



Tour:

OZARKS ECO-ADVENTURE

Middle School Edition

Destination:

Branson, Missouri

Itinerary:

5-days / 4-nights in destination

OZARKS ECO-ADVENTURE - MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION				
Branson, Missouri				
Day	Meals	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	D	Travel to Branson, Missouri; meet your Tour Director and transfer to hotel; Check-in & Refresh		Dinner & The Track Go Karts
2	B, L, D	Silver Dollar City Theme Park + Ozarks Cave Geology Tour: Spelunking, Chemistry & Physics Experiences		Pizza Party & Branson Ferris Wheel
3	B, L, D	The National Tiger Sanctuary & Big Cat Experience	Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery at Table Rock Lake	Ozarks Nature & Ecology Kayak Tour on Lake Taneycomo
4	B, L, D	Dogwood Canyon + Wildlife Tram Tour + 'Conservation Stream' Ecosystem Experience		
5	B	Depart for Home		



As with all sample itineraries, please be advised that this is an 'example' of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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A Message From Our Team

At STEM Study Tours, we believe students learn best when they're immersed, engaged, and inspired. Every program is built with intention - blending hands-on discovery, academic depth, and meaningful experiences that help students see the world (and themselves) in new ways. Our goal is for each itinerary to spark curiosity, build confidence, and create moments students carry long after the trip ends. We're honored to partner with schools who share that vision and to help bring learning to life beyond the classroom.

— Michele & The Hammock Expeditions Team

Why Travel With Hammock Expeditions & STEM Study Tours

Schools choose us because we design programs that are organized, intentional, and built around real learning. Our itineraries combine strong academics with smooth logistics, giving teachers confidence and giving students opportunities to explore, ask questions, and grow. We partner with trusted local experts, communicate clearly, and support groups every step of the way so educators can focus on their students - not the logistics.

What Sets Us Apart

- **Purpose-Driven Itineraries** - Students actively participate in meaningful, real-world learning.
- **Safety, Structure & Professionalism** - From 24-hour support to vetted partners and clear communication, we ensure teachers can focus on their students while we handle the logistics.
- **Hands-On, High-Impact Learning** - Our programs emphasize field science, conservation, and experiential learning - the kind that sticks with students long after the trip ends.
- **Student-Centered Design** - We balance learning with fun, reflection with adventure, and structure with flexibility. Every day is crafted to keep students engaged, energized, and supported.
- **A Team That Travels With Purpose** - We're educators, planners, naturalists, and travel professionals who care deeply about student growth. Your goals become our goals.

Our Commitment to You

When you travel with us, you gain a partner who understands your vision, anticipates your needs, and delivers an experience your students will remember for years to come. We're here to support your school, empower your students, and make every moment meaningful.

We want to be your educational partner. Let us know how we may serve you.

Michele, Christina, Izzy, Dana, Taylor, and the Team



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This five-day **Ozarks Eco-Adventure** invites middle school students into the hills, lakes, caverns, and conservation spaces surrounding Branson, Missouri for a program that blends outdoor discovery with hands-on STEM learning. Students will explore the natural systems of the Ozarks through experiences connected to ecology, geology, water quality, wildlife management, and environmental stewardship, while also enjoying the energy and student-friendly fun that makes Branson such an engaging destination.

Throughout the journey, students connect classroom concepts to real-world places: observing freshwater ecosystems near Table Rock Lake, learning how conservation protects native species and habitats, exploring underground landscapes shaped over millions of years, and reflecting on how people interact with the natural world. The itinerary is designed to balance education, adventure, teamwork, and fun - giving students opportunities to ask questions, build confidence, and experience science as something active, memorable, and meaningful.

Branson... Set in the rolling Ozark Mountains of southwest Missouri, Branson is known for its welcoming spirit, live entertainment, family attractions, scenic lakes, and easy access to outdoor adventure. Beyond the theaters and bright lights, the Branson/Lakes Area offers a natural learning lab for students, with Table Rock Lake, Lake Taneycomo, caves, trails, conservation areas, and wildlife-focused experiences close by. It is a destination where recreation and education fit naturally together—making it especially well-suited for middle school groups looking for a trip that feels exciting, safe, active, and connected to the environment.



