Your Guide to
Hocking Hills State Park
Abundant with towering cliffs, deep caves, awe-inspiring cascades, and hemlock gorges, Hocking Hills State Park is one of the most scenic regions in Ohio. Millions of visitors flock to this area to escape everyday life and feel as if they’ve been transported into another world. Of course, natural beauty is not the only thing you’ll encounter. Divided into six state parks, Hocking Hills State Park is a utopia for outdoor recreation. You can trek through the forests on one of many hiking trails, search for wildlife, or investigate caves. No matter what you decide to do, an adventure awaits!

Within walking distance of Hocking Hills State Park, you’ll find the perfect harmony between luxury and nature at the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls. This Hocking Hills Tourism Association green-certified accommodation is bordered on three sides by the park, offering easy access to hiking trails and many other park activities. Our bed and breakfast offers a variety of lodging options including cabins, cozy cottages, and B&B guest rooms. We even have an award-winning restaurant and tranquil onsite spa. It’s the perfect place to lie back and relax during your getaway to the hills.
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Ash Cave

Ash Cave is one of the largest and most spectacular caves in Ohio. At 100 feet deep, the cave offers plenty of room for exploration. Its location at the southernmost part of the park can be accessed by a trail that winds through a hemlock-lined gorge. Along the way, you’ll be greeted by valleys of beautiful wildflowers, beech trees, and many other hardwoods. Visitors can dwell downward into the horseshoe-shaped cave and admire the Queer Creek cascades as they plummet into the pools below. During the winter months, this waterfall can become one solid ice formation, and it’s absolutely breathtaking!
• Ash Cave is handicapped-accessible and dog friendly.

• The cave was named after the large amount of ash that was found here by early settlers, most likely left behind by Native American campfires.

• The cave was used by early inhabitants as a workshop in which they prepared food and fashioned arrows and spear points.

• .5 mile hike
Cantwell Cliffs is one of the most remote locations in the park and is well worth the extra travel time. You may choose one of two trails to follow. One leads you along the valley floor, and the other takes you to the rim. As you approach the rock shelter underneath the cliff, you will embark through narrow passageways, the most popular known as “Fat Woman’s Squeeze.” The fern-covered cliff walls and various colorings of the rock make this destination one of the most picturesque in Hocking Hills.
Erosion caused by Buck Run, a small local stream, is responsible for forming the cliff.

The dark reddish-brown coloring in the rock is from the cementing agent, iron oxide.

One of the best views of Cantwell Cliffs is from Lookout Point on the Rim Trail.

In the spring, Cantwell Cliffs is comes alive with vibrant wildflowers.

.5 mile hike

Explore Cantwell Cliffs  
Read More on Our Blog
Just beyond the valley of Queer Creek, at the point when Old Man’s Creek merges with Queer, you’ll find one of the most remote and prepossessing attractions of Hocking Hills. Cedar Falls is a primitive chasm laden with hemlock trees and steep rock walls. It is also beautifully surrounded by lovely grottos and waterfalls. In terms of volume, Cedar Falls is the greatest waterfall in the Hocking region.

Interestingly, one of the most notable features of the falls is the steps leading into the chasm. They are known as Democracy Steps and were created by an artist, architect, and mathematician, Akio Hizume. He wanted to design a staircase that drew from his love of nature and made descending towards the waterfall an experience rather than an exhausting chore. He created nearly 100 steps that gently glide along the hillside from the parking lot of Cedar Falls. While the lengths of individual steps vary, walkers are able to alternate the leading foot. This provides a pleasurable walking rhythm that was carefully planned and designed by Hizume.
• In the mid-1800s, a grist mill was built above the falls to utilize the water power for the grinding of grain.

• Early settlers mistook the hemlocks surrounding the falls for cedars, which means that Cedar Falls is actually misnamed.

• .5 mile hike
With features like western prairies and eastern Appalachian forests, photos do not do the beauty of this incredible park justice. The rugged terrain at Clear Creek Metro Park includes steep ravines and cliff faces as well as mild topography like rolling meadows and wetlands. The park is an ideal spot for a romantic picnic, relaxing fishing trip, or scenic stroll.
• The valley became part of the Franklin County Metro Parks system in 1996.

• The park sits on an overlap of geological and climate zones, explaining its unique topography.

• More than 150 species of birds and 1,200 plant species have made their homes in the valley.

