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# 3 Midwest Road Trips For Summer – Indianapolis, Ohio And Wisconsin



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Travel

*I write about luxury travel, food and wine.*



Biking on the Monon Trail, Indianapolis CLIFF RITCHEY

After months in quarantine and with the threat of coronavirus far from extinguished, road trips have become the preferred mode of traveling this

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feels safer than flying and it's a great way to see the country. Consider these Midwest road trip destinations in Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin whether you're looking for outdoor adventures in nature or to relax with a long-awaited spa treatment.

## Outdoor Adventure in Ohio



Scioto Mile in Columbus, Ohio EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS

In the heart of downtown Columbus, the revitalized riverfront comprises more than 175 acres of bikeways, pedestrian paths and parkland planted with indigenous grasses. The [Scioto Mile](#) is great for walking, cycling, canoeing or stand-up paddleboarding. Relax after your workout with a scoop of ice cream from Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, a croissant from [Pistacia Vera](#) or a refreshing beer at [Rockmill Tavern](#). Rockmill's brewery in Lancaster, just 30 minutes from the city, is worth a visit too. The former

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Rockmill Brewing Beer Tasting AMBER GIBSON

An hour south of Columbus are the cliffs, forests and waterfalls of [Hocking Hills](#), arguably the most beautiful landscapes in the Midwest. Outdoor adventures are plentiful and favorite hikes include Conkle's Hollow, Cantwell Cliffs, Corkscrew Falls and the most famous of all – Old Man's Cave. Try rock climbing and rappelling down moss-covered sandstone cliffs at [High Rock Adventures](#), or take a leisurely eco tour and learn about the indigenous flora and fauna while sipping refreshing birch water. [Hocking Hills Canopy Tours](#) offers ziplining for all ages and you can find solace among the stars on clear nights at [John Glenn Astronomy Park](#). Stay at [Inn at Cedar Falls](#) for the most comfortable beds in the county.

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Old Mans Cave Devils Bathtub, Hocking Hills ERIC HOFFMAN

[Butterfly Ridge](#) is one of the most inspiring attractions in Hocking Hills, a conservation project celebrating pollinators of all types including butterflies, moths and bees. The property has been in owner Christopher Kline's family since 1863 and today Kline and his wife pour their hearts into this butterfly haven, offering guided hikes and treasure hunts for kids. Saturday night moth lightings give nightlife a whole new meaning – and open your eyes to an unexpected world of beauty. More than 500 species of moths have been spotted on property and hot humid nights are the best conditions for maximum moth sightings.

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Touch the Earth Adventures Kayaking TOUCH THE EARTH ADVENTURES

Another breathtaking wildlife experience is kayaking with Mimi Morrison of [Touch the Earth Adventures](#). With brilliant sapphire eyes and a tanned visage, Morrison is Mother Earth personified, at home among the beavers, great blue herons and bullfrogs on Lake Hope. Most guests go kayaking during the day, but sunset kayaking is even better. Morrison also hosts [hiking and kayaking nature retreats](#) for women.

## A Girls Getaway in Indianapolis

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Indy Craft Pass MELISSA NEEL

If you're yearning for a fun city vibe that still feels safe, Indianapolis is approaching reopening in a cautiously optimistic fashion. Stretches of Broad Ripple and Massachusetts Avenue are closed to traffic, allowing restaurants like [Garden Table](#) to expand their outdoor seating capacity so guests can dine al fresco while social distancing. Some restaurants, like brunch favorite Milktooth, are still closed for now, but sister restaurant [Beholder](#) is open for dinner and one of the best restaurants in the city. [Livery](#) is another great pick for rooftop dining with Latin-American flavors and spicy margaritas.

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Smoothie Bowl at Ezra's Enlightened Cafe EZRA'S ENLIGHTENED CAFE

Take a stroll along the shaded paths of the beautifully landscaped [Garden at Newfields](#) and stop for a drink at their beer garden. Just west of Newfields, the [Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park](#) spans 100 acres with cheerful and poignant art installations throughout, including a wild grass labyrinth and “Funky Bones,” the giant fiberglass skeleton sculpture where Augustus and Hazel fall in love in “The Fault in Our Stars.”

