Belle Isle Park
A Day in The D

There’s an oasis of flora and fauna just minutes from Detroit’s urban center. Spend a day frolicking on the city’s island jewel.

1 DAY | 3-12 HOURS
FEATURES
Outdoor, Sports & Recreation
DESTINATIONS
Downtown Detroit

1 ATTR ACTIONS

Visit the electric eel at the Aquarium, the oldest in the country. Feed the fallow deer at the Nature Center, where a fully accessible, nature-themed playground recently opened. Immerse yourself in the lush landscapes of the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory. Or get schooled on the region’s maritime history at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

Ideas for the Isle: Take a snapshot at the William Livingstone Memorial Lighthouse, the only marble lighthouse in the U.S., and at the picturesque Scott Memorial Fountain.
Rent bikes, kayaks, canoes, pedal boats or stand-up paddleboards on the island. Hike nature trails or run the six-mile exterior road that circles the park. Golfers can take advantage of a nine-acre outdoor practice facility and six-hole golf course. Fishing piers are located at both the north and south sides of the island. Ride down a giant slide, splash around at the beach or pack a picnic spread and take in serene views of the Detroit and Windsor skylines at the island’s Sunset Point.

Ideas for the Isle: Be sure to have a fishing license if you plan on casting a line.
Events

Insert these to-dos on your calendar. The Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix races into town June 2-4. The race’s challenging street circuit is a favorite among drivers. Eyes to the skies on June 26 for the dazzling Ford Fireworks. Search for treasures at the Art Fair in August. OABI (Once Around Belle Isle) — the annual kayak, paddleboard and surf-ski race and beach party — returns Aug. 12.

About Belle Isle Park

Sitting in the international waters of the Detroit River, between the U.S. and Canada, the Isle is 2.5-miles long and 982 acres. The park, larger than New York City’s Central Park, was actually designed by Central Park’s landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. Almost a third of the island is a wooded home to many birds and small animals.

Getting In

To enter the island park, Michigan residents need a Recreation Passport, which actually gets you in more than 120 Michigan state parks. The annual passport is $11 for cars, $5 for motorcycles. A one-day pass for nonresidents is $9. All are sold at the gate. Entry is free for those who walk or bike onto the island.

Photo Credits: Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory and pedal boat by Michelle & Chris Gerard; aerial by Vito Palmisano; OABI by Toddstar Photography