

This fall, make it a LONG WEEKEND

By Jacky Runice

The long, lazy days of summer have given way to mad dash mornings of cold cereal and mismatched socks and homework woes that are nightly scenes of absurdist theater. Help them get out of their heads before you lose yours by taking a three-day weekend that's sure to recharge neurons and refresh sagging spirits.

Two grand reasons to get out of town

Take another look at the Grand Geneva Resort and Spa in Lake Geneva, Wis. One of only five AAA Four-Diamond resorts in Wisconsin, the property garners great grades for family activity: two award-winning and championship golf courses; indoor and outdoor tennis; gentle horseback riding — great for the kids; a ski and snowboard area; biking; kayaking and canoeing, and hay and sleigh rides are just the beginning.

The outstanding fitness center offers a full-size indoor basketball, tennis and volleyball courts; a Junior Olympic-size lap pool; morning yoga classes; and a 35-foot, nine-station indoor climbing wall. Also, guests at Grand Geneva can buy water park passes at Timber Ridge Lodge and Moose Mountain Falls water park, a short trolley ride away. The 50,000-square-foot park has something for toddlers to tweens.

Not very long ago, kids fell into the “mac 'n cheese, hot dog and chicken nugget” gang of gobblers but today it's not uncommon to hear

young gourmets ordering tekka maki minus the tobiko (flying fish roe) and saving room for the house creme brulee. Sign up for the Ultimate Desert Creation for children of all ages: for around \$10, kids and adults work in the restaurant kitchen with a pastry chef who takes them through a step-by-step process of creating and plating a fabulous dessert. Have the staff refrigerate the work of edible art and your young Wolfgang Pucks can enjoy it later as dessert in one of the resort's restaurants.



Hit the links at the Grand Geneva Resort and Spa.

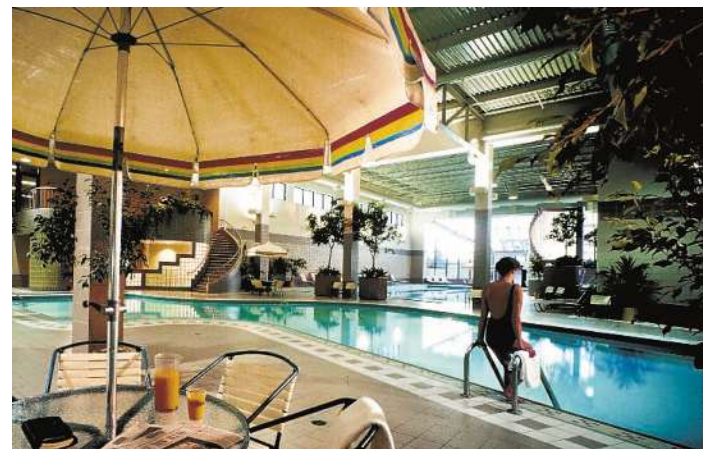
Be sure to ask about the new suites at Grand Geneva that offer a separate bedroom via French doors (children can sleep on the pullout couch in the living room) and a kitchenette so you can store snacks and even dine in your suite. The Premier Family Package includes accommodations in a newly renovated Premier Suite; \$100 dining credit; four water park passes to Moose Mountain Falls; and a 30 percent WELL Spa + Salon discount. Rates start at \$279 and the package is valid

Oct. 1 to Dec. 24.

The resort recently debuted a new Guest Experience Passport Program which rewards you with activity credits toward a return visit for sampling the Grand Geneva's range of experiences. After golfing, dining, horseback ride, or joining one of the Fun for Kids activities at Timber Ridge Lodge & Waterpark, for example, receive a stamp in the passport booklet under the appropriate category. Present the passport upon checkout showing stamps for five different experiences and snag a \$100 resort activity credit; a passport with 10 stamps earns a \$200 resort activity credit. Upon your next visit, use your credit to ski or snowboard, spa, golf or dine — credits are valid for one year after the date of issue.

