

# LEISURE

APRIL 2022

GROUP TRAVEL

## Experiential Travel Grows in Popularity

Travelers are immersing  
themselves in their destinations

**Forts and  
Battlefields of  
Pennsylvania**

See where  
heroism, patriotism  
and perseverance  
impacted the birth  
of a nation

**INSIDE:**  
Illinois Group  
Tour Planner

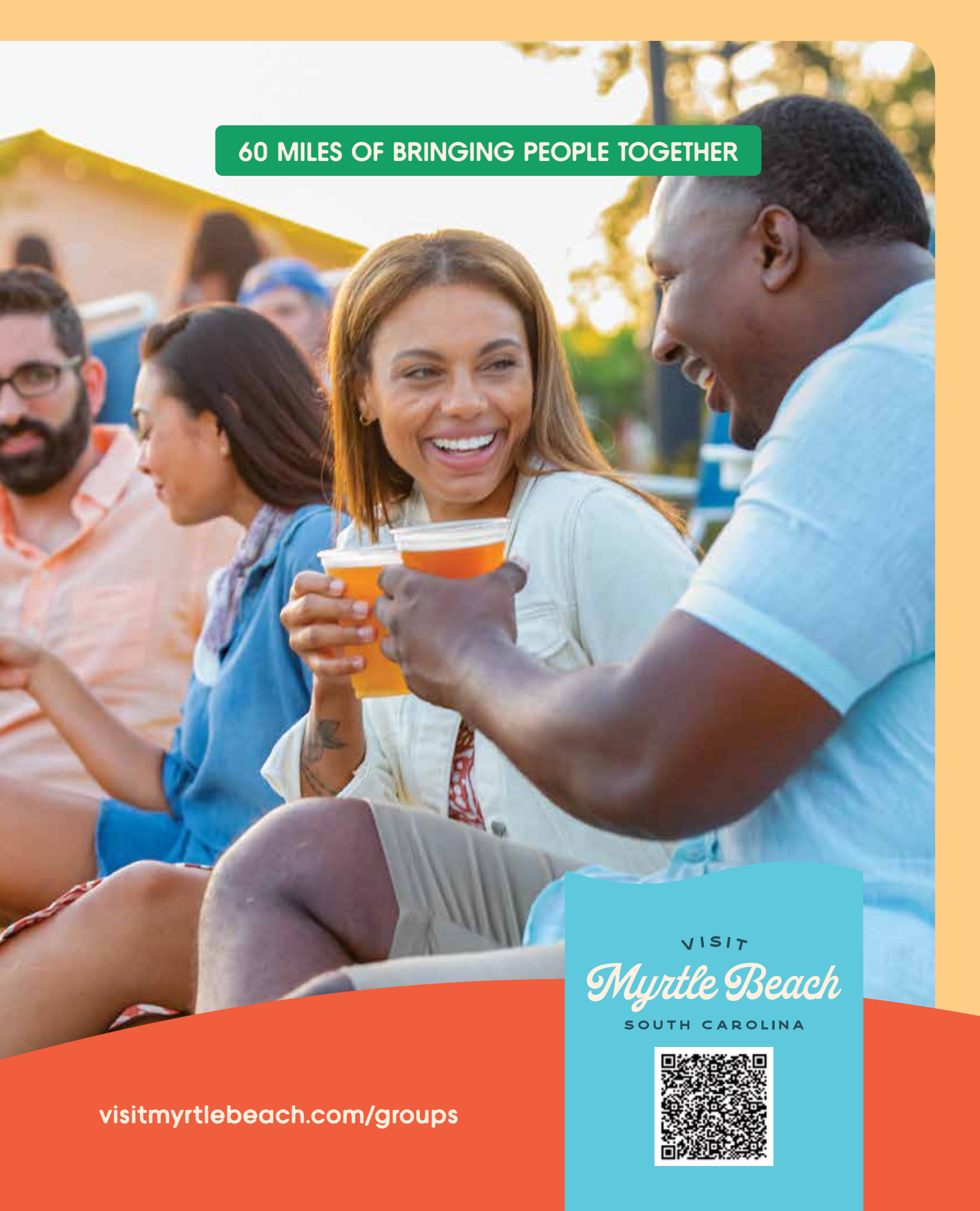
Virginia Group  
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# LEISURE

