

Best bets for drives and destinations that celebrate fall colors

Written by [Jeanene Dunn](#)

The fall colors of the trees along the streets, highways and byways in and around the Kansas City metro burst with spectacular beauty — gold, orange, crimson and red. The trees that dot the bluffs along the Missouri River are a sightseer’s dream. Stop to take in the abundant beauty and keep driving to discover some fascinating, memorable — and fun — fall destinations.

Parkville

The drive along Missouri Highway 45 north from Parkville to Weston is one of the most scenic in the fall — perfect for a lazy weekend afternoon drive. Before you realize it, you may end up standing along the Missouri River somewhere along the way or enjoying the day in downtown Parkville or Weston — two historic Missouri towns.

Take in the beauty along the Missouri River bluffs as you hike, bike or walk along the scenic trails of [English Landing Park](#), located in downtown Parkville. The bluffs offer the perfect backdrop for a day of picnicking and fun in this park full of amenities that are sure to please.

Get lost on Main Street in Historic Downtown Parkville while browsing the cool collection of shops and galleries. These mom and pop businesses offer visitors a unique shopping experience, selling everything from collectibles and fashion, to antiques and art. Visit the [Parkville Main Street Association](#) to view a listing of the shops, eateries and other businesses, and download a map of the area.

Weston

This historic town about 40 miles north of downtown Kansas City is a favorite for weekend day trippers. Weston offers visitors a range of experiences — from walking tours to seasonal festivals, to farmers’ markets and shopping — as well as Second Saturdays throughout the fall and Applefest the first weekend in October. Visit www.westonmo.com to learn more and see what Weston has in store for you.

While in Weston, be sure to make time to enjoy the scenic overlook at [Weston Bend State Park](#). The scenery is a must-see for any visitor and a study in the many facets of fall color for as far as the eye can see. The overlook is where Lewis and Clark are said to have viewed the Missouri River in 1804. There is simply no escaping the beauty along the park’s many trails and other amenities.

Swope Park

Kansas City’s largest urban park, [Swope Park](#), is considered the “crown jewel” of the area parks system, and a perfect place to take in fall colors. The popular [Kansas City Zoo](#) is just one of many attractions inside the park, which is located on the city’s southeast side on more than 1,800 acres of land. This park is full of scenic trails where visitors can completely indulge in the beauty of fall by foot, bike or car – or catch a soccer game, hit the links on the golf course, or enjoy a class at the [Lakeside Nature Center](#).

Conservation areas

Outside Kansas City, near Warsaw in west central Missouri, the fall colors along the hiking trails at [Granny's Acres Conservation Area](#) are a stunning sight. You won't get lost in the forest, but you can certainly get lost in all the lush hues.

On Sunday, Oct. 16, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will host the 30th annual fall driving tour through the rugged hills and forest at the [Poosey Conservation Area](#) near Chillicothe. For more information, call 660-646-6122, or visit mdc.mo.gov.

2016 Fall Color Report

Though it's difficult to predict when the fall colors will peak or how vibrant the hues will be, the Missouri Department of Conservation has [tips and resources](#) for optimal viewing.

Jeanene Dunn is a lifelong Kansas City resident and freelance writer. She enjoys cool places, great people, Netflix and a good book.