

Tour Guide IOWA

Made in Iowa

Food, art and furniture
created in the Hawkeye State

Urban Adventures

6 cities with nightlife
and stunning architecture

*Performing
Arts Venues*

Theaters and civic centers
filled with history



Greetings!

The Hawkeye State boasts bountiful urban adventures, beautiful performing arts venues and agritourism attractions that showcase the state's artisans and farmers. Leisure Group Travel is proud to showcase all the state has to offer in our 2019 edition of the Iowa Tour Guide. Created in conjunction with the Iowa Group Travel Association (IGTA), the guide offers numerous ideas for tour planners tasked with creating an unforgettable Midwestern itinerary. At 16 pages, this year's guide is our biggest and best yet, filled with Iowa's best group-friendly locales.

Learn about Iowa's thriving cities in "Urban Adventures," which highlights six of the state's most cosmopolitan destinations. Enjoy craft beer and hip nightclubs in Des Moines, admire classic Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in Mason City and enjoy farm-to-table meals in reimagined industrial spaces in Dubuque. These cities are also populated with "Iowa makers" who create everything from fine art to exquisite wine. In "Made in Iowa," we explore opportunities to meet these makers in their studios, farms or factories and buy their products firsthand. Whether you're enjoying farm-fresh creations at Jefferson County Ciderworks, admiring beautiful sculptures at Isabel Bloom or embarking on a Black Hawk County quilt barn tour, you'll find an authentic Iowa creation to enjoy.

Also in this edition is "Remarkable Arts & Music Venues in Iowa," which shines the spotlight on preserved historic theaters and vibrant live entertainment programs throughout the state. Whether your group wants to soak in the magnificent detail of the Paramount Theatre or relive rock 'n' roll history at the Surf Ballroom, Iowa has a venue for you. In "What's New from IGTA," we highlight some of IGTA's newest members, who range from the agritourist-friendly Hansen's Dairy to the quirky and colorful Traer Shaker Gallery. And since nearby Omaha is hosting ABA Marketplace 2020, we are providing a FAM preview for travel professionals staying afterward to experience "Hollywood in the Heartland" across Iowa.

We hope you enjoy the 2019 Iowa Tour Guide and know that IGTA is committed to creating an authentic and comprehensive Iowa group tour experience.

Thanks for reading,



4 IOWA'S URBAN ADVENTURES

These six cities boast entertainment, nightlife and fine dining in historic urban settings

8 WHAT'S NEW FROM IGTA

Meet some of the Iowa Group Travel Association's newest members

10 MADE IN IOWA

Sample and purchase exceptional wine, beer and art created by the state's finest makers

12 REMARKABLE ARTS & MUSIC VENUES IN IOWA

Concerts, opera houses and much more to experience in Iowa

14 ABA MARKETPLACE 2020 FAM ITINERARY

Experience "Hollywood in the Heartland" after ABA Marketplace in Omaha



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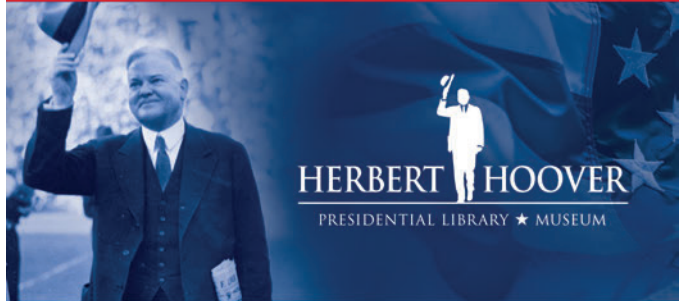
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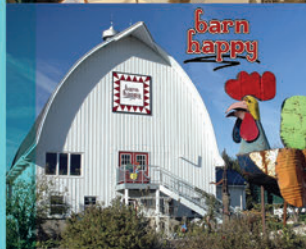
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Iowa's URBAN Adventures

These 6 cities boast entertainment, nightlife and fine dining in historic urban settings



Iowa is world-renowned for its beautiful prairies, plentiful agriculture and charming small towns, but large cities offer just as much adventure. World-class dining, live entertainment and museums await visitors who explore these thriving metropolitan areas that blend urban sophistication with Midwestern hospitality.

