

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA WELCOMES GROUPS

From shopping forays to wildlife watching,
the state offers countless options

PLUS:

ENJOY 3 DAYS
IN MINNEAPOLIS/
SAINT PAUL

EXPERIENCE
OUTDOOR BEAUTY,
SCANDINAVIAN CULTURE

SOUTHERN MN
BLENDS HISTORY &
AMERICAN ICONS



*Padelford Riverboat on
the Mississippi River,
photo courtesy of
Visit Saint Paul*



LAUREN BENNETT MCGINTY,
State Tourism Director,
Explore Minnesota

CHOOSE MINNESOTA FOR **ADVENTURE**

Welcome to the start of your Minnesota adventure. Whatever path you choose for your group travel plans, we have a variety of outstanding destinations for you. Whether you adventure on the many hiking and biking trails or paddle in to see the stunning Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness under our dark and starry skies, we know you'll enjoy our great outdoors. As you traverse our scenic highways and byways and as our lakes call you to their shores, be sure to visit our small towns and big cities along the way.

**WHATEVER PATH
YOU CHOOSE
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DESTINATIONS
FOR YOU.**

Experience our vibrant, award-winning dining in Minneapolis and St. Paul or local, family-owned favorites across the state. From the prairies in Southwest Minnesota to Lake Superior in the Northeast, you can find locally-crafted goods along with cultural experiences celebrating Minnesota's past and present. And wherever you go, our residents will be eager to welcome you.

No matter your background, you will be welcomed here with open arms. As you immerse yourself in our communities and mingle with the residents that make our state great, remember to help us keep our state special for generations to come. While you are here, please travel safely and responsibly, respecting the world around you, ensuring we can continue to welcome you and your fellow travelers well into the future.

We cannot wait to welcome you to the North Star State. When you return home, you'll have memories to last a lifetime, and you can share with friends and family how your dreams magically came to life in Minnesota.

Enjoy!

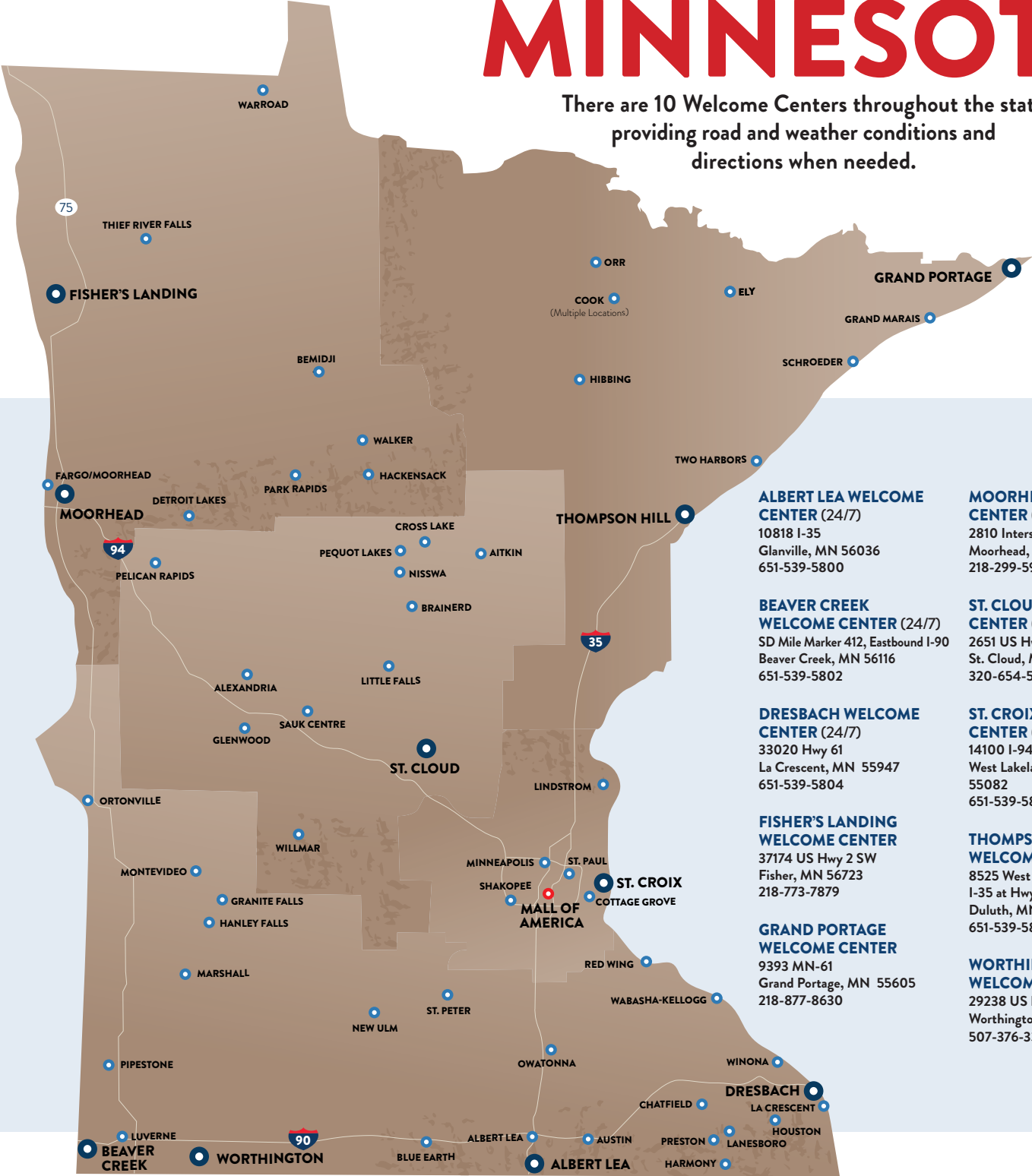


*Learn more
about Minnesota's
travel opportunities!*

m **EXPLORE
MINNESOTA™**

WELCOME TO MINNESOTA

There are 10 Welcome Centers throughout the state providing road and weather conditions and directions when needed.



