

Your
Indispensable
WESTCHESTER
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 and Jamie McGillian

BEYOND THE PAGE

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

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Courtesy Greenburgh Nature Center

1. Summer Slide

Willson's Waves water park, featuring a wave pool, water slides, and a water playground, opens at Willson's Woods Park in Mount Vernon around Memorial Day weekend. Find more details, and other [amusement parks in the area in our full guide](#).

2. C'mon, Let's Walk!

Kids could meet Geoffrey the giraffe from Toys "R" Us during the **Westchester/Fairfield Walk Now for Autism Speaks** in White Plains, which typically takes place in early June. The 2-mile walk raises funds for those affected by autism and includes family-friendly activities. Or participate in another [walk to raise awareness](#) in the area.

3. Old-Fashioned Fun

In mid-June, experience old-fashioned music, dancing, crafts, hayrides, and games during **Colonial Day** at St. Paul's Church National Historic Site in Mount Vernon. Discover lots more kid-friendly [historical sites in the NYC area](#).

4. All Aflutter

Walk Among Live Butterflies at [Greenburgh Nature Center](#) in Scarsdale. See New York-native butterflies such as monarchs and painted ladies and learn about the lifecycle of these colorful creatures. The exhibit is hosted outside in the meadow from June through early August.

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Gus Philippas

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Gabe Palacios Photography



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Top NYC

5. Songs in the Key of Earth

[Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival](#), held at Croton Point Park in Croton-on-Hudson in late June, is the country's oldest music and environmental festival. The festival always features an impressive lineup of musical performers and includes family activities such as storytelling, crafts, boat rides, and a Green Living Expo. Proceeds benefit efforts to help preserve and protect the Hudson River and its tributaries.

6. A Musical Ride

Take advantage of the [First Friday! Music & Trolley](#) program at the [Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum](#) in the Bronx, which allows visitors to explore the museum, enjoy live music and refreshments, and then board the free trolley to explore City Island (first Friday of the month, April through December).

7. 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](#).

8. Round and Round We Go

Take a spin on the [Grand Carousel](#) at Playland in Rye (there's also a Kiddy Carousel for little ones between 36 and 48 inches tall), or find another [merry-go-round near you](#).

9. All Aboard!

The [Science Barge](#) in Yonkers opens in July for weekend art and science workshops, which run through October. Cross the gangplank and board the barge, a greenhouse and educational center that floats on the waters of the Hudson River, to learn about everything from growing hydroponic plants to the dynamics of juggling.

10. Fests for All Folks

Check out Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla, which hosts [cultural celebrations](#) throughout the

summer, including an African-American Heritage Celebration in June and an Italian Festival in July, or [another cultural festival in the NYC area](#).

11. Rockets' Red Glare

Celebrate the Fourth of July at [Pops, Patriots, and Fireworks](#) at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in Katonah. Find other [fireworks displays in our roundup](#).

12. Buccaneers and Buried Gold

Gather ye scallywags at Tarrytown Music Hall in mid-July for [Pirates of the Hudson](#), a swashbuckling Off-Broadway musical that calls on the audience to help write and perform the tale.

13. Beach Boys (and Girls)

Go swimming and visit the beach and sprayground park at [Harbor Island Park Beach](#) in Mamaroneck, or check out [our full list of beaches in the area](#).

14. Shops & Shows

[SummerFest 2015](#) at Cross County Shopping Center includes a whole summer's worth of free outdoor concerts, kids' shows, fireworks, and Sunday Fun Days for the whole family (early May through mid-August). Check [our calendar](#) for details on specific events.

15. Fore!

Play a round of miniature-golf at [Fairview Golf Center](#) in Elmsford—which boasts two outdoor 18-hole courses—or [another course in the area](#).

16. 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. Check for special family performances.



17. Firefighter Fundraiser

[Mamaroneck Fire Department's Annual Carnival](#), which takes place at Harbor Island Park, has been a staple summer event for nearly 70 years. If you like rides, games, and carnival food, you're in luck! It goes on for nine nights in late June and early July, with all proceeds going to the fire department.

18. 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. And check out our list of other [top family day trips in the NYC area](#).

19. A Horse, of Course

Take a [horseback riding](#) lesson at Boulder Brook Equestrian Center in Scarsdale, or one of the other [horse stables in Westchester](#).

20. Summer Fan Fair

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.

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



1. An Apple a Day...

Take a wagon ride and **pick your own apples** from early September through late October at Wilkens Fruit & Fir Farm in Yorktown Heights or another [apple orchard or farm in the area](#).

2. It Couldn't Be Cornier

Eat juicy corn on the cob, join a corn-shucking race, traverse a corn maze, and more at the [CORNUcopia Festival](#) at Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow in early September, and check out a host of [other fall festivals nearby](#).