1. DES MOINES

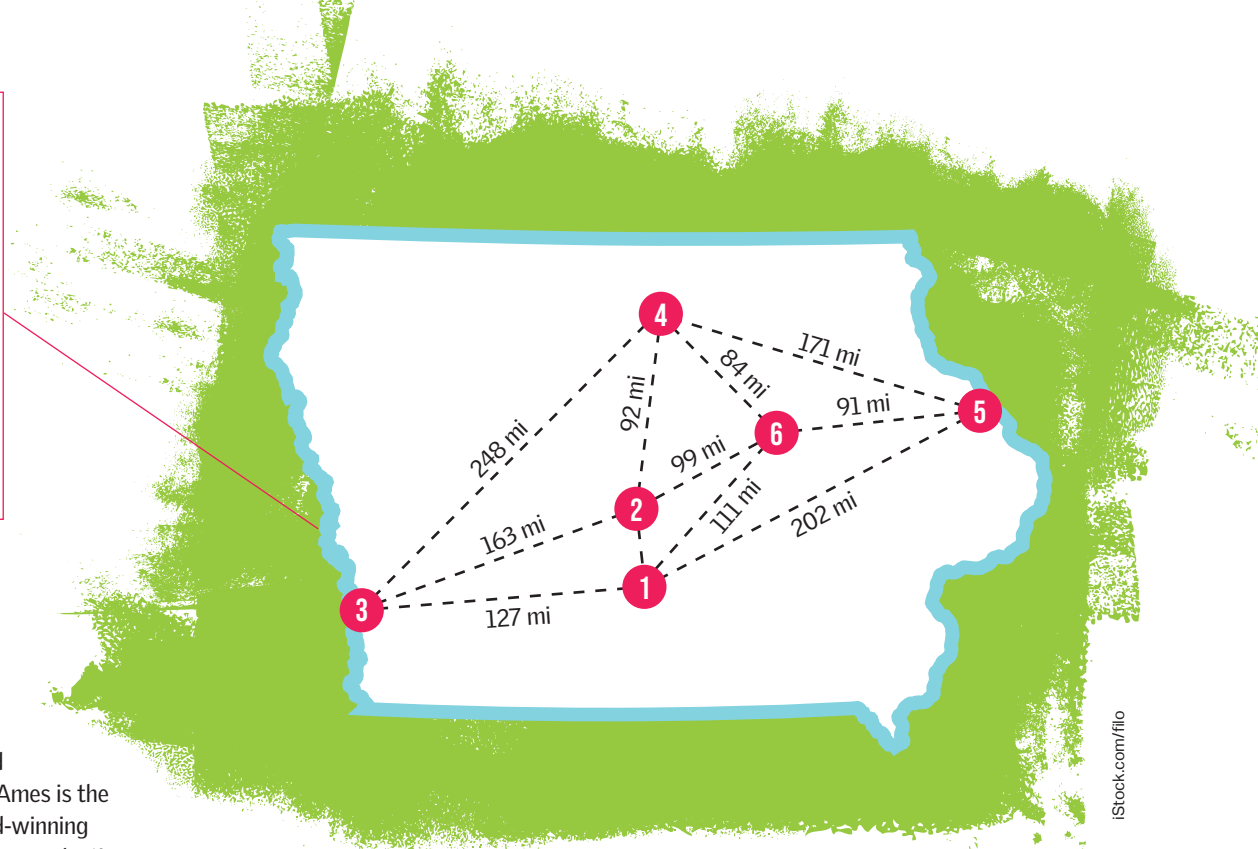
Iowa's largest city and state capital is an urban playground teeming with nightlife, dining, live entertainment and shopping for every budget. An evening in the **Historic East Village** will dispel any notion of Iowa as unadventurous; situated around the gold-domed State Capitol Building, this district is populated with historic facades that house trendy nightclubs like the **Lime Lounge**, craft brew pubs like **Peace Tree Brewery** and the retro arcade **Up-Down**. Group members

interested in history can embark on a tour of the **State Capitol**, explore the **State Historical Museum** or learn about the first-generation skyscrapers on Locust Street. Admire the entire skyline from **Principal Park**—home of the AAA Iowa Cubs—and enjoy a comprehensive baseball experience at a generous group rate.

Ranked second in the nation, the **Downtown Farmers Market** consists of over 300 vendors every Saturday from May to October along 4th Street. This free attraction offers live entertainment, free samples

from friendly farmers and an opportunity to explore Des Moines' thriving downtown. One block away is the **Science Center of Iowa**, one of the state's premier museums and home to a 50-foot planetarium, six-story IMAX screen and innovative hands-on exhibits that appeal to groups of all ages. Locally sourced food is plentiful in Des Moines' dining scene, which features creative farm-to-table dishes at **HoQ**, hearty brunch at **Americana** and scrumptious desserts at **Molly's Cupcakes**.

- 1 DES MOINES
- 2 AMES
- 3 COUNCIL BLUFFS
- 4 MASON CITY
- 5 DUBUQUE
- 6 WATERLOO



2. AMES

An innovative college town and thriving culinary community, Ames is the perfect city to enjoy an award-winning meal, catch exceptional theater productions or listen to a world-renowned speaker.

