

# What are we going to do tomorrow? Let life be a Blast!

Alright, moms and dads ... Here we are, just into July, halfway through summer break. For us, this is the point in the summer when activities slow down a bit, but the first day of school seems to be creeping closer every day. With that day edging closer come thoughts of your little one starting kindergarten just yesterday, but now they're heading into their middle school years. Or maybe this is their very first year of school, and they've been home with you for the last five years. Either of those milestones is enough to have a mom's head spinning and wishing time would slow down – especially summertime.

However, if your house is anything like mine, this is also the point in the summer when it's hot, the 15 sports events and camps are finally over, the house has become a dumping ground for stinky cleats and wet swimsuits, endless snacks have been eaten, countless drinks have been opened and abandoned, camp laundry is piled high in the laundry room, you're the only one who apparently knows how to operate the washing machine, and the million-dollar question starts being asked less than 48 hours after your children's return from said camps ...

"What are we doing tomorrow?!"

I'm convinced that all of the sweet thoughts and sentimental feelings we have about our growing children were given to us as a form of self-preservation to keep us from completely losing our minds and eating our young like animals in the wild. Because there's nothing that makes this Type C, chaos-loving mom crazier than being asked what we're doing tomorrow after I've already used every ounce of creative energy planning today – as well as every week prior!

Now, before anyone starts mumbling under their breath, "When I was little, we didn't have to be entertained all the time ... We had a stick and a rock, and we were happy all summer ..."

Yes, I know. I've shared those same sentiments over the years, and I agree. I didn't grow up in a family that took vacations every school break, and



Kentucky Down Under



Exploring Big Rivers



I turned out just fine. In fact, most of my favorite childhood memories come from summers spent with my cousins and friends playing outside, riding bikes, camping out and swimming.

So no, I don't believe my kids have to go on a vacation every year or be entertained with planned activities every single day. But I do enjoy being the maker of memories and the provider of fun whenever I can. Sometimes that means a vacation, and other times it means a quick day trip and a picnic lunch.

Recently, I've noticed other moms asking the same question online, searching for something fun and close to home to do with their own kids. So this month, I thought I'd share some of our favorite local(ish) spots, along with a few weekend trip ideas we've loved over the years.

First up: Local(ish) adventures

The Clement Mineral Museum: My kids absolutely LOVE this place. They're open six days a week from 10

a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cave-In-Rock: Assuming the ferry negotiations work themselves out, the ferry ride, playgrounds and giant cave make this a quick, fun afternoon trip for the whole family – and it's free! Pack a lunch, and you've got an entire day of entertainment.

Garden of the Gods in southern Illinois: This one is probably best for families with older kids – or parents like us whose children treat every rock as a parkour course and whose nervous systems have simply adapted. It's an easy half-day trip, but you can easily stretch it into a full day with a picnic. There's also a little roadside shop on the way out that sells ice cream, and it's the perfect reward after a day of climbing and exploring.

Big Rivers – A great place to explore with beautiful views that make for the perfect picnic spot. Be sure to pack bug spray and plenty of water!

Land Between the Lakes: Bison drive-through, boating, fish-



Don't miss Dinosaur World

ing, the Nature Station, Maggie's Jungle Golf ... if you can think of it, they probably have it.

Pennyrile State Park: If you love sand, sunshine, beautiful blue-green water, a healthy dose of exhaustion and the possibility of leg cramps, this is the day trip for you. Like any beach day, it may require more work from the adults than the kids, but it's guaranteed to create memories they'll never forget. My pro tip? Bring friends. The kids entertain each other while you get a little adult conversation, and having another set of eyes watching swimmers never hurts. They also offer kayak and paddleboat rentals, although I haven't tried those yet.

The Calvert City Drive-In: This is a must on a cool summer evening. Honestly, I couldn't tell you much about any of the movies we've watched because my ADHD kicks in, and I can't stay focused for two hours. My kids, however, think it's the greatest thing ever. Ryan Blackburn's favorite part? The burgers. He'd happily make the drive just for those.

Weekend getaway favorites: Bowling Green area.

My sister lived in Bowling Green for several years, so we became pretty familiar with all the fun family attractions nearby.

Chaney's Dairy Barn: Fun in both the summer and fall, with delicious

ice cream and great playgrounds.

