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BELLE ISLE

Up until a year or so ago, if I was looking for some waterfront activities, Richmond was not a place that came to mind. But once I visited Belle Isle, that all changed.

It's a surprise public park, river walk, museum, hike, rapids, and excellent photo op in the middle of the city. Even the walk over is beautiful. There's a public parking lot (free!) and you take a beautiful winding bridge for a leisurely walk over the Rappahannock River. As you get further above the city, the view gets more and more incredible until you have a perfect shot of the skyline.



And it's the kind of place you can head again and again and still manage to see something new each visit.

The history of the island is fascinating too. After serving as a fishery, a nail factory and an entire village, it was turned into as a prison for Union soldiers during the Civil War. Remnants of the prison are visible there today.



You'll find your own reasons to love Belle Isle when you visit. But here are a few things you can do at Belle Isle to get you started:

- Pack a picnic — there's a shelter on the island
- Wade in the rapids, hop on rocks
- Use signs at the entrance and along a few walking paths to tour the history of the island
- Check out the mountain bike trails on the island
- Go for a jog!

Check out this site for more info:

<http://www.richmondoutside.com/destination/belle-isle-jrps/>

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