Grand Geneva Resort and Spa
(800) 558-3417 or visit grandgeneva.com

Since you have just three days, you need a destination that has built-in activity because who needs another thing to plan



It's perfect swimming weather year round at the Grand Traverse indoor pool.

during the school year? Located on 900 acres near Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay, Grand Traverse Resort & Spa is one of the Midwest's grand full-service, year-round resorts with family-friendly amenities galore. Tote the infants along, too, because there's state-licensed day care as well as organized activities for older kids.

Got kids? Gotta have a pool and the resort offers indoor and outdoor swimming pools, including a Water Playground with a 70-foot waterslide, floating obstacle course, zero-depth sprayground, basketball hoops and more. Practice your backhand on indoor and outdoor tennis courts or hit the links on three championship golf courses, including The Bear, designed by golf legend Jack Nicklaus; sign up for a family golf lesson. Team up for beach volleyball and don't miss the bonfire, complete with singalong and s'mores. Every Friday and Saturday night from 6 to 10 p.m. the 6- to 12-year-olds can compete in wacky games, swim, get into arts and crafts and join in a pizza party during the “Kid's Night Out” program. Meanwhile, you're at Spa Grand Traverse enjoying hydrotherapy, body wraps, massages, facials, manicures and pedicures. Maintain your fitness goals at the Health Club's fully equipped cardio and weight rooms, fitness classes and indoor pool. Have a date night dinner and regroup later for in-room Nintendo and movie rental options. Teens



The Grand Geneva pool at night is a beautiful sight.



Slide into fun at the Grand Geneva pool.



The Dells are known for water parks, but zip-lining may be the new craze. The Wilderness recently added a zip line adventure that spans more than eight football fields in length.

can hit the indoor table tennis area, video arcade and Cyber Cafe without ever leaving the resort grounds. By all means, bring your furry kids along: Grand Traverse Resort & Spa is one of the nation's most dog-friendly resorts with 24-hour dog care.

Located in the beautiful Northwoods of Michigan, Grand Traverse offers a ton of seasonal activity from hiking and snowmobiling to browsing museums and wineries. Hockey fans will want to know that every autumn since 1997, the Detroit Red

Wings have held their fall training camp at Traverse City's Centre ICE arena and fans can watch games and meet team members.

Take advantage of the resort's Family Water Fun Package, a three day/two night

family excursion that includes accommodations for two nights; welcome amenities; access to the Indoor Water Playground; four breakfasts from Sweetwater American Bistro per package; and an in-room movie or video game per room. Available Sept. 5 to Nov. 6, 2010, rates begin at \$327 per room (does not include 8 percent tax and nightly resort fee).

Grand Traverse Resort & Spa

Call (800) 748-0303 or visit grandtraverseresort.com for nightly rates

and additional package information. For more area attraction information visit BarefootGrandTraverse.com.

Ozark daredevils

The mere phrase, "Fall in the Ozarks," sounds heavenly, doesn't it? Consider a getaway at Stonewater Cove Resort and Club that can be a mix of lake and forest activities running the gamut from heart-pounding to relaxing family time. Sitting in the

heart of the Mark Twain National Forest, the Table Rock Lake resort is a 500-acre, lakefront playground that offers guided and self-guided activities

including: gentle or daring ATV rides along trails that meander through the lush forest — great for teenagers or have the younger kids climb aboard a double rider; brand new zip-lines adventures through and over the

forest canopy for wonderful views of the ancient Ozarks in their autumn best; swimming in a "lake pool" surrounded by a swim dock for safe lake swimming (Table Rock Lake is known as one of the clearest freshwater lakes in the world); sunset or moonlight cruises; dock fishing; kayak or canoe excursions; skeet shooting and archery; and easy hiking trails for little ones' first forays into nature. The concierge can also book a professionally guided fishing trip, helicopter tour,

forest picnic or a spa service. Your activities are customized and printed upon arrival to the resort.

If it's too cool to swim, visit the lower level of the lodge which is furnished with couches, chairs, tables, a fireplace, board games, puzzles, and cards, plus

a media room with a big screen and popcorn machine for playing Wii games and watching DVD's. Expect s'mores arriving hot from the Lodge

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Enjoy the Ozarks in autumn at the Stonewater Cove Resort and Club.

