

Indiana Dunes National Park

The best things to see & do



© backpackandsnorkel.com

Indiana Dunes National Park

Content

[1. Introduction](#)

[2.1 Disclaimer](#)

[2.2 Copyright](#)

[3. General Information](#)

[3.1 What is Indiana Dunes National Park?](#)

[3.2 Where is Indiana Dunes National Park located?](#)

[3.3 Why should I visit Indiana Dunes National Park?](#)

[4. Beaches in Indiana Dunes National Park](#)

- [West Beach](#)
- [Marquette Park](#)
- [Central \(Avenue\) Beach](#)
- [Dunbar Beach](#)
- [Indiana Dunes State Park](#)
- [Kemil Beach](#)
- [Lake View Beach](#)
- [Miller Woods Beach and Lake Street Beach](#)
- [Mount Baldy Beach](#)
- [Ogden Dunes Beach](#)
- [Porter Beach](#)
- [Wells Street Beach](#)

Indiana Dunes National Park

Content

5. Hiking Trails in Indiana Dunes National Park

- [West Beach Trails](#)
- [Bailly and Chellberg Trail](#)
- [Calumet Dunes Trail](#)
- [Cowles Bog Trail](#)
- [Dune Ridge Trail](#)
- [Glenwood Dunes Trail](#)
- [Great Marsh Trail](#)
- [Heron Rookery Trail](#)
- [Hobart Prairie Grove Trail](#)
- [Indiana Dunes State Park Trails](#)
- [Mount Baldy Summit Trail](#)
- [Paul H. Douglas Trail \(Miller Woods\) Trail](#)
- [Pinhook Bog Trails](#)
- [Tolleston Dunes Trail](#)

6. 1933 Chicago World's Fair Homes

- [Armco-Ferro Enamel House](#)
- [Cypress Log House](#)
- [Florida Tropical House](#)
- [House of Tomorrow](#)
- [Wiebolt-Rostone House](#)

7. Closing Remarks

Indiana Dunes National Park

1. Introduction

Indiana Dunes National Park is the 61st national park in the US. Its main attractions are its sandy beaches and hiking trails through miles of sand dunes. Considering the location of the park on the southern shores of Lake Michigan, most people are surprised to hear that there are sand dunes so far north in the United States. Taking into account that Indiana Dunes National Park is located less than 50 miles from downtown Chicago and that not many people outside of the Chicago area have ever heard of this park, we think that this park can be considered to be one of the best kept secrets in the country.



But not much longer – we are going to spill the beans and provide you with a detailed guide to Indiana Dunes National Park.

In this guide, we will tell you what we consider to be the major attractions, provide google maps links to help you get there, our experiences and often links to the attractions if they have a website. To help you find out what best fits you, we have added lots of photos and links to additional reviews.

Indiana Dunes National Park

This is not an in-depth guide. You can buy those from the big travel guide companies.

Our goal is to help you Make Memorable Moments on a relaxing trip and help you build the perfect itinerary for your trip.

Please also check out the other exciting destinations and travel guides on our [Backpack and Snorkel](#) website.

Indiana Dunes National Park

2.1 Disclaimer

In this guide I am doing my best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and backpackandsnorkel.com cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

2.2 Copyright

This website and its content is copyright of “Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel”. All rights reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. The content on this site (including photos) may not be sold, reprinted, or used for commercial purposes without the written consent of “Rudy at Backpack & Snorkel”. You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.

Indiana Dunes National Park

3. General Information

3.1 What is Indiana Dunes National Park?

In 2019, Indiana Dunes National Park became the 61st national park in the US. This 15,349 acre (6,212 ha) park runs along the southern section of Lake Michigan for about 20 miles and it surrounds the much older Indiana Dunes State Park which was established in 1925.

About 40,000 years ago, the continental glacier had thinned significantly and at its end, it deposited the glacial till and sand that it was carrying. When the glacier receded north about 20,000 years ago, it left the Indiana Dunes on the southern shore of what is now Lake Michigan.

The first recorded settlements date back to the Hopewell culture in 200BC and the first European settlement dates back to the early 19th century.

