

Five Go Rockford adventures for winter - A variety of indoor, outdoor attractions

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By John Groh,

For many people in the Midwest, the winter months are an excuse to hibernate and wait for spring when outdoor activities and festivals get back into full swing. Here in Rockford, we embrace the cold-weather months and there is no slowing us down. With that in mind, here are my 5 Go Rockford Adventures you should take this winter.

5. The holiday season in Rockford lights up every December with some of the best displays in the region. The tradition of driving through the Festival of Lights in Sinnissippi Park is one many Rockford families look forward to each year. Now that Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens hosts its All Aglow displays, the holiday cheer is amplified. Down the street, don't miss the classic scenes of Christmas at Woodward in Loves Park or Rockford's River Lights, presented by ComEd, along the banks of the Rock River in downtown Rockford. While the RACVB's Stroll on State presented by Illinois Bank & Trust festival is my obvious choice for favorite holiday experience, these displays are certainly at the top of my list.

4. No matter how cold it is outside, the beautiful Coronado Theatre is always heating up thanks to an amazing and ever-changing lineup of great entertainment. In the spirit of Transform Rockford's enthusiastic call to better our community, I think REO Speedwagon's rendition of "Don't Stop Believing" will be extra special when the group takes the stage on Jan. 24. And don't forget about the amazing performances by our own Rockford Symphony Orchestra. Catch their first show of 2018 on Jan. 13.

3. Snow Park at Alpine Hills has already won the hearts of my three children — and I'll be honest, of this adventurous dad, too. With its five acres of winter wonderland and high-speed thrills while you sled down their tracks, you can't help but grin with excitement. Nestled right in the heart of Rockford, it certainly is an attraction that continues to grow in popularity. And thanks to the helpful surface-lift to take you back up to the top of the hill, the kids won't get tired too quickly!

2. For a night on the town, creating your own brewery hop is always a fantastic way to spend time with a group of friends. The Rockford area is lucky to have three amazing breweries: Carlyle Brewing Co., Pig Minds Brewing, Co., and Prairie Street Brewing Co. Start your adventure at Carlyle for a few European-style lagers and maybe a giant pretzel, then hop on over to Prairie Street for a classic American brew in its Screw City Light, and finally, swing up to Machesney Park's gem Pig Minds for a few brews paired with its unique vegan dishes.

1. The Riverfront Museum Campus is often the perfect pick during winter since you can explore three museums without having to venture back out into the cold. You can spend the entire morning getting wild with your kids at Discovery Center Museum before slowing down for a relaxing stroll through the galleries at Rockford Art Museum and, when you feel like jumping into the past, take the underground tunnel over to Burpee Museum of Natural History. So, don't let the cold slow you down. The Rockford region has plenty of attractions to help you get up, get out, and GO! Want to add to your winter adventure itinerary? Check out gorockford.com!