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Did you know?

- › Branson sits in the Ozark Mountains of southwest Missouri, a region known for rolling hills, forested ridges, caves, clear streams, and scenic lakes.
- › Before Branson became famous for live entertainment, the area was known for its Ozark scenery and the 1907 novel *The Shepherd of the Hills*, which helped introduce readers to mountain life in the region.
- › Branson is part of the Tri-Lakes area, surrounded by Table Rock Lake, Lake Taneycomo, and Bull Shoals Lake - each with its own ecosystem and recreational personality.
- › Table Rock Lake was created after Table Rock Dam was built on the White River in the 1950s, turning the surrounding landscape into one of the Ozarks' most popular outdoor recreation areas.
- › Table Rock Lake has more than 745 miles of shoreline, giving students a great example of how reservoirs, watersheds, and human engineering can shape a region.
- › Lake Taneycomo changed dramatically after Table Rock Dam was completed; cold water released from deep in the lake helped create an ideal environment for trout.
- › The Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery near Branson is Missouri's largest trout-rearing facility and helps stock rainbow and brown trout in Lake Taneycomo and other waters.
- › The Ozarks are full of karst landscapes, meaning caves, springs, sinkholes, and underground passages are formed as water slowly dissolves limestone over long periods of time.
- › Marvel Cave, located at Silver Dollar City, is one of the area's most famous caves and reminds visitors that some of the Ozarks' most dramatic scenery is actually underground.
- › Branson may be known for shows and attractions, but its lakes, trails, conservation areas, caves, and wildlife habitats make it a natural classroom for ecology, geology, and environmental science.

Day 1

Dinner

Arrival, Welcome & Kickoff - Students arrive in Branson, Missouri and get checked into the hotel, settling into their rooms and meeting their Tour Director. Once everyone is unpacked and refreshed, the group gathers for our Welcome, Safety & Orientation Meeting, where we walk through trip expectations, daily routines, supervision guidelines, and how our team keeps students supported throughout the week. It's a chance to meet the staff, review safety protocols, and set the tone for a fun, respectful, and curiosity-driven Ozarks adventure. The evening wraps up with a welcome dinner, giving students time to relax, connect, and get excited for the days ahead. If your group arrives early, we're always happy to help plan additional Branson-area activities to make the most of your first afternoon in the Ozarks.



The Track Go Karts - Students kick off their Branson adventure with high-energy fun at The Track Family Fun Park, one of the area's most popular student-friendly entertainment stops. Known for its unique high-rise go-kart tracks, including multi-level wooden and steel courses, The Track gives students a chance to relax, laugh, and bond after arrival while enjoying safe, supervised fun in the heart of Branson. Depending on timing and group needs, students may enjoy go-karts along with other attractions such as arcade games, laser tag or bumper boats, making it a lively first-night activity that

balances the week's outdoor learning with classic Branson excitement.



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Day 2

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Today's activities include:



memorable balance of learning, exploration, and classic Branson excitement.

Silver Dollar City Theme Park - Students spend the day at Silver Dollar City, one of Branson's signature attractions and a lively 1880s-style Ozark Mountain village filled with rides, crafts, demonstrations, music, food, and student-friendly fun. The park gives students a chance to experience the character of the Ozarks through themed streets, artisan traditions, and hands-on observations of how entertainment, history, engineering, and regional culture come together in one place. Between educational touchpoints, students will have time to enjoy rides and attractions with their group, making the day a



Marvel Cave Tour - A highlight of the visit is the guided Marvel Cave tour, which takes students below the surface into the limestone formations that helped launch Silver Dollar City itself. As students descend into the cave, they encounter an unforgettable underground landscape shaped by water, time, and geology, including dramatic chambers, living formations, and evidence of the Ozarks' karst terrain. The tour gives students a real-world look at erosion, mineral deposits, underground ecosystems, cave safety, and the relationship between natural history and regional tourism.



for structured education as well as the excitement of rides, demonstrations, and group exploration.