First attempts to protect the sand dunes as a national park date back to 1916 but it took until 1966 when Congress created the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore which was redesignated **Indiana Dunes National Park** in 2019.

In 1925, the Indiana Dunes State Park was established. The state park still exists and nowadays it is surrounded by the National Park.

Nowadays, the dunes are mostly covered with vegetation, but the lake shore is basically one long beach.

With more than 1,400 plant species Indiana Dunes National Park ranks 8th in total plant species among all National Parks.

Indiana Dunes National Park

West Beach ([map](#), [parking lot](#), [website](#))

West Beach is the most popular beach in Indiana Dunes National Park. The reasons for this are easily understood: parking is only \$6 per vehicle per day, there is ample parking, the park building has restrooms, showers and a concession stand, there are beach guards and there are different hiking trails.

Because of the large parking lots, this beach gets busy in summer, but if you don't mind walking a bit from the beach access to the left or right, you will escape some of the noise and get to more serene parts of the beach.



Indiana Dunes National Park

Marquette Park ([map](#), [park map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

If all parking lots for the beaches in the area are full, don't worry. Marquette Park will likely still have space for you. This park has some roadside parking and paid parking at \$10 per day per vehicle at the time of writing. If you want to kayak, you can either do this in the lagoon or in Lake Michigan. Unlike in some other states, we did not need to have life vests and kayakers and swimmers had to share the same area. Due to speed boat activity, swimming and kayaking is only allowed within the first 200ft (50-60m) from the beach. This distance is strictly enforced by the life guards. Unfortunately, even at 200ft out, the water is only waist deep, which will likely put a big damper on any swimming activity for adults.



Indiana Dunes National Park



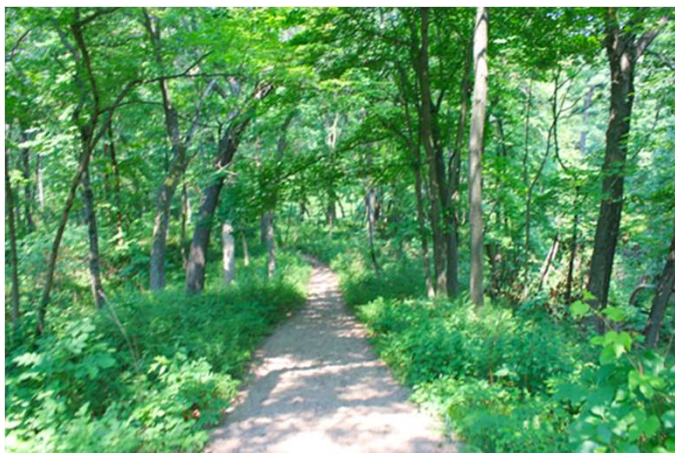
Indiana Dunes National Park

Start at the western end between the two parking lots at the wheelchair accessible path to the picnic coves and then continue on the sandy path and hike up the sand dune (Loop 3).



The hike up is the most strenuous part of this 3.4 mile hike and you will have a good view from the top.

Continue on the well-marked trail through the forest and, if you come in July and August, notice the blackberry bushes. If they are not ripe yet, don't worry. There are lots more in full sunlight which will be weeks ahead in their ripening cycle.



Indiana Dunes National Park

After almost half of the Loop 3 trail, you will come to the park entrance road. Cross the road and follow the sign to the right. Unfortunately there is no sign that tells you to go through the first opening to your left and cross the second road. But that is exactly what you need to do. Cross the other road and follow the Long lake Trail back into the forest.

Fairly soon the path will exit the forest and you will get your first glimpse of Long Lake with the railroad tracks behind it – chances are that you will see and hear freight and passenger trains here. Depending on the time of year, there may not be too much water in this part of the lake.



