



Unplug Illinois Activity Guide



Unplug Illinois is a program of the Illinois Park & Recreation Association, designed to encourage people to “unplug” from technology and plug into, play, creativity, family and adventure.

Many of us focus so heavily on work and family commitments that we never seem to have time for pure fun. Play is not just essential for kids; it is an important source of relaxation and stimulation for adults as well. Unplug Illinois promotes getting up and getting out, whether you go for a walk, bike ride or hike.

We hope you enjoy this activity guide, which is designed to give you and your family plenty of creative ways to unplug at home and at your local park, recreation or conservation agency.

Why Unplug?

Unplugging delivers many physical, mental, social and health benefits:

Improve your physical health.

Getting 30 minutes of physical activity can improve blood pressure, lower cholesterol, reduce stress and extend life expectancy according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Improve your mental health.

The National Recreation and Park Association states that more time spent in parks and green spaces can help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress.

Improve your social interactions.

Spending time with family and friends helps cope with trauma, encourages healthy habits and can lower health risks such as stress and high blood pressure according to the Mayo Clinic.

Improve your lifestyle.

Committing to taking time away from screens can improve sleep cycles, boost being present in the moment, increase productivity and improve social connections.

Parks and Recreation Deliver Many Benefits:

Parks deliver value in people's lives and communities by generating local revenue and jobs.

Parks provide healthier, sustainable communities by encouraging psychological and physical health.

Make Fruit and Vegetable Stamp Art

Get the chance to play with food by making stamps out of fruits and vegetables. Recycle produce by using them to make exciting prints on paper or fabric.



Supplies

- Paper
- Fruits and vegetables, ideally those that have passed their expiration date
 - Apples, pears, oranges, bananas, lemons, broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers, potatoes, carrots, corn, mushrooms, bok choy, brussel sprouts, snow peas and okra are all great options.*
- Tempera or poster paint
- Plastic plates or trays
- Cutting board
- Knife

In addition to paper you can decorate aprons, placemats, table cloths, bandanas and even clothing! Just swap your tempera or poster paint with an acrylic or fabric paint.

Directions

Gather fruits and veggies. Wash and wipe dry.

Prepare the stamps! Fruits and veggies can be cut in many different ways. Experiment to create different effects and find what you like best. For example:

Apples and pears cut in half (splitting top from bottom) expose the star shape that the seeds make

Cut the bottom of the bok choy bunch to make a rose print

Potatoes are great for creating custom shapes

Corn on the cob can be used as is like a rolling pin

Put different colors of paint in shallow plates or containers.

Dip your stamp into a tray of paint,

making sure that the bottom is evenly-coated and gently shake off any excess paint.

Press the painted side of the fruit or vegetable stamp firmly onto the paper or fabric.



Lift to admire your print!

Wipe off the paint from your stamps before dipping into other colors to avoid getting mud-colored prints.

There are so many different techniques to try. You can make random prints, patterns, overlapping designs or even try composing a picture!



Photos and Adapted Craft Instructions Courtesy of FirstPalette.com

Recycled Milk Carton Bird Feeder

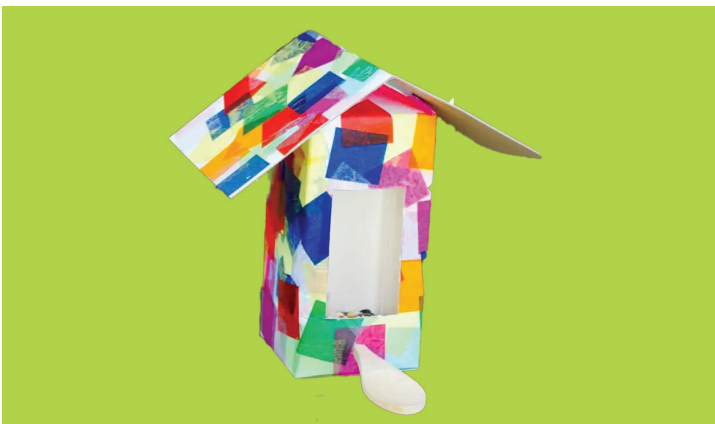
Making a bird feeder is a fun spring or summer activity and a great way to learn about birds native to your area.