Educator-Led Learning Experience - To make the day both fun and academically meaningful, STEM Study Tours enhances the visit with a dedicated facilitator who uses curriculum guides, student activity prompts, and learning moments to connect the experience to middle school learning themes. Students may explore topics such as geology, karst landscapes, simple machines and ride engineering, regional craftsmanship, early industry, natural resources, and how tourism and conservation intersect in the Branson area. These guided learning moments are woven into the day so students have time



human experience intersect in moments that continue to shape public memory.

The Titanic Museum - Students step aboard for an immersive journey into one of history's most famous maritime stories. As they move through recreated ship spaces, view artifacts, and encounter interactive exhibits, students explore the human stories, engineering decisions, class differences, communication systems, and safety lessons connected to the RMS Titanic. The experience blends history, social studies, science, and empathy, giving students a powerful way to consider how technology, decision-making, and



Branson Ferris Wheel - In the evening, students enjoy one of Branson's most recognizable landmarks: the Branson Ferris Wheel, located along the city's lively entertainment strip. Originally part of Chicago's Navy Pier before being relocated to Branson, the wheel now lights up the night sky with a colorful music-and-light display that gives the group a fun, festive way to experience the city after dark. This activity offers a relaxed change of pace after a full day at Silver Dollar City, giving students time to enjoy the lights, views, and energy of Branson in a safe, supervised setting.

Day 3

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Today's activities include:



cannot return to the wild.

The National Tiger Sanctuary - Students begin the day at the National Tiger Sanctuary, a rescue facility dedicated to the lifelong care of big cats and other animals. During a guided visit, students learn about animal rescue, habitat needs, enrichment, responsible stewardship, and the difference between conservation education and animal entertainment. This experience encourages students to think critically about wildlife protection, human impact, and the responsibilities involved in caring for powerful animals that



Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery & Ranger Talk - In the early afternoon, students visit the Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Education Center, located near Table Rock Dam and Lake Taneycomo. A ranger talk introduces students to trout life cycles, cold-water habitats, hatchery operations, and the role of fisheries management in maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems. Students see how science, engineering, and conservation work together as rainbow and brown trout are raised and stocked into Lake Taneycomo and other Missouri waters.



Ozarks Nature & Ecology Kayak Tour on Lake Taneycomo - Later in the afternoon, students take to the water for a naturalist-led kayak experience on Lake Taneycomo. With guidance from a local naturalist, students observe shoreline habitats, water movement, riparian plants, birds, and other signs of life along the lake while discussing how Table Rock Dam, cold-water releases, and the White River system influence the ecosystem. This gentle paddle gives students a direct, sensory connection to the watershed they have been studying throughout the day.



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WonderWorks Branson - The day ends with an evening visit to WonderWorks Branson, an interactive STEM-focused museum filled with hands-on exhibits that connect science, technology, engineering, art, and math to student-friendly fun. Students explore topics such as physics, weather, light, sound, motion, perception, and innovation through immersive exhibits and playful challenges. After a day focused on wildlife and aquatic ecosystems, WonderWorks gives the group an energetic indoor finale that keeps curiosity and STEM discovery at the center of the experience.

Day 4

Breakfast, lunch & dinner included

Today's activities include:



backdrop.

Dogwood Canyon Nature Park - Students spend the day immersed in the rugged beauty of Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, a spectacular Ozarks landscape of limestone bluffs, spring-fed streams, waterfalls, forests, trout pools, and wildlife habitats. The setting gives students a powerful outdoor classroom where they can observe how geology, water, plants, animals, and conservation practices work together in a protected natural environment. Throughout the visit, the focus is on slowing down, looking closely, and understanding the Ozarks as a living ecosystem rather than simply a scenic



Wildlife Tram Tour - The group boards an open-air tram for a narrated Wildlife Tram Tour through some of Dogwood Canyon's most scenic areas. As the tram travels past bluffs, waterfalls, streams, and wooded valleys, students learn about the park's natural history, wildlife, and ongoing conservation efforts. Depending on conditions and animal movement, the tour may include views of species such as bison, elk, deer, and longhorn cattle in large pasture areas, giving students a safe and memorable way to connect animal behavior, habitat, and land stewardship.



the living stream environment in front of them.