Rent a bike from one of [50 Pacers Bikeshare locations](#) to pedal along the Indianapolis Cultural Trail. Broad Ripple is a great place to stop and refuel, with organic smoothies, juices and healthy plant-based lunches at [Ezra's Enlightened Cafe](#), popsicles at Nicey Treat and popcorn and wine flights at [Just Pop In](#). Shop at [8 Fifteen](#) after a blowout or manicure at [French Pharmacie Salon](#). The scalp massages here are excellent and masks are required for both clients and stylists.

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Two Chicks District Co AMBER GIBSON

HGTV fans should make a pilgrimage to brand new [Two Chicks District Co.](#) curated by mother-daughter duo Karen Laine and Mina Starsiak Hawk of “Good Bones” fame. The Bates-Hendricks boutique has a small bistro area in front serving wine, local beer and light bites from [Wildwood Market](#) and the furniture and home décor include many items you may recognize from their TV show. Craving a cocktail instead of wine? Head a couple blocks over to [1718 House Bar](#) and their spacious backyard patio. There's not as much nightlife these days, but you can create your own wine flights from 70 different bottles at [Tastings](#) wine bar or pick up a six-pack from [Upland Brewing Co](#) before heading to [Tibbs Drive-in Theatre](#)

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Gallery Pastry Shop Broad Ripple KELLEY JORDAN

Indy's dessert scene is getting a lot sweeter too. [Gallery Pastry Shop](#) just opened adjacent to Hyatt House downtown, serving soft scrambled eggs on toasted croissants at brunch and seafood towers at dinner along with foie gras macarons and delicate entremets. In coming weeks, [Leviathan Bakehouse](#) will open too, along with a chocolate tasting room by [SoChatti](#) in the [Circle City Industrial Complex](#), a cool community of more than a hundred artists and makers. While you're there, drop in for a class at [Indy Fused Glass](#) and make your own plate or bowl from a kaleidoscope of colors. Don't forget to pick up some locally made [Frittle peanut brittle candy](#) to enjoy on the drive home.

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Indy Fused Glass at Circle City Industrial Complex CONRAD PICCIRILLO

## A Romantic Spa Retreat in Wisconsin



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Amidst the cheesy attractions of Wisconsin Dells – Ancient Greece themed water parks, miniature golf courses, arcade games and Go Karts – a romantic adults-only retreat is the last thing you'd expect to find. [Sundara Inn & Spa](#) and its 80-acre enclave of serenity is like a mirage in the desert, a welcome respite from the gallimaufry of family-friendly fun and kooky entertainment that the Dells are known for.



Dining in bathrobes at Sundara Spa JOSEPH LEUTE

Sundara has been electronics-free since opening in 2003, when it was a digital detox pioneer. Now, the gentle rule helps guests unplug from stressful lives. A weekend without cellphone notifications or screaming children? What could be more divine? Sundara's 2018 expansion includes new spa facilities, a pink Himalayan salt chamber and eight woodland suites and retreats. There are just 27 suites, including a [spa villa](#), so it never feels

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Sundara Golf Course JOSEPH LEUTE

Peace and quiet are encouraged throughout public spaces, from the indoor bathhouse with its signature five-step bath ritual to the shakra meditation trail. The woodland reflection room overlooking the forest is a wonderful place to nap in a rocking chair when it's not being used for yoga or guided meditation classes – just a couple of the complimentary classes offered each day. Meander through the deer sanctuary on the resort's 2.5 mile hiking trail or relax in the pool and order a cocktail from the swim-up bar. Golfers will enjoy the rolling hills at the championship [Wild Rock Golf Club](#) course next door.

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Sundara Spa Suite JOSEPH LEUTE

Ultimately, Sundara's star attraction is the spa. The comprehensive treatment menu ranges from medical-grade HydraFacials and Vichy shower body treatments to a signature body polish and massage using ingredients indigenous to the Wisconsin Dells. Upgrade manicures and pedicures with new CBD-infused products for extra relaxation and pain relief. The indoor pool area mimics Wisconsin's ancient Cambrian-era sandstone cliffs with casts of rock formations.

In the gift shop, you'll find [Roots Chocolates](#), made just down the road on chocolatemaker Lisa Nelson's organic farm. Bonbons are infused with raspberries, mint and spruce tip caramel, depending on what's in season. Visits to the farm are available by appointment, so you can enjoy a private chocolate tasting with refreshing cacao nib cold brew. There's no better aphrodisiac.

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