FAMILY DAYS OUT

Things to Do In and Around

Redbridge, Havering and Barking & Dagenham

Parks · Farms · Nature trails · Water play · Trains · Indoor fun · Theatre & more

Looking for somewhere to go with the family? This guide brings together parks, farms, nature trails, splash parks, indoor play and more, in our local boroughs and a little further into Essex and east London. Each entry has a link to the venue's own website, where you can check opening times, prices and accessibility.

£ Entrance fees may apply

Many parks are free, but some venues charge for entry, parking or activities. Check prices online before you go.

✓ Check before you go

Opening times, seasonal closures and booking rules change. Always check the venue's website on the day.

★ Look for SEN sessions

Entries marked with a lilac SEN box offer relaxed, SEND or autism-friendly sessions.

Tips for a smoother day out

- Look at photos or videos on the venue's website together before you go, so the place feels familiar.
- Visit at quieter times, such as early mornings or weekdays, and ask venues about quiet or SEN sessions.
- Ask about carer tickets and access schemes. Many venues offer free or reduced entry for a carer.
- Pack comfort items, snacks, drinks and ear defenders, and agree a quiet spot to take breaks.
- Plan your route and parking, and check whether you need to book in advance.

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Parks & Open Spaces

Free, open-air spaces to run, play and explore. Great for quieter visits early in the day.

1 **Hainault Forest** *Redbridge*
Ancient forest with a working farm, outdoor adventure play, boating lake and café, plus regular events.
Website: redbridge.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-the-arts/parks/hainault-forest-country-park

2 **Valentines Park** *Ilford, Redbridge*
Award-winning Green Flag park with gardens, cafés, sports courts and the historic Valentines Mansion.
Website: redbridge.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-the-arts/parks/valentines-park

3 **Fairlop Waters Country Park** *Redbridge*
Redbridge's largest country park, with lakes, walks, water sports and golf. Near Fairlop and Hainault stations.
Website: redbridge.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-the-arts/parks/fairlop-waters-country-park

4 **Harrow Lodge Park** *Hornchurch, Havering*
Havering's largest urban park, with children's play areas, sports facilities and a lakeside café with pedal boats.
Website: havering.gov.uk/parks-1/harrow-lodge-park

5 **Raphael Park** *Romford, Havering*
Landscaped park with a lake, café, sports facilities and a large playsite with inclusive play equipment.
Website: Raphael Park | London Borough of Havering

6	**Lawns Park** *Collier Row, Havering* Green Flag park with wide open views and inclusive play facilities. Website: Lawns Park | London Borough of Havering
7	**Cottons Park** *Romford, Havering* Play site with inclusive play equipment, ball games court, skate/BMX park and outdoor gym. Website: Cottons Park | London Borough of Havering
8	**Central Park** *Harold Hill, Havering* Big green space with an inclusive play site, skate park, BMX track and walking and cycling paths. Website: havering.gov.uk/directory_record/41/central_park
9	**King George's Playing Fields** *Romford, Havering* Park along the River Rom with play equipment, sports courts, an outdoor gym and a café. Website: havering.gov.uk/parks-1/king-georges-playing-fields
10	**Lodge Farm Park** *Romford, Havering* Green Flag park with a surfaced footpath looping the park, play equipment and sports facilities. Website: Lodge Farm Park | London Borough of Havering
11	**Bedfords Park** *Havering-atte-Bower* One of Havering's largest parks, with woodland walks, a red deer herd and an Essex Wildlife Trust visitor centre. Website: Bedfords Park | London Borough of Havering
12	**Hornchurch Country Park** *Hornchurch, Havering* Large country park on a former RAF airfield, with wildlife habitats and an Essex Wildlife Trust visitor centre. Website: havering.gov.uk/parks-1/hornchurch-country-park
13	**Langtons Gardens** *Hornchurch, Havering* Historic 18th-century house with restored landscaped gardens, ideal for a calm stroll. Website: langtons-house.co.uk/house-gardens/langtons-gardens
14	**Parsloes Park** *Dagenham* Large park with a new playground, lots of sports pitches and accessible paths. Website: lbbd.gov.uk/services/parsloes-park
15	**Mayesbrook Park** *Barking* Large park with lakes, green space and play areas. Website: Mayesbrook Park | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
16	**Eastbrookend Country Park** *Dagenham* Country park with lakes, meadows and nature trails. Home to the summer Eastbrookend Country Fair. Website: lbbd.gov.uk/find-your-nearest/eastbrookend-country-park

Nature, Wildlife & Countryside

Woodland trails, nature reserves and story trails a little further afield.

