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# 11 THINGS TO DO FOR SPRING BREAK IN SPOKANE

Spring break is more than well-deserved time off. It's glorious sunshine after winter dark, the final flurries of snow dusting the mountains, and flowers blooming everywhere. Spokane—the Lilac City—makes an ideal spring break destination. It's a perfectly walkable city, with gardens galore, an action-packed city park, and miles of walks, hikes, and bike rides just outside your door.





Spokane is a vibrant college town, with more food, exciting art, and shopping options than you can check off in a week. It's a family-friendly environment, that also boasts one of the most dynamic beer and wine scenes in the Northwest. Further afield, Spokane is a gateway to winter sports and the perfect base camp for those final bluebird days of spring. Check out these things to do for Spring Break in Spokane.



## **#1 DISCOVER SPOKANE PARKS & GARDENS**

Spring in Spokane means it's time for the lilacs to blossom in the Lilac City. This colorful bouquet was brought to the Spokane Valley around the turn of the last century and thrived so well the city adopted it as the official flower. With 23 different species, the Lilac Garden in Manito Park is the place to go for the bright colors and amazing aromas of spring.



Manito Park unveils epic blooms on the 117-year-old property, which also includes a Japanese Garden, Rose Hill, and two other gardens. Located in the historic South Hill neighborhood, check into a favorite home rental and stay in a classic 1920s bungalow with park views.

With 87 city parks and wise urban planning, over 80% of Spokane residents are within walking distance of green spaces. Other easy-to-enjoy garden highlights include the lush John Finch Arboretum, secluded Palisades Park, and epic Riverside State Park.



## **#2 VISIT RIVERFRONT PARK**

Riverfront Park is Spokane's must-do and is totally unique among city parks nationwide. 146-foot Spokane Falls is the most impressive urban waterfall in the country. Buy a ticket for the Numerica SkyRide over the Spokane Falls and then

ice or roller skate on the Numerica Skate Ribbon. Take the sculpture self-guided walk—capped off with a visit for the kids to the world-famous Garbage-Eating Goat, and the big Red Wagon--the planet's largest Radio Flyer. Take a nostalgic ride on the Looff Carousel, one of the country's best-preserved hand-carved wooden carousels. Then be sure to return after sunset to watch the mesmerizing Pavilion Light Show. The fun never stops, from sunup to sundown.



### **#3 GO SPRING SKIING**

For powder enthusiasts, spring means the shredding is over—or is it? Spokane is your spring break winter sports base camp--with five resorts within two hours of downtown, including mile-high Mount Spokane just an hour away. Or venture into the gorgeous surrounding hills, the Inland Northwest is also one of the best places in the country to hike, fish, and camp.





## **#4 TAKE A WALK ON THE CENTENNIAL TRAIL**

Starting in Riverside State Park and stretching to the Idaho border, the Centennial Trail offers 40 miles of outdoor dedicated path leg-stretching fresh air. Go for a long ride or a short stroll, the choice is yours. The easiest place to access the Centennial Trail is in downtown Spokane, where three miles of the trail wind through the historic core. Hop on and hop off at any point to eat, drink, shop, and sightsee.



*Pictured: Northwest Museum of Arts*

## **#5 IMMERSE YOURSELF IN SPOKANE'S ART & ARCHITECTURE**

Culture doesn't need to take a break—Spokane has a thriving gallery district, as well as the best museum in the Inland Northwest. The city turns 150 in 2023, so it is also chock full of historic neighborhoods, adorned with Victorian and Craftsmen houses. Spend an afternoon in Browne's Addition, one's of the city's oldest and most charming neighborhoods. Grab lunch at Browne's Bistro, then hit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, aka the MAC.

On March 20th, the museum welcomes the world premiere of DreamWorks Animation: The Exhibition Journey from Sketch to Screen, the first-ever viewing of over 400 models, masks, and drawings from animated classics like Shrek, and



How to Train Your Dragon. Fans of all ages can visit the Drawing Room to create their own hand-drawn movie concepts, then bring them to life with DreamWorks software.



## **#6 ACTIVITIES FOR THE YOUNG OR YOUNG AT HEART**

Spokane is the perfect playground to bring the kids, load them up with yummy food, and then watch them burn off exuberant energy for days. Riverfront Park alone has enough tasty options to keep them endlessly occupied. The impressive, all-inclusive Providence Playscape promotes independence, equality, and social activity for all kids. The 12,000 square foot playground is safe, comfortable, and accessible for all.

Mobius Discovery Center has re-opened, dedicated to inspiring the littles to inquire, explore, and discover. Mobius offers experiential learning opportunities to encourage little ones to think creatively and solve problems—and it's also a lot of

fun! Next door, Huntington Park provides a quiet place to sit with an ideal vantage point for viewing the rushing river and falls below.

For lunch, visit the Garland district to eat burgers in a milk bottle. That's right, inside a milk bottle! Mary Lou's Milk Bottle is a throwback diner with award-winning milkshakes, homemade burgers, and more comfort food than the kids can eat. Unless they try really hard.

When dinnertime rolls around, the booming neighborhood of Kendall Yards has more treats for littles. Kids will love an ice cream break at The Scoop, or award-winning 'za at Versalia Pizza. By this point, the grownups will be exceedingly content to spend a few hours at kid-friendly Maryhill Winery, which doles out excellent wine, live music, and sunset views over the river.