3. What's All the Buzz About?

Celebrate busy bees at the annual [Honey Harvest Party](#) at Scarsdale's Greenburgh Nature Center in early September. You'll see beekeepers collect the sweet stuff straight from the hive and enjoy a free taste of the fruits of their labor, too.

4. Reflect & Respect

Take a moment to reflect at the **9/11 Twilight Ceremony** at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla, home of Westchester's Sept. 11 memorial, The Rising. The ceremony includes remembrance activities as well as volunteer opportunities. If you want to make the trip into the city, take in our tips for visiting the [National September 11 Memorial & Museum](#) in Manhattan.

5. For Equine Enthusiasts

The **American Gold Cup**, one of the most prestigious equestrian sporting events in the world of international show jumping, takes place at historic Old Salem Farm in North Salem in mid-September. Once your kids see this event, they'll want to [learn to ride](#), too.

6. A Colorful Celebration

In mid-September, the Redhawk Native American Arts Council presents a [Native American Pow Wow](#) at FDR State Park in Yorktown Heights. The weekend-long event brings together Native American artists, educators, singers, dancers, storytellers, and performing groups from across the Americas.

7. Handmade Gifts & Goodies

Shop for one-of-a-kind items during [Fall Crafts at Lyndhurst](#) in Tarrytown in mid-September. The weekend also includes live music, craft demonstrations, and kids' activities.

8. Gone Country

Taste a slice of true country living at the

[Yorktown Grange Fair](#) in Yorktown Heights—a tradition since 1923. Come mid-September, you can take a spin on the Ferris wheel, visit with farm animals, dance along to live music, and enter competitions to show off your homegrown veggies, flowers, and more.

9. When Pigs Swim

Don't miss the swimming pig races at the [Barn Dance at the John Jay Homestead](#) in Katonah in mid-September. The annual fall fest also features a country barbecue, campfire, and live music by local bands.

10. Fall on the Farm

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

11. Pooch Parade

Bring your favorite canine (and the rest of your family) to the [Hounds on the Sound Dog Walk-a-thon and Festival](#) in mid-October for a 1.5-mile stroll around Glen Island Park in New Rochelle. The event raises funds for local animal shelters, including the New Rochelle Humane Society, and includes tons of fun activities for four- and two-legged participants.

12. Gourds Galore

Pick your own pumpkins in October at Stuart's Fruit Farm in Granite Springs or another [pumpkin farm in the area](#).

13. 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. The Blaze opens in early October and runs through mid-November. Get details on this and tons of other Halloween events at [nymetroparents.com/halloween](#).

14. Real Live Raptors

Get up close with birds of prey during **Raptor Day** at [Wave Hill](#) in the nearby Bronx in early October. See red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, and more at this popular event.

15. Bookworms & Baked Treats

Kids can meet and mingle with some of their favorite authors at the [Chappaqua Children's Book Festival](#) in late September/early October. The fest is typically held at Robert

Bell Middle School in conjunction with the [Great Chappaqua Bake Sale](#), an event started by local moms that raises money to combat childhood hunger.

16. 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 neighboring Putnam County.

17. You've Got a Friend

Each October [Sesame Street Live](#) brings a new, interactive show for little ones to Westchester County Center in White Plains.

18. A Real Treat

The [Chocolate World Expo](#), held at Westchester County Center in White Plains in early November, is the area's biggest chocolate-themed event, with tons of local and regional sweets to be tasted and purchased as well as a host of activities for little ones.

19. Time to Celebrate!

Planning a bar or bat mitzvah, Sweet 16, or other milestone party? Check out the [Celebrate! Party Showcase](#) at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown in mid-November.

20. Turkey Day Parade

If you can't make it into the city for the [famous Macy's parade](#), head to New Rochelle for the annual **Valenti Thanksgiving Day Parade** in mid- to late November. This is Westchester County's largest parade with more than 1,000 participants.

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

1. Skating Season

Hit the ice for some classic winter fun at **Ebersole Ice Rink** in White Plains, Westchester's premier outdoor rink. It's typically open late October through mid-March. Or Find another [indoor or outdoor ice rink in the area](#).

2. Holiday Express

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 trip to the Bronx. The show typically runs mid-November through mid-January. And see our full list of nearby [train shows and exhibits](#) that you can visit throughout the year.

3. All of the Lights

The name says it all: **Westchester's Winter Wonderland** transforms Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla with 2.5 million dancing lights choreographed to holiday music. Plus, go ice-skating, take a winter hay ride, and visit Santa's Workshop to meet the Big Guy himself from late November through early January.

4. A Charlie Brown Christmas

Make this Christmas extra-special with a trip to [cut your own Christmas tree](#) at Stuart's Farm in Granite Springs or one of the area's other tree farms, most of which are open from late November through late December.