Supplies

- Clean and dry recycled milk or juice carton
- Acrylic paint
- Recycled cardboard
- School glue
- Paint brush
- Tissue paper squares
- Twine
- Wooden spoon
- Scissors
- X-acto knife (adults only)
- Outdoor Mod Podge

Directions

- Paint your carton with white acrylic paint and allow to dry.
- Coat each side of the carton with school glue and apply the tissue paper squares in any arrangement you like.
- Gently brush the squares with a brush to ensure all of the edges are glued down. Let dry.
- To create the roof, cut and fold a piece of cardboard to fit over the top of your carton.
- Repeat steps above and apply tissue squares with glue. Set aside to dry.
- If necessary, remove the plastic pouring spout with an X-Acto knife (adults only!). You can also cut off any excess cardboard from the "roof ridge" if desired.
- To make a bird feeder, cut a large rectangle into the front of the carton.
- Just below the opening, cut small slits in an 'X' shape. This is where you can insert a wooden spoon create your perch.
- Apply a generous dab of glue to securely attach the perch to the carton.
- On your roof piece, punch two small slits, about 2" apart, and thread through the ends of your twine or string. Tie a knot securely.
- Using glue, attach the roof to your carton.
- Give the birdfeeder a couple coats of outdoor Mod Podge, and hang them up outside.
- Fill the bottom up with bird seed, hang from a tree, and wait for your feathered friends to discover it!



Photos and Adapted Craft Instructions Courtesy of Heidi Kundin from HappinessIsHomemade.net

Spring & Summer Activities

Need something to do this summer or spring? Complete this word search to find some activities that can help you unplug!

ADVENTURE
PICNIC
KAYAK
READ

EXERCISE
GARDEN
DANCE
CAMP

EXPLORE
SPORTS
SWIM
RELAX

HIKE
FISH
PLAY
BIKE



Find Backyard Birds in Illinois

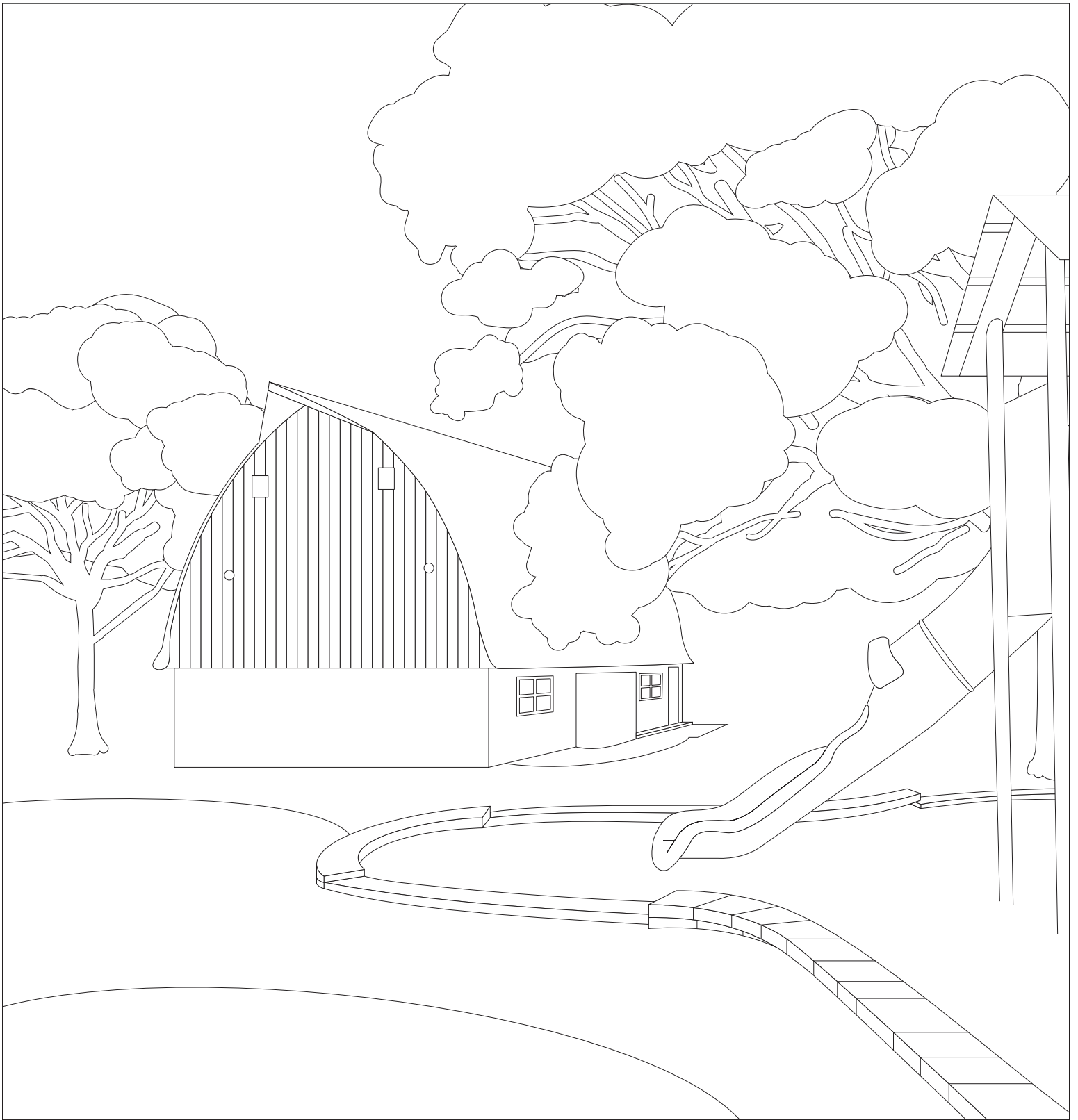
Just like you, every bird in this list calls Illinois home. Each has its own special role in the ecosystem. See if you can spot them in your backyard and in the word search below!