ALBERT LEA WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
10818 I-35
Glanville, MN 56036
651-539-5800

BEAVER CREEK WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
SD Mile Marker 412, Eastbound I-90
Beaver Creek, MN 56116
651-539-5802

DRESBACH WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
33020 Hwy 61
La Crescent, MN 55947
651-539-5804

FISHER'S LANDING WELCOME CENTER
37174 US Hwy 2 SW
Fisher, MN 56723
218-773-7879

GRAND PORTAGE WELCOME CENTER
9393 MN-61
Grand Portage, MN 55605
218-877-8630

MOORHEAD WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
2810 Interstate 94 east
Moorhead, MN 56560
218-299-5944

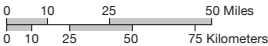
ST. CLOUD WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
2651 US Hwy 10 SE
St. Cloud, MN 56304
320-654-5548

ST. CROIX WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
14100 I-94
West Lakeland Township, MN 55082
651-539-5806

THOMPSON HILL WELCOME CENTER (24/7)
8525 West Skyline Parkway
I-35 at Hwy 2 SW Duluth
Duluth, MN 55810
651-539-5808

WORTHINGTON WELCOME CENTER
29238 US Hwy 59-60
Worthington, MN 56187
507-376-3352

- WELCOME CENTERS
- AFFILIATED INFORMATION CENTERS
- MALL OF AMERICA INFO CENTER



MINNESOTA WELCOMES GROUPS

From shopping forays to wildlife watching, the state offers countless options for tour planners

By Randy Mink

Whether your travelers seek out urban pleasures or access to nature, Minnesota abounds with crowd-pleasing possibilities. From the Twin Cities to the Northwoods, the nation's 12th largest state is filled with things to see and do, and there's water, water everywhere.

The state capital, St. Paul, and neighboring Minneapolis make up the Twin Cities, the commercial and cultural hub of Minnesota. Among the communities comprising the

country's 16th largest metro area is Bloomington, where the 500-plus stores at **Mall of America** (MOA) lure shoppers from all over the world. Besides retail revelry, the iconic megamall offers SEA LIFE aquarium and thrill rides at Nickelodeon Universe indoor theme park. Recent additions at MOA include ClimbZone, a 40-wall climbing park at Nickelodeon Universe; an M&M's destination store; a B&B Theatres multiplex and The Fair on 4, which features go-kart racing and axe-throwing.

SPECTATOR SPORTS AND THEATER FARE

The Twin Cities are home to professional men's and women's teams in every major sport, offering year-round sports entertainment. The state also has a thriving performing arts scene.

Minneapolis' nationally acclaimed **Guthrie Theater**, situated on the banks of the Mississippi, presents classic and contemporary plays. The city's Hennepin Theatre Trust brings in Broadway blockbusters, plus musicians, comedians and holiday shows, to its elegantly restored **State, Orpheum** and **Pantages** theaters. St. Paul's **Ordway Center for the Performing Arts** hosts the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, dance ensembles, concerts and touring Broadway shows. In Chanhassen, 20 minutes west of downtown Minneapolis, **Chanhassen Dinner Theatres**, with three theaters under one roof, is the nation's largest dinner theater, offering Broadway musicals, comedies, cabarets and concerts.

Professional theater can be found in other parts of the state as well. In the little town of Lanesboro in southeastern Minnesota's Bluff Country, **Commonweal Theatre** is gearing up for



▼ Midtown Global Market Mural, East Lake St, Minneapolis, photo courtesy of Paola Carlson-Sanchez/Meet Minneapolis

its 35th season. Up north, downtown Bemidji's **Historic Chief Theater** is a former movie house turned performing arts center. Its resident production company, the **Paul Bunyan Playhouse**, is the oldest professional summer stock company in Minnesota and draws actors from across the country. Past productions have included *Mamma Mia!*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Grease* and *Young Frankenstein*.

