

The Best Way to Grow Up in Rockford

Rockford really is a great place to live. Just after I was born, my parents created a bracket of possible places to live, weighing the pros and cons of each, and found that Rockford came out on top. Aside from all the practical reasons my parents took into consideration, the best part about growing up in Rockford is simply all the fun things to do. I've grown up here and found a whole lot to love, so here are some of my favorite places to go and eat in the Rockford area.

Westrock Wake Park

1420 S Pierpont Ave, Rockford, IL 61102



I took up wakeboarding two years ago because of a single lesson my sister and I took for fun at Westrock; ever since then, I've been obsessed. The instructors at the park are incredible and make wakeboarding easy and fun to learn. It helps that the wake park, located on Levings Lake, is one of the best in the country.



Zammuto's

725 Kent St, Rockford, IL 61102

My sister and I, self-acclaimed ice cream connoisseurs, held a competitive tour of every ice cream shop in and around Rockford. Zammuto's was our winner; their unusual- a combined cup of soft serve and a kind of Italian ice called granita- beat every other ice cream within 30 miles.



Lockwood Park

5201 Safford Rd, Rockford, IL 61101

Horse riding camps at Lockwood were the highlight of my Summers all through elementary. I went back year after year to see my equine friends and spend time outside learning and playing in the sun. Even today, I still regularly run along Lockwood's extensive trails or just walk by to say hi to the animals.

Midway Village Museum Loop

6799 Guilford Rd, Rockford, IL 61107



One of my favorite ways to get outside is to go on a walk, run, or bike ride on the Midway Village Museum Loop path. The path creates two loops that are 1.5 or 2 miles around a beautiful prairie. When the historic village itself is open, it's always worth a visit.

Woodfire Pizza

408 E State St, Rockford, IL 61104



Woodfire will always be my first choice when it comes to pizza in Rockford, although my mom swears by their pesto gnocchi. Perfectly located downtown, Woodfire is a great spot for a nice dinner and crisp pizza crust.

Mary's Market
4431 E State St
2636 McFarland Rd



For a while I didn't realize that Mary's Market only exists in Rockford. My dad coming home with fresh seedy sticks and muffins is the best part of every Sunday morning. Between their baked goods, brunch menu, and perfect studying atmosphere, Mary's Market is my favorite comfort spot for any time of day.

The Studio

7326 N Cherryvale Mall Dr.

Whether you're a performer or part of the audience, the Studio really knows how to put on a show. The youth-centered theatre company giving me the opportunity to be on stage growing up was just as much fun as it was memorable. Even now when I'm on the audience's side of the curtain, their shows are always worth watching.



Curran's Apple Orchard
6385 Kilburn Ave

Everything pumpkin spiced and apple flavored is right around the corner, and Curran's Orchard is the best way to feel Fall. No matter the season, their apple cider is hands-down the best I've ever had. Start your Fall season off with Curran's on August 26th for apple picking and homemade doughnuts or drop by now to see all the goodies they've already got stocked.

Salvaged by Sonya
510 E State St,

Salvaged by Sonya's store in downtown Rockford is my favorite place to just walk around in. This boutique is full of antiques and collectables. With all the vintage treasures, you're always guaranteed to find something you like.

All these places and so many more made it easy to grow up in Rockford. No matter the weather or the mood, our city's has stuff to see and things to do.