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**10 GREAT TRAILS FOR FALL THAT AREN'T IN NEW ENGLAND!**

*An Alternative List of Under-the-Radar Trail Adventures for October*

Fall is a great time for trail adventures. Cooler weather, that crisp, fresh air, and the bright colors of the season inspire outdoor enthusiasts everywhere.

Dominating the season's lists of best trails for fall are always the long, rural pathways of New England, famous for their colorful foliage where leaf-peepers flock each October.

But for those of you looking for a fall adventure that mightn't be on everyone's bucket list, we've uncovered some less-heralded rail-trail gems.

**The Alternative List - 10 Great Trails for Fall**

**1. Allegheny River Trail**

Clarion and Venango counties - Pennsylvania

A recent TrailLink.com review: "Truly cannot say enough about the beauty of this trail. Each time I thought I had hit the pinnacle of scenery, I went around a bend and saw an even more spectacular view."

Pennsylvania is blessed with some of America's most scenic, and most visited, rail-trails. As beautiful as any of them, but slightly under the radar, is the Allegheny River Trail which runs 32-miles through the lovely Lake Erie region in the state's northwest.

In addition to the vibrant orange and yellow palette of the surrounding woodland this time of year, this stretch of the Allegheny River also features a number of historic railroad towns that welcome bikers, hikers, horse riders and fishermen drawn to this spectacular watershed and the rail-trail that passes through it. The 115-year-old Belmar Bridge, and the Kennerdell and Rockland tunnels are noteworthy highlights.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/allegheny-river-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/allegheny-river-trail.aspx)

*TrailLink.com is Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's free trail-finder website. It provides verified GIS maps, user reviews and photos of more than 24,000 miles of trails across the country.*

## **2. Ontario Pathways Rail Trail**

Ontario County - New York

The charming resort town of Canandaigua is one of the star attractions along this 19-mile rail-trail through New York's Finger Lakes region. The rural trail is the pride of an industrious community organization, Ontario Pathways, Inc., that purchased the unused railroad corridor and transformed it into a popular recreation destination. The trail includes twelve bridges over a myriad of creeks and streams that snake through this rich and fertile landscape.

Canandaigua is the scene of October's Great Pumpkin Walk along the rail-trail, which is lined with hundreds of artistic Jack-O-Lanterns for the occasion. Cider and donuts are included in the small admission fee. Yes, you read that correctly. Cider and donuts. Included. Event info: [www.facebook.com/OntarioPathways](http://www.facebook.com/OntarioPathways)

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/ontario-pathways-rail-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/ontario-pathways-rail-trail.aspx)

### 3. North Bend Rail-Trail

Doddridge, Harrison, Ritchie and Wood counties - West Virginia

Big on beautiful natural scenery and small on crowds, the 70-mile rail-trail dives deep into the state parks and wilderness areas for which West Virginia is famous.

The North Bend Rail-Trail also passes through the small city of Salem, which during the first week of October puts on the wonderful Salem Apple Butter Festival. The heady aromas bring them in from miles around to see live demonstrations of old fashion apple butter making, the copper kettles suspended over a crackling wood fire.

Get ready to stay a while; there's also a grand parade, fireworks on the Saturday night, apple pie baking contests, horseshoe pitching and cornhole tournaments, a bicycle poker ride, and a 5k run along the rail-trail. Now *that's* a fall getaway weekend.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/north-bend-rail-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/north-bend-rail-trail.aspx)

### 4. River Trail of Illinois

Tazewell County - Illinois

Looking for something genuinely different this fall? The 7.5-mile River Trail of Illinois runs from East Peoria in the center of the state to the rural community of Morton, widely recognized as the "Pumpkin Capital of the World" (85 percent of the world's canned pumpkin is produced in Morton, so it's hard to argue with that).

Every October Morton hosts the thoroughly weird but certainly entertaining Morton "Punkin Chuckin" Contest, where enterprising Illinoisans build gigantic pumpkin launching machines out of gas tanks, aluminum piping and elastic slings and gather in a huge field to do their thing. The smart tip: bring lawn chairs as seating is scarce.

Event info: [www.mortonpumpkinfestival.org](http://www.mortonpumpkinfestival.org).