Iowa State University—the state's largest college—attracts scientists, authors and athletes from across the world to make Ames one of the most innovative communities in the Midwest. Admire **Memorial Union's** Greek-influenced architecture, watch thrilling Cyclones athletics or embark on a walk to admire one of the largest public art collections in the nation. Sites on campus available for free tours include the **Brunnier Art Museum** (which houses an extensive collection of American decorative arts), the **Farm House Museum** (which honors 19th century Iowa history) and the peaceful **Anderson Sculpture Garden**.

Green-thumbed guests will want to explore **Reiman Gardens**, a 17-acre property that includes a tropical plant conservatory, butterfly garden and perennial displays. East of campus is the **Main Street Cultural District**: a thoroughfare lined with public sculptures and populated by more than 50 locally owned specialty stores, art galleries and restaurants. Groups can purchase paintings by local artists at the **Octagon Center for the Arts**, watch Broadway-caliber musicals at the **Ames City Auditorium** and sample delicious craft beer at **Torrent Brewing Company**.

3. COUNCIL BLUFFS

Located on the shores of the Missouri River across from downtown Omaha, Council Bluffs was a crucial transportation hub during America's westward expansion. Steamboats, locomotives and wagon trains embarking on the Mormon Trail all passed through this pioneer town, which served as the eastern terminus for America's first transcontinental railroad. That transportation heritage is celebrated at the **Union Pacific Railroad Museum**, which chronicles the history of the Union Pacific Railroad Company with interactive exhibits and video game technology. Further history abounds at the

General Dodge Home, a lavish 14-room Victorian mansion built by Civil War veteran and railway industrialist Grenville Dodge, and the **Lewis & Clark Monument Scenic Overlook**. The Corps of Discovery's meeting with the local Otoe and Missouri tribes gave Council Bluffs its name, and you can recreate their view at **Narrows River Park**.

The city was also an important stopping point for Mormon travelers. It was here that Brigham Young was sustained as president by the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1846, and a replica of the **Kanesville Tabernacle** where that historic vote took place is open for tours.

4. MASON CITY

Architecture buffs and Broadway fans will want to spend ample time exploring Mason City, home of *The Music Man* composer Meredith Willson and the largest concentration of Prairie School buildings in Iowa. The Prairie School style—which altered English Arts & Craft design with overhanging eaves and stark geometry—was made famous by Frank Lloyd Wright, and several of his buildings are available to visit. Begin at the **Stockman House & Interpretive Center**, which offers tours to explain Wright's career arc and the home's original Arts & Craft furnishings, and join a Prairie School tour through the **Rock Crest-Rock Glen Historic District**. Visitors can also stay at the **Historic Park Inn Hotel**, a boutique lodging option with 27 rooms and the only remaining hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Hollywood history comes to life at **Music Man Square**, an indoor 1912 streetscape that includes an ice cream parlor, gift shop and sets that recreate the Warner Bros. film production of *The Music Man*. An interactive museum highlights Meredith Willson memorabilia, and groups can visit his restored 1895 Queen Anne boyhood home. Another treasured collection can be found at the **Charles H. MacNider Art Museum**, which houses a collection of over 500 marionettes and puppets created by Mason City native Bil Baird.

5. DUBUQUE

Distinct from the prairies that constitute most of the state, northeastern Iowa's driftless area is a compelling landscape of rocky hills formed by ancient melting glaciers. In the heart of this region along the Mississippi River is Dubuque, a city of Beaux-Arts architecture, diverse dining and stunning river views. Begin with a ride on the **Fenelon Place Elevator** to admire Iowa's oldest city. This 296-foot-long cable car has been deemed "the world's shortest and steepest railroad" and provides scenic views of the Port of Dubuque. Group members leery of heights can explore the **Cable Car Square District**, which consists of 16 local shops and boutiques. The riverfront is where visitors will find the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** (a Smithsonian affiliate filled with hands-on exhibits), **Dubuques' American Lady** (a riverboat that offers lunch and dinner cruises) and **Stone Cliff Winery**, which offers tastings and live music in a restored brewery building.

Further inland in the shadow of the elaborate Beaux-Arts county courthouse is the **Millwork District**. This rejuvenated industrial neighborhood is now populated with hip coffee shops, craft breweries and farm-to-table restaurants to satisfy every taste. Highlights include **Inspire Café**, which hosts authentic English afternoon tea, and **7 Hills Brewing Company**, a welcoming taproom and brew pub that serves a "stout float" served with ice cream. Farm-to-table advocates will want to dine at **Brazen Open Kitchen & Bar**, which features an open kitchen and dishes prepared without freezers.