NORTHERN FLICKER
INDIGO BUNTING
MOURNING DOVE
SONG SPARROW
HOUSE FINCH

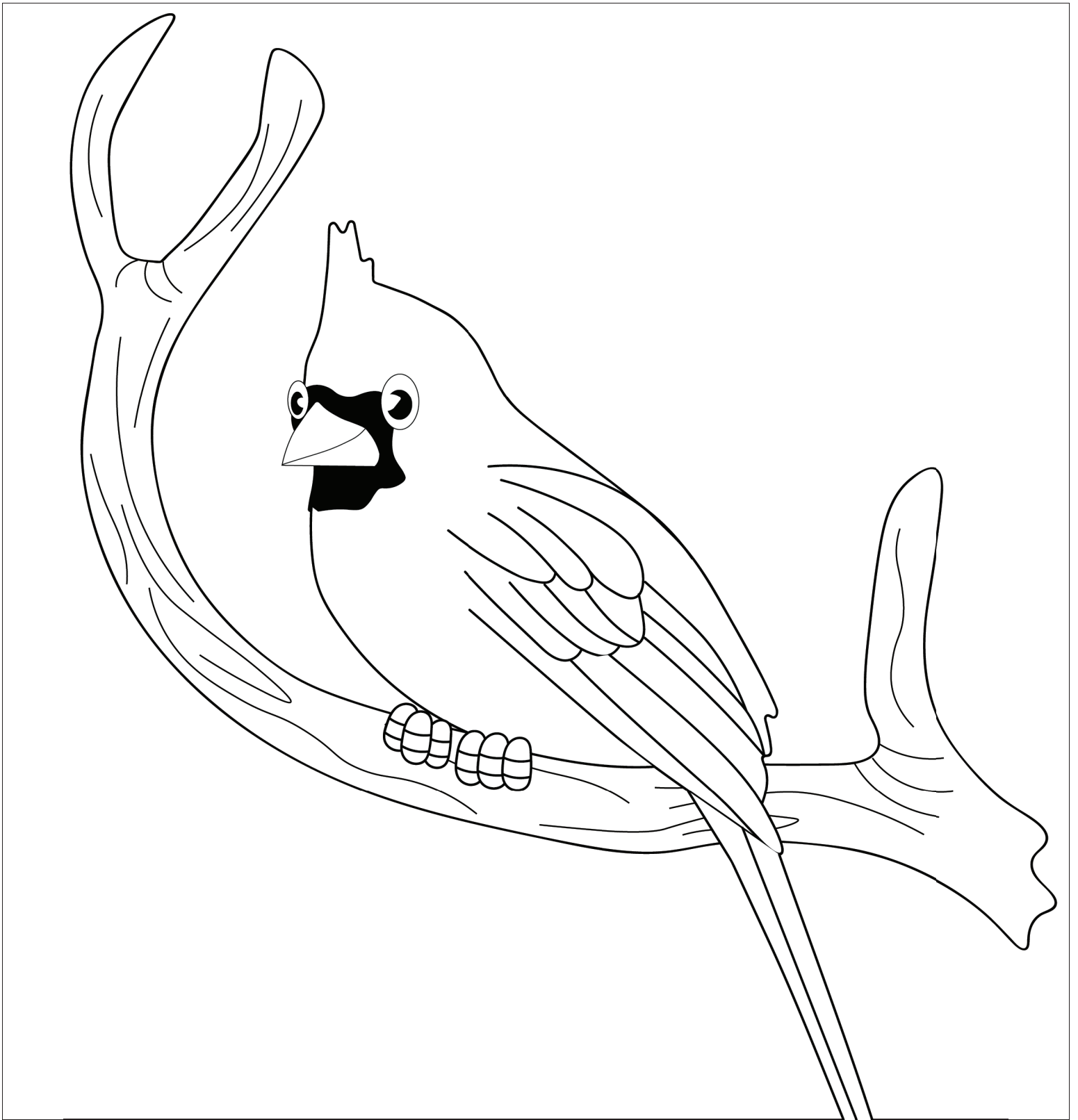
AMERICAN ROBIN
HOUSE SPARROW
CEDAR WAXWING
BARN SWALLOW
BLUE JAY

DARK-EYED JUNCO
AMERICAN CROW
TREE SWALLOW
GRAY CATBIRD
DOWNY WOODPECKER

M	B	L	U	E	J	A	Y	D	E	N	P	W	L	V
O	G	Q	M	C	I	S	O	O	A	O	C	D	M	H
U	R	A	M	E	N	O	J	W	M	R	O	A	T	D
R	A	M	H	D	D	N	B	N	E	T	M	R	R	Z
N	Y	E	O	A	I	G	B	Y	R	H	M	K	E	H
I	C	R	U	R	G	S	A	W	I	E	O	E	E	H
N	A	I	S	W	O	P	R	O	C	R	N	Y	S	O
G	T	C	E	A	B	A	N	O	A	N	G	E	W	U
D	B	A	S	X	U	R	S	D	N	F	R	D	A	S
O	I	N	P	W	N	R	W	P	C	L	A	J	L	E
V	R	R	A	I	T	O	A	E	R	I	C	U	L	F
E	D	O	R	N	I	W	L	C	O	C	K	N	O	I
V	P	B	R	G	N	E	L	K	W	K	L	C	W	N
M	D	I	O	E	G	F	O	E	Z	E	E	O	L	C
Z	W	N	W	V	D	U	W	R	A	R	E	H	T	H



Meyer Woods Park in the Darien Park District is a 10-acre oak grove oasis. The park was built on the site of a farm and still features the original barn, which was built in 1913.



One of the most beautiful things for Illinoisans to be proud of is our state bird, the northern cardinal! Male cardinals are a brilliant scarlet red, while females are a buffy brown with reddish wings. Both have a jet-black mask, pronounced crest, and heavy bill.



Many park and recreation agencies feature zoos and farm animals. Miller Park, a part of Bloomington Park & Recreation, Cosley Zoo in the Wheaton Park District and Blackberry Farm in the Fox Valley Park District are a few locations with live animals. Color your own farm animal above!

Bake Sweet Animal Treats

You'll have a hoot making these beary good desserts.

Brown Bear Cookies



Yield: 12 Cookies
Total Time: 25 mins

Ingredients

- Oatmeal cookie mix, plus ingredients called for on package
- Granulated sugar, for rolling
- Brown M&M's
- Mini chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat oven to 375° and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, prepare oatmeal cookie dough according to package instructions.