GROUP TRAVEL

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Washington's Headquarters,  
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# Experiential Tourism is All Around Us

**E**xperiential tourism certainly isn't new. If you do some research, you'll find articles authored as early as 2017. I'm sure there are others with even earlier dates. In some ways experiential tourism may have given birth to adventure travel, culinary tourism, cultural tourism, volunteer tourism and others. Travelers like personalized experiences and that's the whole point.



Adventure travel may have been the first segment to engage experiential tourism. Back in the day, we were perfectly happy to visit a state park and walk on a paved path (don't want to get our new sneakers dirty) and call it a hike. Likewise, back in the day watching the lovable manatees from a bridge was great. Today, we want to swim with the manatees.

Culinary tourism has also found a home in experiential tourism and blends well with cultural tourism. At one time, we were perfectly content to watch a cooking demonstration and get a recipe card before we passed through the gift shop. Now, cooking classes are hands-on enjoyed with friends and family. Probably the best way to blend culinary and cultural into experiential tourism are festivals and events. Where else can you eat, craft and dance like a local?

Volunteer tourism certainly falls under the experiential tourism umbrella. Every religious order brings groups together to travel to areas with poverty and natural disaster challenges. Whether we're good with a hammer and saw or we're a novice, Habit For Humanity will find a place for us. Do a good day's work and still enjoy a great dinner and evening entertainment.

It's clear experiential tourism is growing and will continue to grow as our industry moves forward. It was a decade ago a dear friend at the state level told me her biggest challenge was keeping her history-rich state fresh. We've come a long way since that time.

This month, Jason Paha, Leisure Group Travel managing editor, does a great job sharing how experiential travel continues to grow in popularity. In the *Virginia Group Tour Guide*, our Virginia Capitols story talks about Colonial Williamsburg's Nation Builder interpreters who are eager to engage on topics of their day. At the Jamestown and Yorktown museums, we can hear first-hand about the trials of sailing across the Atlantic Ocean and what it's like to camp and fire the cannons at Yorktown.

One of my personal favorites is the experience had in The White House Decision Center at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. It's high-stakes involvement as participants step into the roles of President Truman and his advisors to address challenges faced by few other world leaders.

Who said history and heritage experiential tourism is hard to find? It's everywhere, if we just look. **LGT**

Happy traveling,

**Dave Bodle**  
Associate Publisher

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## Leisure Group Travel (ISSN-1531-1406)

is published bi-monthly by Premier Travel Media, 621 Plainfield Road, Suite 406, Willowbrook, IL 60527. The magazine is distributed free of charge to qualified tour operators, travel agents, group leaders, bank travel clubs and other travel organizations. Other travel-related suppliers may subscribe at the reduced rate of \$12.00 per year. The regular subscription price for all others is \$18.00 per year. Single copies are \$4.95 each.

## Send Address Change to:

Premier Travel Media  
621 Plainfield Road, Suite 406  
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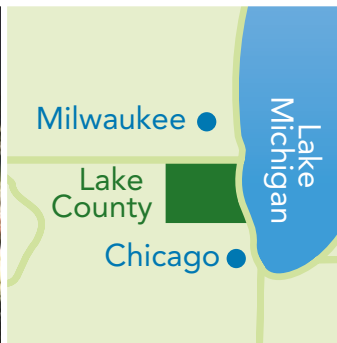
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# Three Ways to Improve and Diversify Your Tours

**W**hether you're leading a tour yourself, planning an itinerary or deciding where you're going to take a group next, we all end up doing a lot of research online and with guidebooks. However, much of the information that's easiest to discover fails to tell the full or most interesting story of a place. After Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March, let's take a moment and look at some tips for diversifying the stops you visit and the stories you tell on a group tour.

