

Your
Indispensable
ROCKLAND
Fun Guide!

A Year's Worth of Fun

The best of the best things to do locally with your kids! Choose from among our top 20 recommendations for each season, and you'll never go wrong. >> By Kaitlin Ahern

BEYOND THE PAGE

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Top 20 Things to Do in the SUMMER

1. Battle Dress for History Buffs

Instead of battling beach crowds Memorial Day Weekend, take advantage of that extra day off to visit [Historic Hyde Park](#) in Dutchess County, which hosts an annual **WWII Encampment and Military Display**. Dozens of re-enactors dress in uniforms and talk about military life in the 1940s, and there are vintage military vehicles on-site.

2. Where the Pickin's Good

Gather your brood and **pick your own berries** at Ochs Orchard in Warwick (in nearby Orange County) or [another berry farm in the area](#).

3. Berry Sweet

The popular annual **Strawberry Festival** kicks off opening day at the [Ramsey Farmers' Market](#) in Ramsey, NJ, in early June. Shop for fresh, local produce as well as artisan breads and cheeses, gluten-free baked products, homemade pastas, local honey, and more. Also enjoy music, children's crafts, and a complimentary strawberry treat.

4. Round and Round We Go

Take a ride on the **carousel** in **Bear Mountain State Park** (located on the southwest side of the baseball field), where kids can hop on the backs of some local animals or ride in the accessible chariot. Find another merry-go-round near you in [our roundup](#).



Rudy Umans



W. Urbini/NPS



Cliff Matias



Courtney Weittenhiller



Deborah Groszmark



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5. Fore!

Play the 18-hole **miniature-golf** course at Tappan Golf Center, which also boasts a driving range, batting cages, and go-karts. Or test your putting skills at [another course in the area](#).

6. Something Fishy

See if the fish are biting at **Piermont Pier and Marsh** on the Hudson River. Canoes and kayaks can be rented if you prefer to laze along the river while you wait for a tug on your line. Or [find another fishing spot nearby](#).

7. Getting Your Greek On

The annual **Greek Festival** at Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, held over four days in early June, features Greek food, music, dancing, crafts, amusements for children, and wine and beer for parents—pretty much everything except the sun, sand, and scenery of the Greek isles. Find more cultural fairs in our area in [our roundup](#).

8. All Aflutter

See colorful butterflies and rare caterpillars during **Butterfly & Caterpillar Weekend** at the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall (Orange County) in late June. And get up-close with lots of different animals at [zoos and nature centers throughout the area](#).

9. It's Famous for a Reason!

[Nyack's Famous Street Fair](#) in mid-July (also held in the spring and fall) features nearly 300 exhibitors from five states offering handmade crafts, art and photography, retail items, collectibles, and festival foods, all on Main Street in Downtown Nyack.

10. America's Birthday

An **Independence Day** celebration at [Fort Montgomery State Historic Site](#) in nearby Orange County around the first weekend of July includes costumed interpreters and demonstrations, artillery and musket firings, and period music.

11. Peanuts and Cracker Jack...

Cheer on the **Rockland Boulders**, our county's resident minor league baseball team, at one of their home games in Pomona's Provident Bank Park. Kids can often hit the field and run the bases after the last inning, and many games are followed by fireworks. Find more details about the Boulders, plus other minor league teams in the area in [our where-to guide](#).

12. Summer Tunes

Enjoy a weekly **outdoor concert** at Bowline Point Park in Haverstraw, or find another free summer music series in [our roundup](#).

13. Films Al Fresco

Catch a flick at the [Warwick Drive-In](#), a park-like theater set on 11 acres of farmland that screens first-run movies on multiple screens and has homemade food for sale.

14. All About The Bard

Introduce the kids to timeless works during the **Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival**, a summer-long event that allows you to watch Shakespearean tales unfold as you picnic and lounge on the lawn of Garrison's [Boscobel House and Gardens](#) in nearby Putnam County.

15. To the Beach!

Visit one of the beaches in Harriman State Park in Bear Mountain, where you'll also find camping areas, 200 miles of hiking trails, and 31 lakes and reservoirs. Check our [full list of beaches in the area](#) for more details.

16. Summer Fan-Fair

From the area's only Sky Ride to the official "Batcopter" from the 1960s TV show *Batman*, the [New Jersey State Fair](#) at the Meadowlands boasts more than 150 rides and attractions, with something for visitors of every age to enjoy. Typically held mid-June through early July, but check [our calendar](#) for exact dates.