Parents - 2 Ways to Make College Major & Career Choices



THE HARD WAY

- Step 1
Pick a major.
- Step 2
Try a few classes.
- Step 3
Figure out it's not for you.
- Step 4.
Repeat from Step 1.

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Long weekend: Take a break from the hustle and bustle

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bonfire every night and even babies get royal treatment at turndown service with treats just for infants and toddlers, infant toiletries and a bath toy.

Call it a day and head to your individually designed room or suite with handsome dark wood floors and custom-made driftwood furniture. One of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Stonewater Cove Resort and Club's dining program is spectacular: made to order breakfast each morning; lunch to go for a forest hike or enjoyed in the lounge; fabulous dinners; and snacks and kiddie faves like mac 'n' cheese or the chef can fiddle with adult items making them palatable to youngsters.

About an hour from Branson, Mo., the luxury family resort exudes a rustic elegance that's a true respite from work and school schedules. Rates and packages vary by season but expect post Labor Day fall packages — just check the website.

Stonewater Cove Resort and Club

The three nearest airports are Branson, Mo. (BKG); Springfield, Mo. (SGF), and Northwest Arkansas (XNA). The concierge can arrange car airport transfers to and from the resort. For more information, visit <http://stonewatercove.com> or call (800) 792-3956.

Farmers markets in the Dells

After soccer, geometry, band practice, football, essays, cranky teachers and general kid and teenage

angst, jot down a trip to the Dells to lighten their loads. No one wants to sound like a broken record (or a wonky iPod), but you can't discount the Dells in fall: The weather is fantastic, crowds have subsided, hotel rates are lower and the kids can still pretend it's summer while in a balmy indoor water park.

The Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort is the bomb when the weather cools boasting four separate indoor water parks. Always ahead of the curve when it comes to adding new thrills, the resort now offers a chance to soar through the treetops on a zip-line adventure that spans more than eight football fields in length over five zip lines 115 feet in the air. It's the perfect introduction to zip lining, safe and not too scary for kids, teens and adults. Wilderness also offers indoor fun via laser tag, a colossal arcade, mini-golf and more. Get a load of fall rates: \$99 weekdays and golf stay and play packages starting at \$109 a person.

Do try to have either a family or adult dinner at the on-site Field's at the Wilderness. The food is as good as any downtown Chicago fine dining establishment and service is flawless. Monk's at the Wilderness shines in the burger department but you might also fall in love with its first-rate version of a Cuban sandwich.

How about a weekend in Africa by way of I-90? The Fall 3-Night Savings package available at



The Stonewater Cove Resort and Club has a rustic elegance — the perfect destination for a long weekend away.

Kalahari Resort during select dates in September includes a three-night stay in a Two Room Family Suite or Royal African Queen Suite for up to six guests, as well as admission to Wisconsin's Largest Indoor Waterpark for each registered guest all for \$299.95. In October, the Fantastic Family Getaway package includes a two-night stay in a Desert or Hut Room for up to four guests, admission to the Indoor Waterpark for each registered guest and four Indoor Theme Park ride passes. The package also includes breakfast for each morning (for two adults and two children), one pizza and four fountain sodas, a \$40 credit toward Dinner at Great Karoo or Kahunaville, a \$20 credit toward spa services at Spa Kalahari and one in-room movie for \$399.95



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For More Information,
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on select October dates. Fall weekends, Kalahari Resort offers a baleful of seasonal activities indoors and out. You don't want to spend all of your weekend indoors — that's what January is for, after all, and the Dells offers some top-notch outdoor festivals. "Wo-Zha-Wa" could be an exclamation when you surprise them with the cool weekend getaway, but it actually translates to "time of fun" in the Ho-Chunk language. Sept. 17 to 19, Wo-Zha-Wa Days Fall Festival is three days of outdoor live music, a street carnival, arts and crafts, flea markets, food vendors and a 100-unit parade. If you're in town Oct. 9, The Dells Chili Cookoff scents the air in downtown Wisconsin Dells. There will be a Texas Hold'em Tournament, live entertainment, pony, bull and stage coach rides, vendors and lots of chili tasting. The Autumn Harvest Fest & Wisconsin Dells On Tap takes place Oct. 16 and 17 with a huge craft fair and farmers market, fun fall activities like a straw dig, hayrides, scarecrow stuffing, pumpkin decorating and tossing, and live entertainment. Saturday is one of the Midwest's premier microbrew beer tasting events, Wisconsin Dells On Tap, when Wisconsin breweries showcase their best.