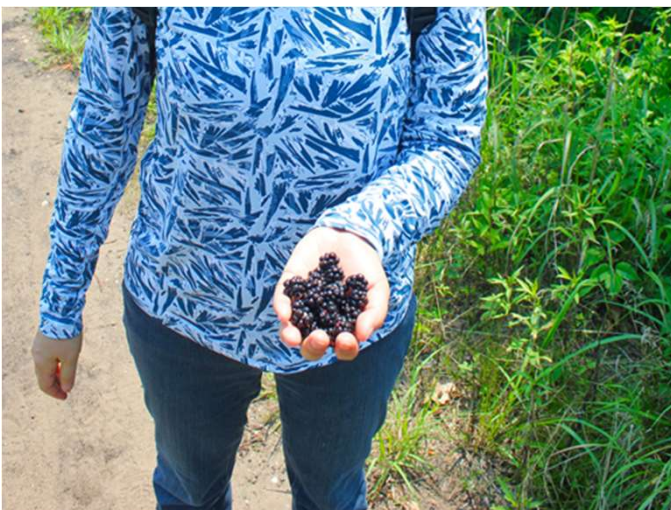
Keep walking and a few feet before the trail crosses the road again is a viewing platform from which you can see a deeper part of the lake with more water. This is the second best viewpoint. The best viewpoint will come later.

Indiana Dunes National Park

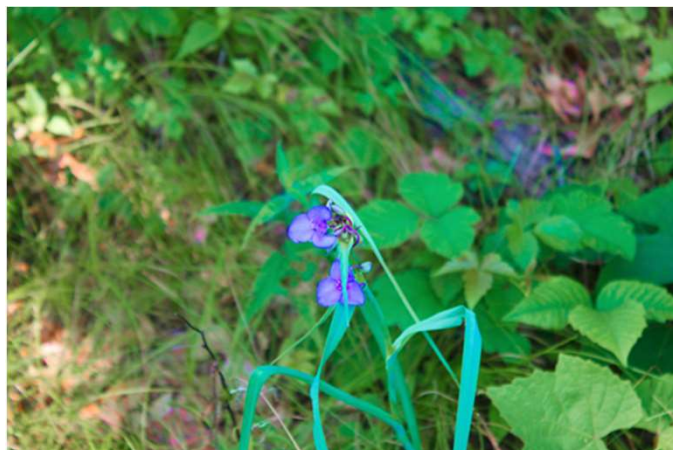
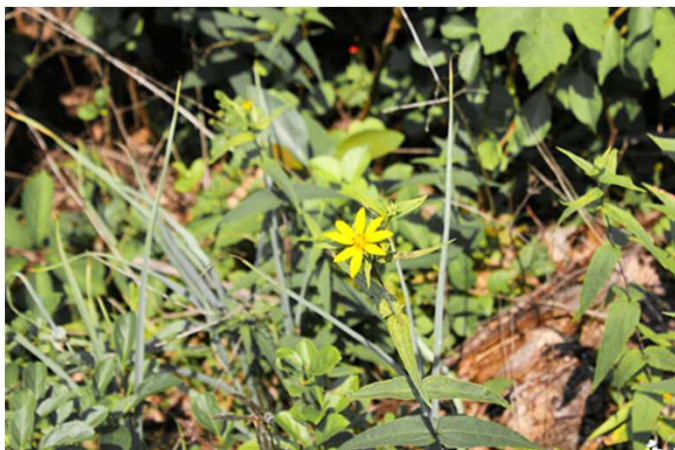
Now cross the road and look at the ground – you should see small cacti on the ground. Many were blooming when we were there.



After 0.3 miles (0.5km), you will come to a sign that tells you that you can go left to the parking lot and right to the West Beach Trail (Loop 2). Go right and, soon after, you will cross the road again. Shortly after you crossed the road, you will see lots of blackberry bushes on either side of the trail. When we were there in early July, many bushes had fully grown super delicious blackberries. My wife picked so many that I was afraid we would never complete the trail.



Indiana Dunes National Park



[Back to hiking trails overview.](#)

Indiana Dunes National Park



Now continue on to the Chellberg Farm which will come up on your right after about 1min. Go and visit the animals and buildings which are unlocked. There is also a Port-A-Potty - just in case.



