

1000 HOURS OUTSIDE™



Family Outside Activity Guide

**10 Low-Cost, Family-Friendly Memorable
Outside Activities near Orlando, Florida**



Low Cost Orlando Nature Fun!

About 72 million people visit the Orlando Area each year. While the theme parks can be memorable, they can also often miserable (not to mention expensive).

We like to try and make our way south once a winter to get a break from the snow and frigid temps and we have found fabulously beautiful places to play and relax outside apart from the theme parks.

Most of these locations cost less than \$10/day for the entire family and several places are completely free! Use the hashtag #1000hoursoutside if you venture to one of the places listed below!

Be sure to call head to verify current hours and accessibility.

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Rock Springs at Kelly Park

ROCK SPRINGS AT KELLY PARK

Natural Tube Ride (approx. 45 minute drive from Orlando)

400 E Kelly Park Rd, Apopka, FL 32712
(407) 254-1902

Head to Rock Springs at Kelly Park and immediately feel like you have entered a tropical oasis. This beautiful park, in an absolutely gorgeous setting, boasts a natural tube ride in a free flowing natural spring that is 70 degrees year round. We're talking about crystal clear waters and beautiful wildlife. Beyond the nature tube ride this is also a great swimming spot with a sandy area for beach toys.

Our seven year old used goggles and a snorkel and spent an entire afternoon swimming after turtles. Bring your own tube or rent from the Rock Springs Bar & Grill right outside the park. You can ride this picturesque lazy river as many times as you like! This spot is perfect for families or couples.



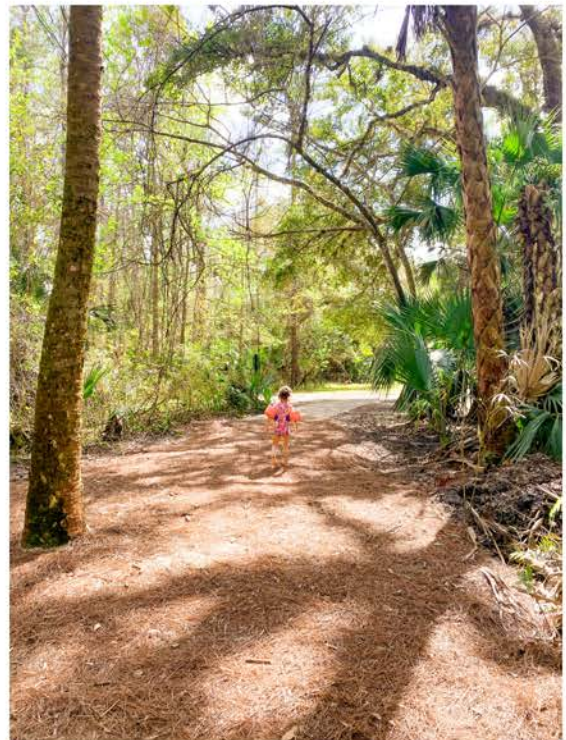
Rock Springs at Kelly Park

Depending on the time of year and the time of day you go, Rock Springs can be very crowded. If you are headed there during peak season or on a weekend make sure you head there early. They will start turning people away once they reach capacity. We went on a weekday in early February and were the only people there.

There is also swimming, hiking, volleyball, a small beach, bathrooms and changing rooms, a playground, a concession stand (cash only) and a campground! Be alert for fire ants, especially near the beach area.

Only \$3 per car to enter for 1-2 people or \$5 per car to enter for 3 - 8 people!

Make a day trip to Apopka and head to Wekiwa Springs (page 4) on the same day!



Wekiwa Springs State Park

WEKIWA SPRINGS STATE PARK

Watering Hole (approx. 45 minute drive from Orlando, combine with Rock Springs at Kelly Park)

1800 Wekiwa Cir, Apopka, FL 32712
(407) 884-2009

Wekiwa springs is a great little watering hole to cool off at. It's like a huge, crystal clear swimming pool with a constant temperature of 72 degrees. The water depth is 5 feet or greater so bring a floating device for children. Add on some water shoes and you will be able to swim all day long. The bottom of this spring is comprised of huge boulders.

Canoe and kayak rentals are also available for guided or self-guided tours on the Wekiwa River. Out on the river you may see sea otters or baby alligators. There is a nature trail to hike as well and you just might see armadillos!



De Leon Springs State Park & The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant

DE LEON SPRINGS STATE PARK &
OLD SPANISH SUGAR MILL RESTAURANT
601 Ponce DeLeon Blvd, De Leon Springs, FL 32130
(386) 985-4212
The Old Spanish Sugar Mill
(386) 985-5644

This is a serene getaway with one-of-a-kind restaurant!
(approx. 55 minute drive from Orlando)

This is a bucket list place!! It's a serene getaway where there is so much to do, including a one of a kind restaurant! The De Leon Spring was once home to the native Mayaca and is now a state park for swimming and canoeing. The Old Spanish Sugar Mill is the only place in Central Florida where you can cook your own pancakes and eggs right on the table in front of you (gluten free batter available!). Our kids LOVED this!!! Put your name in early because even in the off season the wait for a table can be several hours.