• 10 trails, .3-2.5 miles

Visit Clear Creek Metro Park

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Conkle’s Hollow is recognized as one of the deepest gorges in Ohio, boasting a stunning profusion of wilderness. The trail to the gorge stretches a half-mile along the ravine. Jaw-dropping vertical cliffs and lovely scenery surround it. If you’re feeling adventurous, follow the Rim Trail along the top of the cliffs, which are the highest in the region. It’s an exciting excursion that’s filled with photo opportunities - especially in the fall! You’ll be able to see the spectacular fall colors stretch across vistas for miles.

The Legend of Conkle’s Hollow: Folklore has it that years ago, a small clan of Native Americans robbed a group of settlers traveling along the Ohio River. They stole a large sum of money and journeyed to Conkle’s Hollow to hide the treasure until they knew it was safe to return to it. They stowed it away in a small recess located high on the west gorge wall, using a nearby hemlock tree to reach it. The thieves marked a directional arrow to its location on the opposite side of the gorge.

Unbeknownst to them, a major storm blew through the hollow and destroyed the only hemlock tree they could use to reach their stolen goods. To this day, a great sum of stolen money remains in the hollow, awaiting one lucky traveler to find it. Many visitors and locals claim they have seen the directional arrow that was carved into the gorge wall, but it has since eroded away.
• Some of the hemlock growth at the bottom of the gorge is so thick that no sunlight reaches the valley floor.

• The cliffs along the ravine rise over 200 feet in height.

• From cliff to cliff, the gorge is 300 feet wide.

• The gorge is handicapped-accessible. Dogs are not permitted.

• 2.5 mile hike

Visit Conkle’s Hollow
The Rockbridge State Nature Preserve is the largest of 12 preserves in the state. Measuring 100 feet long and only 10 feet wide, this arch gracefully stretches across a ravine over Rock Bridge Falls. It is among one of the most unusual geological features in the park but also the most breathtaking.
Rockbridge State Nature Preserve originated millions of years ago due to the erosion of Mississippian Black Hand Sandstone.

Dogs are not permitted.

The only natural rock bridge that rivals the size of Rockbridge Nature Preserve is the Ladd Natural Bridge in Washington County, Ohio.

2 trails, .75-1 mile

Visit Rockbridge State Nature Preserve
This tunnel-like corridor is the only true cave in the park! It is situated midway up a 150-foot cliff and boasts 25-foot high ceilings with a main corridor that is 200 feet long. The cave’s gothic-like windows, spectacular views of the valley, and incredible rock formations make it a must-see during your visit to Hocking Hills State Park!

Inside the cave, you’ll notice many man-made formations that tell the stories of those who have used the cave for hundreds of years. It is believed that Native Americans used the hominy holes, or small recesses in the rear of Rock House, as baking ovens when the rock became heated on all sides. Chiseled-out troughs in the floor signify that they also used the water that permeated through the sandstone. The water would flow into these holding tanks and then across the floor and out the windows when they became too full. Folklore has it that Rock House was also a popular hideaway for robbers, horse thieves, bootleggers, and murderers, earning it the name “Robbers Roost.”
• Colonel F.F. Rempel of Logan erected a 16-room hotel here complete with a ballroom, livery stable, and post office. The picnic shelter you see today now stands in the place of the old hotel.

• Numerous carvings decorate the walls of the cave, one bearing the letters: ITFBRAR-ITFFAWMTAW. Many people believe this means, “In the fall, Buck Run bananas are ripe. In the frost fall, a wise man takes a wife.”

• .5 mile hike

Visit the Rock House
This man-made lake is located halfway between Old Man's Cave and Cedar Falls. It was formed by an earthen dam and is one of the best spots in the park for fishing. No matter what time of year you visit, Rose Lake is a beautiful place to rest during your Hocking Hills State Park excursions. In the summer, fields of green grass and stunning wildflowers surround the lake accompanied by dragonflies and butterflies. The trees bloom with gorgeous colors and reflect off the water in the fall. Winter brings blankets of white and a peaceful, serene ambiance to the lake. The state stocks the lake with trout in early spring.
Swimming is not permitted in Rose Lake, but a nearby pool at Old Man’s Cave is available for guest use.

The annual Hocking Hills Winter Hike follows the path by the lake every year.

Other names for Rose Lake include Hocking Hills Reservoir and Fisherman’s Lake.

