



Warren County Backgrounder

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About the Area

FUN

Fun! Laughter! Excitement! It's all waiting for you right here in southwest Ohio. As the Home of Kings Island, The Beach Waterpark and Great Wolf Lodge, Warren County is the ultimate family getaway, not far away. Dive in to three incredible waterparks all within one mile. Or, search for timeless classics and more modern treasures in our more than 100 antique, boutique and specialty shops. Discover our natural beauty with a waterway canoeing trip, or a day hiking and biking or an afternoon on one of our challenging golf courses.

AFFORDABLE

Warren County is a great travel destination under any circumstances; but particularly when people are cutting back. A vacation in Warren County is affordable, providing families with a chance to get out and have a great time. BIG savings on exclusive vacation packages in Warren County are available online ohioslargestplayground.com.

DRIVABLE

Warren County is conveniently located between Cincinnati and Dayton, and easily accessible from two major highways (I-71 and I-75). Visitors to Warren County can enjoy more activities within a 30-mile radius, than anywhere else in Ohio.

Story Ideas

Family Getaways

Families can Play and Stay in Warren County. Splash around Great Wolf Lodge's 78,000 square foot waterpark before settling in to one of the 400 woodland-themed rooms. The next day test your wits on Diamondback, Kings Islands tallest, fastest, meanest rollercoaster ever! The fun doesn't stop when you leave the park – stop by Lazer Kraze, one of the country's largest indoor laser tag arenas for some fun family competition. Head south and spend the day at the Cincinnati Museum Center featuring "Dinosaurs Unearthed" and "Dinosaurs Alive!" (Feb. 13 – Sept. 7) with its more than 20 roaring moving dinosaurs, full skeletons and fossils. Feel a Horseshoe Crab, tickle a Whelk or pat a real live Sea Star.

Girlfriend Getaways

Warren County is a great location for memorable girlfriend getaways. From IKEA's showrooms, to the charming streets of Lebanon and Waynesville (the "Antique Capital of the Midwest") filled with over 100

antique, boutique and specialty shops. Explore our premium outlet malls, affordable flea market treasures and seasonal farmer's markets. Warren County is truly a shopper's paradise.

Couples/Boomer Getaway

For an adult getaway stay in one of our charming B&Bs, spend the day shopping in the more than 100 antique and specialty shops of Lebanon and Waynesville, take in one of the largest displays of Shaker artifacts and visit the Cincinnati Flower Show, the only North American flower and garden show endorsed by the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Britain, producer of the world renowned Chelsea Flower Show. Or, stay along the Scenic Little Miami Trail at Hardy's B&B, walking distance to The Golden Lamb which features an all new Sunday Brunch, Warren County History Center, shopping, quaint coffee shops and more.

Active/Adventurous

Be one of the first to experience **Ozone Zipline Adventures**, the Midwest's Largest Zipline tour. Opening in May, it will be the largest zipline tour in the Midwest, and include some of the longest single zipline runs in the continental U.S.

The canopy (tree-top) tour will include twelve ziplines totaling well over 10,000 feet in length, and reach heights of 170 feet. Riders will "zip" over and through the Little Miami River Valley. The educational eco-tour will not only give participants a high-flying thrill, it will also teach riders about Southwest Ohio history, ecology of the region, basic physics of "zipping."

The fun doesn't stop when you land! At the base of the valley you will find more amazing outdoor adventures. The Little Miami Scenic Hike & Bike Trail is a paved trail offering relaxing rides for more than 70 miles along the Little Miami River, through woodlands, amidst rolling hills, through picturesque countryside and into quaint small towns.

Some of the best canoeing areas on the Little Miami are also at your "paddle-tips" just around the bend. At **Morgan's Canoe Livery** set off in a canoe for a leisurely three or six mile trip past lush, steeply wooded hillsides where you will enjoy frequent "fun rapids", great swimming, picnicking and camping spots.