If you're keen to extend your trail trip, the lovely Rock Island Trail from Peoria travels through friendly small towns, classic Midwestern farmland and woodlands.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/river-trail-of-illinois-\(carl-bud-schmitt-trail\).aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/river-trail-of-illinois-(carl-bud-schmitt-trail).aspx)

## **5. Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail**

Lassen County - California

Okay, we probably can't claim the Bizz Johnson as genuinely "under the radar." As an inductee into Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Rail-Trail Hall of Fame, this 25-mile trail through spectacular canyons and upland forests is one of California's most-loved.

But no list of the best fall excursions is complete without mentioning the annual Rails to Trails Festival in Susanville, the trail's hub and one of the best examples in America of a small community making the most of its location next to a destination trail.

Centered around the historic Susanville Railroad Depot, this yearly celebration attracts visitors from far and wide, with live music, railroad handcar races, a chili cook-off and salsa contest, and the Bizz Johnson Marathon. Better yet the festival, held this year October 12, supports the Lassen Land and Trails Trust in its work to enhance public trails in northeastern California. Event info: [www.lassenlandandtrailstrust.org](http://www.lassenlandandtrailstrust.org).

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/bizz-johnson-national-recreation-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/bizz-johnson-national-recreation-trail.aspx)

## **6. Galloping Goose Trail**

San Miguel County - Colorado

With such spectacular surroundings you'd think the Galloping Goose Trail would just about be a household name among rail-trail fans. But this eye-opening, high-altitude trail in southwestern Colorado enjoys a relatively low profile.

A sterner test for the legs and lungs than most rail-trails, the Galloping Goose – bearing the nickname given to the unique part car-part train vehicles that once traversed the narrow-gauge line – winds for 20 miles through Colorado's Uncompahgre National Forest. The glow of the region's famous aspen trees is the main draw this time of year, framed by the snow-capped Rocky Mountain peaks. Don't wait too long – the trail becomes one of the area's first skiable cross-country trails as early as October.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/galloping-goose-trail-\(co\).aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/galloping-goose-trail-(co).aspx)

## **7. North Central State Trail**

Cheboygan and Otsego counties - Michigan

The Tip of the Mitt is a great place to experience the coming of the cooler season. The 62-mile North Central State Trail winds through Michigan's north woods with connections to well-established tourist towns at both ends. The evidence of fall pours generously over this remarkable rail-trail and the surrounding agricultural fields, forests, lakes, rivers and wildflowers. The section north of Indian River, particularly, is illuminated with iridescent birch and maples through mid- to late October.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/north-central-state-trail-\(formerly-gaylord-to-mackinaw-city-rail-trail\).aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/north-central-state-trail-(formerly-gaylord-to-mackinaw-city-rail-trail).aspx)

## **8. Red Cedar State Trail**

Dunn and Eau Claire counties - Wisconsin

There are few lovelier places to be on a bright October day than Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley. This bucolic 14.5-mile rail-trail follows the gentle Red Cedar River past forests and farms, canopies of trees, wetlands and crimson sumac, the landscape changing with the distinct seasons.

The Red Cedar also connects with the Chippewa River State Trail, connecting in turn to a number of trailside communities waiting to welcome you with a roaring fireplace and a restorative beverage.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/red-cedar-state-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/red-cedar-state-trail.aspx)

## **9. Lake Wobegon Trail**

Stearns and Todd counties - Minnesota

The trail's namesake is the fictional town of Lake Wobegon, made famous by author and radio personality Garrison Keillor. Along the 10-foot wide paved trail, you'll find small

towns that provided Keillor with inspiration, including Holdingford, a town once referred to by Keillor as "most Wobegonic."

Following the former Burlington Northern Railroad corridor between Osakis and St. Joseph, the 62-mile Lake Wobegon Trail offers scenic views of prairie remnants, lakes, woodlands and open farmland, with surprising deep reds and toasty yellows greeting visitors in the autumn months.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/lake-wobegon-trail.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/lake-wobegon-trail.aspx)

## **10. Boise River Greenbelt**

Ada County – Idaho

Albino deer, foxes, blue heron, eagles, osprey, rainbow trout, owls and wood ducks – photos of the Boise River Greenbelt at TrailLink.com reveal a rail-trail that is as much nature preserve as it is paved pathway. In the fall, the 23-mile streak of riverside trail outside Idaho's largest city blazes warm reds, oranges and yellows.

**Map, photos and info:** [www.traillink.com/trail/boise-river-greenbelt.aspx](http://www.traillink.com/trail/boise-river-greenbelt.aspx)

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*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 100,000 members, is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Founded in 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's national office is located in Washington, D.C., with regional offices in California, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. For more information visit [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org).*