Wisconsin Dells

To book lodging at the Wilderness, call (800) 867-9453 or visit WildernessResort.com.

For zip line reservations, call (800) 867-9453 ext. 4764. Advance reservations are required and the cost is \$45 for guests \$65 for the public.

Get details on Kalahari packages at (877) 525-2427 or surf over to KalahariResorts.com.

For Dells event details, get over to wisdells.com or call (800) 22-DELLS.

Abbey Road

The only full-service resort right on Lake Geneva, the Abbey Resort & Spa in Fontana,



One of the six large aquariums at the National Mississippi River Museum.

Wis., was completely renovated five years ago and offers a laid-back escape from to-do lists and jam-packed calendars. S'mores and bonfires at The Abbey are year-round events (Friday, Saturday and Tuesday nights from 8 to 10 p.m.) serving up warm cider with the gooey treats in fall and winter. The Abbey Arcade will take their minds away from the grind with rounds of video games, air hockey, billiards and more or go old-school and compete as a family with board games galore. You can also check out footballs, soccer balls, Frisbees, horseshoes, croquet equipment, bikes and helmets,

juggling sticks, a flag football set and more for outdoor exercise. An activity director works full time to plan activities and upon check in, you'll get a rundown of everything that's happening that weekend at The Abbey and Lake Geneva. Consider booking your stay during the Antique and Classic Boat Show, Sept. 24 to 26, held in and around the resort's marina. Browse the boats and wares of local vendors, swing to live blues music, nosh BBQ and snag a good spot for viewing the boat parade. Looking deeper into autumn, book a stay during Lake Geneva's Oktoberfest held downtown Oct. 9 and 10.

Fall packages include the Family Values Package that will get you a free child's breakfast with a paid adult breakfast as well as discounts to activities and area attractions and the BOGO package (book one night at a competitive rate and get the second night at an even better value). Some restrictions apply on packages so read the fine print at The Abbey's website.

The Abbey Resort & Spa

(800) 709-1323
theabbeyresort.com

Antique and Classic Boat Show

www.genevalakesboatshow.com

Down by the river

Why haven't you taken the family to the Port of Dubuque, an easy three-hour drive due west from Chicagoland? There's a boatload of things to do at incredibly reasonable prices.

This spring the National Mississippi

River Museum completed a \$40 million expansion meaning you can explore six large aquariums, interactive exhibits and a 4D theater all under one roof. The new 40,000-gallon aquarium is the largest in Iowa and its swimming sharks and eels are sure to get a "whoa" out of the kids. They'll say "sweet" when you take in breathtaking views from world's steepest and shortest scenic railways. For only \$2 per passenger, jump on the historic Fenelon Place Elevator (est. 1882). Stroll in the crisp, autumn air along the beautiful River Walk before heading back to your digs at Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark. Family of four packages start at \$134 and include deluxe room accommodations, indoor water park tickets, complimentary breakfast and a free pizza from Tony Roma's. Point the van west and see "The Field of Dreams" movie site in Dyersville and a



The newly renovated National Mississippi River Museum has new aquarium, interactive exhibits and a 4D theater.



Time a trip to The Abbey Resort & Spa to coincide with the Antique and Classic Boat Show.

meal at Iowa's oldest bar and restaurant, Breitbach's Country Restaurant (est. 1852), is a must. Serving old-fashioned American comfort foods, Breitbach's is antique-filled and offers magnificent views of the Mississippi and family-friendly prices.

National Mississippi River Museum

mississippirivermuseum.com

Fenelon Place Elevator

dbq.com/fenplco

River Walk

americasriver.com/riverfront.htm

Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark

grandharborresort.com/index.cfm or (866) 690-4006

Field of Dreams

fieldofdreamsmoviesite.com/distance.html. Free admission and open through Nov. 30.



The Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark is a great family destination.