6. WATERLOO

Visitors to this riverside city will immediately be drawn to the **RiverLoop Amphitheatre and Arts Mall**. This steel-framed band shell hosts live music, cultural dance events and film screenings next door to the **Waterloo Center for the Arts**, which rotates exhibits to spotlight Midwestern artists. Art-lovers will also enjoy the **Hearst Center for the Arts**—a permanent sculpture garden—and the **Oster Regent Theatre** in Cedar Falls, a 1910 building that produces musicals and dramas throughout the year.

Groups seeking an outdoor adventure should spend time at the **Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanic Gardens**, which includes 40 acres of butterfly meadows, rose gardens and fruit orchards. To learn about the bravery and sacrifice of Iowa's military veterans, pay a visit to the **Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum**, which includes over 35 interactive exhibits and an electronic Wall of Honor. Tours are also available at the **Rensselaer Russell House Museum**, an 1861 brick structure that allows visitors to step into the Victorian era with authentic family heirlooms and furniture.

Also in Waterloo is the **John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum**, which explores the developments in agricultural technology throughout American history. The museum, which opened in 2014 on the site of the very first John Deere tractor factory, traces the company's growth over time and engages guests through rare artifacts and interactive features. ■



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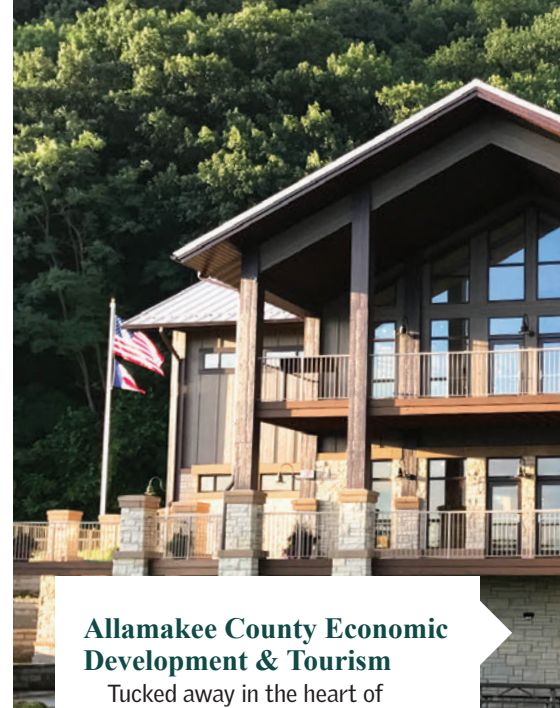


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WHAT'S New FROM IGTA

Meet some of the Iowa Group Travel Association's newest members

IGTA is constantly expanding its membership to promote the best DMOs, attractions and hotels in the state. Some of this year's newest members include relaxing Driftless Region escapes, quirky museums and welcoming hotels that can accommodate groups of various sizes.



Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism

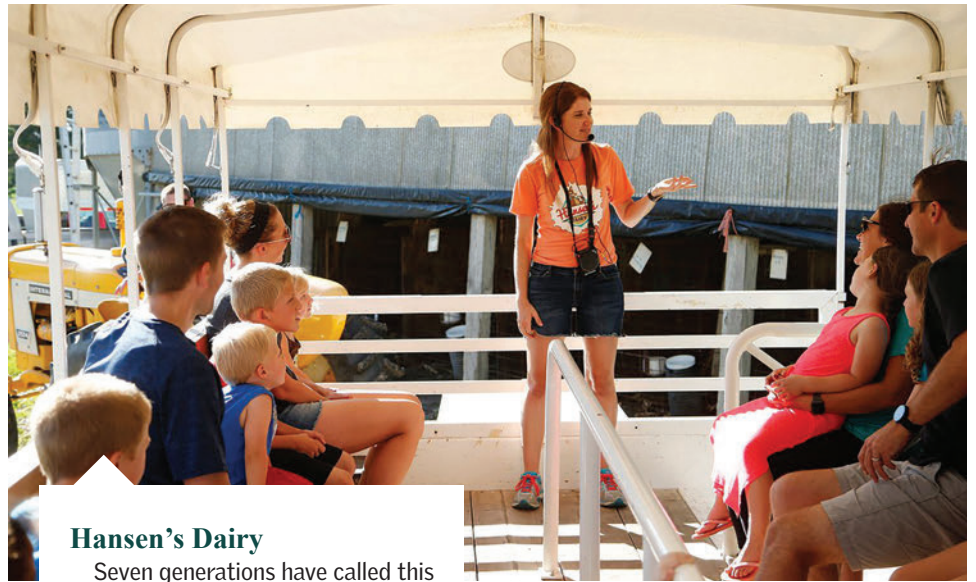
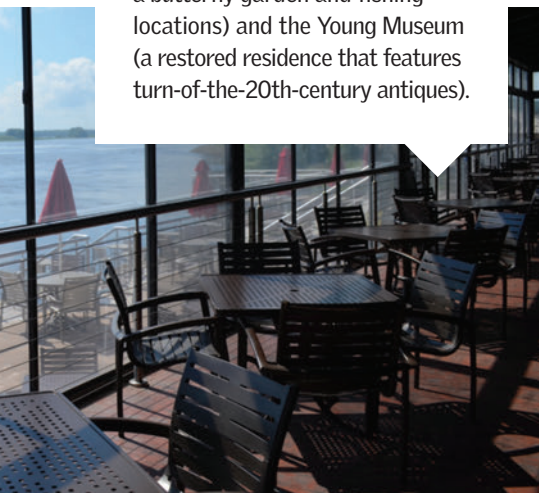
Tucked away in the heart of northeast Iowa, this serene county features meandering trout streams, rugged sandstone bluffs and springs that will especially appeal to nature-lovers. Groups will want time to explore the Effigy Mounds National Monument, the only national monument in Iowa. Hundreds of mounds, many shaped like animals, dot a landscape intersected by hiking trails, peaceful marshland and the Yellow River. Other stunning nature areas for exploration include Yellow River State Forest, the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and Black Hawk Bridge, which offers uninhibited views of the majestic Mississippi River. The region's newest attraction is the Driftless Region Education & Visitor Center.





Baymont Inn & Suites (Bellevue)

Welcoming hospitality and spectacular views of the Mississippi River await guests at this exceptional hotel. Guests will enjoy free Wi-Fi and breakfast in addition to an indoor pool, a fitness room, guest laundry and a 24-hour market kiosk with items for purchase. The property welcomes groups and offers two meeting rooms: a 550-square-foot conference room and the 3,500-square-foot Riverfront Event Center, which can accommodate 50 to 350 guests. Local attractions include River Ridge Brewing, the South Bluff Nature Center (which features a butterfly garden and fishing locations) and the Young Museum (a restored residence that features turn-of-the-20th-century antiques).



Hansen's Dairy

Seven generations have called this Hudson farm home since 1864, and the creamery continues to produce high-quality butter, ice cream and milk on-site. The family is happy to welcome groups for a tour of the property, which includes a behind-the-scenes look at the milking and bottling processes. You can also meet and feed the dairy's mascots: a pack of playful kangaroos. Tours conclude at the Tour Center, a monolithic concrete dome that serves fresh ice cream and chocolate milk for famished visitors. The center is available for event rental and can seat up to 90 guests with a full kitchen, restrooms and AV capability.

Visit Muscatine

Surrounded by river bluffs and rolling hills, this charming city in eastern Iowa has been at the crossroads of history for centuries. Mark Twain wrote of its unique sunsets, abolitionists developed Underground Railroad stops here and Al Capone used the city's secret tunnels during the peak of his mob power. Today, visitors can appreciate the Muscatine Art Gallery (a restored Edwardian mansion that showcases the decorative arts), the Environmental Learning Center (85 acres of pristine prairie land that contains fishing ponds and an arboretum) and beautiful Mississippi River views along the Great River Road. ■

Traer Shaker Gallery

The Midwest's largest salt and pepper shaker gallery is a pure slice of Americana and houses over 16,000 sets of shakers, nesters and condiment containers to admire. The collection is the lifelong passion of Ruth Rasmussen, who has been collecting the ceramic keepsakes since 1946. Themed areas focus on famous politicians, the 50 American states and farm animals, and Rasmussen's most-prized pair depicts Princess Diana and Prince Charles. Other highlights include a collection of ornate beer steins, a shaker shaped like Grant Wood's famous *American Gothic* painting and a sports section with shakers shaped like bowling pins and famous football players.



Made in Iowa

Sample and purchase exceptional wine, beer
and art created by the state's finest makers



Looking for an authentic Iowa gift to bring back home or want to sample some of the Midwest's finest wines? Iowa studios and farms are overflowing with handmade pieces of art, small-batch craft beer and fresh-picked produce to pique the interest of any palate.

