

— by Rebecca Hastings

Perfect Leaf Peeping Trips This Fall

Fall is the perfect time to hop in the car for a leaf-peeping adventure. With colors on full display, every trip is painted in beauty. Whether you want a short drive or a longer trip, you can see fall foliage on full display.

Why Should You Go Leaf-Peeping?

1. Spectacular Scenery: You can't beat the vibrant colors of changing leaves and the way they create breathtaking landscapes that are both visually stunning and unique to the autumn season.

2. Natural Beauty: It's a chance to witness the beauty of nature up close and personal, appreciating the intricate details and patterns of foliage.

3. Seasonal Tradition: Many people have made leaf-peeping a seasonal tradition, enjoying the outdoors and embracing the changing seasons.

4. Outdoor Experience: It's an opportunity to spend time outdoors, whether hiking, driving scenic routes, or simply walking through parks and forests. This is especially good to do before cold temperatures set-in and limit some outdoor adventures.

5. Photography: Fall foliage provides excellent opportunities for photography, capturing vibrant colors and creating memorable images. Kids especially love to take photos. Try giving them a chance to experience the wonder of autumn through a camera to capture great memories.

6. Relaxation and Serenity: The calm and peaceful atmosphere of nature during fall can be a refreshing break from daily routines.

7. Local Economy: Leaf-peeping often boosts local economies, as tourists visit areas known for their fall foliage, supporting small businesses and tourism industries.

8. New Places: A foliage adventure can lead you to new places that you've never been before.

Overall, leaf-peeping is a delightful way to connect with nature, appreciate seasonal changes, and create lasting memories.

When Should You Go?

People always want to find the perfect time to go leaf peeping. It can be tricky to time it right, but if you check out this year's leaf forecast in your area it can help. According to the Farmer's Almanac, the best times for leaves in the area are:

- **Pennsylvania: October 5-21**
- **New Jersey: October 12 – November 4**
- **New York: September 28- October 28**

These dates and times vary depending on proximity to the coast and overall elevation.

With such a wide range, you have plenty of opportunities to catch an amazing display. If you go early, you get to see the greens just changing with the first hints of color. If you go later, you can see the end of color as the leaves begin letting go. No matter when you go, you can find something beautiful.

Trips in Pennsylvania

- **Pocono Mountains:** Always a favorite, drive along Route 209 or Route 6 for amazing views of colorful foliage. Bushkill Falls and Promised Land State Park both offer great spots for leaf peeping on foot with hiking trails.

- **Lancaster County:** The rolling hills and farmlands of Lancaster County offer a relaxing drive filled with scenery. There is something uniquely beautiful about the Amish countryside fall. Plus, you can find delicious treats as you visit local markets and farm stands.

- **Hawk Mountain Sanctuary:** Full of stunning overlooks, this trip offers something truly spectacular. You have the chance to see stunning birds migrating south with the stunning mountain foliage as a backdrop.

- **Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area:** The Delaware River comes alive bordered by fall foliage. Explore the recreation area's hiking trails and overlooks for perfect fall photos.

Trips in New York

- **Hudson Valley:** This area offers a beautiful drive along Route 9W just north of New York City. Particularly noteworthy is the beauty of the leaves along the Hudson River. If you want a different adventure, try taking a scenic train ride along the river.

- **Bear Mountain State Park:** The drive to this park is a great chance to see the fall colors, but the beauty really shines within. Explore the hiking trails in the park to see colors on full display with forest and river views.

- **Storm King Art Center:** This outdoor sculpture park allows you to put the beauty of nature together with art. Stroll through the center to see the artwork with a stunning fall backdrop.

- **Central Park, New York City:** The city may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of leaf peeping, but Central Park offers 842 acres of green space in the middle of New York City. In the fall, this land comes alive with color, all with the picturesque backdrop of NYC.



Trips in New Jersey

- **Skylands Region:** In Sussex County, this area offers amazing opportunities for leaf peeping. Hike up to High Point Monument at High Point State Park for panoramic views of the surrounding forests ablaze with fall colors. Explore Stokes State Forest with miles of scenic trails and picturesque lakes reflecting fall's colors.

- **Princeton and Sourland Mountain:** Princeton offers a picturesque town full of color and charm. The University offers a particularly quintessential fall experience. The nearby Sourland Mountain Preserve also has plenty of space to stretch your legs hiking through woodland trails to enjoy the foliage up close.

- **Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge:** Offering boardwalks and trails, the refuge is a perfect place to relax and enjoy fall colors. This is a perfect place to bring the family.

- **Ringwood State Park:** Explore the gardens and trails of Ringwood State Park, which is home to the historic Ringwood Manor. The park's diverse landscapes offer a variety of fall foliage experiences.

The Key to a Successful Fall Foliage Trip

While you want to see the best leaves, you also want to have fun. Start by checking out the leaf forecast if you want to know what to expect. Beyond that, you simply need to embrace the beauty before you. Don't get wrapped up in whether it's peak leaf-peeping. Simply look around. Breathe in the air. Take photos. Embrace the beauty in front of you.

Leaf peeping isn't about finding the perfect leaves, it's about the experience. Enjoy a chance to get outdoors and appreciate all that fall has to offer. Whether it's the brightest leaves or a stroll along a river, you can find beauty everywhere.