## 1. EXAMINE THE ROOTS OF THE PLACE YOU'RE VISITING

Whether you're visiting a national park or a busy city, chances are there's a deep indigenous history that predates European settlement. This is often the least-mentioned information on a tour. Learn the specific name of the tribe(s) who have and continue to inhabit the land. Learn their individual stories, and dig deeper before accepting commonly-retold myths and inaccuracies, or failing to acknowledge that history at all.

I live in New York City and worked for over 15 years as a tour guide. In Manhattan's Financial District I often spoke about the \$24 "sale" of Manhattan to the Dutch by the Lenape Indians. Debunking this myth properly means digging deep into what the meaning of the land for the various tribes that traversed Lower Manhattan and what life looked like for them.

## 2. SEEK THE COMPLETE TRUTH OF THE PLACES YOU STOP AND STORIES YOU TELL

Sometimes, the stories as they've been told for generations simply aren't complete. They focus on one aspect, like the Great Architects and Explorers and Philanthropists who helped design and

create cities and lands. As guides and tour leaders and itinerary designers, we have a responsibility to choose stops and craft stories that honor the *full* story of a place.

Let's return to New York's Financial District. At Bowling Green Park, you look around and see the imposing Customs House and office buildings once belonging to the great shipping companies that made so much money from traversing the oceans. The Dutch became so good at this that the century of exploration became known as the Golden Age.

**"Finally, in addition to greater accuracy in our accounting of the past, and looking at multiple perspectives of the stories we tell, we should seek out brand new stories and stops to enrich our tours!"**

But that's only a partial truth, looking through a particular Western lens. In the practice that forms part of what is sometimes known as *decolonizing* travel, we can understand the same time period from the perspective of marginalized communities. For example, during this Golden Age, the Dutch enslaved and transported 600,000 African people to the Americas. By the 1630s, in the colony of New Amsterdam (which would become New York), there were around 100 enslaved individuals. Without slave labor, New Amsterdam might not have survived.

## 3. LOOK FOR NEW, DIVERSE STORIES AND STOPS

Finally, in addition to greater accuracy in our accounting of the past, and looking at multiple perspectives of the stories we tell, we should seek out brand new stories and

stops to enrich our tours! When preparing for a tour by doing online research, simply add—for example—"enslaved history," "women's history" or "LGBTQ history" to your Google searches. That way you'll get results that look completely different than searching for the term alone, and often filled with great content.

For example, in the Financial District, I learned that right where I always talked about the Stock Exchange and George Washington's inauguration and Wall Street, was also once the oyster cellar of an African American named Thomas Downing, who became the Oyster King of America and transformed his cellar into one of the fanciest restaurants in the city. He became a fervent abolitionist and his restaurant was an important stop on the Underground Railroad.

## WAIT, DON'T WE ALL JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN?

A common refrain I hear when sharing this kind of advice is, *but the people I travel with just want to have a good time*. I'm not admonishing you or anyone in the group tour industry for failing to fill your tours with only stories of doom, gloom, and difficulty. But I do ask you to have more faith in your fellow travelers and explore this rich terrain of story and experience beyond the guidebook. The stories we tell and the places we go will become the moments and tales shared by travelers back at home, affecting generations of travelers to come. **TGT**



**Mitch is the co-founder of TripSchool [thetripschool.com], a learning organization that helps tour guides, tour operators and other travel professionals grow their skills and pursue their travel career dreams. TripSchool offers courses ranging from tour technology to storytelling and guide certifications. Mitch has worked in the group travel industry for 20 years, since his days as a tour guide in Paris, France. Today he is an international speaker, author, tour guide trainer and consultant for the group tour industry.**





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A couple snorkeling in Miami Beach

Photo courtesy of Visit Florida

Consumers are looking to immerse themselves in their journeys more than ever

# CHOOSE LIFE:

## Experiential Travel is a Growing Trend

By Jason Paha

**B**ack in the halcyon days of 2014, Peak DMC (a destination management company) and Skift (a travel industry news site) released a report focusing on the growing popularity of experiential travel.

