

20 Free (or Almost Free) Adventures in March 2018

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OUT + ABOUT/SEASONAL FUN

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Fill March with fun without spending much money

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Plan an affordable summer

Attend one of ParentMap's free regional Camp Fairs!

Rain or shine, Northwest families will have a good time with these ideas. The best part? They're cheap!

We're talking story times, movie nights and other free or not-too-pricey fun that will help families spring into the new season.

Read on for 20 ideas to keep your spring fun all season long.

1 Dig in at Dino Days

[Burke Museum, Seattle](#)

March 3–4

Hundreds of dinosaurs and fossils take over the whole museum for a prehistoric party. Meet Burke paleontologists and dig into hands-on activities. Timed tickets keep the crowds from becoming overwhelming and are already on sale. \$10 adults, \$7.50 kids. Ages 2–10.

2 Enjoy a family movie night

[Portland Avenue Community Center, Tacoma](#)

March 9

Free. Enjoy free popcorn and a free family-friendly indoor movie (TBA) on a large indoor screen. Bring the whole family along with bean bags, game chairs, pillows and anything else you need for comfortable lounging. All ages.

3 Add in fun at the Math Festival

[University of Washington](#)

March 10

Free. The Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival encourages kids to approach mathematical activities, games and puzzles with creativity and persistence at the University of Washington Husky Union Building (HUB). Ages 10–18.

4 Kick it at Kent Kids' Art Day

[Kent](#)

March 10

Kids create art projects all day for one flat fee at Kent Kids' Arts Day at Kent Commons. Art supplies are included. You

may bring a lunch or buy one. \$10 per child. All ages.

5 Celebrate the landing of St. Patrick

[South Lake Union](#)

March 16, 6 p.m.

Free. St. Patrick was brought to Ireland by pirates in about A.D. 400. Now, the Pirates of the Emerald Isle will deliver St. Patrick to South Lake Union (near the Museum of History & Industry) for the Green Stripe Laying, a mini parade to mark the route of the St. Patrick's Day Parade down the center of Fourth Avenue. A large crowd participates by riding the flatbed truck along the route. All ages.

6 Make the most of Moisture Festival

[Hale's Palladium, Seattle](#)

March 15–April 8

The Moisture Festival's high-energy variety show features comedy and physical feats in a unique combination of the styles of English music halls, European cabaret and American vaudeville, all accompanied by live music. Matinees are all-ages, evening shows welcome kids but may include some innuendo. \$15–\$25. All ages with

parental discretion.

7 Book it to Seattle Public Library's book sale

[Exhibition Hall, Seattle Center](#)

March 16–18

Boost your kids' academic potential and support your local library at the Seattle Public Library's huge book sale. Admission is free, and books cost as little as \$1, but we'll understand if this ends up being the most expensive thing you do in March. All ages.

8 Spring clean the great outdoors

[Various locations, Tacoma](#)

March 17

Free. Get the whole family outside and lend a helping hand at a Tacoma Parks work party. Bring garden gloves and be ready to get dirty when you join volunteers at Point Defiance Beach, Oak Tree Park or McKinley Park for a spring cleanup. If you're busy on March 17, check the parks calendar online; there are work parties throughout the month at different parks around the city. All ages.

9 Visit a state park

[Includes 140 Washington state parks](#)

March 19

Free. On this Washington State Parks' Free Day, celebrate the 105th birthday of the state's park system. You can picnic and play at any of the 140 Washington state parks for free. All ages.

10 Celebrate a small-town Easter parade

[Snohomish](#)

March 31

Free. Billed as the state's only Easter parade, the old fashioned Snohomish Easter Parade includes floats, bands, kids and farm animals moving down First Street in Snohomish. Be sure to wear your best bonnet; the parade is followed by an Easter bonnet contest. All ages.

11 Ride a bike

[Arboretum Loop Trail](#)

Free. March is a good time to break out the bikes and try the new 2.5-mile loop trail around the Washington Park Arboretum, which opened during the winter. With a 10-mph speed limit and relatively flat course, it's a perfect, easy ride to get the family back in the saddle. Enjoy it now before warmer weather brings out the crowds. All ages.

12 Throw a party at the zoo

[Woodland Park Zoo](#)

Zoo admission isn't exactly cheap, but it is a good value. Get even more for your money by pairing the Bunny Bounce egg hunt with a day of viewing zoo babies. Gorilla toddler Yola turned 2 in November, and this month Lulu the giraffe turns 9 (months), while the sloth bear twins turn 3 (months). \$10–\$15. All ages.

13 Forage the food forest

[Beacon Food Forest/Swan Creek Park Food Forest](#)

Free. Volunteers work to maintain the urban food forest to share with the whole community. Visiting the forest and even gently harvesting the food for yourself is welcome. (March is hardly harvest season, but you might be surprised to find out what's ready to eat in spring in a food

forest.) Consider getting more involved. Kids are far more likely to eat food they helped to grow. Join Tacoma's Swan Creek Park for a work party on March 18. All ages.

14 Go roller skating

Various locations

Roller skating is good exercise disguised as family fun. You can take it outside if it's dry enough, but during this time of year when everything is usually damp and soggy, there are plenty of indoor options to keep warm and dry. Either way, everyone gets out of the house. Not sure where to go? Check out our guide to roller rinks around the Sound. \$5–\$10. Ages 3 and older.

15 Go natural(ist)

Various locations

Spring is a fun time to do a reasonably priced nature program at one of the local nature centers. [Mercer Slough Nature Park](#) has free guided ranger walks on select Sundays; rangers lead events at [Lewis Creek Park](#); [Seward Park Audubon Center](#) has events for all ages; and the Children's Garden at [Magnuson Park](#) hosts family nature walks. For something different, try a nighttime

nature walk. If something different, try a nighttime adventure with the Tacoma Nature Center's [Pier Peer programs](#). Program prices and recommended ages vary.

16 Take a hike

[Various locations](#)

Free. The trails can be a muddy mess in March, but as they say, "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." So, bundle up in waterproof duds and discover the wonders of early spring, when you're almost guaranteed to have the trails to yourselves. All ages.

17 Peek in at Pike Place

[Seattle](#)

Free. If you haven't been to Pike Place Market in a long time, you might not realize what a family-friendly place it has become, especially in the early spring, when the fresh flower and produce options are starting to pick up, but the tourists haven't yet started to arrive en masse. See our online age-by-age guide to the Market for inspiration. All ages.

18 Ride the giant Ferris wheel

[Seattle Waterfront](#)

Depending on the weather, enjoy a bird's-eye view or feel like you're floating in a cloud inside the Seattle Great Wheel's fully enclosed gondolas. Buy tickets online and print them at home so you won't even have to stand in line when you get there. \$9–\$14 (children younger than 2 ride for free). All ages.

19 Snag a story time

Various locations

Free. Both the [King County Library](#) and [Seattle Public Library](#) systems have numerous well-stocked branches with frequent story times and free family activities. Visit a new-to-you branch library or make a pilgrimage to the Central Library in downtown Seattle, where the children's section is larger than some library branches. The kids will love riding the chartreuse escalators all the way to the vertiginous 10th floor.

20 Welcome 'A Wrinkle in Time'

Everywhere (also timeless)

[EVERYWHERE \(ALSO, INTELLIGENCE\)](#)

Prepare for the March 9 release of Disney's highly anticipated adaptation of "A Wrinkle in Time" by Madeleine L'Engle by reading the book and watching the 2003 made-for-TV Canadian production. Don't be surprised if the story sparks conversations about being yourself, the relative value of love versus intelligence or the nature of the space-time continuum.

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