Shape cookie dough into six 1" balls for the bear head. Flatten bear heads with a glass. Shape smaller 1/2" balls for the ears and snouts. Place two balls on the top of each bear head to create ears. Roll the dough balls being used for snouts in sugar and place in the bottom center of the bear head. Carefully flatten the smaller balls.

Bake until golden, 8 to 10 minutes. While the bear cookies are still warm, place an M&M on the snout to make a nose and use two mini chocolate chips to make eyes.

Let cool completely.

Owl Cupcakes

Yield: 24 Cupcakes
Total Time: 1 hr 20 mins

Ingredients

- 1 box chocolate cake batter, plus ingredients called for on box
- 1 (16-oz.) tub chocolate frosting
- 24 Oreos, halved
- 48 chocolate mini M&Ms
- 24 orange mini M&Ms

Directions

Preheat oven to 350° and line 2 12-cup muffin tins with black cupcake liners. Prepare cupcake

batter according to package directions.

Scoop cupcake batter into liners and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 22 to 25 minutes. Let cool.

Frost cupcakes with chocolate frosting, making two swooshes on top for ears!

Top with Oreo halves, icing side up for eyes. Dot the bottom of chocolate mini M&Ms with frosting

and place on top of Oreo halves for eyeballs.

Place an orange mini M&M for the nose.



Photos and Recipes Courtesy of Lauren Miyashiro and Lindsay Funston from Delish.com

Swimming Communities

Do you love swimming? People of all ages can swim, and it is an easy and fun way to break a sweat, get wet and get some good exercise during the fleeting Midwest summer. Many local park and recreation agencies offer pools, and some also have waterparks. Go ahead and unplug from your devices, get outside, and have fun today! Please call ahead or visit their websites to confirm availability, hours, and fees.

Bloomington Park District

bloomingtonparks.org

The Oasis Water Park

170 S. Circle Avenue
Bloomington
(630) 339-3568

Champaign Park District

champaignparks.org

Sholem Aquatic Center

2205 Sangamon Dr.
Champaign
(217) 398-2581 (in season)
(217) 819-3985 (off season)

Gurnee Park District

gurneeparkdistrict.com

Hunt Club Park Aquatic Center

900 N. Hunt Club Road
Gurnee
(847) 599-3780

Fox Valley Park District Aquatics

foxvalleyparkdistrict.org

Phillips Park Family Aquatic Center

828 Montgomery Road
Aurora
(630) 851-8686

Splash Country

195 S. Barnes Road
Aurora
(630) 906-7981

Freeport Park District

freeportparkdistrict.org

Read Park Family Aquatic Center

867 W. American Street
Freeport
(815) 801-SWIM

Rockford Park District

rockfordparkdistrict.org

*The Rockford Park District
operates three public pools.*

Alpine Pool

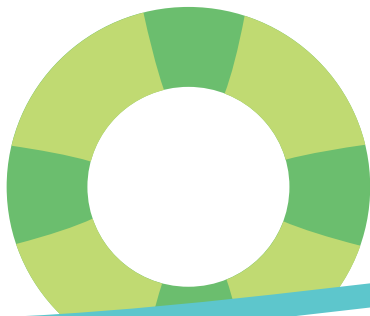
4310 Newburg Rd
Rockford
(815) 987-8804

Harkins Aquatic Center

910 Acorn St.
Rockford
(815) 987-8805

Sand Park Pool

1041 E Riverside Blvd
Loves Park
(815) 987-8806



West Chicago Park District

we-goparks.org

Turtle Splash Water Park

129 West National Street
West Chicago
(630) 293-6320

O'Fallon Parks & Recreation

ofallonparksandrec.com

Memorial Pool

1411 E 5th St, O'Fallon
(618) 624-0139

Hoffman Estates Park District

heparks.org

Seascape Family Aquatic Center

1300 Moon Lake Blvd.
Hoffman Estates
(847) 310-3626

Round Lake Park District

rlapd.org

Aquatics Center

860 Hart Road
Round Lake
(847) 740-9823

Channel Your Inner Animal

Frog jump your way into fitness with the following exercises to keep kids moving. According to the CDC, the prevalence of obesity in children ages 2-19 is 18.5% and affects about 13.7 million children and adolescents.

Inchworm Walk

Start in a standing position. Bend forward, lower your hands to ground, and keep your feet still as you walk out to a plank. From the plank, keep your hands still as you walk your feet in toward your hands.

Bear Crawl

Start on your hands and knees. Gently lift your knees 1 to 2 inches off the ground and keep back flat.

Crab Walk

Start on your bottom with your hands behind your back and legs bent at the knees. Lift your bottom off the ground.

Frog Jump

Start in deep squat with your hands on the ground. Jump up as high as you can with your hands and feet leaving ground at the same time.

Alligator Crawl

Start on your belly, staying as low to the ground as possible. Alternate using your right arm and left leg and left arm and right leg to move forward.

Relax with Yoga

Fun, relaxing yoga poses the whole family can enjoy!

Butterfly Pose

Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine, bend your legs, place the soles of your feet together, and gently flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.

Tree Pose

Stand on one leg, bend your knee, place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh, and balance.

Come to an all-fours position, round your back, and tuck your chin into your chest.

Cat Pose

Cobra Pose

Lie on your tummy, place palms flat next to your shoulders, press into hands, lift head and shoulders off ground, and hiss like a snake.

Mountain Pose

Stand tall with legs hip-width apart, feet facing forward, and straighten your arms alongside your body.

Lotus Pose

Sit on your heels, stretch fingers out in front of you, and place heels of palms together.

Poses and Descriptions Courtesy of kidsyogastories.com

Constellations

There are five main constellations that can be seen in the northern hemisphere all year round; Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Draco, Cepheus, and Cassiopeia. Start with the big dipper to establish your directions and explore the night sky!