1 **RSPB Rainham Marshes** *Purfleet (near Rainham)*
Wetland nature reserve with birds, water voles and dragonflies. Accessible trails and a visitor centre.
Website: rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/rainham-marshes

2 **Thames Chase Community Forest** *Upminster / Essex*
Community forest with woodland walks, wildlife and volunteer-led activities.
Website: thameschase.org.uk

3 **Cycling at Thames Chase Forest Centre** *Upminster*
6.5km of easy, flat, family-friendly cycle routes. Good for young learners.
Website: forestryengland.uk/thames-chase-forest-centre/cycling-thames-chase

4 **Belhus Woods Country Park** *South Ockendon*
Over 300 acres of ancient woodland, meadows and lakes, with a children's play area and café.
Website: explore-essex.com/places-to-go/find-whats-near-me/belhus-woods-country-park

5 **The Gruffalo Trail** *Thorndon Country Park, Brentwood*
Follow the story through the woods on this Essex Wildlife Trust character trail.
Website: essexwt.org.uk/visit/nature-trail/gruffalo

6 **Peter Rabbit Woodland Trail** *Langdon, near Basildon*
Essex Wildlife Trust woodland trail featuring Peter Rabbit and friends.
Website: essexwt.org.uk/visit/nature-trail/peter-rabbit

7 **Wat Tyler Country Park** *Pitsea, Basildon*
125 acres of countryside with walks, wildlife and children's play areas.
Website: wattylercountrypark.org.uk

8 **Great Notley Country Park** *Braintree*
Home to Essex's longest play trail and a Sky Ropes course, plus lakes, cycling routes and a café.
Website: explore-essex.com/places-to-go/find-whats-near-me/great-notley-country-park

9 **Harlow Town Park** *Harlow*
One of the largest urban parks in the country, with gardens, playgrounds and a paddling pool.
Website: Harlow Town Park | Harlow Council

10 **Grays Beach Riverside Park** *Grays, Thurrock*
Riverside park with play equipment and a sandy area beside the Thames.
Website: Grays Beach Riverside Park, Grays

11 **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park** *Stratford*
Huge park with open spaces, play areas, waterways and famous sporting venues.
Website: queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

Farms & Animals

Meet the animals. Farms can be busy at weekends, so try a weekday or an early start.

1. **Wellgate Community Farm** *Collier Row, Romford*
   Community farm in Havering with animals to meet.
   Website: wellgatefarm.org/visit-us

2. **Old Macdonald's Farm** *Brentwood*
   Family farm park with animal encounters, rides, play areas and seasonal events. About 10 minutes from the M25.
   Website: omdfarm.co.uk

3. **Barleylands Farm Park & Village** *Billericay*
   Farm park with animals, a craft village, football golf and seasonal events.
   Website: barleylands.co.uk

4. **Marsh Farm Animal Adventure Park** *South Woodham Ferrers*
   Over 30 acres by the River Crouch, with animals, shows, play areas and places to eat.
   Website: marshfarm.co.uk

Water Play, Swimming & Beaches

Splash parks are seasonal, and some need booking in advance. Always check before you go.

1. **Splash Park Barking** *Barking Park*
   Seasonal outdoor water park with fountains and water features. Under-16s must be supervised.
   Website: Family Day Out in East London | Splashy Land Barking

2. **Maldon Splash Park** *Promenade Park, Maldon*
   Seasonal splash park. Sessions are booked online in advance.
   Website: visitmaldon.co.uk/splash-park

3. **London Aquatics Centre** *Stratford*
   Olympic pools welcoming swimmers of all ages and abilities.
   Website: londonaquaticscentre.org

4. **Leisure World Colchester** *Colchester*
   Leisure centre with swimming pools, sports courts and climbing walls.
   Website: colchesterleisureworld.co.uk

5. **Frinton-on-Sea Beach** *Frinton, Essex coast*
   Wide sandy beach with a quiet, uncommercial feel. Toilets, beach huts and seasonal lifeguards.
   Website: thebeachguide.co.uk/south-east-england/essex/frinton-on-sea.htm

All Aboard! Trains

Perfect for train lovers. Check running days before you go.

1 **Epping Ongar Railway** *Epping / Ongar*
Heritage steam and diesel train rides through the countryside, with vintage bus connections.
Website: eorailway.co.uk

2 **Chelmsford City Miniature Railway** *Chelmsford*
Miniature train rides on selected Sunday afternoons from spring to autumn, plus seasonal specials.
Website: csme.org.uk/minrailway.html

Indoor Play & Active Fun

Ideal for rainy days. Look out for SEN, SEND or quiet sessions, which are marked below.

