

HIKERS' GUIDE

If you are planning to hike...Starved Rock State Park is the place to be! With 13 miles of well marked hiking trails, you can plan your hiking based on your skill levels. Let's get started!



Preparing for your Hike

You can drastically improve your hiking experience by preparing for your hike before you go hiking. Here's how:

Plan your hike. Figure out what you want to see before you try to figure out which trail you want to take, where to park or how much water you need to bring.

Pack Smart. Bring only what you need and leave the rest behind so you don't end up dragging a 65 lb. backpack up 150 stairs.

Dress appropriately according to weather so you don't get hypothermia in the winter or heat stroke in the summer.

Give yourself enough time to do more than just hike. Take pictures of your friends and family on top of Starved Rock and enjoy yourself while you're here!

Where to find the Waterfalls

Although you can (technically) see waterfalls in 14 of the 18 canyons, some of the most scenic waterfalls are found in St. Louis, French, Wildcat, Tonty, Ottawa and Kaskaskia canyons. The best times to see waterfalls are in the spring when the snow

and ice melt or after a heavy rainfall. Come back in the winter to see an icefall - they are spectacular!

The Seasons of Starved Rock State Park

We highly recommend you to come back to Starved Rock during different seasons of the year. The entire park, including the canyons and trails, look completely different in the fall and winter than in the spring and summer.

Trail Tips

Start with short hikes and work your way up from there. Use these hikes to familiarize yourself with the trail map and markers. Keep track of how much time you need to hike. This will help you plan hikes in the future.

Hike along trails that are further from the Visitor Center and Lodge, such as the interior canyon trails of Tonty and LaSalle for a more natural, rugged, hiking experience.

Stop every once in a while to look at your surroundings: you never know what you might miss if you don't. As you are leaving a canyon, look back.

Let your body gradually adjust to the unique demands of hiking by warming up before you hike and taking care not to overexert yourself.

Make long hikes shorter by driving out to parking lots that are closer to your destination. Keep an eye out for road closures; some parking lots may not be accessible.

Half Day Hikes with the Walker's Club

Would you like someone to hike with you? Don't know where to hike? The Walker's Club meets on Thursdays at 9:00 am in the lobby of Starved Rock Lodge for pre-planned group hikes. These hikes take a few hours and usually end around noon.

Ask for a schedule at the Front Desk or call the Lodge for more information at 800-868-7625.

Tools of the Trade

Reusable Water Bottle *Highly Recommended* - Having water available when you need it can make or break your hiking experience. You can find reusable water bottles at Trailheads, located in the Visitor Center or at the Starved Rock Lodge Gift Shop.

Medicine *Highly Recommended* - Medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes can quickly become medical emergencies. When you're out on a trail a mile from the Visitor Center, help isn't always nearby, and your cell phone might not get any reception, so please bring your medicine.

Insect Repellent *Highly Recommended* - You're on the trails to have a good hike, not to give mosquitoes a free meal. Apply the repellent and leave the bottle behind.

Small Backpack - Carrying a small backpack sure beats storing everything you own in your pockets or purses. You can also help keep the park clean by using your backpack (and maybe a bag as well) to store your garbage until you return.

Camera - Make your time at Starved Rock memorable and snap a few photos along the trails.

Trail Map - Useful for planning hikes and finding your way around Starved Rock State Park. Find these at the information desk at either the Visitor Center or the Lodge.

Walking Stick - Helps you hike across streams and difficult terrain with ease.

Hiking Shoes - Good for trails with dirt paths and difficult footing (especially after rainfall)

Small Towel/Bandana - Helps reduce heat exhaustion; simply pour some water on it and wear.

One Way to Remove a Tick

Here is a good way to get ticks off you, your children or your pets. Apply a glob of liquid soap to a cotton ball. Cover the tick with the soap-soaked ball and swab it for a few seconds (15-20), the tick will come out on its own and be stuck to the cotton ball when you lift it away. This is much less traumatic for the patient and easier to administer.

The method recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention is:

Use fine tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.

Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.

After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.