The report stated: "Intense global demand for travel experiences that resonate on a deeper emotional level is driving travel brands to develop product that is more adventurous, more personalized and more attuned to local culture, inspiring consumers toward a path of self-discovery."

Eight years later, and following a two-year span in which the tourism spigot was essentially shut off, that feeling among consumers has considerably heightened.

Experiential travel, a form of tourism where travelers immerse themselves into a destination by engaging with its history, culture, food and environment, is most certainly having a moment.

## THE WORLD HAS CHANGED AND SO HAS TRAVEL

With climate change, political instability and the COVID-19 pandemic all wreaking havoc on the planet, travelers' tastes have changed along with the world. When the pandemic disrupted lives, it altered the travel outlook for many. Rather than lounging on a beach or relaxing in a luxurious hotel, travelers are now choosing experiences over amenities.

"Travel is no longer just about 'going somewhere,'" said Christie Hudson, a senior public relations manager for Expedia. "Coming out of such a long period of constraints and limitations, 2022 will be the year we wring every bit of richness and meaning out of our experiences."

Hands-on experiences such as food and drink tours, cooking classes and even hiking outings in far-flung locales like Patagonia (not the clothing store) are popular choices.

"We continue to see a significant increase in groups with a strong interest in experiential travel," said Jeff Roy, executive vice president of revenue management for Collette Tours. "In particular, our Explorations product line offers immersive experiences and the opportunities for guests to really get to know the local culture while in destination. We expect

this to continue as groups seek out travel experiences in the future."

Other beloved endeavors include:

- In Jackson Hole, Wyoming, visitors can relive days gone by with a chuckwagon dinner in which they ride in a covered wagon
- In Homosassa, Florida, guests can brandish a snorkel and swim with manatees, the gentle cows of the sea
- At the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown in Virginia, visitors can be a part of the firing of a cannon
- In Sydney, Australia, the Sydney BridgeClimb tour takes groups up inclines and across catwalks where they can savor 360-degree views of the picturesque city
- In Bordeaux, France, groups can visit famous wineries and get their hands dirty while crushing grapes and making wine

## A GROWING MARKET

According to a report on [researchandmarkets.com](http://researchandmarkets.com), the global market for tours and activities reservations is expected to reach \$266.7 trillion by 2027, making the experiential/adventure travel market one of

the fastest growing tourism segments.

Skift echoed those projections in a report that said "67 percent of opulent or well-to-do travelers want to spend their money on activities than a nicer hotel. Travelers are going beyond the concept of relaxation, leisure and traditional sightseeing."

In its most recent Experiential Travel Trends research, Tripadvisor said the hottest souvenir to bring back from a trip is a new skill, as travelers are learning different skills during trips abroad, enriching their lives beyond the trip. Tripadvisor found that among American travelers, experiences like salsa dancing classes and surf lessons were hugely popular.

Cat Jones, founder of Byway, who specializes in slow travel journeys across the United Kingdom and Europe, was quoted as saying "With the return of travel after years of restrictions, holidaymakers want to make the most of every second they're away. This, coupled with the fact that the pandemic has made 61 percent of travelers want to travel more sustainably, signals a shift in the ways people will travel in the future.

"We've seen a 600 percent increase in the number of people taking our slow travel



Visitors can take part in the firing of a cannon at the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown in Virginia.