Enjoy more of the great outdoors for **free** at **Cesar Creek State Park** for hiking, biking and boating, it doesn't get better. Home to a 2,830-acre lake, forty-three miles of hiking trails, thirty-one miles of horse trails and camps and five-miles of mountain bike trails, the park is a treat for anyone with a love for the great outdoors.

Old-Fashioned Fun

Experience a nostalgic train ride through the scenic Warren County countryside aboard a vintage passenger car on the **Lebanon Mason Monroe Railroad (LM&M)**. Walk through the train to the open-air gondola and listen as the conductors describe railroad history. The LM&M offers many themed rides throughout the year including Easter Bunny Express, North Pole Express, and Day Out with Thomas the Tank Engine. This is a must stop favorite for young and old alike!

The old-fashioned train station is one block away from historic and scenic downtown Lebanon, Ohio, home to the **Golden Lamb Inn & Restaurant** – Ohio's oldest continually operating inn and restaurant. Twelve US presidents and Mark Twain have visited the Golden Lamb. For a taste of history, and a wide variety of delicious food in a relaxed yet elegant atmosphere, this is a stop you won't want to miss.

Let the day melt away with a "Truly Old Fashioned Ice Cream Soda" at the **Village Ice Cream Parlor**, across the street from the Golden Lamb in downtown Lebanon, Ohio. Made in a frosted soda glass with your choice of flavored syrup and a little whipped cream – then filled to the brim with a hard stream of soda water and topped off with two scoops of real ice cream.

For more sweet treats and heavenly smells, stroll over to the **Golden Turtle Chocolate Factory**. Also located in historic downtown Lebanon, Ohio, the Golden Turtle Chocolate Factory specializes in premium chocolates made daily on site by master candy makers. Enjoy the finest and freshest ingredients with every mouth-watering bite. Known for their Texas Tortoise – a delectable treat of Texas pecans covered in a buttery caramel and drenched in purple chocolate, Almond Toffee and sinful opera creams. It's a candy and chocolate lovers paradise!

Lebanon also features the **Warren County Historical Society Museum**, acclaimed as one of the nation's most outstanding county museums which offers the largest display of Shaker artifacts in the country. Young and old alike will feel like they have stepped back in time when entering the Village Green. Small storefronts line the sides of this exhibit displaying artifacts, both large and small, in a typical Warren County community setting of yesterday. The general store is center stage with a large working clock on top. Throughout the museum, find displays of paintings by Warren County Quaker artist, Marcus Mote, and more.

Spend the rest of the day browsing the fresh fair at the **Lebanon Farmer's Market** held every Thursday May through October from noon - 6 p.m. Sample locally grown produce, baked goods, flowers, herbs, honey, eggs and meat.

Attractions

Kings Island is your family's answer for non-stop excitement. Families with young children will love Nickelodeon® Universe, named by Amusement Today readers as the **Best Kids' Area in the World** for the eighth year in the row, which offers more than 18 rides and attractions and more kids' coasters than any other park. Two exciting neighborhoods dedicated to SpongeBob SquarePants™ and Dora the Explorer™ allow children to meet their favorite stars.

Kings Island offers more than 80 rides and attractions including some of the best roller coasters in the world. New in 2009 – **Diamondback**, Kings Island's tallest, fastest, meanest roller coaster ever, standing a mind-blowing 230 feet at its highest point with a first drop of 215 feet. Go to www.visitkingsisland.com for more information.

Ohio's only dinner theater, **La Comedia's** summer lineup includes "Disney's High School Musical" May 7 – July 5, and "Annie" July 9 – August 30. La Comedia has been treating families to Broadway-style productions and scrumptious buffet style dinners for over 30 years.

Or, hit the beach, **The Beach Waterpark** that is, for fun-in-the-sun with real ocean sand, sounds and live palm trees surrounding this tropical oasis which spans 35 acres and includes over 50 rides and attractions. The Beach Waterpark celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2009.