Lost River Cave: Such a neat experience! You explore the cave by boat, and there are walking trails, butterfly gardens and playgrounds to enjoy afterward. Tours require reservations, so be sure to book ahead.

Kentucky Down Under: Located in Cave City, just outside Bowling Green, there's an onyx cave to explore, a bird aviary where birds will eat right from your hand and the best part – the kangaroo petting zoo. We all loved this one.

Dinosaur World: Also in Cave City. It's definitely a little kitschy, but if you have a dinosaur-loving kid, they'll think it's the greatest place on earth.

Mammoth Cave: I haven't taken my own kids here yet, but it's high on our list. Tours fill up quickly during school breaks, so plan ahead if you decide to go.

And of course, there's Discovery Park of America in Union City, Tenn. It easily fills an entire day and truly has something for everyone. We've been several times, and it's always a hit. If you're still up for one more stop on the way home, grab dinner at The Grind Mac & Cheese Burger Bar in Martin, Tenn, and don't leave without ordering one of their over-the-top milkshakes.

Now, I'm certainly no travel adviser. Truthfully, I usually talk myself out of taking the trip before it ever begins because staying home often sounds much easier. But I also know that some of our family's favorite memories have come from simply saying yes to the adventure.

So don't take my recommendations as expert travel advice. They're simply suggestions from one mom trying to help another answer the age-old summer question ...

"What are we doing tomorrow?"

*Author Staci Blackburn grew up in Crittenden County and is now raising her family here as a working mom.*

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## KENTUCKY Sheriff's Ranch

Crittenden County Sheriff Evan Head is pictured with Caroline Williams of Marion during last week's Kentucky Sheriffs' Boys and Girls Camp at Gilbertsville. The free four-day camp is for children ages 8-11 years old. Also pictured is Camp Coordinator Jessie Moore.



### NOTICE OF PASSAGE AND SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE NO. 26-O-008: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CRITTENDEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

Notice is hereby given that the Fiscal Court of Crittenden County, Kentucky, at a special called meeting held on June 30, 2026, at 4:00 o'clock p.m., gave second reading and passed and adopted an Ordinance relating to the Ordinances of the Crittenden County Fiscal Court, which Ordinance had been given its first reading at its regular meeting of the Fiscal Court held on June 18, 2026, at 6:00 o'clock p.m. A summary of the Ordinance is as follows:

Chapter 8: Purchases and Contracts is amended to increase the need for competitive bidding from \$20,000.00 to \$50,000.00 for materials, supplies, and contractual services other than professional. Further, the negotiated process may be used instead of advertisement for bids if the amount exceeds \$50,000.00 if an emergency exists, bids exceed available funds or the contract is for professional services.

The full text of the Ordinance is on file in the Office of the County Clerk in the County Administrative Office Building, Industrial Drive, Marion, Kentucky, where it is available for public inspection.

PREPARED BY: ROBERT B. FRAZER, CRITTENDEN COUNTY ATTORNEY  
P.O. BOX 364, MARION, KY 42064, 270/965-4600, July 1, 2026

### MONEY FOR FARM IMPROVEMENTS



**Eligible Incentive Areas:**  
Agricultural Diversification  
AgTech & Leadership Development  
Large Animal - Small Animal Farm Infrastructure  
Fencing & On-Farm Water  
Forage & Grain Improvement  
Innovative Ag. Systems  
On-Farm Energy  
Poultry & Other Fowl  
Value Added & Marketing

visit: [kyagr.com/agpolicy/2026-Program-Guidelines-and-Applications](http://kyagr.com/agpolicy/2026-Program-Guidelines-and-Applications)  
CAIP Program

All applications are scored based on the scoring criteria set by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board.

### COUNTY AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM (CAIP)

Applications are available for Crittenden County's CAIP program. CAIP is a cost-share reimbursement to producers who make qualifying investments, most require a 50% match, up to \$2500 reimbursed.

**Informational meeting, July 9, 2026, 6:30 pm at the Fiscal Court building.**

Application Available at the meeting or after July 9 from:

**CRITTENDEN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

118 E. Bellville St.  
Marion, KY 42064

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**For More Information:**  
270-965-3921, ext. 3

or Email: **Cindy Jenkins** or **Bob Guess** at [CrittendenConservation.ky@gmail.com](mailto:CrittendenConservation.ky@gmail.com)