Photo courtesy of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation

# THE RISE OF EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL

holidays since April," Jones added. "Our customers are citing the desire for travel experiences that allow them to savor each moment, pausing in a variety of places to connect with local cultures and ecosystems for high quality, authentic and sustainable experiences. Slow travel is already taking off, and we expect the acceleration of the slow travel movement to be one of the defining trends of 2022."

## YOUNG TRAVELERS DRIVING EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL

A sizable reason behind the surge in experiential travel is the preferences of millennials (defined as Americans born between 1980-1996) and Generation Z (those born from 1997 and after). According to Bloomberg, 86 percent of millennials want to travel for experience and culture, immersing themselves into their destination

with 60 percent ranking authentic culture as essential. Along those lines, Eventbrite's nationwide research of millennials showed 69 percent want to live one-of-a-kind experiences that let them get in touch with the culture of the places they visit.

In 2019, Airbnb created Airbnb Adventures, where travelers were encouraged to take immersive adventures around the world. The company announced guest bookings by Generation Z for "Experiences" in Thailand increased by 228 percent.

Why is the younger generation so interested in experiential travel? Experts say smartphones (which, critically, take and send photos to social media platforms) inspire travelers to seek local activities, dishes and destinations.

A survey conducted by easyJet, a Swiss low-cost airline, discovered 55 percent of travelers scheduled trips inspired by

images they saw on their Instagram feeds. A survey taken by Schofields, a United Kingdom-based holiday rental home insurance provider, showed 40 percent of millennials consider the "Instagrammability" of a destination to be their most important priority when choosing a destination.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As the world continues to reopen and travel returns to a state of normalcy, operators are challenged to cater to the desires of those seeking more immersive tours.

Certainly, traditional tours will continue to thrive and all-inclusive vacations will remain profitable, but numerous experts are calling experiential travel the future of tourism. With younger travelers craving new experiences and seeking fresh adventures, who can argue? **LGT**

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musicals (*I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change; Godspell; and Nunsense*) and Neil Simon's comedy *Barefoot in the Park* along with late-night cabarets and family-friendly Popcorn Theatre. Group tours are available and are adaptable to fit your group's interests. (**Tibbits.org**)



Photo courtesy of Tibbits Opera House

Coastal Classic Train,  
Alaska Railroad  
Photo courtesy of Riley Stefano

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### Kentucky Railway Museum New Haven, KY

It's always fun to step back in time and when you visit the Kentucky Railway Museum, that's exactly what you get to do. The museum, which originated in Louisville, Kentucky in 1954, is one of three tourist railroads in Kentucky. Many families visit the museum and take a train excursion - especially grandparents who bring their grandkids to let them see and feel that piece of history they experienced during their youth. Each year they welcome thousands of visitors to enjoy one of the train rides, visit and stroll through the museum or attend a special event. **([kyrail.org](http://kyrail.org))**



### Whitewater Valley Railroad Connersville, IN

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Photo courtesy of Kelly Vereck

# Spooky Experiences Await in the Midwest

These five ghostly attractions will give you goosebumps

By Hailey Johnson

Since 1972, there have been at least 62,482 ghost sightings reported in the country. On a map charting these reports, both Texas and California — the nation's most populous states — are highlighted in a light blue, representing their nation-leading number of sightings.

But in terms of regions actually teeming with the most ghosts, neither Texas or California

is where one will hear "boo!" the most. This is strictly a Midwestern affair. Between the 12 Midwestern states, 17,000 ghosts reportedly live in the cities and suburban towns. From old prisons to a property called the "Murder House," we did some digging on where to find these spooky spectres.

## RANDOLPH COUNTY ASYLUM/INFIRMARY (RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA)

On a ticket stub for Randolph County

Asylum's upcoming "flashlight tours" there is a question at the bottom posed to all participants: "Are you afraid of the dark?" If the answer is no, the asylum might very well try to change this. Originally built as a county home, the property has since gone through several changes, from operating as a prison to a care center and storage facility. Throughout the years, it's also become a resting place for the dead. It is estimated at least 200 people died during its care center



days. Unmarked graves surround the outside, including a mummy — locally known as Mose — that has been buried since 1873. And it only starts there.