For more wet and wild fun – try a trip down one of the top ten scenic rivers, the Little Miami River, by canoe at **Morgan's Livery** offering canoeing, kayaking, rafting tours and camping. Celebrating 50 years of outdoor and river recreation in 2009.

This summer the best men's and women's players in the world will take center court at the **Western & Southern Financial Group Masters and Women's Open August 8 – 23**. Adding to the impressive lineup of Venus Williams, the reigning French Open champ, Ana Ivanovic, and reigning US Open champ Serena Williams, World No. 1 Kim Clijsters has announced her return to the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour at this summer's Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open in Mason.

Ozone ZipLine Adventures is the largest zipline tour in the Midwest, where education and fun take flight. The full canopy (tree-top) tour will consist of nine ziplines connecting across the canopy of the Little Miami River Valley. This will give the participants well over 10,000 feet (two miles) of zipping at heights up to 170 feet above the ground.

The **2009 AVP Mason Pro Beach Volleyball Tour** will celebrate its 5th Anniversary this summer. The sand will fly at this annual tournament which brings the top Olympic beach volleyball players in the U.S. to Mason.

Fort Ancient State Memorial features 18,000 feet of earthen walls built 2,000 years ago by American Indians who used the shoulder blades of deer, split elk antler, clam shell hoes and digging sticks to dig the dirt. They then carried the soil in baskets holding 35 to 40 pounds. Portions of these walls were used in conjunction with the sun and moon to provide a calendar system for these peoples.

The site offers beautiful vistas along hiking trails as well as the remains of the prehistoric mounds for visitors to see. Convenient picnic areas can be found along the road at the site.

The Museum at Fort Ancient contains 9000 sq. ft. of exhibits, including many interactive units, focusing on 15,000 years of American Indian history in the Ohio Valley. The Museum also contains a classroom, a research area, and a sales shop with many fine American Indian items.

On June 13-14 Fort Ancient will host Celebration: A Gathering of Four Directions. Celebrate Ohio's American Indian history at this educational and entertaining event. This Ohio Historical Society program features featuring period encampments from the 18th century, compelling storytellers, live musical entertainment and dozens of artisan vendors. Be sure to catch the highlight of the entire event—a three-hour drumming and dance display that includes nearly 100 performers!

Annual Events

Blues Festival (Lebanon, Ohio), August 1, 2009

Jam on the streets of historic Lebanon and revel in the sounds and styles of multiple bands, much on some hearty BBQ and channel your inner dragster at a classic car show. Averages 12,500 in attendance.

Ohio Renaissance Festival (Harveysburg, Ohio) Weekends Sept. 5 – Oct. 25

Watch 16th century England come alive as valiant knights compete in the joust and swordsmen engage in hand-to-hand combat. Learn traditional crafts such as glassblowing and blacksmithing, or stroll the grounds feasting like royalty on juicy roasted turkey legs. Averages 165,000 in attendance.

Ohio Sauerkraut Festival (Waynesville, Ohio) October 10-11

Every October, Waynesville become the center of German-inspired cuisine in the Midwest, serving seven tons of sauerkraut to scores of visitors during this popular fall festival. This 40th anniversary will again feature musical entertainment and performances, a live auction, recipe and cabbage-growing contests and hundreds of artisan vendors make this one of the largest events around. Averages 395,000 in attendance.

Location/Getting Here

Conveniently located off I-71 and I-75 between Cincinnati and Dayton, Warren County is close to a diverse variety of local and regional attractions. 65% of the U.S. population can reach Warren County in a day's drive.

Climate

Summer is warm and sunny, with most areas seeing 90 F/32 C temperatures for at least a few days. Humidity can be high, though generally not excessively so. Expect more rain in late spring and early summer, including occasional thunderstorms. Temperatures range from 41-72 F/5-22 C in the southwest during April and May.

Fall is the sunniest season, with warm September days running 52-71 F/11-22 C, resulting in some of the most beautiful Fall Foliage to be found anywhere. A jacket will be useful for evenings, especially in

October, when temperatures drop into the low 40s F/4-6 C at night. Winters can be cold (17 to 43 F/-8 to -6 C).

