

Summertime getaways for free (or next to nothing)

Whoever said nothing in life is free hasn't traveled along the Heritage Trail in Northern Indiana, or climbed a sand dune, gone to an art fair or stopped long enough to smell all the flowers.

This summer, Northern Indiana is making it easier to travel by offering lots of things to see and do that won't cost a penny - or in some cases, are next to nothing. Here are 10 trips in Northern Indiana that fit the bill.

1. **Travel the Heritage Trail.** This 90-mile-driving trail takes you on the Amish back roads through the rolling countryside that LIFE editors call "One of America's Most Scenic Drives." You'll discover the rich, diverse heritage that's shaped Amish Country. You'll explore where some 20,000 Amish make their homes, and how band instruments, Alka Seltzer, quilts, furniture, RVs and even pie have helped shape the region. Download an audio tour, or pick up a CD from the Elkhart County Visitors Center. AmishCountry.org
2. **See the Quilt Gardens along the Heritage Trail.** Beginning Memorial Day, take a tour through seven communities in Elkhart County to see 19 gardens – 1,000,000 blooms - all planted in traditional and heirloom quilt patterns. The largest garden spans 2,400 feet, about the length of eight football fields. Also, along the trail are 12 murals painted in quilt patterns. QuiltGardens.com
3. **Hit the beach.** The shores along Lake Michigan stretch about 20 miles from Gary to Michigan City. Along the way, there are eight beaches most of which don't charge admission and include hiking trails, fishing, swimming and picnic areas. IndianaDunes.com
4. **Climb a sand dune.** At 123-feet tall, Mount Baldy on the eastern edge of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore can be quite a work out, but well worth the views of vast Lake Michigan. And if this hike isn't enough, there are several nature hikes throughout the park. There are a variety of ranger-guided tours, special events and horseback riding (that will cost a few bucks). NorthernIndianaGetaways.com
5. **See the Barn Quilts of Marshall and LaGrange Counties.** There's no better way to experience the culture and history of rural Northern Indiana than by hitting the road to see Indiana's first Barn Quilts Trails. You'll find several quilts that adorn barns on family homesteads and public spaces. Maps and information about the Barn Quilts are available at VisitMarshallCounty.org and VisitShipsheWana.org
6. **Attend an Art Fair.** The Annual Village of Winona Art Fair will be held on June 2 and 3 and will bring together hundreds of artists from around the country, who will display (and sell) art in a variety of media. There also are interactive activities for the kids, music and plenty of shopping. LiveWellintheMoment.org