Rose Lake makes a great day on the water for guests who bring their own canoe or kayak.

.5 mile hike
Adorned with rugged foothills and the pristine waters of Pine Lake, Tar Hollow State Park is one of the most striking areas in the region. It is also one of the richest in wildlife! During your visit, keep your eyes open for reptiles, amphibians, colorful songbirds, and raccoons that frequent the area. You may also spot creatures along the banks of the lake like lumbering box turtles, red-backed salamanders, or the distinguished five-lined skink. The beauty and wild prosperity of this park make it a popular camping and picnic spot during warmer months. It’s also a great place to hunt for morel mushrooms in the spring.
-Interesting Facts-

- Rare sightings of bobcats have been reported in the park.

- The state park is bordered by Tar Hollow State Forest, recorded as Ohio’s third largest state forest.

- During the Great Depression, the areas around Pine Lake were used as a group campsite by the WPA and NYA Programs.

- 5 trails, various lengths
The Best Place to Stay Near Hocking Hills State Park

Our Hocking Hills cabins in Logan, Ohio, feature a setting that puts guests in tune with the harmony of nature, the peace of solitude, and the simple joys of the Earth’s beauty. As a Hocking Hills Tourism Association green certified and Select Registry property, the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls is surrounded on three sides by Hocking Hills State Parks. Mammoth rock formations, caves and waterfalls native to the region share their breathtaking beauty with our 1840s log cabins bed and breakfast rooms and charming cottages.
A quiet retreat awaits those seeking modern amenities gently balanced with a closeness to nature. There’s a moment when it all comes together — when you discover the best in yourself. In the middle of your busy schedule, it’s easy to miss these special times that can awaken you to life’s possibilities. Open daily, the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls offers packages, treatments and gift certificates for men, women, couples and groups.

Cabins
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Which trails can I take my dog on?
You can take your dog on every trail except
Conkle’s Hollow and Natural Rock Bridge as these
two areas are State Nature Preserves.

Which trails would be most suitable and safe
for children and people with mobility issues?
Ash Cave and Conkle’s Hollow both have paved,
flat trails.
**What should I be sure to see while I’m here?**
We recommend seeing Old Man’s Cave, Cedar Falls and Ash Cave. Each trail can be walked in a leisurely two hours. Depending on the season, we have favorites. We like Ash Cave and Cantwell Cliffs in the spring for the waterfalls and spring wildflowers. Any of them are good in the summer. In the fall, the rim train at Conkle’s Hollow is dynamite, as you are on top of the trees rather than down in the cave. You will also want to walk around Rose Lake. Frozen ice formations in the winter are stunning at Ash Cave and Cedar Falls.

**Where is a good place for me to take a run?**
Many runners like to run Chapel Ridge Road. This road is not busy with auto traffic and is scenic. Cotterman Road, just at the bottom of our property is also a nice run.

**Is there a bicycle trail in the State Park?**
There are two mountain bike trails in the Hocking Hills State Park. One is medium difficulty and the other is considered difficult. You access both trails from the Primitive Camping area on State Route 374. Many of our guests enjoy the bicycle trail from Nelsonville to Athens.

**What are the hours of the park?**
The state park is open from dawn to dusk.

**What kind of shoes do I need?**
Tennis shoes are fine during most seasons. Some guests prefer to wear hiking boots during the winter as some trails stay are wet, icy and slippery.

**Where is the Devil’s Bathtub?**
Devil’s Bathtub is a natural rock formation on the trail at Old Man’s Cave.

**Is there a shuttle service that will take us back to our car?**
No, unfortunately there is not a shuttle service.

**How long is the trail from Ash Cave to Old Man’s Cave?**
The trail from Ash Cave to Old Man’s Cave is 6 miles one way. This is not a loop trail, so it is 12 miles round trip. Cedar Falls is at the halfway mark.
Conclusion

With 2,356 acres to discover, Hocking Hills State Park is a gold mine for nature enthusiasts and adventurers alike. You can spend an entire day in the park and only scratch the surface of all there is to experience in this unforgettable wilderness.

After your adventures, head back to the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls for some well-deserved relaxation. You can indulge in our location’s peaceful solitude and enjoy a wide array of amenities and accommodations. Come and see why so many guests escape to the Hocking Hills and start planning your trip today!

Learn More about the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls