

mississippi river

ITINERARY

The story of the “Father of Waters” is steeped in American history. From the headwaters’ discovery by early explorers with American Indian guides, to its background as a transportation route, this history is as varied as the scenery it touches. Follow this route to discover the scenery and stories of the northern half of the Mighty Mississippi.

★ Mississippi River Headwaters, MN



★ Mall of America, MN



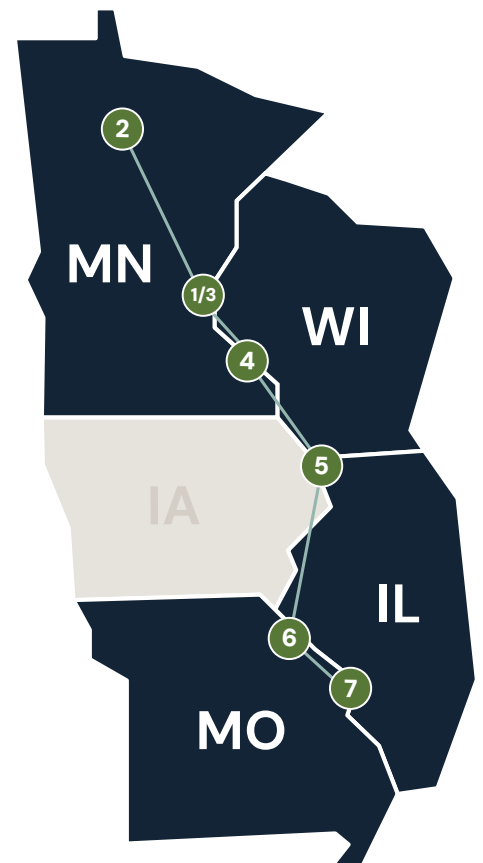
★ Paul Bunyan & Babe Statues, MN

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

Arrival at Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP). Use a complimentary hotel shuttle and check into your Bloomington, Minnesota hotel. Then it's off to an evening of shopping, entertainment and dining at Mall of America, the largest enclosed shopping and entertainment center in the U.S. There is no sales tax on clothing or shoes in Minnesota!

DAY TWO: BEMIDJI, MN

Morning drive to Itasca State Park, where the Mississippi River begins its journey to the Gulf of Mexico from Lake Itasca. Drive through the Park to the Headwaters for a photo and walk across the stepping stones where the river flows from the lake. Late afternoon drive to Bemidji, known as the First City on the Mississippi. Highlights include the famous statues of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox and Bemidji Woolen Mills.





★ Mississippi River, MN



★ Mill City Museum, MN



★ Winona, MN



★ The Gateway Arch, MO

DAY THREE: MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MN

Minneapolis is the largest city in Minnesota and St. Paul is the state capital—together they are known as the Twin Cities. Head to the Mississippi River, which flows through the centers of both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Take a sightseeing cruise aboard a Paddlewheel boat for beautiful views of the city skyline. Learn about the history of the river at Mill City Museum in Minneapolis and the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area in St. Paul.

DAY FOUR: WINONA, MN

Depart the Twin Cities driving along the Great River Road, a national scenic byway which extends from the Mississippi River Headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. About one hour south, stop at Red Wing to visit the flagship Red Wing Shoe Store & Museum. Next stop is Wabasha, with impressive views of the Mississippi and home of the National Eagle Center. Then it's on to Winona, a river town famous for the Watkins Heritage Museum and Gift Shop and the Polish Cultural Institute and Museum.

DAY FIVE: GALENA, IL

Head across the river to explore the historic city of Galena, Illinois, with charming shops, delectable restaurants and more. The historic Main Street is lined with 125 unique shops—from candy and ice cream shops to spas, wine tasting and amazing dining options—all happening along an 1800s street with original buildings. For more history, tour the home of the 18th U.S. President, Ulysses S. Grant.

DAY SIX: HANNIBAL, MO

Follow the river to Hannibal, Missouri, the boyhood home of America's most famous author, Mark Twain. Learn about the author's early life at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum located in the historic downtown. Jim's Journey Freedom Center is Hannibal's newest museum, detailing the history of African Americans in the city. For hands-on activities, visit the Mark Twain Cave and Mark Twain Riverboat for a ride on the Mississippi River.

DAY SEVEN: ST. LOUIS, MO

Drive along the Great River Road to St. Louis, Missouri. For one of the most unique views of the Mississippi River, ride the tram to the top of the Gateway Arch and see the river from the top of the 180-meter structure, overlooking Missouri and Illinois. In the afternoon head to the Forest Park neighborhood, home to free attractions including the Saint Louis Zoo, the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Missouri History Museum. Final stop will be the famous Anheuser-Busch Brewery for a tour.

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCE: MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRUISE

From St. Louis, visitors have the option of boarding a luxurious 7-night cruise ship on the Mississippi River, traveling either north to St. Paul, Minnesota or south to New Orleans, Louisiana—both are 7-night cruises. Or depart for a flight home with memories of your visit to the Father of Waters.