illinois
Southern

destination shawnee

Trek across thousands of acres of majestic natural landscapes

Sometimes the grandeur of the natural world calls us. It beckons us to go outside and get some fresh air. And with majestic rock formations, picturesque hills, lush woodlands, breathtaking bluffs, there's no better place to do it than the Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois.

Cache River Wetlands

Garden of the Gods

Shawnee Country Forest Area

Cave-In-Rock State Park

Metropolis

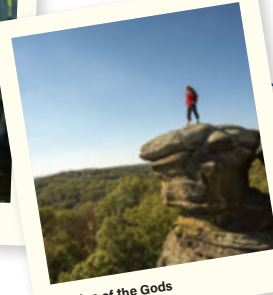**3-5 days**
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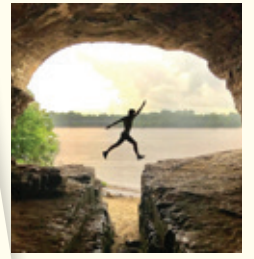**(Approx)**

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Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Cache River Wetlands Center

Garden of the Gods

Cave-In-Rock State Park

Many attractions have reopened with limited capacity or different operating hours. Inquire with attractions ahead of time for up-to-date travel policies and health and safety information.

📍 Day 1-2 Cache River Wetlands

Start your day at **Crab Orchard Lake**. If you'd like to spend the day out on the water, **boat rentals** are available. Also nearby is the **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge** visitor center. Here, you can learn about the natural beauty of Southern Illinois before venturing out to see the wildlife on the nature trails or trying your luck at fishing. If you have time, stop by the tasting room at **Walker's Bluff Winery**.

Now head south to the **Cache River Wetlands Center** where you'll find information about the wetlands and its recreational opportunities. The center also has an extensive natural and cultural history exhibit, wildlife viewing and more. Then, it's time to explore! The **Section 8 Boardwalk** passes through a cypress-tupelo swamp and a floodplain forest. There's interpretive panels to help you identify the many tree species lining the boardwalk.

After a day of exploration, enjoy wine and a meal at the **Cache River Basin Vineyard & Winery Restaurant**. To rest up for the next day's adventures, the vineyard has onsite cabins where you can enjoy a furnished kitchen, sauna and hot tub.

📍 Day 2-3 East Shawnee Forest Area

Start your day at **Garden of the Gods**, an incredibly impressive set of unique sandstone rock formations with panoramic views that make it one of the most photographed natural areas in the state. On the road in, look out for **Sassy the Bigfoot**, a quirky roadside photo-op that Bigfoot fans should not miss. Also nearby is **Cave-In-Rock State Park**, featuring an impressive 55-foot wide cave. Snap some pics and explore the trails. There are great lunch options nearby including **The Red Onion**, known for their impressive steaks, and the floating **E-Town River Restaurant**.

Cabins and vacation rentals are available for overnighting in this beautiful area of Illinois – try the **Cabins at Stone Creek**, located in the heart of the Shawnee Wine Trail.

📍 Day 3-4 West Shawnee Country

Time to explore **Giant City State Park**! If your feet are starting to tire, **Giant City Stables** offers guided horseback trail rides, as well as lessons and pony rides for younger horse lovers. If you want to experience the trees from above, a **Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour** will have you flying high on a thrilling zipline ride. For a bite, **Giant City Lodge** is a great option for lunch or dinner. They're known for their family-style fried chicken...need we say more? The lodge also has accommodation options for an overnight stay.

📍 Day 5 West Shawnee Country

If you haven't had your fill of the beautiful Shawnee Forest area yet, there are plenty of other ways to explore. The **Shawnee Hills Wine Trail** features 11 award-winning wineries located on a 35-mile scenic drive along Illinois Route 127 and U.S. Route 51. If you prefer to get your steps in on the golf course, the **Southern Illinois Golf Trail** is another great set of stops to base your trip around. Up for a challenge? Do some biking on the **Tunnel Hill State Trail**, a 47.8 mile trip that starts in Harrisburg. It's a difficult − but beautiful − ride that weaves through reclaimed strip mines, ravines, rocky streams, bottomland woods, ponds and more.
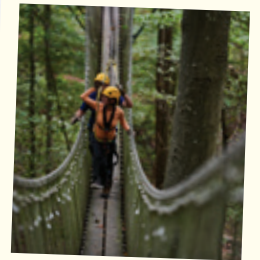
For something a little different, head over to the town of Metropolis where you can snap a pic with the **Superman Statue** and try your luck at **Harrah's Metropolis Casino**.

Giant City State Park

Giant City Stables

Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour

Alto Vineyards on the Shawnee Wine Trail

Superman Statue

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