

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

Explore Ozaukee for spring break fun

OZAUKEE COUNTY — Spring break in Wisconsin may not always guarantee beach weather, but in Ozaukee County the early weeks of spring offer a refreshing mix of outdoor adventure, cozy indoor attractions and charming small-town exploration. If you're staycationing this spring, Ozaukee County's rich communities provide plenty of family-friendly experiences perfect for a mid-March to early-April getaway.

Natural attractions

As winter begins to fade, Ozaukee County's parks and trails come alive with the first signs of spring. Two of the area's most spectacular outdoor destinations are Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve in Grafton and Virmond Park in Mequon. These preserves feature scenic hiking trails, boardwalks through wetlands, and blufftop views overlooking Lake Michigan. Families can follow trails and, weather permitting in early April, take eco-friendly staircases down to the lakeshore for a peaceful beach stroll.

Spring is a great time to



Photo courtesy of Ozaukee Tourism

A mom and daughter ride the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, a 30-mile path that goes from the Milwaukee County line north to the Sheboygan County line.

visit the county's nature preserves, which offer family-friendly classes and activities, as well as miles of trails that journey through forests, prairies and wetlands and offer beautiful Lake Michigan and Milwaukee River views. Check the websites of places like Riveredge Nature Center, the Mequon Nature Preserve and Harrington Beach State Park for spring activities.

The county's diverse habitats also make it a great place for bird watching, especially during the spring migration season. Bring your bird book and you might be able to check off a number of migrating warblers, orioles, tanagers and shorebirds as they travel north.

For families who want to explore more of the county by bike or on foot, the Ozaukee Interurban Trail offers a fantastic option, and is also designated a "Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail." This 30-mile paved trail stretches the length of the county and connects several communities along the way. Its gentle grade makes it accessible for riders and walkers of all ages, and along the route you'll pass parks,

wetlands, farmland and glimpses of Lake Michigan. It's an easy way to combine outdoor recreation with stops in small towns for snacks, shopping or sightseeing.

Historic downtowns

Spring break is a wonderful time to visit Ozaukee County's historic downtown districts. Several communities offer self-guided walking tours, including Grafton's Paramount Blues tour, Port Washington's Shipwreck Coast tour and Cedarburg's Public Art Tour. Families love to explore the three-story Shops of Cedar Creek Settlement, the creekwalk or search for treasures in Cedarburg's unique boutiques, candy shops and specialty stores. Kids especially love a stop in the Cedarburg Toy Company, a boutique toy store that offers unique toys that embrace creativity, curiosity, joy, exploration and imagination.

Another must-visit stop is The Gem Shop, where kids can explore geology-themed kits, hands-on activities and a fascinating collection of minerals, fossils and gemstones that make the shop feel part museum, part treasure hunt.

Grafton offers a mix of locally owned boutiques, specialty shops and larger retail stores, making it easy to browse everything from artisan goods to everyday finds. Nearby Mequon and Thiensville offer a blend of charming local businesses and upscale shopping, along with great dining options — perfect for an afternoon of browsing, relaxing and enjoying the area's laid-back suburban sophistication.

Traveling north, Port Washington offers another family-friendly stop with its shoppable downtown, beautiful harbor, lakefront parks and scenic views of Lake Michigan. Walking along the marina or visiting the area's lighthouses provide a great way for families to stretch their legs and enjoy the fresh lake air.

While in Port Washington, bring the kids to The Basement VR, a new local spot for immersive virtual reality gaming. Book a VR session and enjoy free classic arcade, pinball and console games while you wait. Team up or face off in multiplayer VR as you battle zombies, solve escape rooms, compete player-versus-player or work together cooperatively for an unforgettable gaming experience.

Local culture and arts

If the spring weather turns wet or chilly, Ozaukee County offers many indoor attractions where families can explore art, history and local culture. The Cedarburg Cultural Center hosts art exhibits, performances and classes for both children and adults — check their website for spring and summer classes. Nearby, the Cedarburg Art Museum is housed in a beautiful historic Victorian home and features exhibitions and highlighting regional artists and Wisconsin artwork. Admission is free, making it an easy stop for families exploring downtown.

One current exhibit, Student Art Matters, includes artwork by students in grades K-12 from across Ozaukee County and represents the Cedarburg Art Museum's largest student exhibition to date. Two more great stops for families include the Cedarburg History Museum (also the Visitor Center) and the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts. Both offer a unique glimpse into the stories of our past and present.