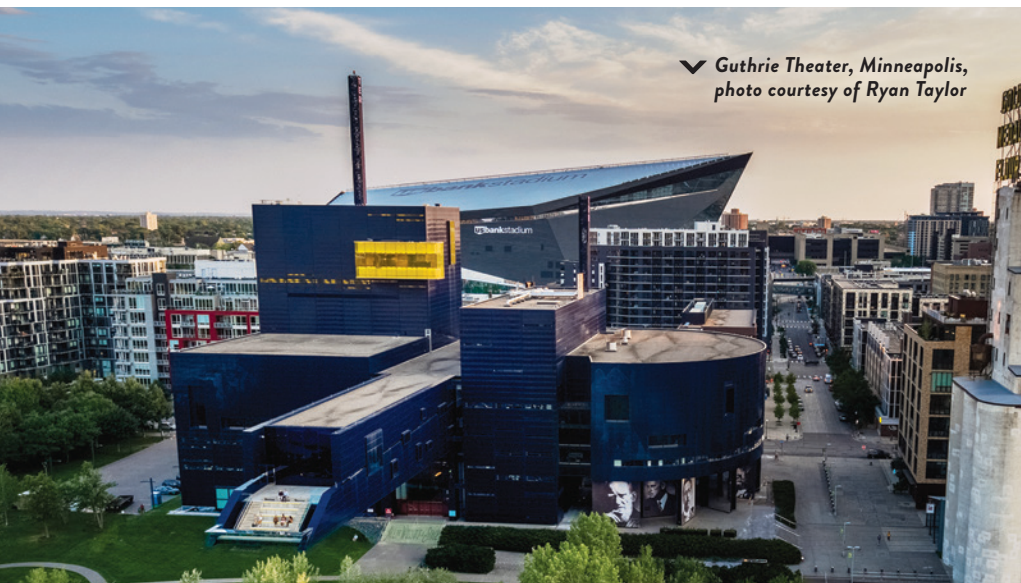
MELTING POT OF CULTURES

Minnesota is known for its Nordic influences, thanks to early settlers from the Old World. In fact, it claims the largest population of Swedes and Norwegians outside of Scandinavia. More recent immigrants have added their own contributions to the state's ethnic make-up.

In Minneapolis, the **American Swedish Institute** occupies the 33-room Turnblad Mansion and attached Nelson Cultural Center. On display are collections of Swedish glass, textiles and decorative and fine arts, along with immigrant artifacts and contemporary exhibits from Sweden and the Nordic region. Tastes of Stockholm in the center's Fika Cafe include Swedish meatballs, gravlax and cardamom buns.

Swedish heritage also is preserved at **Gammelgarden Museum** in Scandia. The 11-acre site exhibits a Lutheran church, log house and other buildings constructed by Swedish immigrants in the 1850s. In Moorhead, **Hjemkomst Interpretive Center** showcases a fully rigged Viking ship replica that sailed from Duluth to Norway in 1982 and plays a 20-minute documentary on the oak vessel's construction and epic trans-Atlantic voyage.

Over the past 30 years, newer immigrant and refugee groups — like the Hmong, Somali, Ethiopian and Mexican populations — have brought their food, music, art and handiwork into the Twin Cities' cultural mix. One of the best places to sample the diversity is **Midtown Global Market** in Minneapolis, which offers ethnic dishes, groceries and gifts representing 22 cultures, from Vietnamese and Venezuelan to Mexican and Moroccan.



▼ Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, photo courtesy of Ryan Taylor

Native American heritage sites can be found in all parts of Minnesota, which is home to 11 sovereign Indigenous nations. **Mille Lacs Indian Museum & Trading Post** is a popular attraction in the central region. **Jeffers Petroglyphs** in southwestern Minnesota features a rocky outcrop with over 4,000 images carved by Indigenous societies as long ago as 7000 B.C. Nearby, **Pipestone National Monument** preserves the sacred site where generations of American Indians have quarried the soft red pipestone that is carved into pipes used for prayer. Along the shore of Lake Superior, the reconstructed stockade at **Grand Portage National Monument** chronicles relations between the fur traders and Ojibwe people. Summertime powwows in various Minnesota locations invite the public to witness traditional music, dance and storytelling.

FAMOUS PEOPLE, FAMOUS PRODUCTS

Minnesota has produced celebrated persons known the world over, and countless products manufactured in the state are household names.

Visitors can connect with famous Minnesotans at attractions like **Paisley Park**, the private estate of the late music icon Prince. The superstar's Chanhassen home, recording studio and performance venue, now a museum complex, bursts with artifacts and memorabilia, including concert wardrobes, musical instruments, motorcycles and a space chronicling Prince films such as *Purple Rain*.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to northern Minnesota and the Grand Rapids birthplace of a true Hollywood legend, the singer/actress most people remember as Kansas teenager Dorothy Gale in the 1939 film classic *The Wizard of Oz*. **The Judy Garland Museum** incorporates the house where the future star grew up in the 1920s before her family moved to California.



▲ Pipestone National Monument Circle Trail, photo courtesy of National Park Service



▲ Purple Rain Exhibit motorcycle at Paisley Park, Chanhassen, photo courtesy of Paisley Park/NPG Records

The **Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home** in Sauk Centre pays homage to America's first Nobel Prize winner for literature. Observations about small-town life in *Main Street* (1920) and other Lewis novels were drawn from his hometown. Another author is remembered at the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum** in Walnut Grove. Known for her *Little House on the Prairie* series about pioneer life, Ingalls Wilder lived in Walnut Grove as a girl in the 1870s.

At the **Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site** in Little Falls, groups can tour the famed aviator's boyhood home and a museum that includes a replica of the *Spirit of Louis* cockpit and the tale of his son's kidnapping.

Cartoonist Charles Schulz, creator of the "**Peanuts**" comic strip, spent much of his life in St. Paul, where his memory is enshrined in bronze statues of Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Snoopy



made product through videos, vintage photos and historical artifacts. Outside the museum, everyone takes selfies with the World's Largest Boot (size 638½ D), which stands six feet tall.

COMMUNING WITH NATURE

For outdoors-minded groups looking for elbow room and recreational opportunities, Minnesota offers an abundance of national, state and regional parks. Zoos, wildlife centers, gardens and arboretums provide additional fresh-air options. In the southeastern corner of

At the **National Eagle Center** in Wabasha visitors see live bald and golden eagles on display, learn about them from naturalist-educators and view (especially in winter) the great raptors perched in trees along the river. Wildlife enthusiasts also flock to the **International Wolf Center** and **North American Bear Center**, both in Ely, to see the four-legged residents. **Minneopa and Blue Mounds state parks**, in the southwest, have bison herds.

In the Twin Cities area, animal fans get their kicks at the **Minnesota Zoo** in Apple Valley and St. Paul's **Como Park Zoo**. The **Great Lakes Aquarium** in Duluth explores marine life associated with Lake Superior.

