



## 20 Family Funtastic Highlights for Visiting Rochester in the Summer

By Debra Ross

Summer is what Rochesterians call “payoff time.” Our proximity to Lake Ontario means we have more temperate summer weather than in many parts of the country, so families head here to flee both the heat AND the high prices of flashier tourist regions. We have plenty of options for the few days it’s steamy, too: Head to one of several waterpark attractions, to a great Lake Ontario beach, or inside to a museum or family fun center. Below are 20 highlights of the region you can enjoy with your family on your visit to Rochester, NY in our glorious summer!

### The Great Outdoors



**Seabreeze Amusement Park** – Consistently voted Rochester’s #1 outdoor attraction by residents, Seabreeze Amusement Park has everything you’d want in an amusement park: Roller coasters, water rides, a wave pool, giant swings, a section for younger visitors, food, and games. The difference is found both Seabreeze’s family-friendly atmosphere and, more important, the sense that the park can be accomplished in a day. No pressure, and much shorter lines compared to bigger parks.

**Roseland Water Park** – A water park that has been likened to a small Disney park, Roseland Water Park, located in Canandaigua, is home to exciting water attractions that beckon more-adventurous older kids and gentle water playgrounds that keep smaller kids busy. Parents love the layout, cleanliness, and sense of safety that Roseland affords; they feel comfortable when ‘tweens and teens venture off on their own, while it’s easy to keep an eye on their smaller siblings.

**Bristol Mountain Aerial Adventures** – Bristol Mountain Aerial Adventures is a recreation-based family-oriented outdoor activity set in the forest canopy. An Aerial Adventure Park is a series of challenge courses interwoven within the forest canopy. Bristol Mountain Aerial Adventures has seven different courses with different levels of difficulty. Each course is made up of 12-15 elements with each element suspended between platforms that are secured to trees. Elements include zip lines, tight rope walk, rope ladders, and bridges, etc. Reservations are highly recommended. Bristol Mountain is located a quick 40-minute trip south of Rochester.

**Darien Lake Amusement Park** – Darien Lake Amusement Park is a theme park located between Rochester and Buffalo just south of the New York State Thruway. Roller coasters that will thrill your most adventurous teen include the Boomerang, the Mind Eraser, the Ride of Steel, and the Viper. You’ll enjoy traditional rides such as the Giant Wheel (a 165-ft tall Ferris wheel), the bumper cars, the Twister, the Grande Carousel, a swinging Pirate Ship, and many others. A separate waterpark called Splashdown is also affiliated with Darien Lake, and can be experienced either separately or in conjunction with a trip to the main amusement park.

**Rochester Red Wings baseball** – How family-friendly do you like YOUR baseball? Summer is the season we typically associate with baseball, and Frontier Field is at its most family-fun-tastic in the summer. For less than you'd spend in an outing to the movies, you can cheer on our Red Wings (our minor league team for the Minnesota Twins), chow down on Zweigle's red hots and cotton candy—or more healthful fare like a salad, a Panini, or a turkey crepe. 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!



**Special Event Weekends at Genesee Country Village and Museum** – Weekends in the summertime are jam-packed with options at Genesee Country Village and Museum, New York's 19<sup>th</sup>-century living history museum. Civil War Days, a traditional Independence Day celebration, Laura Ingalls Wilder Days, their National Silver Base Ball tournament, the Old-Time Fiddler's Fair, and Victorian Days add a festive flair to a wonderful living history experience every day of the week in the summertime. Their interpreters, fascinating demonstrations and hands-on activities for all ages will make your family feel like you just popped back in time. Kids will not realize how much they're learning!

**Brown's Berry Patch Barnyard Adventure plus strawberry, blueberry, cherry, and raspberry picking** – In the summertime, the cherries are so thick in the trees at Brown's Berry Patch that you'll think you've arrived at the Garden of Eden. Then head to Brown's other picking fields for raspberries, blueberries, and late strawberries. Afterward, head over to the barn for barbecue and indoors for ice cream and other delicacies made fresh on the farm. Save the Barnyard Adventure and playground activities for *after* picking—otherwise, your kids will never want to leave!

**Lake Ontario's Beaches** – Head north on Lake Avenue. In just 9 miles, you'll be at Ontario Beach Park (what locals call "Charlotte Beach") directly north of Rochester. Hop on the historic carousel, play in the sand and gentle waves, have a picnic in a pavilion, walk out on the pier, and lick an Abbott's Custard cone. Five miles east you can head to Durand Eastman Park, which also has a small public sprayground. 35 miles even further east is the historic summer resort community of Sodus Point. Or instead head 22 miles west of Ontario Beach Park to another lovely beach, Hamlin Beach State Park—great combined with a trip to Brown's Berry Patch!

**Free Community Concerts** – Every night of the week in the summer, you will find at least one, probably several, free community concerts from which you can choose. With music ranging from classical to jazz to fife-and-drum to swing to rock, you'll find something that will engage both you and your kids. Our Canal towns of Fairport, Pittsford, and Spencerport have especially great venues for this music, and are delightful places to stroll, have dinner, and shop.

## 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.

**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!



Rochester is famous for its many festivals throughout the year. The **Rochester International Jazz Festival** is held in June, as is the Maplewood Rose Festival; **Corn Hill Arts Festival** is in July; **the Park Ave Summer Art Fest** is in August; and **the Clothesline Festival at the Memorial Art Gallery** winds up our summer in early September. Interspersed within those months are various **Canal Days** festivals for our Erie Canal towns.

Our region celebrates the Fourth of the July like few others you will ever encounter: Visitors during the Fourth of July weekend will find more opportunities for family fun (much of it free!) and special events than you can count.

## 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.

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**Sample 2-day summer trip itinerary:** For a 2-day trip with kids, we recommend culture for the first day, pure classic fun for the second day. So consider a trip to Genesee Country Village, Susan B. Anthony House, or the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography & Film during the day, and a Red Wings baseball game, concert in the park, or an Eastman House Vibes concert in the garden at night. The second day, head to a location that puts the FUN in Family FUNtastic: Seabreeze, Roseland, or Darien Lake Amusement Park, or the Seneca Park Zoo. The kids will sleep in the car or on the plane, trust us.

**Sample 3-day summer trip itinerary:** The second night, we suggest opting for a great dinner out and then relaxing in your hotel, especially if it has a pool. Sleep well, because you'll want to save your energy for your third day in Rochester. Add on the Rochester Museum & Science Center in the morning, Strong National Museum of Play in the afternoon (don't forget a trip to Strong's Butterfly Garden)—both can be done in one day if you don't have much time, although really it's best to take a day for each. Or spend most of the day at the Seneca Park Zoo and then bring some sandwiches to the beach at Durand Eastman Park for an afternoon picnic before packing up and heading home.

**Sample 4-day summer trip itinerary:** For your third night in Rochester, check out KidsOutAndAbout's community calendar to see what's happening around town for families; free evening concerts abound in our communities every day of the week in the summer, but especially on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. For Day 4, you want to make sure you finish "strong"—at the Strong National Museum of Play if you haven't already been there, or the Seneca Park Zoo, OR the RMSC. Finish with an afternoon snack and a walk on the Erie Canal Path before waving goodbye and heading home.

And make plans to come back and see us again!