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17. Time Travel

Throughout the summer, you can head to the **Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site** for living history demonstrations, old-fashioned artillery drills, and tours of the Revolutionary War battlefield as well as the oldest surviving lighthouse on the Hudson River. See our roundup for [more historic sites in the NYC area](#).

18. A Colorful Celebration

Check out a real teepee, play with Native American instruments, try some foods popular in Indian cultures, and take in an incredible dance performance by Native American groups from throughout the Americas at the [Native American Heritage Celebration of the Hudson Valley](#) in Stony Point in early August.

19. Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

The [New York Renaissance Faire](#) in Tuxedo Park's Sterling Forest (Orange County) kicks off in early August and runs through late September. Bring the kids for circus-type performances by costumed characters, a jousting match starring knights in shining armor, and lots of carnival-inspired games, all in a 16th-century setting. Also see our list of [top family day trips in the NYC area](#).

20. The Fairest of Them All

Head to the area's nearest county fair, the [Dutchess County Fair](#) in Rhinebeck (Dutchess County), in mid- to late August to see farm animals and pig races, watch a variety of performances, shop for crafts, ride and play the amusements, and enjoy a mind-boggling selection of food.



Courtesy hvshakespeare.org

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BONUS Horsin' Around

Take a **horseback riding** lesson at Nickel-O Farms in West Nyack or one of the other [horse stables in Rockland](#), most of which also offer summer camp programs and birthday party packages.

Top 20 Things to Do in the FALL



1. An Apple a Day...

Pick your own apples throughout September at Orchards of Concklin in Pomona or at another [u-pick apple orchard or farm](#) in our region.

2. Cider Season

Once you've plucked those plump fruits, bring them to [Tenafly Nature Center](#) in nearby Bergen County, NJ, to **make fresh apple cider** on weekend dates in September and October.

3. Taste of Germany

On weekends in September and October, Bear Mountain State Park hosts its [Oktoberfest](#) fall festival featuring authentic German music, food, beer, and vendors. While you're there, take a stroll around Hessian Lake and enjoy the park's fall foliage.

4. Reds, and Yellows, and Oranges, Oh My!

Take in the fall foliage at the [Hudson River Valley Ramble](#) hike at Stony Point Lighthouse and Battlefield in late September, where costumed guides will also discuss the history of the site. Check our [full guide](#) for more places to view the season's colorful leaves.

5. Hot Wheels

Families are invited to the [Touch-a-Truck and Rock the Block](#) festival at JCC Rockland in West Nyack in September. Kids can get up-close with some super cool vehicles and then the whole family can enjoy fun activities and live entertainment.

6. Harvest Hoedown

Hungry Hollow Co-op hosts the annual [Farmers' Festival](#) in late September, celebrating local agriculture with live music, locally sourced food and refreshments, children's activities, and more at its location in Chestnut Ridge. Or check out one of the other [fall-themed festivals in the area](#).

7. Italy Comes to Rockland

At the annual [Italian Festival](#) at Congers Station Park, held either in late September or early October, you can celebrate Italian culture with live entertainment, food from local restaurants, themed crafts, and specialty vendors.

8. Gourds Galore

On weekends in October, take a hayride to the fields and **pick your own pumpkins** at Dr. Davies Farm in Congers or another [pumpkin farm in the area](#).

9. Lighting Up the Night

Don't miss [The Great Jack O' Lantern Blaze](#), an outdoor walkthrough experience featuring thousands of hand-carved pumpkins, at Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson (Westchester County). The Blaze opens in early October and runs through mid-November.

10. A Local Gem

In early October, head to the [Pearl River Day Festival](#) and enjoy food, music, and entertainment as you browse the town's shops, restaurants, and other local businesses. For kids, there's usually face painting, pumpkin painting, balloon twisting, bouncy attractions, and more.

11. Fall on the Farm

Cross the Hudson in early October for [Harvest Fest](#) at the [Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture](#) in Pocantico Hills, which boasts a farmers' market, hayrides, demonstrations and workshops on food and farming, live music and performances, and the center's famous Berkshire pig roast. This event sells out, so buy your tickets early!

12. Cozy Around the Fire

Toast some marshmallows, tell some stories, and get cozy in mid-October during a [Family Bonfire Night](#) at [Boscobel House and Gardens](#) in Garrison, in nearby Putnam County.

13. For a Cause

Join the [Greater Hudson Valley Walk Now for Autism Speaks](#) at Rockland County Community College in mid-October. Find more information, and more causes to get walking for, in [our roundup](#).