Brewing

America's craft beer boom has also flourished in Iowa, where brewers have easy access to grains and fresh water to create award-winning brews for every taste. Located just outside of Ames on a 40-acre, family-owned farm, **Alluvial Brewing Company** allows visitors to sample spring ales and lagers while walking through preserved wetlands and

vegetable rows. Continue west to the nearby city of Boone, home of the **Boone Valley Brewing Company**. Favorites in this intimate pub include the Roxie Irish Red and Halligan Porter for those who prefer their brews on the sweet side. A nearby agritourism adventure awaits at **Jefferson County Ciderworks**, which owns over 700 heirloom apple trees to create tasty creations that integrate flavors like lavender, orange and hibiscus.

Large groups can rent the immense, multistory taproom at **Toppling Goliath**, Decorah's premier culinary attraction and the only place to enjoy signature creations like the Pseudo Sue Pale Ale and Golden Nugget IPA on tap. For live music in a more intimate pub atmosphere, head to **Franklin Street Brewing** in Manchester, which serves IPAs and blonde ales that won prizes at the Iowa State Fair. Other charming craft breweries include **Albia Brewing Company** (which also serves fresh wood-fired pizzas), **River Ridge Brewing Company** (which boasts gorgeous views of the Mississippi River) and **Peace Tree Brewing** (located in the heart of Des Moines' hip East Village neighborhood).

Wine

Iowa's fertile soil produces wines that rival California for variety and quality at a fraction of the cost, and groups can embark on wine trail adventures and vineyard tours without the tourism congestion of northern California. Begin your wine excursion at **Prairie Moon Winery** in Ames, which features a spacious tasting room to sample the signature Honey Moon red (a juicy semisweet red made with locally sourced Concord grapes). Personalized visits can be arranged at **Barrel Head Winery**, a family-run farm outside Dubuque where members of the Burns family can lead a walking tour of the grounds before offering samples of Dry Tomcat champagne and Sweet Cranberry fruit wine.

Cedar Valley Winery, housed in a charming red barn and featuring peaceful views of the surrounding vineyards, offers tours and tastings of its French and American hybrid varietals in the town of Batavia. Offerings include the Vignoles white, Chambourcin red and Foch rosé for easy drinking. One of Iowa's more unique wine

experiences is **Corning Winery's** floating tasting room, where visitors walk on a gangplank to reach a nautically inspired space that includes an aquarium on the floor.

Crafts

Black Hawk County, which encompasses Waterloo and Cedar Falls, is the site of over 25 barn quilts, exquisite folk art designs painted on barns or homes by local families. Embark on a self-guided tour to see as many homes as you'd like, and most families are glad to explain their art with advanced notice. A similar itinerary awaits in **Clayton County**—home to 30 barn quilt designs to admire. Located in downtown Winterset, the **Iowa Quilt Museum** rotates its exhibits every three months to showcase quilting history and creations of local artists, who are sometimes on hand to discuss their work.

More idiosyncratic art can be found throughout the state, such as the elaborate creations at **Matchstick Marvels**. Gladbrook craftsman Patrick Acton has constructed over 70 pieces entirely from wooden matchsticks that resemble the U.S. Capitol, Notre Dame Cathedral and Challenger spacecraft. By appointment, visitors can also see the elaborate woodcarving creations of **Jack Becker** in Dyersville. Highlights include the largest carved clock in Iowa, elaborate chessboards and replicas of the Twelve Apostles. Isabel Bloom was a Davenport-

based artist who became internationally renowned for her concrete sculptures of animals and young children. Learn about her legacy and purchase a sculpture for yourself on a 45-minute tour of the museum and workshop, where you can witness sculptors shaping and firing the elaborate figures.

The Amana Colonies (seven closely united villages originally founded by German Lutherans) feature artisan shops that sell wine, baked goods and—most notably—furniture. Crafted using 19th century methods with painstaking detail, these beautiful pieces are available for sale at businesses such as the **Amana Furniture & Clock Shop**.

Farms

For a thorough agritourism experience, stay for **Cinnamon Ridge's** Farm to Table event, an evening of food, drink and education provided by the friendly Cinnamon Ridge farmers. Groups will dine on white tablecloths outside the farmhouse and can sample local produce, ride farm equipment and chat with local growers between courses.

Groups can also emulate Iowa artisans themselves with a visit to **Three Pines Farm** in Black Hawk County. A variety of cooking and crafting classes are offered at an 1865 farmstead where friendly fifth-generation farmers can teach visitors how to basket-weave, stitch a necktie or bake a homemade pie in a state-of-the-art kitchen. ■



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REMARKABLE

Art & Music

VENUES IN IOWA

CONCERTS, OPERA HOUSES AND MUCH MORE TO EXPERIENCE IN IOWA

The Hawkeye State offers much more for group travelers than just rolling plains and fertile corn harvests. Iowa provides numerous spots dedicated to lovers of the arts and a music scene that will offer your group a unique, memorable experience.