Conservation Stream Ecosystem Experience - Following the tram tour, students take part in a naturalist-led Conservation Stream Ecosystem Experience designed specifically to deepen their understanding of freshwater environments. With guidance from a naturalist educator, students examine how clear Ozark streams support aquatic insects, fish, plants, and other organisms, and how water quality, temperature, flow, habitat structure, and human choices affect ecosystem health. This hands-on session gives students a chance to think like field scientists as they connect conservation concepts to



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Dolly Parton's Stampede Dinner Theatre - In the evening, students enjoy a classic Branson dinner theatre experience at Dolly Parton's Stampede. The performance combines live music, horseback riding, friendly competition, special effects, and a hearty group meal in a lively arena setting. After a full day focused on conservation and natural systems, this evening experience gives students a fun, high-energy way to relax together and enjoy one of Branson's signature entertainment traditions in a supervised, group-friendly environment.

Day 5

Breakfast

Reflection Circle - Before departure, students gather for a final reflection on their Ozarks Eco-Adventure - a chance to look back on the places, people, and ideas that shaped the week. From exploring caves and karst landscapes to learning about wildlife rescue, trout habitats, stream ecosystems, and conservation in action, students consider how each experience helped them better understand the natural world and their role within it. This closing circle gives the group time to share favorite moments, recognize teamwork and personal growth, thank their leaders, and connect the fun of Branson with the deeper learning that took place throughout the journey.

As the program comes to a close, students leave Branson with more than memories of rides, shows, and shared adventure. They return home with a deeper appreciation for the Ozarks - its caves, lakes, streams, wildlife, and conservation stories - and a clearer understanding of how science connects to real places and real decisions. Thank you for trusting our team to guide your students through this meaningful experience. We hope they travel home inspired, curious, confident, and ready to keep asking questions about the world around them.



Goodbye Ozarks!



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Minimum Booking Numbers: 20 students

What's Included:

- ✓ Roundtrip flights or motorcoach transportation
- ✓ 4-nights' accommodation in destination
- ✓ Breakfasts, lunches & dinners daily; starting with dinner on arrival and ending with breakfast on departure (dependent upon travel times)
- ✓ Airport transfers + transportation to activities shown in itinerary
- ✓ The Track Family Fun Park
- ✓ Silver Dollar City Theme Park
- ✓ Marvel Cave Tour
- ✓ Educator-Led Learning Experience at Silver Dollar City
- ✓ The Titanic Museum
- ✓ Branson Ferris Wheel
- ✓ The National Tiger Sanctuary & Big Cat Learning Experience
- ✓ Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery & Ranger-led Learning
- ✓ Ozarks Nature & Ecology Kayak Tour with a Naturalist on Lake Taneycomo
- ✓ WonderWorks
- ✓ Dogwood Canyon & Wildlife Tram Tour
- ✓ Dogwood Canyon's Conservation Stream Ecosystem Experience
- ✓ Dolly Parton's Stampede Dinner Theatre
- ✓ Dedicated Tour Director
- ✓ 24-hour emergency assistance

What's Not Included:

- ⊗ Fully comprehensive insurance (**mandatory**)
- ⊗ Baggage costs, pay directly to airline if required
- ⊗ Baggage handling - everyone should be able to pull / load their own bag
- ⊗ Transfers to/from home airport
- ⊗ Meal selections other than ones provided for the entire group (we are generally able to cater for allergy conditions, vegetarians, halal and in some cases vegan)
- ⊗ Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
- ⊗ Sightseeing / Entertainment / Transport not shown in Itinerary
- ⊗ Hotel incidental deposits & bills – mini-bar, movies, etc.
- ⊗ Gratuities – drivers, hotel services, local guides, tour director
- ⊗ Credit card fees if individuals wish to pay via credit card instead of ACH
- ⊗ Additional taxes, fuel surcharges or fees levied by governments / suppliers

As always, our staff are available to answer any questions you may have regarding programming.
If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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