## #7 PLAN A ROMANTIC DATE DAY



Spokane's gorgeous surroundings, manageable size, and ease of use make it ideal for a weekend away for couples. Start with a short, scenic drive out to Arbor Crest Wine Cellars, a historic vineyard with stunning views of the Spokane Valley.

After wine and a beautiful red and orange sunset sky, book a table at Luna on the South Hill, or at Osprey on the Spokane River. The allure of the surroundings is perfectly paired with the delicious food.

Before heading back to the hotel, cozy up to a romantic nightcap at any of these downtown liquor dens. With names like Volstead Act, Purgatory, Hogwash, and Cease & Desist--a good time is guaranteed for all.



*Pictured: Prohibition Gastropub Bootleg Burger*

## #8 DIVE INTO SPOKANE'S DIVERSE FOOD SCENE

Dozens of top-flight food options in downtown Spokane make finding foodie favorites easy. Gastropub enthusiasts will love the menus—and drink selection—at Heritage Bar & Kitchen, or Wooden City. Casual diners and burger aficionados will appreciate Incrediburger & Eggs and newly crowned burger king Wisconsinburger. Fine diners will appreciate the Rat Pack nostalgia of Clinkerdagger.

Beyond the tried-and-true favorites, Spokane is home to a diverse and exciting food scene, which has become increasingly appreciated nationwide. Renowned local chef Chad White recently received his second James Beard Award nomination. The Top Chef season 13 contestant runs Zona Blanca, a Mexican ceviche bar slash gastropub in the heart of downtown, a must-eat for visiting gourmands.





## #9 EXPLORE OUR LOCAL BEER & WINE SCENE

Spokane's compact footprint makes it perfect for a pub crawl with your besties. The Cork District is a walkable circuit of downtown tasting rooms, and a cooperative showcasing the best local wines. Visit Barrister, the only winery in the state whose barrel room lies beneath railroad tracks. Barrister produces some of the most acclaimed reds in the state—all gently aged by the vibration of trains overhead.

For another fun and quirky wine experience, check out the new downtown tasting room of Two Winey Bitches—named jokingly for the owners' dogs—and featuring wines made from blueberries, cherries, peaches, and other non-grape fruits.

Spokane is also acclaimed for its award-winning beer. The Spokane Ale Trail boasts an ambitious 30 different breweries! Start at No-Li, winner of six medals at the 2021 World Beer Awards. Their riverside location on the banks of the Spokane River is ideal for reveling in spring weather outside, with a view and a beer. Then head downtown for a brewery crawl.

Iron Goat is a standout, with interesting snacks and great beer. Then off to Brick West, River City, Whistle Punk, Lumberbeard, Black Label—outside of Seattle there are more breweries packed into a smaller space here than anywhere else in the state.



*Pictured: Auntie's Bookstore*



## #10 SHOP INDIE

Spokane has a small but mighty list of distinctive shops for finding that perfect gift. Two sister stores -- inspired by *To Kill a Mockingbird* – are well worth the visit. Boo Radley's is a curio shop filled with unusual cards, t-shirts, and gifts for anyone with a sense of humor. Atticus Coffee & Gifts is its more sophisticated older sibling, with beautiful books and well-curated gifts for those on your gift list with impeccable taste for the finer things. Auntie's Bookstore is a beloved local indie purveyor of books, while next door the aptly named Uncle's Games stocks one of the best collections of board games in the state. Fringe and Fray has fab finds, Do It With Soul is resale clothing heaven, and Roses and Thread has bohemian chic for style mavens everywhere.



## #11 SLUMBER IN STYLE

Spokane's downtown magic comes from its walkability. Give or take a lilac-dotted park or a snow-capped mountain, everything on this itinerary is just a short stroll away. So toss the car keys to the valet and get the party started!

Check into the [Historic Davenport Hotel](#) for a taste of turn-of-the-century splendor. The lovingly restored lobby is one of the most impressive rooms west of the Mississippi. Whether you're staying there or not, order a cocktail in the Peacock Lounge among the decadent surroundings, and then ask the front desk about the self-guided walking tour.

A few blocks away, the [Hotel Indigo](#) offers a chic stay in a well-renovated space that is easy on the wallet. Inside, Magnolia American Brasserie makes a place for the whole group to meet, greet, and eat before heading out on the town.

Around the corner—similarly priced and equally charming—the [Montvale Hotel](#) is Spokane's oldest boutique hotel.

These three and more are ideally located spots to park the car, lay your head, and get the most out of Spokane—spring's walkable, ski-able, tasty, artsy, kid-friendly, romantic, sporty Lilac City!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Natalie Compagno is a travel journalist who has been to over 110 countries. She specializes in culture, food, and entertainment. Her pieces have been published by Huffington Post, Yahoo! Travel, Food52, Red Tricycle, Travel Age West, Peter



Greenberg, Smart Meetings, Tiny Beans, Frequent Flyer Destinations, Northwest Meetings + Events, and more, plus she has recorded numerous podcasts and delivered in-person travel talks throughout the country. She owned the renowned and beloved travel bookstore Traveler's Bookcase in Los Angeles for ten years, during which she contributed her travel expertise to movie studios, teams filming internationally, celebrities, and globetrotting locals. Compagno hosted an episode of Secret Swimming Holes on the Travel Channel that filmed in Spain. She loves discovering and learning about new places, especially off the beaten path destinations and hip new finds.