PARAMOUNT THEATRE, CEDAR RAPIDS

The theater, built in the 1920s, seats 1,690 guests and is one out of 300 movie palaces still standing in the United States. Over the years the prominent feature of the historical theater has been the "Mighty" Wurlitzer organ, which was used for many forms of entertainment through generations of performers. Today the Paramount is a home to Orchestra Iowa and the Cedar Rapids Area Theater Organ Society. Annual dance recitals, concerts and Broadway Series are hosted. Groups can enjoy guided tours that reveal backstage and hidden corridors while also getting to stand on the same stage as greats like Willie Nelson and B.B King.



SURF BALLROOM & MUSEUM, CLEAR LAKE

The Surf Ballroom is largely associated with the event known as "The Day the Music Died" after rock stars Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens had their last performance during the "Winter Dance Party Tour" and, immediately leaving, died in a plane crash. The Surf got its name from the dance floor that closely resembled a 50's ocean-style dance club. The hand-painted art on the walls illustrates palm trees, surf waves, lighthouses and sailboats. The bamboo furniture and island décor create a feeling as if you're dancing under a sky full of stars. The property includes a Wall of Fame that commemorates all of the famous artists who have performed there, a museum of memorabilia and a souvenir shop.



ENGLERT CIVIC THEATRE, IOWA CITY

Previously a livery stable where horses were kept, this theater was built in 1912 and was able to seat 1,071 people. In 1999, the theater was closed after 88 years of a mixture of live theater and movie showings. It reopened in 2004 and has flourished as a live performance theater. Today, Iowa City's historic theater shines a light on local performers and traveling tour performances. Year-round, musicians, comedians, dancers and actors each tell a different story with their art. The theater's event series include the Witching Hour (a festival dedicated to the unusual and unexplained) and the Mission Creek Festival (the Midwest's premier independent literary gathering).



DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

The Des Moines Civic Center staged its first show in 1979 and has since been a hotspot destination for travelers and locals alike. Capable of seating 2,744 people, it is Iowa's largest performing arts center. The building and grounds are used for Broadway shows, ballets and concerts. If your group is interested in renting a venue, Des Moines Performing Arts offers the Civic Center, outdoor space in Cowles Commons or balcony lounges. Along with providing space for a private event, the Performing Arts Center offers tours for groups of eight or more at a venue of your choice.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE, DUBUQUE

Built in 1890, this opera house is considered a "national treasure." It is home to the largest stage in Dubuque and is the last standing opera house in town. In the past the Grand has witnessed countless famous actors, musicians and choreographers.

From *Mary Poppins* to *The Addams Family*, there's something for every member of your group. The Grand offers group rates for parties of 12 or more attending a performance together, and theater rental for concerts, recitals, weddings or corporate events. ■

Iowa FUN FACTS




- The Red Delicious apple was developed in Iowa. Jesse Hiatt, a farmer in Madison County, entered his "Hawkeye" apple in a fruit fair, where it was catapulted to America's favorite apple.
- Iowa boasts the nation's highest literacy rate (over 99%). From creative writing at the University of Iowa to Laura Ingalls Wilder history in Burr Oak, the state is teeming with literary attractions.
- There are more golf courses per capita in Iowa than any other state. Over 440 private and public courses are available for a tee time bookings for groups seeking a fairway escape.
- Snake Alley in Burlington has been declared the "Most Crookedest Street in the World." Visitors can ascend the 275-foot-long road that was designed by German immigrants who modeled the walkway after the winding vineyard paths of the Old County.

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ABA Marketplace 2020 attendees in Omaha will have the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of internationally famous Iowans on this three-day itinerary.

Post-ABA FAM: Hollywood in the Heartland, January 15-17, 2020

Day 1

Depart from Omaha for the city of Clarinda, home of the **Glenn Miller Birthplace Home & Museum**. Visitors will learn about the famous bandleader's childhood, rise to stardom, service in World War II and musical legacy. Continue to Corning to tour **Johnny Carson's Birthplace**. Visitors will walk through a house that recreates 1920s Midwestern life with authentic furnishings and artifacts from *The Tonight Show* host's television career. After enjoying a gourmet sandwich at Primrose Restaurant, groups will stop in Winterset to experience the **Boyhood Home of John Wayne Historical Site**. The modest four-room home has been restored to its 1907 appearance, and the new adjacent museum displays posters, costumes and scripts from the movie star's many Western films. Your day will conclude with dinner at the **Des Moines Social Club**, an innovative entertainment space housed in a renovated art deco firehouse.

