Park are also SNAs.

Visit Riveredge Nature Center in Saukville April 6 for an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast and dedication of the new Sugarbush House. Registration is required.

It may be a little too early to get out on the water, but spring break is a great time to learn more about our water sports partners, like Silent Wake in Fredonia, which offers a unique kayak service and a safe and delightful experience for everyone from beginners to advanced paddlers. Sherper's will be offering kayak, canoe and stand-up paddle board rentals on South Beach in Port Washington.

### Explore and Learn

Wait – what? Shipwrecks? What kid wouldn't love shipwrecks? The Port Historical Society and Port Exploreum's new exhibit, "Murmurs from the Deep – Port Washington's Shipwreck Stories," takes a look at almost all the known shipwrecks in Ozaukee County waters, from the oldest (the Niagra, which sank in 1856) to the newest (the Linda E., the last commercial fishing tug based in Port Washington, which was run over and sank while fishing in December 1998).

The Luxembourg American Cultural Society and Center in Belgium features a museum, gift show and research center housed in the rebuilt 1872-Mamer-Hansen stone barn. It tells the story of the Grand Duchy past and present, the history of Luxembourg immigration to America and the experience of the immigrant families.

The Cedarburg History Museum's exhibits change regularly – for example, journey through Cedarburg's growth from a small hamlet to a burgeoning 1930s city through a series of historic maps now on display. Beginning with an 1830s surveyor's map, you can watch Cedarburg's evolution from industrial center to early tourist destination and city center. The museum also offers the General Store

Museum and a cute candy and gift shop the kids will love.

The Cedarburg Art Museum's newest exhibition (opening April 3) will explore mood and design through color with Wisconsin's own D.K. Palecek, a plein air artist drawn to cityscapes and buildings.

There are more than a dozen historical sites and treasures to explore throughout Ozaukee County. Visit the newly formed Ozaukee History Co-op on Facebook for links to member groups' sites, events and activities.

For information on all these activities and more, visit the Ozaukee County Tourism website at [www.ozaukeetourism.com](http://www.ozaukeetourism.com) and follow the Ozaukee County Tourism Facebook page.

On behalf of the Ozaukee County Tourism Council, thank you for helping to make Ozaukee County a wonderful place for all to live, work and visit.



Long-billed dowitcher



glaze!



Bratt Woods



Silent Wake



Kayaking in Lake Michigan



Harrington Beach State Park



Port Exploreum



Luxembourg American Cultural Society