

Autumn Colors in Clermont County: Top Spots to Leaf Peep

As summer winds down and fall approaches, Clermont County transforms into a tapestry of oranges, reds, yellows, and golds. Whether you are into hiking, photography, or simply soaking in the views, here are some of the best local spots to “peep” fall foliage, plus tips so you catch their peak colors.

East Fork State Park

East Fork State Park is one of Ohio's biggest treasures and a fantastic place to embrace the beauty of fall! The stunning Harsha Lake reflects the vibrant colors of the trees, and the rolling hills are a patchwork of autumn shades. You can hike, bike, or take a leisurely boat ride to soak in the scenery from different angles.

Stonelick State Park

Stonelick, with its smaller size and quieter atmosphere compared to East Fork, offers a cozy and tranquil vibe. The peaceful lake beautifully mirrors the surrounding forest colors, especially in the early morning. It's a lovely spot for wandering along trails or relaxing with a picnic under the golden leaves.

Sycamore Park + Wilson Nature Preserve

Just a short drive outside of Batavia, Sycamore Park is a favorite spot for anyone looking to enjoy the beautiful fall foliage. With smooth paved trails, cozy shelters, and lovely views of the river, it's perfect for families or anyone needing a quick nature escape. If you can stay until sunset, you'll be treated to some truly breathtaking colors reflected in the water.

Pierce Preserve & Trails

Looking for a true hike? Look no further than Pierce Preserve & Trails. With its more than three miles of trails across creek valleys and open prairie, it's a spot that feels like a hidden gem with plenty of photo-worthy views. The trails range from gentle to moderately challenging, offering the chance to come across wooden bridges, overlooks, and pockets of wildflowers that last into early fall.

Kelley Nature Preserve

Nestled along the Little Miami River, Kelley Nature Preserve feels like a tranquil grotto, inviting you to unwind. The trails meander through lush woods and offer charming river overlooks, providing a perfect escape to enjoy the autumn beauty away from the crowds. It's a beloved spot for birdwatchers and photographers alike, eager to capture the peaceful scenery.

Crooked Run State Nature Preserve

If you are craving a more rugged experience, Crooked Run offers two miles of trails through the wild terrain of the deep woods. It's less developed than the state parks, making it perfect for anyone who wants to explore in peace. Make sure to bring good hiking shoes so you can enjoy the fall colors without worrying about blisters.

Shor Park

With its 56 acres of wetlands, woodlands, and open spaces, Shor Park is a family-friendly stop for leaf peeping. The playground and picnic areas provide an ideal spot to turn a quick walk into a full afternoon of outdoor adventure. The variety of landscapes means you can see a mix of colors all in one place.

Tips for the Best Experience

Plan your timing. Peak colors usually arrive in October, but keep an eye on Ohio's Fall Foliage Forecast to catch the season at its most colorful.

Go early or late. Mornings and late afternoons have softer light and smaller crowds, plus golden hours are perfect for photo ops.

Pack for the day. Dress in layers, bring water, and don't forget a camera or phone charger. Some preserves are more rustic, so check ahead for facilities.

Make a day of it. Pair Sycamore Park in the morning with Kelley Nature Preserve at midday, and then finish at East Fork for sunset.

Clermont County's parks and preserves offer a colorful patchwork of lakes, rivers, forests, and valleys, all glowing with autumn colors. Whether you are hiking, picnicking, or just looking to watch the leaves fall, these spots make the perfect backdrop for all your fall adventures. Happy adventuring!