De Leon Springs State Park & The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant

The spring water is 72 degrees year round and is crystal clear with depths ranging from 3 feet to 30 feet. The way the spring is cut off from the river makes it seem like a huge swimming pool! There aren't many shallow areas so bring floaties for inexperienced swimmers. The surrounding area is beautiful with lots of wildlife around.

There are many shady spots for picnicking, a small playground, wheelchair accessible facilities, and clean bathrooms/changing rooms. There are lots of extra things to do as well. There is a river boat tour, hiking trails, and rentals for snorkeling and kayaking. It's also a great spot for fishing! If history is your thing there are signs all over the park as the sugar mill dates back to the 1800s.

Only \$6 per car to enter and the restaurant is very reasonably priced!



Blue Spring State Park

BLUE SPRING STATE PARK
2100 W French Ave, Orange City, FL 32763

Visit the Manatees During the Spring! (approx. 45 minute drive from Orlando)

Depending on the time of year you come, Blue Spring State Park offers different things! This warm spring is located on the St. Johns River. It's a popular spot for swimming, diving, and for spotting manatees by the hundreds with their babies. There is a sign at the entrance that lets you know how many manatees are still there in the spring. The park is beautiful and laid out nicely. When it's not peak manatee season you can swim or canoe. Bring floaties (as the water can get deep) and your goggles (there are all kinds of fish here)! Our kids loved the playground equipment, the short handicapped accessible boardwalk trail, and all the space to run around. There is also a boat tour of the St. Johns river.

Only \$6 per car to enter!



Showcase of Citrus

SHOWCASE OF CITRUS

5010 US-27, Clermont, FL 34714

(352) 394-4377

Fruit Picking and Farm Animals! (approx. 40 minute drive from Orlando)

This place is agritainment at it's finest!! We spent an entire day picking all sorts of citrus fruit, playing with farm animals, playing on the playground, and taking advantage of the many photo opportunities. The kids learned about many different types of citrus fruit and the only cost was for the fruit we picked and any treats we bought from the store. We chose not to do the monster truck tour as it seemed pretty expensive for a large family and it got mixed reviews.



Alexander Springs Recreation Area

ALEXANDER SPRINGS RECREATION AREA

49525 County Road 445

Altoona, FL 32702

Phone: 352-669-3522

Swimming Hole in the Ocala National Forest (approx. 60 minutes from Orlando)

Alexander Springs is a beautiful swimming hole located within the Ocala National Forest. It is a constant 72 degrees year round and has a soft sandy bottom with a gentle slope, great for young children. There is also a one-mile hiking trail at the recreation area and at certain times of the year you can rent canoes or kayaks. You can paddle along eight miles of the St. Johns River. A bathhouse and changing rooms are available as well.



Brevard Zoo / Atlantic Ocean

BREVARD ZOO/ATLANTIC OCEAN
8225 N Wickham Rd, Melbourne, FL 32940
(321) 254-9453

Though not as cheap as some of the other options we all thoroughly enjoyed the Brevard Zoo. This zoo boasts over 500 animals, a chance to feed giraffes, and a large water play area. Bring swimsuits and towels! Our kids loved playing in the water area.

It was easy to combine this outing with a visit to the ocean! Or just head to the ocean We went to a 7-acre beach park called Cherie Down Park in Cape Canaveral. This day was an absolute blast and super memorable.



Playgrounds & Splash Pads

FREE PLAYGROUNDS AND SPLASH PADS AROUND ORLANDO

Sometimes all you need is a good playground. Pack up some snacks and try out one of these for a free day of fun! If you're headed to a splash pad bring a few buckets or plastic cups. The kids will play for hours. Bonus: these are great places to try and catch lizards!

Our two favorite playgrounds are Dr. P. Phillips Community Park and Kissimmee Lakefront Park. Both have large areas to run around, fabulous playgrounds and splash pads. They also both have nice restroom facilities.

There are many splash pads and interactive fountains around Orlando. We love the ones at Disney Springs and Universal City Walk. Go during the day and these won't be super crowded. We also love the splash pads in downtown Celebration and Winter Garden. We love to combine visits to those splash pads with visits to the farmers markets in those cities.



Low Cost Memories

In my experience, our low cost memories are some of our best memories. There are no expectations when it only costs a few dollars to go to a state park for a day, for instance. These simple nature moments we've experienced as a family in the Orlando, Florida area have been some of our best and most memorable! These 10+ locations have provided a hearty amount of activities for a weeks worth vacation. Often the kids want to return so these spots could last you a several week Orland stay. Enjoy your adventures!



Blue Spring State Park (p7)



De Leon Springs (p5)



Rock Springs (p2)



BLUE SPRING TRAIL
A 10 MINUTE WALK ALONG THIS TRAIL WILL LEAD TO BLUE SPRING. ALONG THE WAY YOU WILL PASS THROUGH A MATURE FOREST COMMUNITY OF BROADLEAF TREES CALLED A "HAMMOCK," AN INDIAN WORD MEANING "SHADY PLACE." BY STAYING ON THE BOARDWALK YOU ARE HELPING TO PRESERVE THE BEAUTY OF THIS PLACE FOR YOUR NEXT VISIT.

Blue Spring State Park (p7)