14. Tastes of Rockland

The newly established [Smoke-N-Fire Food Fest](#) at Provident Bank Park in Pomona lets you sample specialty foods from hot sauce and spice companies as well as food from area restaurants and produce from local farms. Last year, the fest was held in mid-October and included a Rockland County culinary competition, live music, children's

entertainment, a fire juggler, and a spicy food-eating contest.

15. Fall Fruit Festival

In mid- to late October, Friends of the Nyacks hosts its annual [Apple Fest](#) at Nyack's Memorial Park (on the shore of the Hudson River) where you can enter an apple pie-baking contest, make apple-y crafts, and enjoy kid-friendly music and entertainment.

16. Monster Mash

Dancing ghouls, marching bands, floats, stilt-walkers, and giant puppets are all part of the very popular [Nyack Halloween Parade](#), held in late October. Prizes are awarded for best costumes and best floats, and the parade is typically followed by a monster mash-style party at Nyack Center.

17. Spooky Season at the Zoo

New Jersey's Bergen County Zoo opens its doors for trick-or-treaters and special nighttime visits with the animals during its [Zoo Boo](#) festival in late October. Don't miss a ride on the Erie Express haunted train! Get details on tons of other Halloween events in the area on our [Halloween site](#).

18. Fiddlin' Fun

The old-fashioned [Family Barn Dance with Live Fiddle Music](#), held at Congers Lake Memorial Park Auditorium in early November, is hosted by West Nyack's Blue Rock School ([bluerockschool.org](#)). Expect folk dancing, traditional fiddle tunes, and refreshments. Event proceeds benefit one of the school's scholarship funds.

19. What's the Story?

Veteran storytellers do what they do best at the annual [Rockland County Storytelling Festival](#) in early to mid-November, which also includes student storytellers and story crafts for kids. The event is held at [Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library](#) in Garnerville.

20. Floats and Tradition in NYC

It's worth the trip into the city—at least once—to experience the magic of the [Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade](#), which has become as much a part of Turkey Day celebrations as family feasts, post-consumption naps, and football.

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Top 20 Things to Do in the WINTER

1. To Infinity...

Join a Public Space

Mission at the [Town of Ramapo Challenger Center](#) on the third Sunday of every month, when kids can go on simulated, interactive missions to Mars, the moon, and a comet.

2. Skating through the Season

Hit the ice for some classic winter fun at **Bear Mountain State Park Ice Rink**. The rink is typically open early November through mid-March (weather pending). Find more indoor and outdoor ice rinks in the area in [our full guide](#).

3. All Aboard!

Hitch a ride to the **New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show**, which boasts replicas of area landmarks made entirely from plants and is definitely worth the drive to the Bronx. The show typically runs mid-November through mid-January. Find a full list of nearby train shows and exhibits that you can visit throughout the year in [our roundup](#).

4. A Charlie Brown Christmas

Make this Christmas special with an early December trip to **cut your own Christmas tree** at Emmerich

Tree Farm in Warwick (Dutchess County), where you can also enjoy wagon rides to fields, hot chocolate, and cookies by the bonfire. Search for more tree farms in the area in [our where-to guide](#).

5. A 50-Year Tradition

[The Historical Society of Rockland County](#) opens the doors to the 1832 Jacob Blaauvelt House in New City to welcome children of all ages to celebrate

St. Nicholas Day in early December. Each child receives a special treat in his or her shoe from St. Nicholas, and everyone can visit with St. Nicholas and his horse, enjoy refreshments, and view the society's current exhibition.

6. All of the Lights

Kick off your Hanukkah celebrations at a local **menorah lighting** at locations across the county. Most of these lighting festivals also feature kids' entertainment and holiday-themed refreshments. Check [our calendar](#) for a lighting near you.

7. Visions of Sugar Plums

Rockland Youth Dance Ensemble presents that classic Christmas tale, **The Nutcracker** ballet, at SUNY Rockland Community College in early to mid-December. If you plan to head into the city for a holiday show, too, check out [our top picks](#).

8. Hungry for Holiday Cheer

Join [Bear Mountain Zoo](#) for a **Beary Merry Holiday** in mid-December and make some tasty holiday snacks for the black bears, then watch as they "unwrap" their gifts.

9. A Quick Carol

[TheatreworksUSA](#) presents a family-friendly version of Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** at Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood, NJ, usually a few days before Christmas. The show typically stops by for only one performance, so be sure to buy tickets early.