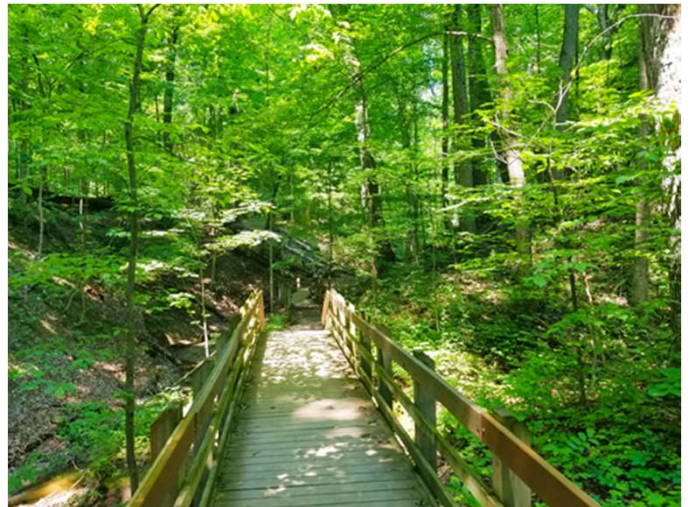
Indiana Dunes National Park



Now, go back to the trail and after about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, the trail splits. The trail to the right is 0.3 miles long and leads to the Bailly Cemetery – after visiting the cemetery, you will come back the same trail to where you are standing right now.

If you go left, you will continue the on loop trail.

After another 0.1 mile on the loop trail, you will need to make another decision: continue left on the Bailly Chellberg trail or enter the Little Calumet River trail to the right and add 2.2 miles to your hike.



Indiana Dunes National Park

Florida Tropical House ([map](#))

Architect: Robert Law Weed (house); James S. Kuhne and Percival H. Goodman (interiors)

Construction: Deigaard & Preston

Sponsor: State of Florida

Architectural Style: Modernism

Address: 210 Lake Front Dr., Beverly Shores, IN

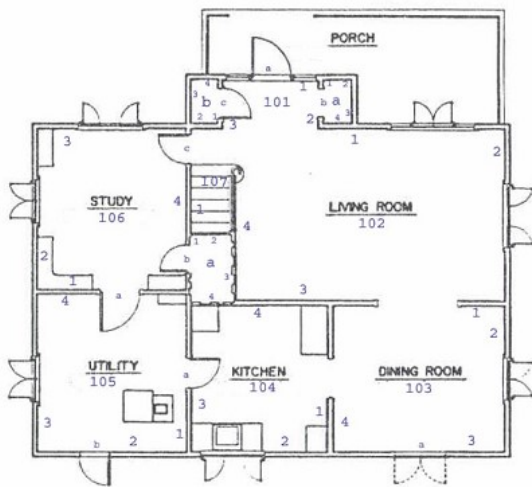


The **Florida Tropical House** is a beach house was designed in the Modernist style by architect Robert Law Weed to showcase the State of Florida and to promote tourism.

As such, the design was inspired by Florida's tropical climate and the needs of Florida residents. It blends the in- and outdoor environments together with the large outdoor terrace.

Indiana Dunes National Park

The Armco-Ferro House has a living room, dining room, kitchen and utility room on the first floor. Since 1934, the 2nd season of the Chicago Fair, the 1st floor features a study, which used to be a garage during the first season in 1933. Also added during the 2nd year was the porch. The second floor has 4 rooms.



Indiana Dunes National Park

Wiebolt-Rostone House ([map](#))

Architect: Walter Scholer

Sponsors: Rostone, Inc. and Indiana Bridge Company

Interior decoration: Tobey Furniture Co.

Address: 208 Lake Front Dr., Beverly Shores, IN



Rostone was a synthetic building product made from shale, alkaline earths, and limestone quarry waste that was promoted as having properties similar to limestone with the advantage that it could be produced in any size and in multiple colors. Unfortunately, the material was much less durable than originally thought and the sheathing on the Rostone House began to fail about ten years after it was installed. This made the **Wiebolt-Rostone House** the house of “never needing repairs” until it was reclad with Permastone in 1950.



7. Closing Remarks

ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.



MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music. Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!



PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see my [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.