5. Historic Holiday

Create your own Christmas story in the Bronx at the **Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum's annual Holiday Family Day**. Usually held in early December, this event includes storytelling, shopping, crafts, and of course, pictures with Santa.

6. Breakfast with the Big Guy

Start your day with a delicious breakfast, some arts and crafts, and a visit with jolly old Saint Nick. Each year in early December, the Ritz-Carlton in White Plains transforms its ballroom into a winter wonderland where kids can have **Breakfast with Santa**. [Check our calendar for updates](#).

7. Ghosts of Christmas Past

Travel back in time with Jonathan Kruk's masterful telling of **Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol** at Old Dutch Church in Sleepy Hollow. The 17th-century church offers the perfect setting for the classic holiday tale. Performances begin in late November and run through late December. For a full list of holiday shows in Westchester, check out [our roundup](#).

8. A Beloved Ballet

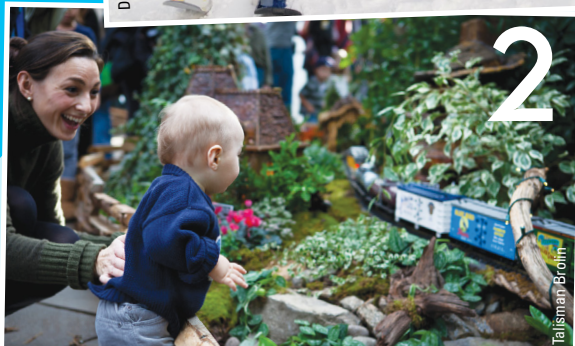
Visit the Land of Sweets in Westchester Ballet Company's **The Nutcracker** at Westchester County Center in White Plains. Performances are usually held over one weekend in mid-December. Get details on this and all *Nutcracker* shows in [our roundup](#).

9. Snow Bunnies

Grab your gear and pack up the kids for a day of skiing or snowboarding at one of the area's [family-friendly winter resorts](#).



Dmitriy Shironosov



Talisman Brolin



Andrea Sadler



Julietta Cervantes



Justina Rainey

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

10. Songs & Sweets

Head to The Ritz-Carlton in White Plains for a **Hanukkah Celebration & Menorah Lighting** in early or mid-December (depending when Hanukkah falls). Sing along with the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester Lower School and Choir and enjoy traditional Hanukkah treats. The event is free and typically held over three days. [Check our calendar for updates.](#)

which coincides with Westchester's countywide **Day of Service**.

16. Mellow Mornings

Enjoy fine art as a family during **Stroller Tours** at the [Katonah Museum of Art](#). Designed specifically for families of children younger than 2, these early-hours exhibition tours offer parents the chance to engage in conversation and explore intellectual themes with tots in tow.

11. Snow Day Solution

Pull out your Flexible Flyer and get set for some downhill snow-day fun. Once there's enough snow on the ground, [Westchester's six public golf courses open for sledding.](#)

17. King of the Birds

Celebrate our national bird at **EagleFest in Croton Point Park** in Croton-on-Hudson in early February. Learn all about these regal creatures through a series of all-day events and activities, including guided bird walks, close-up looks, stories, and displays.

12. A Howling Good Time

Hang out with wolves at the [Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem](#). Each year on New Year's Day, visitors can help **Howl in the New Year** while they enjoy hot beverages and learn all about these beautiful and endangered species.

18. Under the Big Top

Revel in old-fashioned family fun when the [Royal Hanneford Circus](#) returns to the Westchester County Center in White Plains in mid-February. With tigers, acrobats, clowns, and baby elephants, this big top show is sure to please.

13. New York Beauties

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.

19. Summer in Sight

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

14. Crunch, Crunch, Crunch...

Embrace the snow by hitting the nearly 15 miles of trails at Teatown Lake Reservation in Ossining for some **snowshoeing**. The trails are open from dawn to dusk, year-round. Find more hiking trails in the area, plus what you need to know before heading out in [our hiking roundup](#).

15. Serving Others

[Give back to the community](#) on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in mid-January,

20. Sweet Stuff

Learn all about [maple sugaring at programs](#) held in late February and early March at the Greenburgh Nature Center in Scarsdale, Westmoreland Sanctuary in Mount Kisco, and other Westchester County orchards and nature preserves.

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Rebecca Bose



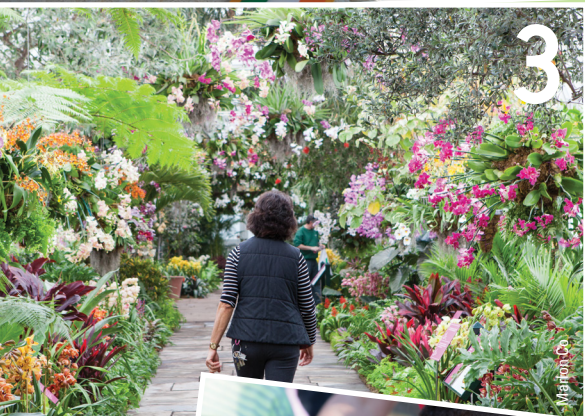
Elissa Schilmeister



Michelle Miller



Michael J. Gindrich



Marion O.