Economy

Warren County Ohio Tourism Facts:

- Tourism is the leading industry in Warren County.
- The 6.4 million yearly visitors to Warren County result in an economic impact of \$917 million up 5.1% from 2006
- Approximately 65% of all visitations occur during the summer season (June through September)
- Top three beneficiaries of tourism revenue in 2007 were:
- Retail Trade which received \$218,377,814
- Recreation and Lodging which receives \$150,890,864
- Food & Beverage which received \$145,429,706
- Tourism supports 1 in every 8 private sector jobs in Warren County
- Total tourism employment is 11,029 in 2007
- Tourism in Warren County generated personal income of \$258 million in 2007

Warren County Economy:

- Population 210,855 & labor force 165,002 people
- 2nd fastest growing county in Ohio & 98th in Nation
- Averaging 17 new residents a day
- 26% growth since 2000
- Median household income - \$66,481
- 3rd highest per capita income within Ohio
- Over 6,000 businesses call the county home
- Largest suburban office center with over 1 million SF
- Top 5 highest new job growth counties in the State

Lodging

With affordable, comfortable and convenient hotel options, you will wake up rested and ready for another full day of fun and adventure in Ohio's Largest Playground. Many of our charming bed & breakfast inns are within walking distance of the best antique shopping, plus many of our campgrounds are located along the Little Miami Scenic River and near our many bike trails. So, from family-style resorts to quaint bed & breakfast inns, Warren County is the place to play and the place to stay!

Warren County offers 51 convenient and affordable accommodations.

Did You Know?

Tourism remains the **No. 1** in Warren County. The 6.4 million yearly visitors generate \$637 million to the local economy, and create 15,800 tourism-related jobs.

Ozone Zipline Adventures is the Midwest's Largest Zipline Tour!

Kings Island's **Eiffel Tower** is a one-third replica of the original in Paris.

The city of **Franklin**, named for Benjamin Franklin, had the first three-story building west of the Alleghenies and the third Roebling suspension bridge in the U.S. (after Cincinnati and Brooklyn).

A local artist, Eric Henn, has won international awards for the realistic murals he has painted on the sides of public buildings in downtown **Franklin**.

Springboro has 27 documented safe-houses on the **Underground Railroad**.

Lebanon's main street, **Broadway**, maintains its original width so that in the 1800's a wagon with a team of eight oxen could be able to complete a U-turn on the street.

Union Village (near Lebanon) was the largest Shaker community in the mid-1800's west of the Alleghenies, with 4,000+ acres of land inhabited by 600 believers. More than 10,000 hymns have been written by the Shakers, plus the creation of numerous innovations such as a flat bottom broom, distribution of seeds in packets, and herbal medicines.

The country's largest collection of original Shaker artifacts is housed in a group of seven room-settings at the **Warren County History Center** and the **Golden Lamb Inn**.

The summer and winter equinox still appears through the same cut of trees at **Fort Ancient**, as it did 2,000 years ago.

The **Little Miami River** is one of the nation's Top Ten federally designated Scenic Rivers. Situated in the beautiful southwest Ohio landscape between Cincinnati and Dayton, the Little Miami River Valley has become a green oasis for thousands of recreation seekers.

The world's longest wooden roller coaster, **The Beast™**, and **Son of Beast™**, the world's tallest and fastest wooden coaster, continue to reign at Kings Island.

The Golden Lamb Inn and Restaurant, Ohio's oldest continuously-operating inn, has served 12 U.S. presidents, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Harriett Beecher Stowe, and Henry Clay.

Movies filmed on-location in Lebanon include: ***Milk Money*** and ***Harper Valley PTA***.

The **Kings Mills General Store and Christmas Shop** is one of the region's largest year-round venues for holiday shopping. This family –owned business (for 23 years) offers Patricia Breen collectables, thousands of Christmas ornaments and decorations, plus every holiday and themed décor items imaginable.