10. On the Slopes

Grab your gear and pack up the kids for a day of **skiing or snowboarding** at one of the area's family-friendly resorts. For details on all the slopes in the region, check out [our full guide](#).

11. Snow Day Solution

When the flakes start to fly, pull out your Flexible Flyer and head for the hills. But before you go out to your local **sledding** spot, be sure to check out [our safety tips](#).

12. A Local Musical Fave

The Bossy Frog Band's Holiday Show features everyone's favorite frog and Rockland-based bandleader Jeffrey Friedberg in a seasonal, non-denominational, end-of-December celebration full of music and dancing. The show has been held at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern and the Nyack Center; check [our calendar](#) for location details closer to the show.

13. Lend a Hand

Give back to the community on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in mid-January. Learn more about [volunteer opportunities in the Rockland area](#).

14. New York Girls

Cheer on the hundreds of young ladies competing to be called [Miss New York USA](#) and [Miss New York Teen USA](#) at the Purchase Performing Arts Center in mid-January.

15. Brick by Brick

Escape from the cold and head to [LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester](#) in nearby Yonkers. Among its attractions, LEGOLAND boasts several themed building stations, rides, and MINILAND, a miniature re-creation of the New York metro landscape.

16. Family Movie Date

What's better on a cold winter weekend than some warm popcorn and a family movie? Head to the Palisades Center Mall in West Nyack to catch the latest films in IMAX. Or if you have a family member with sensory issues, opt for a [sensory-friendly matinee](#) where the lights stay up, the sound is turned down, and audience

members are encouraged to get up and make as much noise as they please.

17. Bouncing Off the Walls?

Keep the kids active in the cold months at [Bounce! Trampoline Sports](#), an indoor play space in Valley Cottage that has tons of fun trampolines and foam pits.

18. Summer in Sight

Start planning the perfect summer for your child at the indispensable [Westchester Camp & Summer Activities Fair](#) at Crowne Plaza in nearby White Plains, typically held in early February. Meet directors, learn about a wide variety of programs, and even win a prize or two.

19. Cure for Winter Blues

When you're craving spring in the depths of February, head to [World of Wings](#) in Teaneck, NJ, and spend some time in the Butterfly Atrium, an indoor tropical oasis featuring flowers, waterfalls, and hundreds of fluttering—you guessed it—butterflies.

20. Sweet Stuff

Do you love syrup on your pancakes? See where it comes from during a **maple sugaring** event at The Nature Place Day Camp in Chestnut Ridge. You'll learn how to tap a tree and boil down sap into syrup. Find more details, plus other locations that host maple sugaring events in February and early March in [our full guide](#).

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Patrizia Tilly



Courtesy Palisades Interstate Park Commission



Courtesy LEGOLAND

Top 20 Things to Do in the **SPRING**

1. A Good Reason to Read, Indeed!

March 2 is Dr. Seuss's birthday and **National Read Across America Day**. Head to your local library or Barnes & Noble store for special story times and more activities that celebrate the joys of reading.

2. Where Irish Eyes Are Smiling

Pearl River hosts a super celebration of all things Irish, including the second-largest **St. Patrick's Day parade** in the state outside New York City. It typically features more than 20 bagpipe bands, at least three high school marching bands, veterans, firefighters, police officers, and performances by at least six Irish dance schools. Check [our calendar](#) for details on the parade in early March.

3. Family Fair

For more than 15 years, families have flocked to **Youthfest** at SUNY Rockland Community College in Suffern to meet and learn about local businesses, services, and activities for kids and parents. This popular annual March event also features loads of giveaways, activities, and performances throughout the day. It's sponsored by the [Rockland County Youth Bureau](#).

4. S'mores Galore

Gather around a **Spring Campfire** at the Tenaflly Nature Center in Tenaflly, NJ, in late March to learn how this season affects our local plants and animals. You'll also listen to stories and roast marshmallows for s'mores. If you plan on making your own campfire at home, read our [10 tips on cooking food over the flames](#).

5. Tiny Trail Trotters

Beginning in April, bring your babies, toddlers, and young children to the [Hudson Highlands Nature Museum](#) in Cornwall for its **Nature Strollers** program, which opens up the museum's family-friendly trails to this special group one morning each week throughout spring. Trails are stroller- and toddler-friendly.

