

Autumn getaways



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

Desmond and Maisie Kinsler, 14 and 10, of Madison, take in the expansive views of the surrounding landscape from atop the West Tower at Blue Mound State Park near the village of Blue Mounds. The park also has a tower on the east side of the hill.

5 must-see state parks to visit this fall

BARRY ADAMS, STATE JOURNAL
badams@madison.com

Maybe summer slipped away with music, food and beer festivals, Milwaukee Brewers winning streaks or a boatload of activities with the kids and you failed to hit up one of Wisconsin's 50 state parks.

Fortunately, there are several offerings within a two-hour drive or less that can make for an ideal day trip or a short and quick weekend getaway this fall.

But for this exercise, let's take two of the big ones off the table.

There are tons to love about Devil's Lake State Park near Baraboo and Gov. Dodge State Park north of Dodgeville. They each offer fishing and swimming, hiking, beautiful rock outcroppings, have scores of campsites and are each about an hour drive from Capitol Square.

They also are two of the busiest. So, as the park system celebrates its 125th year, here are five state parks that you've most likely have heard of but maybe haven't had the chance yet to visit. And if you have, you already know why you need to return.

Blue Mound State Park

Located on the edge of the village of Blue Mounds in western Dane County, this park features the only swimming pool in a Wisconsin state park. The bad news is that the

pool and its splash pad close on Labor Day. But this park is set atop the highest point in southern Wisconsin and its two wooden observation towers, one on the east the other on the west side of the park's plateau, offer up sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. And on many days, you can even spot the State Capitol.

The park offers unique geological features, over 20 miles of hiking, off-road biking and cross-country ski trails and access to the Military Ridge State Trail with bike-in campsites and a rustic cabin for people with disabilities. For car campers, the sites nestled are nestled into the wooded hillside.

Lake Kegonsa State Park

Between McFarland and Stoughton and plunked down on the northeastern shore of 3,200-acre Lake Kegonsa, this park may often times be overlooked by those looking to escape the city or the burbs.

But its location eliminates a long trip while still offering plenty of classic state park amenities.

The park has a swimming beach, picnic areas with shelters, a boat launch and plenty of opportunities to catch a walleye for dinner. Hiking trails weave among oak woodlands, prairies and wetlands while the campground has 96 campsites, 29 of which have electrical hookups.

Natural Bridge State Park

There is no camping here, but this state park literally lives up to its name, thanks to a naturally formed sandstone arch created by the eroding effects of wind and water.

The bridge opening is 25 feet high by 35 feet wide and exists thanks to the glaciers that bypassed this area of Sauk County 12,000 years ago.

According to the state Department of Natural Resources, Warren Wittry of the Wisconsin Historical Society excavated the rock shelter in 1957 and his team found pieces of charred wood, presumably from fire pits, which were dated between 9000 and 8000 BC. Evidence indicates that the shelter was used only periodically at first, perhaps as a hunting or seasonal camp. Later it was inhabited year-round.

You may need to use your GPS to find this park since it's located on Highway C west of Highway 12 between Leland and Denzer.

Tower Hill State Park

While many headed this way are in pursuit of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture or Shakespeare at American Players Theatre, the Spring Green area also has one of the smallest state parks in Wisconsin, but that is loaded with history.

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RODRIQUE NGOWI, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pedestrians walk near a Northeastern University sign Jan. 31, 2019, on the school's campus in Boston.

US colleges begin to panic as international enrollment drops

Groups forecast a huge impact on schools' budgets

LUENA RODRIGUEZ-FEO VILEIRA, MAKIYA SEMINERA AND COLLIN BINKLEY
Associated Press

One international student after another told the University of Central Missouri this summer that they couldn't get a visa, and many struggled to even land an interview for one.

Even though demand was as high as ever, half as many new international graduate students showed up for fall classes compared to last year.

The decline represents a hit to the bottom line for Central Missouri, a small

public university that operates close to its margins with an endowment of only \$65 million.

International students typically account for nearly a quarter of its tuition revenue.

"We aren't able to subsidize domestic students as much when we have fewer international students who are bringing revenue to us," said Roger Best, the university's president.

Signs of a decline in international students unsettled colleges around the U.S. Colleges with large numbers of foreign students and small endowments have little financial cushion to protect them from steep losses in tuition money.

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