

# Cedar Point

9:30



## FRONTIER TRAIL

CEDAR POINT  
CP  
LAKE ERIE

11:00



# THE BIG TIME: CEDAR POINT, OHIO

The fun starts here! We take you through a jam-packed day in Sandusky, the “roller coaster capital of the world.” BY KARA WILLIAMS

When you want to have a blast on the biggest scale possible, you can't beat Cedar Point (1 Cedar Point Drive, [cedarpoint.com](http://cedarpoint.com); \$43 adults, \$16 children). The 138-year-old institution is the country's second-oldest amusement park and home to 75 rides—the largest collection in the country. No doubt, lines can be ridiculously long. (On any given summer day, there are upwards of 20,000 visitors.) So we've cooked up a minute-by-minute cheat sheet to having the time of your life from sunup to sundown.



**8:50 A.M.** You've just spent the night at one of the budget, mid-range or deluxe Cedar Point resorts, so you can enter the park an hour before official opening time. (Sweet!) Avoid the main entrance and gather with the other clever folks at the northeast back gate.

**9 A.M.** For early parkgoers, Cedar Point opens five of its most popular rides. Head quickly west to **Maverick**, the newest coaster, to knock this one off your list before lines become unbearable. We can't think of a better way to begin the day than with a 95-degree descent.

**9:30 A.M.** Tick off another coveted coaster by scooting south to **Millennium Force**, near Frontier Trail. When this “giga-coaster” debuted in 2000, it broke world records for its height (310 feet) and speed (93 mph). It no longer holds those titles, but nothing beats its bird's-eye views of Lake Erie.

**10 A.M.** As the gates officially open and crowds pour in, get in

line at **Top Thrill Dragster**, the park's third most popular ride. Your car catapults straight up from zero to 120 mph in four seconds, crests a hill at 420 feet and zooms back down to earth—all within 17 seconds.

**10:30 A.M.** After all that action, take a stroll to the back of the park for a snack. Stop at **Happy Friar** to pick up a basket of **thick, fresh french fries** (\$4), a Cedar Point staple since 1939. Look for signs advertising “hand-cut” or “homemade.” Sprinkle with salt and vinegar or smother in ketchup.

**11 A.M.** Eat your fries, then catch the **Cedar Point & Lake Erie Railroad** from nearby Frontier Station. An authentic coal-fired steam engine pulls the open-air cars on the leisurely 15-minute ride.

**11:30 A.M.** When many visitors start breaking for lunch (and later for dinner), coaster lines can shrink significantly. So hit a few that are close to one another in succession. First

brace yourself for the three-minute ride on **Mean Streak**, a crisscrossing woodie at the northernmost point of the park. Then race against another car on the twin tracks of **Gemini**. Finally, you'll fly up from your seat—but stay securely strapped in—on the legendary **Magnum XL-200**.



**2 P.M.** After five hours in the sun, you probably need to cool off. Head to the **Good Time Theatre** in the middle of the park for the **free ice-skating show**, with an appearance by Snoopy.

**2:45 P.M.** Continue heading south toward the **Midway Market** for a buffet spread: Get your fill of pizza, burgers, tacos, salad, meatloaf and desserts for just \$13. Since it's between



**TRY THIS**  
 Grab a map at the gate and form a plan of attack.

typical lunch and dinner hours, you'll have the place to yourself.

**4 P.M.** Walk off that big meal by heading across the Midway to wield a water pistol at **Top Glo** (\$3) or any of the other nearby games. Most visitors tend to



play games in the evening, just before they leave, so you won't have a ton of competition in the late afternoon. Store your stuffed toy in a \$1 locker near the **Giant Wheel**. And while you're in the vicinity, hop on this mellow ride with stellar views of the beachfront.

**5 P.M.** You've relaxed long enough; it's time to get that heart pumping again. The field-tripping day campers are boarding buses home about now, and other visitors have dinner on their brains, so the lines should be more reasonable. First hit **Wicked Twister**, where you're propelled up and down a spiraling structure five times. Move on to nearby **maXair**,

a giant, rotating swing that launches you 140 feet in the air. Then head north to **Power Tower**, where you have a choice of being thrust up 240 feet, or being thrust down from the same height at 60 miles an hour. Try both versions before another food break.

**7:30 P.M.** As the sun sinks in the sky, grab a portable hot dog on a stick, aka a **corn dog** (\$3), at **Transport Refreshments**. Exit the park at the southeast gate to meander along the beach boardwalk and catch a lake breeze. Have your hand stamped so you can return.

**8:30 P.M.** With less than two hours left before the park closes, you'll want to top off your day with a coaster nightcap.

Get inverted on the stand-up **Mantis** and then on the spiraling **Corkscrew**, which spans the bustling Main Midway.

**9:55 P.M.** Queue up anywhere before the park closes at 10 p.m. and you're guaranteed a ride. End your day at the bright-green **Raptor** coaster near the front entrance. With legs dangling, you'll fly upside down six times. You can buy a **personal souvenir DVD** (\$20) to bring home, so smile wide for the on-car camera.



**eat this** Cornmeal-battered cheese on a stick (\$3) from Sagebrush Sue's, in Frontier Town.

**sleep here** You could book a hotel room like everyone else. Or, for the same price, you could rent a 400-square-foot Cedar Point-affiliated cottage at Lighthouse Point (*One Cedar Point Drive, resorts.cedarpoint.com, 419-627-2106; cottages from \$155*). The freestanding, cedar-shingled units face the waterfront and sleep six; amenities include a kitchenette, deck and outdoor grill.

## RECORD-BREAKING RIDES

Hop on these carousels and coasters for a truly unbeatable experience.



### Flying Horses Carousels OLDEST: 132 YEARS

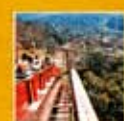
Two East Coast resort towns boast carousels built by ride impresario Charles W.F. Dare around 1876: the Flying Horses Carousel on Martha's Vineyard (*Oak Bluffs Ave., Oak Bluffs, MA; rides from \$1.50*) and the Flying Horse Carousel in Rhode Island (*Bay St., Westerly; rides from \$1.50, ages 12 and under*).



### Kingda Ka

### TALLEST: 456 FEET FASTEST: 128 MPH

Prepare for a cheek flapping, heart-pounding good time on Kingda Ka at Six Flags Great Escape (*1 Six Flags Blvd., Jackson, NJ; \$60 adults, \$30 children*). In 3.5 seconds, you're propelled from 0 to 128 miles per hour, before soaring 45 stories. Top off the airtime on this steel coaster by cresting a 129-foot-high "camel hump."



### The Beast

### LONGEST: 7,359 FEET

Get your money's worth with a ride on The Beast at Kings Island (*6300 Kings Island Drive, Kings Island, OH; \$30 adults, \$25 children*), sprawling across 35 acres and clocking in at four minutes and 50 seconds. The old-fashioned woodie surprises with a fancy finish: a crazy spin through a spiraling tunnel.