6. Farm to Table

In early April, the **Nyack Farmers' Market**

moves from its indoor location in the Nyack Center to the Main Street parking lot in downtown Nyack. Open Thursdays (8am-2pm) through late November, the outdoor market offers local produce, cheese, wine, bakery and specialty items, and more. Check [our calendar](#) for details on live entertainment at the market.

7. Search Party

Near Easter time, kids ages 10 and younger can join **Boulder Bird's Egg Hunt** at Provident Bank Park in Pomona, home of the Rockland Boulders. Special prizes are hidden along with the thousands of candy-filled eggs, and kids can take pictures with Boulder Bird and the Bunny throughout the day. Check [our roundup](#) for more Easter activities in the area.

8. Nature's Bounty

In mid-April, the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall opens [Grasshopper Grove](#), a unique natural play area that encourages tots and preschoolers to climb on fallen trees, dig in the dirt, balance on boulders, and create imaginative worlds using sticks, pinecones, and bark. The grove is open weekends through mid-November.

9. Earth Day Help

In honor of Earth Day, Keep Rockland Beautiful hosts **community cleanup events** throughout the county to...well, keep Rockland beautiful! Find details on this and other community service activities in [our full volunteer guide](#).

10. In Step with Babies

Join the March of Dimes' **March for Babies** in Stony Point or Mahwah, NJ, in late April and support research to understand and prevent health problems in infants. For details on this and other charity walks in the area in [our full guide](#).

11. Dancin' in the Street

[The New City Chamber of Commerce](#) hosts an annual **Spring Street Fair** in late April or early May on Main Street in downtown New City. The fair features live music, food and craft vendors, rides, games, a balloon artist, a caricaturist, and more.



Courtesy Cropsey Community Farm

12. Just a Trim

The popular **Sheep Shearing** event at Bergen County Zoo in Paramus, NJ, invites visitors to cheer on the zoo's flock of sheep as they get their annual haircuts in early May. In addition to shearing demos, there are children's crafts, special story times, wool spinning demonstrations, and more, and you can enjoy visiting the animals and taking a spin on the zoo's carousel while you're there. Find more zoos, botanical gardens, and nature centers in the area in [our where-to guide](#).

13. Light Art

If your family is fond of the annual Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze, they'll love **Lightscares**, an incredible nighttime display of sculpture, light, sound, and special effects created by the Blaze artists and on display in May at [Van Cortlandt Manor](#) in Croton-on-Hudson.

14. Loco for Locomotives

Celebrate **National Train Day** in mid-May with a train ride (including one on Thomas the Tank Engine!) or by visiting [a nearby train exhibit or museum](#), such as the Suffern Railroad Museum.

15. Mom's the Word

Make Mom feel special with a trip to the Bronx for a **Mother's Day Weekend Garden Party** at the [New York Botanical Garden](#). Live music, games, hands-on nature activities, picnicking, and the garden's amazing array of plants and flowers all make this a worthwhile trip into the city.

16. A Thrill a Minute

Rye's **Playland**, in nearby Westchester County, opens for the season in mid-May with rides and games for all ages.

Browse the [full list of area theme parks](#) for more information.

17. Green Thumbs

Cropsey Community Farm in New City hosts open houses and other family events throughout the spring and summer. Visitors to this 12-acre organic, biodynamic community farm—the first of its kind in Rockland County—can typically stroll the fields, meet the farm team, and do a planting activity, or even work alongside the team in the fields. Check [our calendar](#) for upcoming events.

18. Watch Out for That T-Rex!

Travel back in time—to the Jurassic period, to be exact—at [Field Station: Dinosaurs](#) in Secaucus, NJ (in nearby Hudson County). This 20-acre zoo-like adventure park, where the “animals” are actually animatronic dinosaurs, typically opens Memorial Day weekend. Catch the dinos in their final season in Secaucus!

19. Mini Farmhands

Take a day trip to nearby Putnam County in late May for **Little Folk Farm Days** at [Green Chimneys](#) in Brewster. Kids can ride the ponies, watch live shows, do crafts, and play games at this nonprofit that focuses on animal therapy and nature education.

20. Kids, Meet George

On late spring and summer weekends, the [Fort Montgomery State Historic Site](#), just across the border in Orange County, hosts **living history demonstrations** complete with costumed interpreters and musket and cannon firings (featuring the fort's pride and joy, a 32-pound cannon named George).



Yasmeen Anderson



Courtesy HIT Entertainment



Courtesy Palisades Parks Conservancy



Courtesy Green Chimneys

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