

TURKEY RUN STATE PARK

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Turkey Run State Park is a great place for hiking scenic trails. The park is full of canyons and ravines formed over hundreds of millions of years, as ancient riverbeds wind through the cliffs, leaving evidence of the magnificent rivers that once tore through the sandstone bluffs. As the second state park established in Indiana, Turkey Run is home to many old growth trees, and there are plenty of historical sites to please any geology or history buff. The peaceful and Scenic Sugar Creek runs right through the heart of Turkey Run State Park, which provides for excellent fishing and canoeing. This is a good park to “get back to basics”, with prime camping, fishing, and hiking trails. The trail system is well marked and rated by ruggedness, so you will have no problem planning a nice day hike.

Camping Availability: Turkey Run has 213 Class A modern campsites with electrical hookup and modern restrooms and showers. It also has 2 primitive group camps with pit toilets, but no restrooms or showers. Turkey Run also offers a variety of cabins for rent, including family housekeeping cabins. Cabins are very popular, so you must reserve early.

Activities Inside the Park: Turkey Run State park is well known for its hiking trails. With 11 different trails spanning over 12 miles, the park contains trail difficulties for all levels. Some of the more rugged trails are the most fun, including the trail through Boulder Canyon! There is an easier 3 mile trail that leads to the Narrows Covered Bridge, an historic landmark spanning over Sugar Creek. Other fun things to see while hiking include Box Canyon, Gypsy Gulch, Ice Box, Bear Hollow, Punch Bowl, Rocky Hollow, Wedge Rock, Lusk Home, Lieber Cabin, Camel’s Back, Log Church, and an old quarry and coal mine. The park boasts many historic sites, including:



-Lieber Cabin – built in 1848 and moved to Turkey Run in 1918, this log cabin museum commemorates Lieber’s contributions to Indiana State parks. The large tulip logs used to build the cabin serve as a reminder of the large tulip tree forests that supplied builders of early America.

Lusk Home – Early pioneers built the Lusk Home and a grist mill on this land that was acquired by Captain Lusk in 1825. The grist mill was completed in 1829, and the Lusk home was completed in 1841. Captain Lusk kept the land pristine, and the restored home is open for tours seasonally.

Fishing along Sugar Creek is popular amongst anglers, and you can catch bass, bluegill, and more. There are two boat landings along the Creek in Turkey Run State park. Although canoes are not available in the park, you can use a variety of outfitters for canoeing, kayaking, and tubing the scenic Sugar Creek. Swimming is prohibited in the creek, but Turkey Run offers an Olympic-size swimming pool, open from 11AM to 6PM from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The park also offers guided horseback rides through the park, but unfortunately, you cannot bring your own horse. The Saddle Barn also offers hayrides, and is open April through October, 9AM – 5PM. You can also visit the Nature Center and take part in a variety of programs, including nature hikes, planetarium programs, history talks, and more.

Area Attractions: There are some canoe, kayak, and tubing outfitters you can use along Sugar creek, such as Clements, or Sugar Valley canoe Trips.

Interesting Fact About the Park: Turkey Run got its name from the way the turkey hunters would round up wild turkeys in the canyon riverbeds, or “runs”, making it easy to hunt large amounts of them at a time. If you call that hunting.

Authored by Chris Brown