For those who prefer flora over fauna, the state has lots of horticultural exclamation points. The **Minnesota Landscape Arboretum** in Chaska, part of the University of Minnesota, includes woodlands, ponds, prairie and 12 acres of manicured gardens. It is the largest public garden in the Upper Midwest. The indoor and outdoor gardens of **Marjorie McNeely Conservatory**, next to St. Paul's Como Park Zoo, are filled with exotic plants and floral displays. At **Munsinger and Clemens Gardens** in St. Cloud, visitors can stroll beneath the pines along the Mississippi River and through formal flower and rose beds. **Leif Erikson Park & Rose Garden** commands a pretty setting along the shore of Lake Superior; its more than 3,000 rose bushes represent 100 varieties.



▲ Gorilla at Como Park Zoo St. Paul, photo courtesy of Robert Ferdinandt

and other characters in Rice Park and other locations. They make good photo ops, as do the larger-than-life painted statues of the mythical lumberjack **Paul Bunyan** and **Babe the Blue Ox** at the visitor center in Bemidji.

Group tours at the **SPAM Museum** in Austin spotlight the history of the canned meat product and include samples on pretzel-rod skewers. The gift shop has hundreds of SPAM-related souvenirs and stocks varieties of SPAM not commonly found on supermarket shelves.

The **Red Wing Shoe Museum** in Red Wing sheds light on another Minnesota-

Minnesota, groups marvel at the 60-foot-tall waterfall and massive stalactites at **Niagara Cave** in Harmony. Not far away, **Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park** encompasses Minnesota's longest cave and Historic Forestville, a restored 1800s village.

At **Itasca State Park**, Minnesota's oldest and second-largest state park, an obligatory stop is the Mississippi Headwaters, the point where a humble stream flows out of Lake Itasca on its 2,552-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico. On naturalist-guided lake cruises aboard the **Chester Charles II** excursion boat, groups may see eagles, herons, cormorants and the common loon, the state bird.

EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA™



Learn more about what to do on group tours.
ExploreMinnesota.com

ENJOY 3 MARVELOUS DAYS IN MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL

HIGHLIGHTS

The Twin Cities region offers an array of theaters, jazz and nightclubs, science and history museums, and a delectable food scene. Enjoy all St. Paul and Minneapolis have to offer on your 3-day group tour.



*Use the QR code
to access the
mobile version of
this itinerary.*



▲ Dakota Jazz Club, photo
courtesy of George Roedler

Arrive in Minneapolis and settle into your group-friendly accommodations. After a little relaxation time, refresh and prepare for dinner and drinks at **Dakota Jazz Club**. Serving American fare in a lively music scene, the Dakota is sure to provide your group with an entertaining meal.

DAY 1

Start your first day with a hearty breakfast at your hotel before the adventure begins. Head to one of the most visited art museums in the country at the **Walker Art Center**. Explore modern and contemporary works, sculptures, paintings, books, artist archives, live performances and more.

Spanning visual, performing and media arts, this eclectic center features a new 385-seat theater and a rooftop terrace to admire the dazzling cityscape. It also offers education areas and expansive green space with blooming gardens.

Take a few hours to discover some of the world's finest art displays, including the magnificent exhibitions across the street. Walk over to the **Minneapolis Sculpture Garden** comprising 11 acres dedicated to some 40 contemporary art sculptures.

DAY 2

After breakfast at your hotel, round everyone up for an exploration of St. Paul

starting with a tour of the magnificent **Cathedral of Saint Paul**. Added to the list of the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the cathedral is a marvel of Beaux-Arts architecture serving thousands of Catholics for worship. It's also the center of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Next, step back in time to the Gilded Age at the **James J. Hill House** just around the corner. Learn about Hill's influence on the community and get a peek at what life was like for the wealthy Hill family. Offering both self-guided first-floor tours and 60-minute full-home guided explorations, the James J. Hill House will pique anyone's curiosities.

Lunch offerings at the **Red Cow** in St. Paul include juicy handcrafted burgers, shareable plates, salads and soups, healthy bowls, sandwiches and more.

Dive deeper into the story of Minnesota at the **Minnesota History Center** near downtown St. Paul. Indulge in the stories of the Indigenous peoples of the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes and their immense influence on the region.

DAY 3

On Saturday mornings, you'll find most people gathered at the famous **Saint Paul Farmers' Market** in downtown from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Explore the myriad artisanal



DAY 2

The Fitzgerald Theater, St. Paul,
photo courtesy of Tylor Boland



DAY 3

Minnesota Zoo, Apple Valley,
photo courtesy of Minnesota Zoo

goods from baked and scratch-made treats to handcrafted souvenirs and unique gifts. Grab breakfast and coffee and peruse the many booths offering an array of items.

If your trip does not align with the Saturday Farmers' Market, be sure to grab breakfast at your hotel before departing.

Get up close and personal with a number of endangered species and other protected wildlife for a morning at the **Minnesota Zoo**. Since 1978, the zoo has been providing protection and habitats for animals from around the world in an entertaining and educational environment.



DAY 1

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

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THE TWIN CITIES

PAIR SMALL-TOWN VIBES WITH BIG-CITY AMENITIES

HIGHLIGHTS

Despite their Twin Cities moniker and the mere ten miles separating their downtowns, St. Paul and Minneapolis aren't two peas in a pod. Rather, Minnesota's two largest cities possess their own unique attributes, including beloved cultural institutions, outdoor activities and iconic architecture. Separated by the Mississippi River, this vibrant metropolitan area offers double the fun minus any sibling rivalry. A rock legend's home, a globetrotting marketplace and a mall like no other all await.