The Grafton Arts Mill Studios Co-Op and Shoppe is the home to 22 artists with studio space. Guests are welcome to browse the individual working studios and the Shoppe in the center of the quaint second floor of the historical mill.

Families looking for hands-on creative experiences during spring break will find plenty of opportunities throughout Ozaukee County. In Grafton, the Grafton Collective Marketplace is a great stop for both crafting and shopping. The marketplace features a variety of local makers and vendors, and visitors can try their hand at making candles, soap and other fun crafts while browsing a collection of unique handmade goods.

Port Washington also offers several creative outlets. At the Purple Turtle Artisan Collective, visitors can sign up for beginner-friendly classes such as knitting while also browsing the shop's selection of locally made art and gifts. The nearby Art Perspective Gallery offers a more advanced creative experience that can be especially engaging for older kids and teens, including high school students interested in exploring their artistic side. They offer a personalized experience as you tour the gallery and skill set classes in a variety of mediums.

Families also love spending a few hours in places like glaze! in Thiensville and The Painted Creek in Cedarburg. With plenty of open studio time as well as scheduled classes, kids and parents alike can create every-

thing from wall art and fused glass to glazed pottery and raw clay projects. Check out their websites for amazing offerings for spring break, as well as upcoming summer camps and classes!

For those interested in local history, several small museums throughout the county provide a glimpse into the area's heritage. These interactive spaces often include artifacts, historic displays and exhibits that help tell the story of Ozaukee County's early settlers and cultural roots. For a list of local museums and their admission times, visit ozaukeetourism.com.

Dreaming of ocean breezes and salty air? You might not find waves in Ozaukee County, but you can still capture the feeling at Alati Salt Spa in Grafton. The calming rooms at this state-of-the-art salt and light spa recreate the atmosphere of seaside air, offering a relaxing break between shopping, exploring and family adventures around the county. The spa also offers a variety of upcoming wellness classes - from yoga and meditation sessions to other restorative experiences — making it an easy way to slow down, breathe deeply, and add a little rejuvenation to your spring break plans.

No family trip is complete without good food. Whether you're looking for a quick bite while you're on the go, a lively lunch spot or a place to settle in for the evening, Ozaukee has you and your tastebuds covered! Many restaurants and cafés welcome families and feature cozy atmospheres perfect for warming up after a spring hike. A few particularly kid-friendly places include Port Washington's LemonZello, which specializes in customizable "dirty sodas" and allows you to create your own combinations of fountain soda mixed with various flavored syrups and cream. Kids love anything chocolate, so stops at places like Tulip Café or the Chocolate Chisel in Port Washington or Sweet Trio in Grafton are sure to put a smile on any little face.

While Ozaukee County is known for its lively festivals later in the year, spring break offers a quieter way to experience the region. With fewer crowds, families can take their time discovering scenic trails, exploring charming downtown streets, and visiting cultural attractions at their own pace. Whether you're hiking along Lake Michigan bluffs, biking a section of the Interurban Trail, browsing local art galleries, or simply enjoying a sweet treat after a day outdoors, Ozaukee County offers a welcoming spring destination for families looking to shake off winter and start the new season with adventure. For more information, follow Ozaukee County Tourism on Facebook and Instagram, or visit ozaukeetourism.com.

(The Ozaukee County Tourism Council is a group of businesses and organizations that support and promote tourism in Ozaukee County)



Photo courtesy of Ozaukee Tourism

Clair Baker holds her Shibori fabric, created at The Painted Creek in Cedarburg.

2025 Ozaukee County 4-H Foundation Memorials & Donations



The Ozaukee County 4-H Foundation extends its gratitude to all the businesses, corporations, individuals, and partnerships that contributed to the Foundation in 2025. These generous donations enable the Foundation to offer scholarships to 4-H youth and adult volunteers, allowing them to participate in educational programs such as:

WI 4-H Youth Conference-Madison Funds to Support Projects

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Citizenship Washington Focus

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Winter Leadership Camp
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4-H Adult and Youth Leadership Programs

We gratefully recognize the individuals and families who experienced the loss of a loved one, this past year. During their time of remembrance, these families generously encouraged memorial contributions in honor of their family and/or friend.

IN MEMORY OF:

Donald Blacklock, William Zickler, Tim McPhee, David



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Photo courtesy of Ozaukee Tourism

The Schuckit family is pictured with their handiwork at glaze.

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