



20 Family Funtastic Highlights for Visiting Rochester in the Spring

By Debra Ross

Spring is a time of change in Rochester, and of celebration. The weather can change quickly even as it grows warmer and our landscape bursts into blossom. Planning a family trip to Rochester in spring is easy, though, as we can accommodate your family for fun both indoors and out. Below are 20 highlights of the region you can enjoy with your family on your visit to Rochester, NY in the springtime!

The Great Outdoors

Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park – A beautiful mansion and nine formal gardens comprise this beautiful park located in Canandaigua, NY. Sonnenberg is open May 1 through October 31 each year; you can even visit the greenhouses starting in early April. Admission for children 4-12 is only \$1; kids 3 and under are free! Request a **free** "I Spy" Kid's Trail adventure map at the Admissions Booth. The map will lead children through a trail of clues along garden paths to hidden signs that provide clues to an answer that the children will note on their map. Once they have collected all the answers from all the stops on their adventure map, they can turn the completed map in at the Admissions Booth to win a prize.

Seneca Park Zoo – Spring is the time of nature's great re-awakening, and a wonderful time to visit the animals when it's not yet too hot and they're more active. In the Z.O.T. Zone (which stands for "Zoologists Of Tomorrow"), kids get a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to keep the animals healthy and engaged. Be sure to check out the recently-completed "A Step into Africa," where you'll meet many of the inhabitants of the plains and savannahs of this mysterious continent.



Ganondagan State Historic Site – Take in the original site of the Seneca people in nearby Victor, NY, where you can experience what life was like in the full-size replica of a 17th Century bark longhouse, hike miles of marked trails, view the palisaded granary, and check out the visitors center with its genuine Iroquois tools and artifacts.

Rochester Red Wings – Spring is the time when baseball dreams come alive at Frontier Field in Rochester. The Red Wings are Rochester's Triple-A minor league ball team (for the Minnesota Twins), but there is nothing minor about this ball team or Frontier Field! For less than the price of taking the family to a movie, you can bring them to a fantastic family-friendly all-American experience. You'll find a wonderful variety of eatables—not just your standard ballpark fare. And after every Sunday afternoon game, kids get to go down on the field and run the bases with Spikes & Mittsy, the Red Wings mascots. Fireworks every Friday and Saturday night June-September!

Rochester Rhinos – Spring is also the launch season of the Rochester Rhinos professional soccer matches. Located at Sahlen’s Stadium, a hop, skip, and a couple of blocks away from Frontier Field, a state-of-the-art stadium matches a state-of-the-art professional soccer experience. Tickets are often as low as \$10, and frequent kids nights feature lots of extra stuff for kids to do: Running, jumping, kicking, and climbing.

Brown’s Berry Patch Barnyard Adventure and in late spring, strawberry picking – Your kids will love the pony and wagon rides as well as the Barnyard Adventure and playground activities here. The Barnyard Adventure area features a huge slide that parents and kids can ride together, as well as goats, bunnies, and other animals, water fun, and more. Strawberries start in early-to-mid-June, depending on the weather. Sample delicacies in their country store.

Awetastic Indoor Attractions



Rochester Museum and Science Center – “Electricity Theater” will spark your family’s imagination with a dazzling display of sound and sizzle as Tesla Coils shoot musical bolts of lightning! Become a scientist in search of alien species at “Alien Worlds and Androids.” These and other extraordinary exhibits and activities, including a rock climbing wall, a fossil-finding exploration, the adventure zone, an optics exhibit and the story of the underground railroad offer an exciting learning adventure for your entire family.

Clubhouse Fun Center – The whole family will enjoy fast-paced fun at the Clubhouse Fun Center, as they speed around the go-kart track or try their skill at the games in the arcade. For a more leisurely pace, play a round of mini golf on one of the Center’s 18-hole courses then grab a bite to eat from the family-friendly menu at the Treehouse Café.

The National Museum of Play at the Strong – You’ll get high scores from your family when you visit this museum, voted the #1 place to take kids by regional KidsOutAndAbout.com readers and #7 on 10Best’s Top Family Museums in the country. Chock full of hands-on activities, the museum’s family favorites include the Wegmans Super Kids Market, Reading Adventureland, the Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden and the Sesame Street area. Lest you think this is only for kids, be sure to visit American Comic Book Heroes, the video games at e-games Revolution and the National Toy Hall of Fame, guaranteed to bring fun memories from your own childhood.

Celebrate!

