

Lake of the Ozarks Ha Ha Tonka State Park

One of the most beautiful locations at the Lake of the Ozarks is Ha Ha Tonka State Park. Over 3,679 acres of land in the Niangua Arm of the Lake of the Ozarks are available for nature lovers of all ages. You will have a chance to explore dark caves or travel down the backcountry hiking trails. You can view castle ruins as you overlook the land below you while standing on a cliff overlooking the lake. If you are a nature lover who is visiting the Lake of the Ozarks, you will adore Ha Ha Tonka State Park.

Located five miles directly southwest from Camdenon, this state park offers so much to do. You will have the opportunity to explore hiking trails that send you to Turkey Pen Hollowland and the Devils Kitchen. In addition to these caves you will see others, as well. If you are looking for a less adventurous activity during your stay in Lake Ozarks you can enjoy a lengthy picnic with family and friends in the picnic area or rent one of the shelters for larger gatherings, such as a family reunion.

Following the Lake Ozarks tradition of outdoor activity, you will find 15 miles of trails to explore in Ha Ha Tonka State Park. On these trails, you will become lost in the beauty of the scenery while remaining in awe of the natural wonders that surround you. From the ruined castle, which was the beginning basis to the Ha Ha Tonka legacy to the numerous caves, bluffs, sinkholes, and the natural bridge, the nature all around you is simply astounding.

Hikers of all experience levels that are visiting the Lake of the Ozarks will appreciate Ha Ha Tonka for various reasons. The castle, which was destroyed in a fire, but still remains in part today, overlooks the breathtaking Ha Ha Tonka Springs and the Lake of the Ozarks. All of this beautiful scenery is taken in while you stand upon a majestic 250 feet bluff.

Of course, it is not only the beauty of the area that takes Lake Ozarks visitors in when they visit the state park. The history of Ha Ha Tonka is also something that makes people interested in the park, itself. The vision of Ha Ha Tonka was created by Robert McClure Snyder around the turn of the century. Snyder fell in love with the rugged and simplistic beauty of the area and acquired as much land as he could, which turned out to be around 5,000 acres.

The goal at this point was to transfer this area of the Lake of the Ozarks into an amazing private retreat that was created with the style of European castles. Stone masons came from Scotland and supervisors of European decent were used to ensure authenticity. The main castle was designed as a three and a half story mansion that was unlike anything in the area.

Sadly, Snyder would never live to see his dream of the private Ha Ha Tonka resort. While construction began in 1905, Snyder died in a fatal car crash in 1906. It would take until the 1920s (around the time the Lake of the Ozarks was officially being formed) for Snyders sons to finish the upper floors of the castle.

Later the Snyder sons would spend years trying to keep their fathers dream in the family. Unfortunately, in 1942 a fireplace in the castle started a fire that would destroy the castle to its present ruins that are viewable today. In 1978, the state of Missouri purchased the land and opened it as a state park.

Ha Ha Tonka state park brings joy to all the visitors that are new to the Lake of the Ozarks as well as those who live in the area. Ha Ha Tonka is home to one of the largest springs in Missouri and is known for its vast geological land, which includes underground streams, endless caves, and Native American pits that were known as the coliseum. You will want to plan at least one full day to enjoy all that Ha Ha Tonka State Park has to offer while visiting the beautiful Lake of the Ozarks.

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