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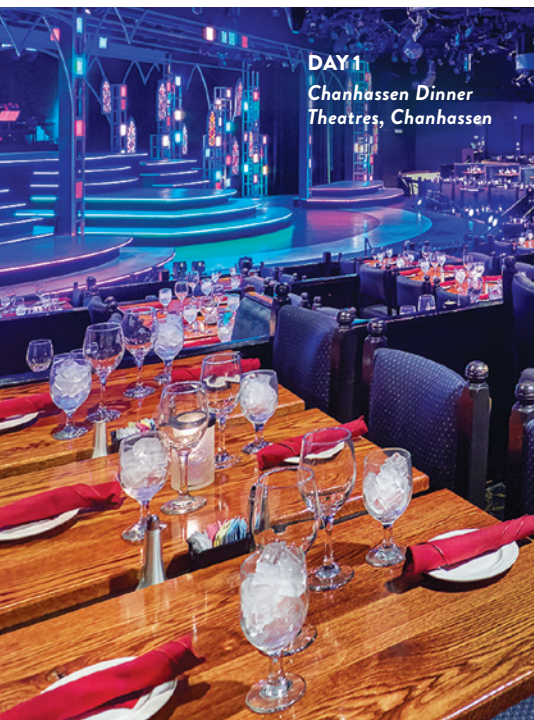


DAY 1

Get the lay of the land from the Mississippi River with a **Padelford Riverboats** tour, offering four Minneapolis/St. Paul sightseeing cruise options. Or catch a ride on the historic **Minneapolis Queen** riverboat, perfect for groups.

Next, explore the riverfront on land with a visit to the **Stone Arch Bridge**, an 1883 landmark spanning 23 arches over the Mississippi River. Leave the modern world behind with a visit to **Mill City Museum**, which recreates the days of old-school flour production, period equipment and all. From the Observation Deck, get a panoramic view of the Mississippi River, St. Anthony Falls, the Stone Arch Bridge and the emerging urban landscape.

Refuel with international cuisine followed by shopping for unique gifts from local immigrant businesses at **Midtown Global Market**, which offers



DAY 1
Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, Chanhassen

everything from colorful textiles and handicrafts to French-style baked goods and Venezuelan empanadas.

Get an insider's look at a musical icon at **Paisley Park**, Prince's home, studio and rehearsal spaces. Not far away, **Chanhassen Dinner Theatres** offer lively entertainment along with tasty continental cuisine.

DAY 2

With more than 500 stores, dozens of restaurants, an amusement park, mini golf, aquarium and the new 40-wall ClimbZone, **Mall of America** offers plenty to keep families, student/youth groups and adult groups amused for hours.

Before heading inside **Minneapolis Institute of Art** (known as Mia to locals) and **Walker Art Center**, the latter celebrated for its visual and media art collections, get your iconic Minneapolis selfie with the Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture in the **Minneapolis Sculpture Garden**.

With 150 years under its belt, **Lakewood Cemetery** offers a unique history lesson, which includes the graves of many of the area's founders, politicians and community members. Tree-lined paths and ponds, plus a Byzantine-style chapel with ornate mosaics, add to its charm.

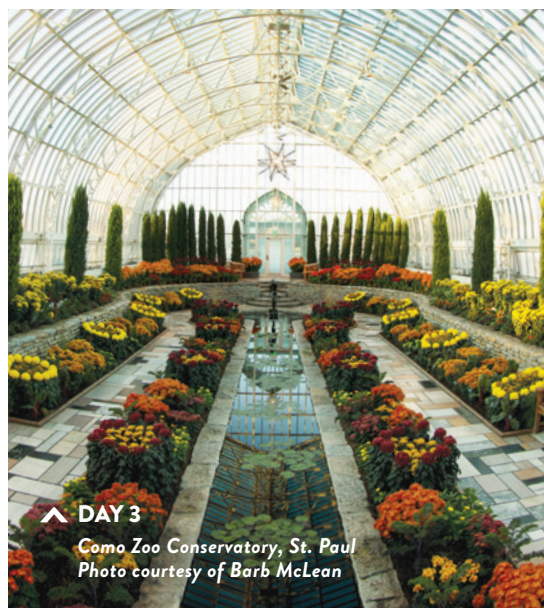
DAY 3

Hundreds of animals and plants from around the world call centuries-old **Como Park Zoo and Conservatory** home, making it a crowd-pleasing visit for groups large and small in St. Paul.

Dig deep into the area's history with a visit to the award-winning **Minnesota**

DAY 2

Chain of Lakes
Photo courtesy of Paul Vincent



DAY 3
Como Zoo Conservatory, St. Paul
Photo courtesy of Barb McLean

History Center near downtown St. Paul. Then get a look at how a 19th-century railroad magnate and his family lived with a tour of **James J. Hill House**.

Continue the history lessons at **Wabasha Street Caves**, a speakeasy and gangster hangout during Prohibition.

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BLENDING

HISTORY AND AMERICAN ICONS IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

HIGHLIGHTS

There's so much to see and do in Southern Minnesota from getting the inside info on a bank raid and answers to FAQs about a meat known throughout the world to the home of four generations of Mayos and an incredible display of marine art.



Use the QR code to access the mobile version of this itinerary.



▲ Pipestone National Monument, photo courtesy of Paul Vincent



▲ DAY 1
Red Wing
Boot Museum



▼ DAY 2
SPAM Museum
in Austin

DAY 1

Arrive at the **Pottery Museum of Red Wing** for a guided tour of more than 6,000 pieces of American stoneware, art pottery and dinnerware. Experience an art form and historical reflection of American culture. Next, it's the **Red Wing Boot Museum** and the world's largest boot. Inside, there's a virtual factory tour and hands-on exhibits.

