

Seven Days of Outdoor Adventures in Rusk County, Wisconsin Sample Vacation Itinerary

Unwind Your Mind with an outdoor adventure in Rusk County, Wisconsin. Offering four paddling rivers, dozens of recreational trails and an abundance of untouched wilderness, Rusk County is the ideal vacation destination for enjoying the outdoors. The area's lakes and rivers offer outstanding fishing for panfish, walleye, bass and musky.

A friendly, small-town atmosphere pervades all the communities of Rusk County. If you're looking to relax and truly unwind on your vacation, Rusk County is a fantastic choice.

One of the most attractive features of a Rusk County vacation is affordability. Rusk County's resorts, motels, campgrounds, cabins, cafés, supper clubs, shops and retailers represent some of the best bargains in the Midwest. The estimated cost for a couple vacationing for one week in Rusk County is between \$600 and \$750. For a family of four, the estimated cost would be \$700 to \$900. That's an incredible vacation value!

Let's look at what a week in Rusk County might look like.

Day 1: Arrive in Rusk County

Afternoon: Stop By the Visitor Center and then Check Into Your Lodging

The first stop in Rusk County should be the Visitor Center in Ladysmith, where you'll find maps and other useful information about activities, attractions and special events. The Visitor Center also has GPS units available for geocaching and binoculars for birdwatching. After that, check into your lodging. Choose from more than two dozen Rusk County lodging establishments. From resorts and lodges to motels and campgrounds, Rusk County has overnight options to fit your style and budget. For a complete list of Rusk County lodging choices, visit www.ruskcountywi.com

Day 2: Hit the trails



Morning: Bicycling at Sisters Farm Trail.

Set on the banks of the Flambeau River, Sisters Farm Trail offers twelve kilometers of single and multi-track mountain bicycling. Enjoy views of the Flambeau as you pedal this top-notch mountain biking trail system. The trail is located just southwest of the City of Ladysmith.

Afternoon: Bicycling the Blue Hills Trail System

This 20-mile trail system is the perfect way to experience the natural beauty of Rusk County's Blue Hills. The hills take their name from the blue color the lush tree-covered hills take on when viewed through the morning mist. The trailhead is located on the east side of Fire Lane Road, 2.5 miles north of the road's intersection with County Highway O.

Evening: Railroad History

After dinner, we'll take a stroll through Ladysmith and see the historic railroad displays. You'll find "Old Smoky" at the intersection of Lake Ave and Highway 8. An engine and several rail cars are located south on Highway 27, two blocks south of Highway 8.



Day 3: Scenic Hiking Trails

Morning: Hiking the Flambeau River Former Mine Site

Five miles of hiking and biking trails run through this former mine site. You'll find excellent areas for bird watching and appreciating nature. Trails are relatively flat. Located one mile south of Ladysmith on Highway 27.

Afternoon: Geocaching

Rusk County is a fantastic geocaching destination, offering great scenery and dozens of caches. For those who have never geocached before, geocaching is a treasure hunting game in which players find hidden caches using just coordinates and a handheld GPS unit. Geocaching is a great way for people of all ages to have fun together in the outdoors. For more information on geocaching in Rusk County, visit www.ruskcountywi.com.



Evening: Stroll along the Riverview Trail

This short, scenic trail in Ladysmith runs along the Flambeau River and is part of the Ladysmith parks system. The trail is located between Highway 27 and County Road G. It's the perfect place for a relaxing stroll.

Day 4: Flambeau River Fishing

All day: Smallmouth Fishing on the Flambeau River

Rusk County is truly blessed when it comes to fishing opportunities, offering 250 lakes and 140 miles of rivers and streams. The Flambeau, Chippewa, Jump and Thomapple Rivers are all great fishing destinations for walleye, musky and smallmouth bass. Nearby Lake Holcombe is one of the top musky lakes in Wisconsin, with more than 120 miles of shoreline and 4,000 acres of open water. Brook trout inhabit many of the area's streams.

For today's outing, we'll hire a local fishing guide and try to catch some of the Flambeau River's trophy smallmouth. The Flambeau River at Ladysmith is one of the most exciting smallmouth destinations in the Midwest. You'll find good numbers of really big smallmouth both upstream and downstream from town.



Day 5: Jump River Adventure

All day: Paddling the Jump River

With so many miles of outstanding riverways, it's hard to pick one single place to go paddling in Rusk County. The Flambeau River is a classic Northwoods paddling trip, offering both whitewater and quiet stretches. The Chippewa is big river with many scenic stretches, offering not only beautiful scenery but also outstanding history. The Thornapple River, which runs through some of Wisconsin's wildest forestland, is a true gem.

The Jump River, with its rocky riffles and its free-flowing waters, is a truly unforgettable trip. We'll put in at Hwy 73 and paddle the 7 miles to Sheldon. From there, we'll continue on to Lake Holcombe. Along the way, we'll find several stretches of exciting whitewater. To order a waterproof river map and find more information for planning your paddling trip, visit www.ruskcountywi.com

Day 6: Wilderness Birding

All day: Birdwatching and Paddling the Thornapple River

Now that we've gotten our paddling skills in order, we'll take a paddle down the Thornapple River. We'll launch at Hwy 27 and travel downstream to Bruce. The backwaters of the Thornapple are an important nesting area for both wood ducks and hooded mergansers. Bald eagle, osprey, pileated woodpecker, kingfishers, blue heron and ravens are just a few of the bird species you'll have a chance of seeing. Be sure to check with the Visitor Center before launching — there are times of the year when the Thornapple River has low water and can be difficult for paddling.



Day 7: Last Day on the Trails

The Flambeau River State Forest offers 14 miles of mountain biking trail. Riding these rugged trails through a forest of hemlock, birch and white pine is the perfect way to spend our last day in Rusk County.

Afternoon: Shopping

Ladysmith offers a number of unique shops. Discover great antiques and collectibles at Gypsy Treasures. See interesting artwork at Winter Gifts & Gallery. Find unique items at Flambeau River Gift Shoppe. Be sure to stop for an ice cream cone at the Village Parlor. Those interested in home décor and clothing shouldn't miss Artisans Outlet in Glen Flora, offering excellent deals and discounts on a huge selection of items. And for treasure hunters, there's Norte' Antiques in Bruce.

Time to head home—See you next time in Rusk County!