Burger at the **Surf District Rock 'n' Roll Grill** (a family-owned restaurant that honors legends of rock with memorabilia, live music and a soda fountain-inspired menu). The nearby **Surf Ballroom** is where Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper performed their final concert before tragically dying in a plane crash. Visitors will admire the Wall of Fame, walk across the famous dance floor and learn about early rock history from a tour guide. Today's final stop is Mason City, which has the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings in Iowa. *The Music Man* composer Meredith Willson grew up here, and groups will tour his childhood home and venture to **Music Man Square** (an indoor streetscape that recreates the musical's film adaptation). Guests will enjoy dinner at the **Historic Park Inn**, a beautifully preserved example of Prairie School architecture and the only surviving Frank Lloyd Wright-designed hotel.



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 641-422-1663
 iowagrouptavel.com

Day 2

After breakfast at the hotel, travel to Gladbrook for a tour of **Matchstick Marvels**. Local craftsman Patrick Acton has used over six million wooden matchsticks to create miniature detailed replicas of famous structures like the International Space Station and Hogwarts from the Harry Potter book and film series. Your next stop is Clear Lake, where you will enjoy a Big Bopper

Day 3

Begin your morning in Dyersville and the **Field of Dreams Movie Site**, where you'll feel as if you've walked into the 1989 Kevin Costner film. Continue east for magnificent water views at the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** in Dubuque. The 10-acre Smithsonian affiliate spotlights the animals, cultures and ecosystems of rivers from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico. Your motorcoach tour will conclude at the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids.

Living the Dream

DYERSVILLE, IOWA



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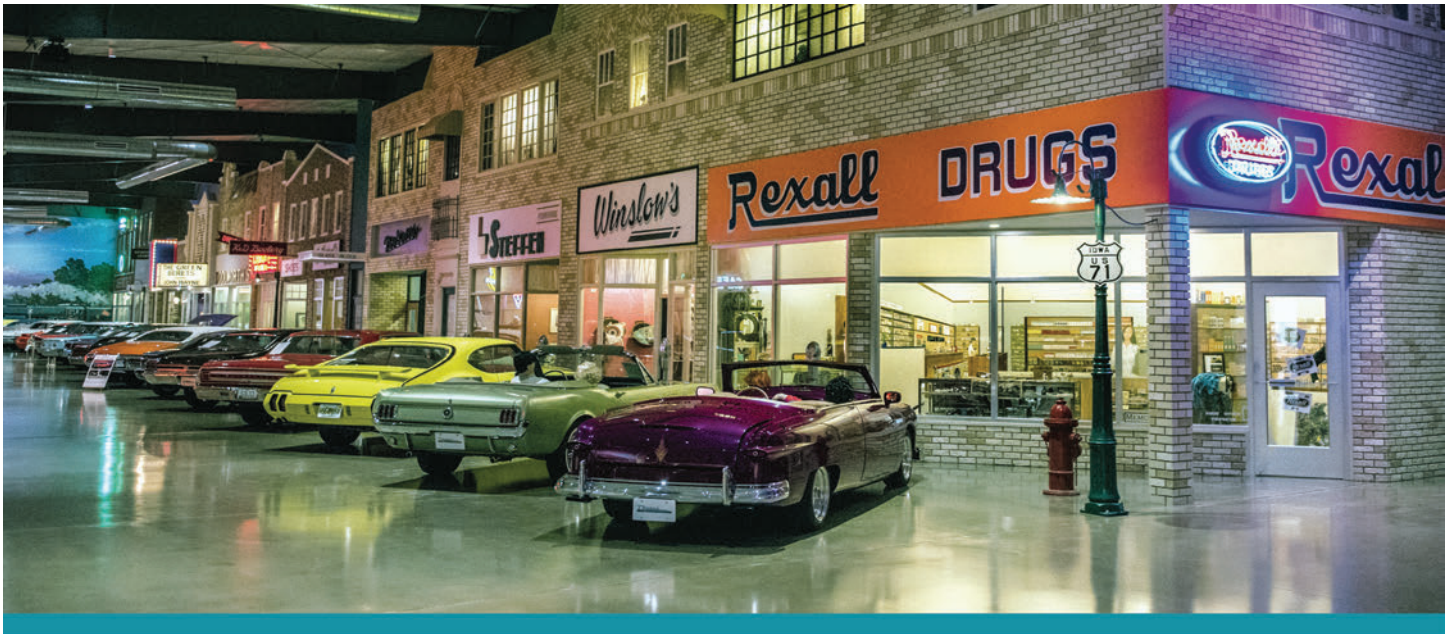
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