It's less than an hour to the **Northfield Historical Society** and the site of the infamous bank raid by the James-Younger gang. Memorabilia on display includes guns from the raid and photographs. The **Ole Store Restaurant** has a nice lunch menu, then it's 30 minutes to **Faribault Woolen Mills** and a group tour of the historic mill.

It's a 30-minute drive to Waseca and **FarmAmerica: The Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center**. Begin at the visitor center and walk the Time Line Trail for an overview of

Minnesota's historic farming culture. Continue to Owatonna, which is less than a 30-minute drive, and tour the **Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum**. The tour features a 30-minute film, a museum and a restored cottage. Dinner tonight is at **Torey's Restaurant and Bar**, a local favorite for great service and a full menu. Depart to Rochester, a 50-minute drive.

DAY 2

Begin at **Historic Mayowood Mansion**, the 48-room mansion designed by Dr. Charles H. Mayo. Much of the mansion is furnished with treasures collected abroad. It's an hour's drive to Winona and the **Minnesota Marine Art Museum**. The purpose-built museum on the banks of the Mississippi River features contemporary and historic works of art inspired by water. While in Winona, visit the **Watkins Museum & Store** and view the company's 150-plus year history. Continue South to Houston and stop at the **International Owl Center**, the only all-owl education center in the United States.

It's a 40-minute drive to Harmony for lunch at **Estelle's Eatery & Bar**. Work off lunch at **Niagara Cave** exploring the wonders of the underground world. The guided hike is about a mile and descends 200 feet showing a 60-foot waterfall and fossils 450 million years old.

It's a short drive to Preston and a guided tour of **Historic Forestville**. Begin at the visitor center and connect with historic figures and their lives at the turn of the 20th century. It's about an hour to Austin, where the **SPAM® Museum** is a fun attraction to finish day two.

Drive 30 minutes to Albert Lea and check in to your hotel. Refresh before dinner at the **Wedgewood Cove Restaurant and Bar**.

DAY 3

Depart early for the 50-minute drive to Blue Earth and the **Jolly Green Giant Museum**. On display is the largest collection of **Jolly Green Giant** memorabilia in the world. Enjoy the two-hour ride to Pipestone and the **Pipestone National Monument**. Generations of American Indians quarried the red pipestone found at this site, and that tradition continues today.

It's a relaxing hour to Granite Falls and the **Fagen Fighters WWII Museum**. Sharing the history of WWII with multiple aircraft and exhibits, the museum preserves the patriotism of those that served. Continue to New Ulm, a 90-minute drive, and tour **Schell's Brewery**, to learn about the fascinating history of Minnesota's second oldest family-owned brewery. Take the 40-minute drive to Saint Peter for overnight and dinner at **El Agave**, a family owned restaurant.



▲ DAY 3
Schell's Brewery in
New Ulm

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DISCOVER

MINNESOTA'S MAGNIFICENT NORTHEAST

HIGHLIGHTS

Experience the beauty of Lake Superior and inland lakes and forests as you travel on highways with scenic views at every turn. Visit Duluth and its seaport vibe and big city options or explore small towns with delightful downtowns.



Use the QR code to access the mobile version of this itinerary.

▼ Lutsen Mountains Gondola,
photo courtesy of Buffalo
Media Group



Arrive in Duluth and connect with the culture and people. Its rich history is on full display at the **St. Louis County Depot**, the home to several organizations, including the **Lake Superior Train Museum**, **St. Louis Historical Society**, **Tweed Museum of Art** and **Duluth Art Museum**. There's a wide choice of dinner options and live entertainment at **Duluth Playhouse**, presenting a year-round season of drama and musicals since 1914.

DAY 1

Fuel up with breakfast and begin at **Canal Park Lakewalk** with stunning views of Lake Superior and the city. A centerpiece of the fully accessible four-mile paved trail is the Aerial Lift Bridge.

Tour the historic **Glensheen Mansion**, which depicts the life of the Congdon family in the early 20th century. The family's collection is intact, from furnishings to books on the bookshelf. Outside, the 12-acre estate offers magnificent views of Lake Superior. Depart for the 40-minute drive to Two Harbors. Anchored on the rocky shore of Lake Superior, Split Rock Lighthouse is Minnesota's oldest still-operating lighthouse. Visitors can take



▲ DAY 1

International Wolf Center, Ely, photo courtesy of Lucy Hawthorne

guided tours of the tower, Assistant Keeper's House and Pilot House. Just north is **Gooseberry Falls State Park** and its spectacular waterfalls. Continue on scenic Hwy. 61 to **Tettegouche State Park** and the state's largest waterfall. Depart on scenic Hwy. 1 through Finland State Forest for the 90-minute drive to Ely.

Arrive at the **International Wolf Center** for an introduction to the facts and fictions of domestic and international wolves. Next is the **American Bear Center**, the only black bear educational facility of its kind. You might prefer the **Grand Ely Lodge Resort Event Center** for dinner and overnight, or take the 20-minute drive to Tower and the **Fortune Bay Resort Casino** for dinner, live gaming action and overnight.

DAY 2

After breakfast, the first stop is Virginia and the **World's Largest Floating Loon**. Now, that's a photo op. Sharpen your sweet tooth at **Canelake's Candies** for a demonstration and shopping. Allow time for a windshield tour of **Virginia's Building Murals**. In Eveleth, visit the **U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame Museum**, a shrine to the players and the game.