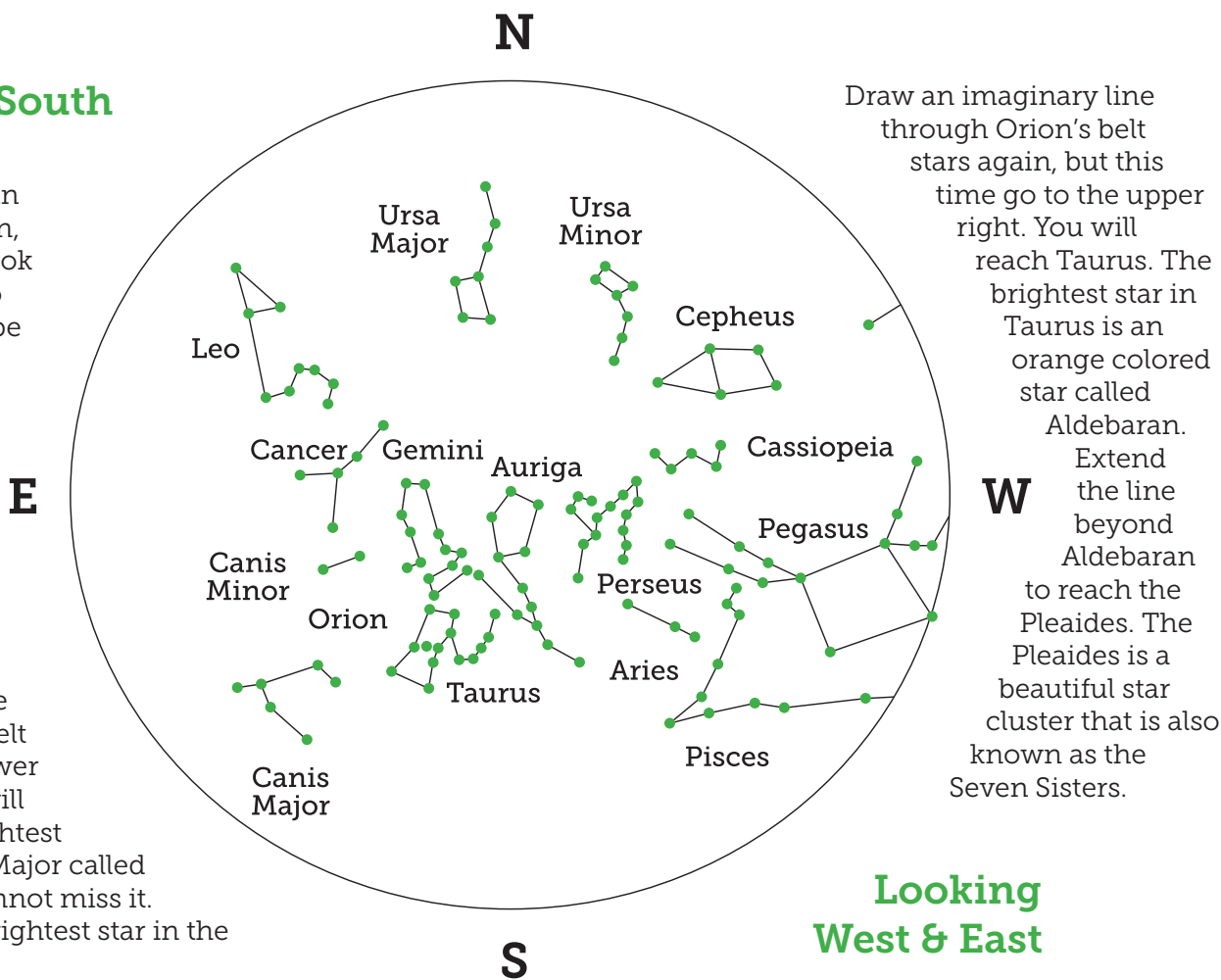
Looking South

The brightest constellation in winter is Orion, the hunter. Look for the stars to make the shape of a person in the sky with 2 shoulder stars, 2 leg stars, and three stars in a row to make a belt in the middle.

Draw an imaginary line through the belt stars to the lower left and you will reach the brightest star in Canis Major called Sirius. You cannot miss it. Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky.

Sirius also belongs to the Winter Triangle. The Winter Triangle is made with stars belonging to Orion and his two dogs – Sirius (Canis Major) and Procyon (Canis Minor). Procyon is the brightest star in Canis Minor which is found to the left of Orion. To complete the triangle, use the top left shoulder star in Orion. This star is a reddish star named Betelgeuse (Beatle-juice).

Above the Winter Triangle, look for the Gemini twins – the two bright stars named Pollux and Castor. Pollux is brighter and has a yellowish color where Caster appears white.



Draw an imaginary line through Orion's belt stars again, but this time go to the upper right. You will reach Taurus. The brightest star in Taurus is an orange colored star called Aldebaran. Extend the line beyond Aldebaran to reach the Pleiades. The Pleiades is a beautiful star cluster that is also known as the Seven Sisters.

Looking West & East

Leo is rising in the east and bringing in the spring constellations. Pegasus is setting in the west with the fall constellations.

Looking North

The Big Dipper in the constellation Ursa Major is in the northeast. The handle is pointed towards the ground/horizon.

Ways to be Kind

According to Happiness.com, "science and studies show that being kind and helpful clearly has a positive and uplifting effect on those carrying out the act". Acts of kindness release feel-good hormones, and can help lower anxiety. And it's a great way to show people you care and appreciate them! Fill in your ideas below.

1. Convert mini libraries into pantries
2. Paint "kindness" rocks and place around the community
3. Create uplifting sidewalk chalk art

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

How We Will Unplug

Unplug from technology and plug into adventure, activity, creativity, family, nature and play. Unplug Illinois encourages people to 'plug into' opportunities that local park and recreation agencies offer. How will you unplug?

1. Go on a walk and have a nature scavenger hunt

2. Play a game of charades with family

3. Create an indoor camping adventure

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Benefits of Unplugging

Unplugging has been shown to help improve quality of life, help you feel more recharged every day, help you sleep better and improve your interpersonal communication skills.

Plug Into Activity

Getting 30 minutes of physical activity can improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduce stress and extend life expectancy, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Plug Into Creativity

Taking part in creative activities can improve physical and mental wellbeing including improving chronic pain, frailty and dementia.

Plug Into Nature

Studies from the National Recreation and Park Association show that more time spent in parks and green spaces can help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress.

Plug Into Play

Play can help relieve stress, improve brain function, stimulate the mind and boost creativity, improve relationships and your connections to others and keep you feeling young and energetic.

unplug
ILLINOIS



To Learn More Visit
UnplugIllinois.org



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