

# DEVIL'S LAKE STATE PARK

S5975 Park Road  
Baraboo, WI 53913-9299  
(888) 947-2757 (for campsite availability)  
(608) 356-8301 (general information)

More people visit Devil's Lake State park annually (1.3 million) than any other state park in Wisconsin. Perhaps it is the scenic trails for hiking and biking. Or maybe it's the famous rock climbing that thrill seekers come to enjoy. Or it might even be the beautiful Devil's Lake itself that attracts outdoor enthusiasts from all over the country. Whatever it may be, Devil's Lake State Park certainly has become a favorite camping destination for many scouts and scouters.

Devil's Lake State Park was established in 1911, and is one of Wisconsin's oldest state parks. It was also one of the first four areas landscape architect John Nolen recommended be set aside when he began planning the state park system in 1909. Prehistoric Indians once inhabited the park and constructed numerous effigy mounds in the shape of birds and other animals. Ho-Chunk Indians also had a summer fishing village along the north shore of Devil's Lake and a winter camp on the southeast shore. Over the years, the park has undergone many changes, and has seen quarries, a golf course, a toboggan slide, and private cabins within its boundaries.



**Camping Availability:** Devil's Lake has 407 family sites, 353 of which are reservable. There are 9 group sites that can accommodate a total of 240 campers. Reservations are strongly recommended, as Devil's Lake campsites fill up quickly. Make reservations at least 6 months in advance for group sites, because they go quickly. Mirror Lake State Park is nearby, and much more available, if you cannot get a reservation at Devil's Lake. The non-group sites are a bit cramped, and typically will not fit more than 2 tents.

**Seasonal Information:** Water facilities are turned on about mid-April, but one winterized water tap and non-flush restrooms are available for campers all winter long. Quartzite campground is the only available campground in the winter, and is not very rustic. Five miles of Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails are also available. Ice fishing is available, but ice thickness and safety is not monitored by the park.



**Activities Inside the park:** There are plenty of hiking trails to keep you busy. Devil's Lake has 30 miles of trails, which range from easy meadow walks to rugged staircase-like stone steps steeply ascending several hundred feet up to the tops of the bluffs. The Ice Age Trail contains about half of the park's trails. It also contains 8 miles of off-road mountain biking trails. The paved roads throughout the park are not biker-friendly, however, as the hills and curves make it impossible for drivers to see far ahead, and many drivers are distracted by the scenery.

Rock climbing is very popular around the park, but the park is not maintained for rock climbing; climb at your own risk. Nonetheless, there are plenty of outfitters to help scouts learn to climb, and this is a great place to earn climbing merit badge.

Fishing and boating is available to scouts and scouters with a fishing license. Brown trout, walleye, northern pike, bass, and panfish are abundant in Devil's Lake. The nature center has a limited supply of fishing tackle that you can borrow. Boats and canoes can be rented at the park's concession areas. A specially adapted kayak is available for use for people with disabilities.

*Authored by Chris Brown*