In Chisholm, enjoy lunch at **Snickers** or **Choppy's**. Begin your afternoon at the **Minnesota Discovery Center** for an introduction to the area's mines and the work of miners. The scene has been set for the **Hull-Rust Mineview**, a sweeping view overlooking an active iron ore mine. In Hibbing, take a guided **Bob Dylan Walking Tour**, including the singer/songwriter's childhood home and hangouts. On the way to dinner and overnight at **The Lodge at Giants Ridge**, stop at **Irma's Finland House**, a gift shopping experience.



▲ DAY 2

Canelakes Candies, Virginia, photo courtesy of Mesabi Trail



▲ DAY 3

Emerald City Carriage at the Judy Garland Museum, Grand Rapids, photo courtesy of Lisa McClintick

DAY 3

Arrive in Grand Rapids and visit the **Itasca County Historical Society**. Next, go to the **Forest History Center** to learn how we depend on forests for food, shelter, building materials and recreation. There's plenty to see and do there, from paddling adventures to the logging camp.

Head to historic downtown Grand Rapids for lunch, shopping and a visit to the **Judy Garland Museum** in her childhood home. Exhibits of Judy Garland and the Wizard of Oz collection honor the talent of the artist.

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EXPERIENCE

OUTDOOR BEAUTY, SCANDINAVIAN CULTURE AND THE MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS

HIGHLIGHTS

Discover a changing terrain as the prairie meets the northwoods. You'll travel the shores of some of Minnesota's largest lakes and visit the headwaters of the Mississippi River. There will be some amazing small towns with all the charm you can imagine. You can visit specialty shops, unique regional museums and dining experiences to please any palate.



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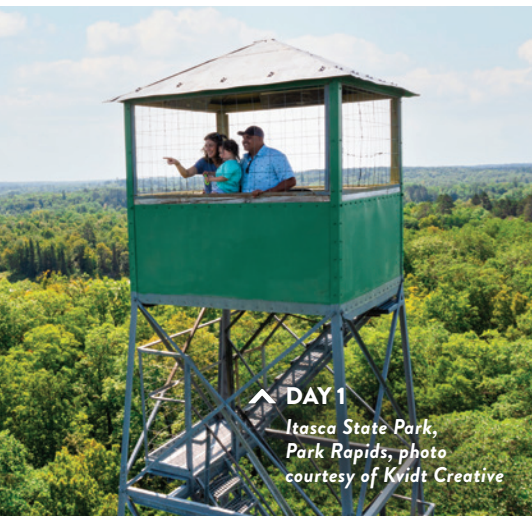
▼ Hjemkomst Viking Ship,
Moorhead, photo courtesy
of Historical & Cultural
Society of Clay County



DAY 1

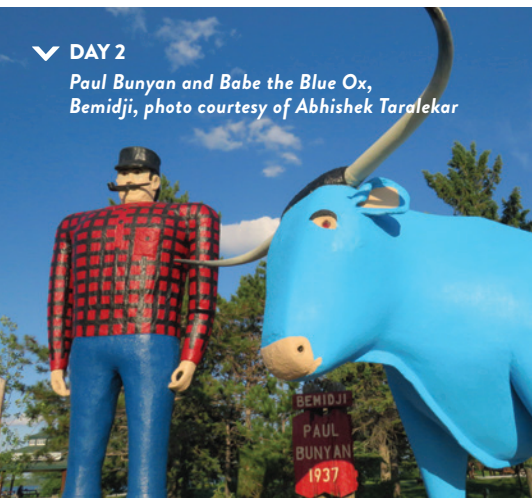
Begin in Park Rapids and the **Nemeth Art Center**. The NAC exhibits contemporary art from both local and non-local artists. Browse the downtown shops and grab lunch on your own. Arrive at **Itasca State Park-Headwaters of the Mississippi**. Imagine walking across the very place that the mighty Mississippi River begins its 2,552-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico.

OPTION: Itasca State Park, Minnesota's oldest state park, offers an abundance of recreational opportunities. Examples include nature



DAY 2

Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, Bemidji, photo courtesy of Abhishek Taralekar



viewing and birdwatching, biking, canoeing/kayaking, boating, swimming, hiking, fishing, hunting, geology, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Dinner is all-you-can-eat family style at **Rapid River Logging Camp**. Take a leisurely walk after dinner before departing on the 30-minute drive to Walker and the **Northern Lights Casino Hotel and Event Center**.

DAY 2

Depart for Bemidji, a 40-minute drive. First stop, **Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox** at the Tourist Information Center. The towering icons are a great photo op. While at the center check out the well-known **Fireplace of States**. Visit nearby **Headwaters Science Center** and enjoy the calming beauty of a 210-gallon saltwater tank.

Head to Blackduck, about 30 minutes away, and take a one-mile trail hike at Lost 40. Witness red and white pine some 300 to 400 years old and 22 to 48 inches in diameter. It's on to **Camp Rabideau**, one of three preserved Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Interpretive displays and a guided one-mile trail tell the camp's story. Depart for Crookston and enjoy the relaxing two-hour drive.

Arrive in Crookston and check in at the **Crookston Inn & Convention Center**. Refresh and depart for dinner at **RBJ's Family Restaurant**, a local favorite since 1981.

DAY 3

Have breakfast and take the 15-minute drive to **Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge**. A windshield tour provides a great way to see wildlife and



habitat on this beautiful combination of tallgrass prairie, wet meadows and open marsh. From there, it's a 90-minute drive to Moorhead.

