

norwegian-american

MINNESOTA HERITAGE ITINERARY

Driven to emigrate by overpopulation, unfulfilled nationalism, and a fractured economy, hundreds of thousands of Norwegians came to Minnesota between 1851 and 1920, making the Minneapolis/St. Paul area the unofficial capital of Norwegian America. Today many sites tell the story of the Norwegian immigration experience as they made their new homes in America.



★ Minneapolis, MN



★ Mall of America, MN



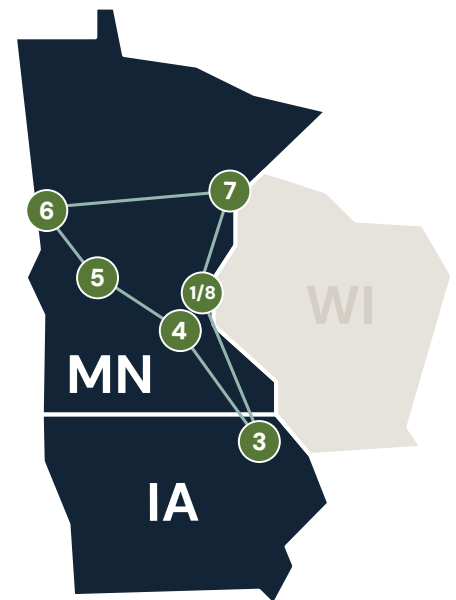
★ Mississippi River, MN

DAY ONE: MINNEAPOLIS/ ST. PAUL/BLOOMINGTON, MN

Arrival at Minneapolis/Saint Paul International Airport (MSP). Check into your Bloomington hotel—most hotels have complimentary shuttles to the MSP Airport and to Mall of America. The largest shopping and entertainment center in the U.S., Mall of America has 500 stores, and attractions ranging from the Nickelodeon Universe indoor amusement park to the SEA LIFE aquarium to free concerts by musical super stars. Walk around, dine at one of the 50+ restaurants/kiosks, or shop—there's no tax on clothing or shoes in Minnesota!

DAY TWO: MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MN

Start the day with a sightseeing tour of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, known as the Twin Cities. Tour will include stops at several Norwegian heritage sites including the Old Muskego Church at Luther Seminary, the first Norwegian church built in North America. Afternoon visit to the Mindekirken Norwegian Lutheran Church, which still holds services in Norwegian every Sunday. Then stop at the nearby Ingebretsen's Food and Gift Store, which started as a butcher shop in 1921 by a Norwegian immigrant and is still family operated. Evening dinner cruise on the Mississippi River on a paddlewheel boat.





★ Great River Road, MN



★ Lakeside Dining, MN



★ Hjemkomst Center, MN



★ Canal Park, MN

DAY THREE: DECORAH, IA

Morning drive south along the Mississippi River passing Red Wing, Wabasha, and Winona—all named after Indian chiefs of the past centuries. Stop in Wabasha for a tour of the National Eagle Center to learn about America's national bird. Then continue the drive to Decorah, Iowa, home of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. It's the largest, most comprehensive museum in the United States dedicated to a single immigrant group. With 16 historic buildings in the main complex, Vesterheim houses over 24,000 artifacts, which include decorative folk art, as well as the tools and machinery of early agriculture, lumbering and other immigrant industries.

DAY FOUR: NORTHFIELD, MN

Returning to Minnesota, drive through Spring Grove, which was one of the most densely settled Norwegian-American colonies in the U.S. in the late 1800s. Most of these settlers came from Hallingdal, Norway and the heritage influence is visible in the Rosemaling on area shops, and even on the town's water tower! Drive on to Northfield, home of St. Olaf College, founded in 1874 to provide a college education for Norwegian immigrants and their families. Located on site, the Norwegian-American Historical Association has archives, publications and documents which maintain the history of Norwegian immigration in America.

DAY FIVE: ALEXANDRIA, MN

The drive today is to Alexandria, Minnesota, home of Big Ole the Norwegian Viking. Visit the Kensington Runestone Museum. Many people say the runestone on display proves the Vikings arrived on this continent around 1,000 A.D.—centuries before other explorers. After hearing the story, you can decide for yourself. Nearby you can also visit the historic home of Knute Nelson, a Norwegian immigrant and politician who held several offices including Governor of Minnesota. Enjoy dinner at a lakeside resort.

DAY SIX: MOORHEAD, MN

Today's journey is to Moorhead, located on the North Dakota border. First stop is at the Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center which has a replica Viking ship, the Hjemkomst, on display. Built by a local man and his family, the ship sailed from Duluth, Minnesota to Bergen, Norway in 1982. Located on the grounds, the Hopperstad Stave Church was carved by a local man and is a beautiful symbol of the Norwegian heritage so prevalent in the area. Late afternoon drive just across the border to Bonanzaville in Fargo, North Dakota, to experience a historic town on the prairie, complete with 34 homes and businesses of the 19th century.

DAY SEVEN: DULUTH, MN

Morning drive through the lake and forest regions of northern Minnesota, crossing the state to arrive in Duluth, a seaport on Lake Superior and the largest inland harbor in the world. As a harbor, Duluth was an entry point for Norwegian immigrants. A display at the Depot Museum tells the story of immigrants as they landed here in the 1800s and early 1900s. After touring the Depot Museum, walk around Canal Park with shops, restaurants, and the Marine Museum, telling the story of shipping on Lake Superior.

DAY EIGHT: MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MN

Start the day with a drive north on the North Shore Scenic Drive to view Gooseberry Falls State Park with awesome waterfalls cascading into Lake Superior. A short distance north, stop at Split Rock Lighthouse, a state historic site which was operational into the 1980s. Then drive back to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area for a final evening to enjoy dinner, live music, and a stroll along the Mississippi River.