Mother’s Day weekend & Father’s Day Weekend: Rochesterians are great at celebrating moms and dads. For Mother’s Day and Father’s Day weekends, you’ll find special events and deals throughout our area: Look especially at Sonnenberg Gardens, Genesee Country Village & Museum, the Rochester Red Wings, the Memorial Art Gallery (?), George Eastman House (?), Clubhouse Fun Center, Wickham Farms, and Long Acre Farms.

Imagine RIT: The first Saturday in May, the Rochester Institute of Technology pulls together an incredible event targeted at families with elementary, middle, and high school kids. A FREE day-long celebration of innovation, creativity, and technology, the event features hundreds of hands-on activities that also engage the brain and show kids just what is possible with some curiosity and a bit of effort.

Lilac Festival: Rochester's internationally-famous Lilac Festival starts the weekend of Mother's Day and runs through the following weekend. Over 200,000 guests easily find room to spread out on the world's largest collection of lilac trees. Concerts, performances, crafts, and fantastic food



Stay and Play Family Packages

Strathallan Doubletree by Hilton Hotel – Sleep tight and play hard with the Strathallan's Strong) Museum of Play Package! The package includes luxurious accommodations, tickets for two, and transportation to the region's famous and fabulous National Museum of Play, plus a complimentary buffet breakfast for two. After the museum, take a dip in the heated indoor pool, dine at the trendy in-house restaurant or work out in their state-of-the-art gym, all conveniently located in downtown Rochester. Check out their Family Fun Package as well!



Radisson Rochester Riverside – The Radisson loves families. You'll find a variety of family-friendly packages, where you can enjoy delightful accommodations in the heart of downtown Rochester, right on the Genesee River. The in-house Legends Sports Bar & Grill, open all day, is a favorite with kids because of their kid-welcoming menu and their nine 50-inch HD TVs.

The Comfort Suites Marketplace Drive – Conveniently located near Marketplace Mall that has some of the best shopping in the region, this all-suites hotel with indoor pool and comp buffet breakfast offers a Family Package that

includes two adults' and two children's tickets to two of the region's top attractions: Choose from George Eastman House (where kids 12 and under are always free), Strong Museum of Play, or Rochester Museum and Science Center.

Quality Inn Rochester Airport – Select an Executive King guestroom or one with two double beds when you choose the Quality Inn Rochester's Family)4)Pack. This great value package includes a full breakfast, your choice of four sub sandwiches or a large pizza, and four passes to one of the following super attractions: George Eastman House, Strong National Museum of Play, Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Memorial Art Gallery, ArtisanWorks, or the Susan B. Anthony House.

From Treats to Eats

Dinosaur Barbecue – From baby backs, pulled pork and chicken barbecue to cornbread, okra and regular or sweet potato fries, you can't beat "The Dino" for a delicious down-south dining experience in a homey atmosphere that delights the whole family.

Jines – For breakfast, lunch or dinner, Jines, located on Rochester's Park Avenue is a kid-friendly eatery that combines the breadth and best of diner fare with the atmosphere of a favorite local neighborhood restaurant.

La-Tea-Da Tearoom – Whether you fancy a spot of tea and scone or a tasty lunch, this British-inspired, Victorian décor tearoom and parlor is sure to delight. They welcome kids with special children's heart-shaped menu items and kid-pleasin' birthday parties (advance reservations required for parties).

Salena's Mexican Restaurant – From á la carte to entrée, you'll never know you're north of the border at this authentic-feeling cantina and hot spot that offers a full selection of your favorite Mexican food, 90+ flavors of tequila and its own signature beer for the grownups, and a special kids menu for the younger set.



Sample 2-day outdoor spring trip itinerary: Sonnenberg Gardens or the Seneca Park Zoo during the first day; Red Wings baseball game or Rhinos soccer match at night. The second day, take in one of our many festivals!

Sample 2-day indoor spring trip itinerary: Strong Museum or Rochester Museum & Science Center the first day; Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra or one of our many jazz or rock opportunities at night. The second day, do something cultural, like the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography & Film, Memorial Art Gallery, or the Susan B. Anthony House.

Sample 3-day outdoor spring trip itinerary: Add to the 2-day itinerary a trip to Highland Park to see our famous Lilacs in bloom

in May or a visit to the Maplewood Rose Garden in June. Don't leave without a trip up to the Charlotte Pier to Ontario Beach Park—makes sure to sample Abbott's Custard, our signature frozen delicacy.

Sample 3-day indoor spring trip itinerary: If you've only been to either Strong Museum OR the RMSC on the first day, visit the other. Go shopping at Schoen Place in Pittsford and go for a walk on the Erie Canal Path.