The first stop is the enormous **Hjemkomst Viking Ship**, a replica of a Norwegian burial ship. The ship was built in Moorhead, transported to Duluth, sailed to New York City and eventually sailed to Bergen, Norway. The ship was returned to Moorhead in 1983 and is a great representation of Minnesota's Scandinavian heritage. On the grounds is the **Hopperstad Stave Church Replica**. Christian and pagan influences contribute to its unique design.

EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA

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3 DAYS OF FUN

IN THE HEART OF MINNESOTA

HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the region, explore a land of unspoiled lakes and small towns with busy main streets, museums and historic sites, shopping and dining. Join us for plenty of fresh air and outdoor options, from a scenic lake cruise to charming gardens. Discover the culture of an early Native American tribe inhabiting the area and learn more about some names you know and some you don't.



Use the QR code to access the mobile version of this itinerary.

▼ *Historic Oliver Kelley Farm, Elk River,
photo courtesy of MN Historical Society*



Arrive at Elk River and the **Oliver Kelley Farm**, a historic 1850s farm located on the Mississippi River. Start at the visitor center with a film about farming the food we consume. Continue to the St. Cloud and St. Joseph area and the **St. John's University Pottery Tour** and **Johanna Kiln**, the largest three-chambered wood-burning kiln in North America. Check in at any St. Cloud-area group-friendly flag hotels or a locally owned and operated hotel/motel. Hungry? There's a wide variety of group dining options.

DAY 1

Depart for Sauk Centre and a stop at novelist **Sinclair Lewis' Boyhood Home**. Allow time to walk the **Original Main Street**.

It's 30 miles to Alexandria and the **Legacy of the Lakes Museum**. Through exhibitions and events, the museum celebrates the traditions and legacies of Minnesota's lakes. Enjoy lunch on your own and some free shopping time in downtown Alexandria. Arrive at **Fort Alexandria** and the **Runestone Museum**. The fort's nine buildings and the museum share the area's rich Scandinavian heritage. View the Kensington Runestone and more than 40 additional exhibits.



▲ DAY 1
Legacy of the Lakes Museum,
Alexandria

Enjoy an hour drive to New York Mills and the **Finn Creek Open Air Museum**, an 18-acre interpretive site devoted to preserving Finnish culture. Nearby, the **Cultural Center** is a must stop with visual art displays in its historic Main Street building.

Relax on the 60-minute drive to Staples for dinner and stay overnight at **Timber Lake Hotel**.

DAY 2

Breakfast at the hotel and depart for the 35-minute drive to Brainerd. The **Northland Arboretum** welcomes groups year-round to its trails for an opportunity to learn and connect with nature. Enjoy a relaxing lunch with **Gull Lake Cruises**. From the upper deck, capture a photo of the Minnesota common loons.

Depart on the 35-minute drive to Mille Lacs Lake and the **Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post**. Throughout the museum, you'll be immersed in the history and culture of the Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe. Tonight, it's dinner, gaming, entertainment and overnight at the **Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel** in nearby Onamia.

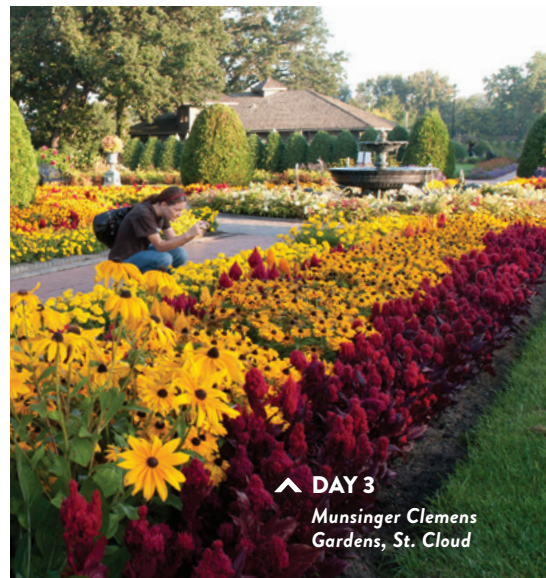
OPTION: For the adventurers, **Paul Bunyan State Trail** departs from **Crow Wing State Park** in Brainerd and continues for 115 miles to **Lake Bemidji State Park**.

DAY 3

Have breakfast at your hotel and relax on the 45-minute drive to Little Falls. **Camp Ripley Environmental Center** conserves and preserves natural and cultural resources. At the **Fort Ripley Military Museum** gain insight into the Gopher State's military contributions. **Minnesota Fishing Museum and Hall**



▲ DAY 2
Quilts at Mille Lacs Indian Museum and
Trading Post, Mille Lacs Lake, photo
courtesy of Mille Lacs Area Tourism



▲ DAY 3
Munsinger Clemens
Gardens, St. Cloud

of Fame offers excellent educational tours with wonderful stories. Grab a quick lunch before a visit to the **Charles Lindbergh House and Museum**. Get a close-up look at the famous aviator in the museum and through a guided house tour.

It's 35 minutes to St. Cloud and a mid-afternoon stop at the **Munsinger Clemens Gardens**. From spring through fall, there is always something blooming.

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ENTER YOUR DREAM STATE



Pipestone National Monument

Minnesota is ready to welcome you to the land of 10,000 lakes. Tour legendary musician Prince's home and recording studio or get up close and personal with American Eagles at the National Eagle Center. Shop with no sales tax on clothes at the iconic Mall of America, home of over 500 stores and 50 restaurants. To connect with the great outdoors, stop by Split Rock Lighthouse on Lake Superior or take a paddlewheel boat cruise on the Mississippi River. Join us on a new adventure, only in Minnesota.

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