Richard Warren



©Disney

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

1. Where Irish Eyes Are Smiling

Don't miss the [St. Patrick's Day Parade](#) in Eastchester, featuring Irish step dancers, bagpipe bands, and more. Community parades are also held in Mount Kisco and Peekskill.

2. Farm-Fresh Food

Pick up some local produce at [outdoor farmers' markets](#), such as the Larchmont Farmers' Market, which boasts everything from fresh baked goods and meats to plants and flowers.

3. Smells Like Spring

The annual [Orchid Show](#) returns to the [New York Botanical Garden](#) in the Bronx in March and April. This exhibition boasts thousands of brilliantly colored flowers and is the largest of its kind in the country, making it well worth the drive.

4. Search Party

Search for sweet treasures hidden by a furry friend at the annual weekend [Easter Egg Hunt](#) at the [Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum](#). Kids can participate in crafts, have their photos taken with the Easter Bunny, and enjoy light refreshments.

5. 'Toons on Stage

Experience the magic of [Disney Live!](#) at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, where you can catch some of your favorite characters performing in early April.

6. For a Good Cause

Join the [March of Dimes' March for Babies](#) in White Plains in mid-to late April and support research to understand and prevent health problems in infants. Or choose [another walk in the area](#).

7. Just a Trim

Take a step back in history during [Sheep Shearing Day](#) at Stone Barns Center in Pocantico Hills, held in late April. Watch and ask questions as the farmers shear the wool from the flock, and then the whole family can participate in wool and weaving activities.

8. Talon-ted Creatures

Also in late April, learn all about living raptors at a [Birds of Prey Experience](#) at the [Wolf Conservation Center](#) in South Salem. Under the supervision of a professional falconer, kids can meet and even hold one of these magnificent birds.

9. Stewards of the Earth

Help make our planet a little better during an [Earth Day Celebration](#) at the [Greenburgh Nature Center](#) in Scarsdale in late April. Parents and kids will get their hands into real conservation projects that help make the grounds enjoyable for everyone.

10. All About Animals

Make the planet better for our animal friends by participating in the [Run for the Wild 5K and Family Fun Run](#) at the nearby [Bronx Zoo](#) in late April. Then pay those animal friends a visit—same-day admission to the zoo is free with your run!

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Julie Larsen Maher



Bryan Haefele

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Courtesy Philipsburg Manor

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Courtesy Green Chimneys

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Courtesy Westchester County

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

11. Rolling into Summer

Go for a ride during National Bicycle Month when the Bronx River Parkway in White Plains hosts **Bicycle Sundays**. From early May through the end of June, the parkway is closed to cars and open to all cyclists, skaters, scooters, walkers, and joggers on Sunday mornings. Also, learn about [the benefits of balance bikes for beginners](#).

12. Light Art

If your family is fond of the annual Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze, they'll love **Lightscaapes**, 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.

13. Loco for Locomotives

Celebrate **National Train Day** in early May with a train ride (including one on Thomas the Tank Engine!) or by [visiting a nearby train exhibit or museum](#).

14. Mom's the Word

Get in some mom-and-child bonding time at [The Mothers and Others Tea Musicale](#) at the Caramoor Center in Katonah. Share a mini-concert in the magnificent Music Room, take a tour of the Rosen House, and enjoy an assortment of tea-time items in the Summer Dining Room. Find more Mother's Day activities in [our roundup](#).

15. A Thrill a Minute

Rye's **Playland** opens for the season in mid-May with rides and games for all ages. [Browse our full list of area theme parks](#).

16. Spring Celebration

Ring in spring in mid-May during the **Pinkster Festival** at [Philipsburg Manor](#) in Sleepy Hollow, an African-American celebration filled with

music, dance, and food. Find [other cool cultural celebrations in our area](#) in our roundup.

17. Calling Aspiring Astronauts

It's a great time for stargazing at the all-new digital planetarium at the [Hudson River Museum](#) in Yonkers.

18. Baby Boom

Take the kids to **Meet the Baby Animals** at Muscote Farm in mid-May, when the farm's newborns greet the public for the first time. Find more [petting zoos and nature centers in our roundup](#).

19. Backyard Nature

Stargazing, campfire stories, roasted marshmallows, and falling asleep under the stars to the calls of crickets and owls are on the agenda at [Rye Nature Center's Family Campout](#) in late May (also in mid-September).

20. 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.



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