1 **Barking Sporthouse Trampoline & Play Park** *Barking*
Trampolines, inflatables, an obstacle course and under-5s soft play.
SEN SEND Bounce sessions for disabled children and young people, with a reduced carer price.
Website: better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/barking-and-dagenham/barking-sporthouse-and-gym/trampoline-park

2 **Oxygen Trampoline Park** *Harold Hill, Romford*
Trampoline park with mini jump sessions, parkour and fitness classes.
Website: Indoor Trampoline Park in Romford | Oxygen Activeplay

3 **Kidspace Romford** *Romford*
Indoor adventure play with soft play, climbing walls and go-karts, for ages 6 months to 12 years.
Website: kidspaceadventures.com/romford

4 **Impulse Leisure: Juniors** *Thurrock*
Junior swimming, adventure footgolf and holiday activities at Belhus Park, Blackshots and Corringham.
Website: impulseleisure.co.uk/juniors

5 **Partyman World of Play** *Upminster*
Soft play and family entertainment.
Website: partymanworld.co.uk

6 **Cookie's Island** *Ilford (and Beckton)*
Indoor children's play centre.
Website: cookiesisland.com

7 **360 Play: Children with SEND** *Nearest centre: Basildon*

Family play centres.

SEN Monthly SEND sessions at selected centres. Siblings and friends welcome. Contact the centre to confirm.

Website: 360play.co.uk/schools-clubs/children-with-send

8 **Hollywood Bowl Dagenham** *Dagenham*

Ten-pin bowling with arcade games and a diner.

Website: hollywoodbowl.co.uk/dagenham

9 **NAMCO Funscape** *The Brewery, Romford*

Bowling, arcade games, bumper cars and pool.

Website: namcofunscape.com/romford

10 **Golf Kingdom** *Chadwell Heath*

Adventure golf, footgolf, a driving range and an 18-hole course.

Website: golfkingdom.net

Theatre, Cinema & Museums

Many venues now offer relaxed or autism-friendly performances and screenings.

1 **Queen's Theatre Hornchurch** *Hornchurch*

Family shows, drama and concerts.

Website: queens-theatre.co.uk

2 **Queen's Theatre: Access & Relaxed Performances** *Hornchurch*

Details of access facilities and discounted access tickets.

SEN Relaxed performances with adjusted sound and lighting, extra space and a quiet area.

Website: queens-theatre.co.uk/about-us/access-facilities

3 **Cineworld Ilford** *Ilford*

Cinema showing the latest family films.

Website: cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/london-ilford/8062

4 **Cineworld Autism Friendly Screenings** *Various cinemas*

Find autism-friendly screening times.

SEN Autism-friendly screenings with lights up, sound down and freedom to move around.

Website: Autism Friendly Screenings — — Cineworld

5 **Discover Children's Story Centre** *Stratford*

Interactive story-themed play spaces and exhibitions for children aged 0 to 11.

Website: discover.org.uk

6 **Valence House & Eastbury Manor House** *Barking & Dagenham*
Two historic houses to explore. Valence House has free entry.
Website: Valence House – a place of discovery

Local Events & What's On

Keep an eye on council listings for fairs, shows and free family events.

1 **Havering Council: Events** *Havering*
Listings of upcoming events across the borough.
Website: havering.gov.uk/events

2 **Havering Family Services Hub: What's On** *Havering*
Family activities and services, including SEND-friendly options.
Website: familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk/kb5/havering/directory/whats_on.page

3 **Barking & Dagenham Council: Events** *Barking & Dagenham*
Borough events, including the summer Eastbrookend Country Fair.
Website: lbbd.gov.uk/events

Important information

£ Entrance fees may apply

Some of the places in this guide are free to visit. Others charge for entry, activities, parking or booking. Prices, concessions and carer tickets vary and can change at any time. Please check the venue's own website for up-to-date prices before you travel.

Disclaimer

This guide is provided by Sycamore Trust UK for general information only. Sycamore Trust UK does not own, run, endorse or have any connection with the venues, organisations or events listed, and is not responsible for the content of external websites.

The information and links in this guide were checked in September 2026. Opening times, prices, facilities, accessibility arrangements and special sessions may change without notice, and websites may move or close. Please always check directly with the venue before your visit.

Inclusion in this guide does not mean that a venue is suitable for every child or family. Parents and carers are responsible for deciding whether an activity is right for their child and for supervising children at all times during visits.

Sycamore Trust UK accepts no liability for any loss, injury, cost or inconvenience arising from the use of this guide or from visits to any of the places listed.

Know a great place we've missed?

We'd love to hear about places your family enjoys. Let the Sycamore Trust Family Services team know, and we can add it to the next edition.