

Summer: Make the most of it!

A guide to local parks, picnic and swimming areas

August and September are typically the best months for outdoor summer activities in the Eugene area. We list here some of the many places you can get to easily from Eugene—spots most suited for an afternoon swim or an evening picnic supper. Several parks feature free outdoor concerts, too. (All directions given are from downtown Eugene.)

ALTON BAKER PARK

Situated along the Willamette River, this park features the 4.2 mile jogging path Pre's Trail, a 3-mile waterway ideal for canoeing (watch for Blue Herons), large playfields, covered picnic areas, and boating access to the river. The new Cuthbert Amphitheatre, which seats over 4,000 people, is the site of many summer concerts and festivals. Cross Ferry Street Bridge, take first right.

AMAZON PARK

This expansive city park forms a refreshing greenway in south Eugene. It features a playground, large picnic areas and playing fields, a community center and a public swimming pool. A major bike trail cuts through the park. Nearby is the one-mile Adidas Oregon Trail, a sawdust jogging path which begins at 24th and Amazon Parkway. Free outdoor concerts happen every Thursday evening, 6:30-8:30 pm, through August. 2700 Hillyard.

ARMITAGE PARK

This lush green state park, located north of Eugene on the McKenzie River, is ideal for large gatherings, with ample picnic and cooking facilities plus spacious playing fields. \$1 per car. Take Coburg Rd. north towards the town of Coburg.

EUGENE DOWNTOWN MALL

Not your ordinary park, this downtown shopping mall features picnic tables, playgrounds, sidewalk cafes, push cart vendors, and lots of greenery and flowers. With free parking on all sides and easy access to public transportation, the Mall is a pleasant place to shop, stroll, or meet someone for lunch. The central fountain area is the site of outdoor concerts, theatre productions and other events—with free noontime concerts on Wednesdays and children's entertainment on Fridays. The Mall is bordered by 8th and 11th Avenues, Charnelton and Oak Streets.

FERN RIDGE RESERVOIR

There are several spots on the shores of Fern Ridge Reservoir suitable for picnics, swimming, boating and fishing. The closest to downtown Eugene is Perkins Peninsula. Take West 11th and watch for the sign.

HENDRICKS PARK

This 81.5 acre wooded parkland, overlooking Eugene, features an exquisite rhododendron garden with over 6000 rhododendrons and azaleas. Surrounding the garden is a wooded park with 300-year-old trees, hiking trails, picnic and play areas. Hendricks Park is big on shade and features a covered pavilion for large group gatherings. Take Franklin Blvd., right on Walnut, right on Fairmont, and left on Summit.

ISLAND PARK

Nestled in the trees along the Willamette River, this park has picnic and play areas, large picnic shelters and boating access to the river. Take Franklin Blvd. across the Willamette into Springfield; turn left or right on Mill.

JASPER PARK

This 60-acre park is located along the banks of the Willamette River. It features playing fields, horse-shoe pits, picnic areas for large and small groups, and a swimming area. A county park, \$1.50 per car. From I-5 South, take Hwy 58 to left turn-off to Jasper.

MONROE PARK

This neighborhood park has a great playground for the kiddies, lots of grass and trees, and features free concerts on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:30 pm. Bring the kids and a picnic supper. 10th and Monroe.



Photograph by David Stein

Canoeing on the Alton Baker Canoe Canal promises a scenic tour of the park lands, a view of some wildlife, as well as a good workout for the arms! Canoe rentals are available at River Runner Supply, near the park entrance.

MT. PISGAH ARBORETUM/BUFORD PARK

Located along the Coast Fork of the Willamette River, at the base of the 1520 foot Mt. Pisgah, the Arboretum features trees and shrubs from around the world. Adjacent to the Arboretum is Buford Park, an idyllic swimming and picnic area. Be prepared to walk in a short way—on tree-lined paths along the river. Hiking trails lead from there to the top of Mt. Pisgah. Take Franklin Blvd. south to Seavy Loop Road, left on Seavy Loop to the end.

SKINNER BUTTE PARK

Named after city founder Eugene Skinner, this park is situated along the Willamette River, close to downtown Eugene. It features beautiful grassy lawns, playing fields, picnic areas, a playground and the Owens Rose Garden. The top of the wooded butte offers a scenic panorama of the city. A bike path running along the river connects this park with Valley River Center, Autzen Stadium, the U of O and Alton Baker Park. Take High St. north to the end.

SPENCER BUTTE

Just a few miles south of Eugene lies the highest vista point in the area. A fairly gentle trail leads all the way to the top from which you can see a full 360 degree panorama. The one-way hike takes about an hour and is well worth the effort, especially on a clear, sunny day! Pack some drinking water and a snack or lunch and make an afternoon of it. Take Willamette Street south.

WESTMORELAND COMMUNITY CENTER/PARK

Free evening concerts take place in this expansive park in West Eugene, Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, through August. The park also features a sawdust jogging trail and tennis courts. 1545 W 22nd.

WILLAMALANE PARK & POOL

This Springfield park has a large indoor swimming pool, playground, picnic areas and lighted tennis courts. From Highway 105 take Mohawk to G Street.

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