Leaving the rest up for discovery, the asylum offers mini-ghost hunts, private history tours, weddings, and, for those up for it, overnight investigations. Beginning at 6 p.m., participants on the overnight investigation will receive a historical tour of the property before having Randolph all to themselves until 10 a.m. the following morning. Still not afraid of the dark? ([hauntedrandolphcounty.com](http://hauntedrandolphcounty.com))

### WHITEFISH POINT LIGHT STATION (CHIPPEWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN)

Unlike the other destinations on this list, Whitefish Point Light Station doesn't advertise that it has ghosts. One assumes this is general knowledge, with the station — one of the oldest in the country — paying witness to the brutal shipwrecks along Lake Superior. Still, visitors remain pleasantly spooked. In 2019, a woman who arrived to watch the banding of birds quickly forgot she had come on bird business. During the night, she experienced something stroking her face, even though there was no human presence around. In the morning, her locked door opened on its own. While the woman would go on to dismiss her later experiences (believing a pounding sound belonged to the radiator), it's not enough to discredit the station. On another couple's visit, the sensations of someone "stroking their back" were detailed. ([shipwreckmuseum.com/shipwreck-museum/whitefish-point-light](http://shipwreckmuseum.com/shipwreck-museum/whitefish-point-light))

### ALTON, ILLINOIS GHOST TOURS


Can a haunted location perhaps be too scary? With the addition of a new spot on its trolley tours, the Alton Haunted Tours Company questioned this themselves earlier this year, but, nonetheless, carried on. The three-hour tour, which explores some of the city's most sinister haunts, now includes the Milton School — a property rich with memories of murders, suicide, and human suffering. Though the school hasn't been in session for years, many have

described hearing children running around, their voices echoing throughout the halls. If this doesn't sound like your kind of thing, the company also offers a Haunted Craft Beer Walk, which promises to "wet your whistle while learning why Alton is one of the most haunted towns in the U.S." Just make sure not to over-indulge, as the

website warns, before the tour. After all, the ghosts would like to drink with you. ([altonhauntings.com](http://altonhauntings.com))

### OHIO STATE REFORMATORY (MANSFIELD, OHIO)

During the daytime, this reformatory is regarded as a director's go-to filming location,



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# MIDWESTERN HAUNTS

with the site featured in *Air Force One*, *Tango & Cash*, and *The Shawshank Redemption*, where it starred as the Shawshank prison. Once nightfall arrives, it takes on a whole different role: it's one of the most haunted prisons in the country. In its 94 years of operation, an unaccounted-for number of prisoners died of influenza, tuberculosis or suicide. When on one of the tours the reformatory hosts — ranging from ghost hunts and walks to private investigations — visitors have experienced “being pushed or punched” by angry spirits. In friendlier encounters, a chill in the air hangs overhead. On your way out, be sure to check out the gift shop, which is stocked with a collection of paranormal paraphernalia — a haven for those wishing to take some spirits home. **(mrps.org)**

Photo courtesy of Laura Bernhardt



This house in Iowa was the site of a 1912 murder of eight people.

## VILLISCA AX MURDER HOUSE (VILLISCA, IOWA)

“Listening to the whispers of disembodied voices was not something I planned on falling asleep to,” wrote a *Daily Iowan* reporter after staying at the property for an evening in 2020. “No one

was talking,” she continued, “No one was moving. I shivered, knowing full well that whoever, or whatever was talking, was not a being of this world ...” Since 1912, these voices have belonged to the Moore family and two family friends — these the remains of the eight who were murdered

by an ax killer. Other sounds fill the house, sounding not unlike those of a busy family. From footsteps going down the hall to furniture being moved, the family continues to be active (even if they are spirits), and might just even say hello during your visit. **(villiscaiaowa.com)** **LGT**



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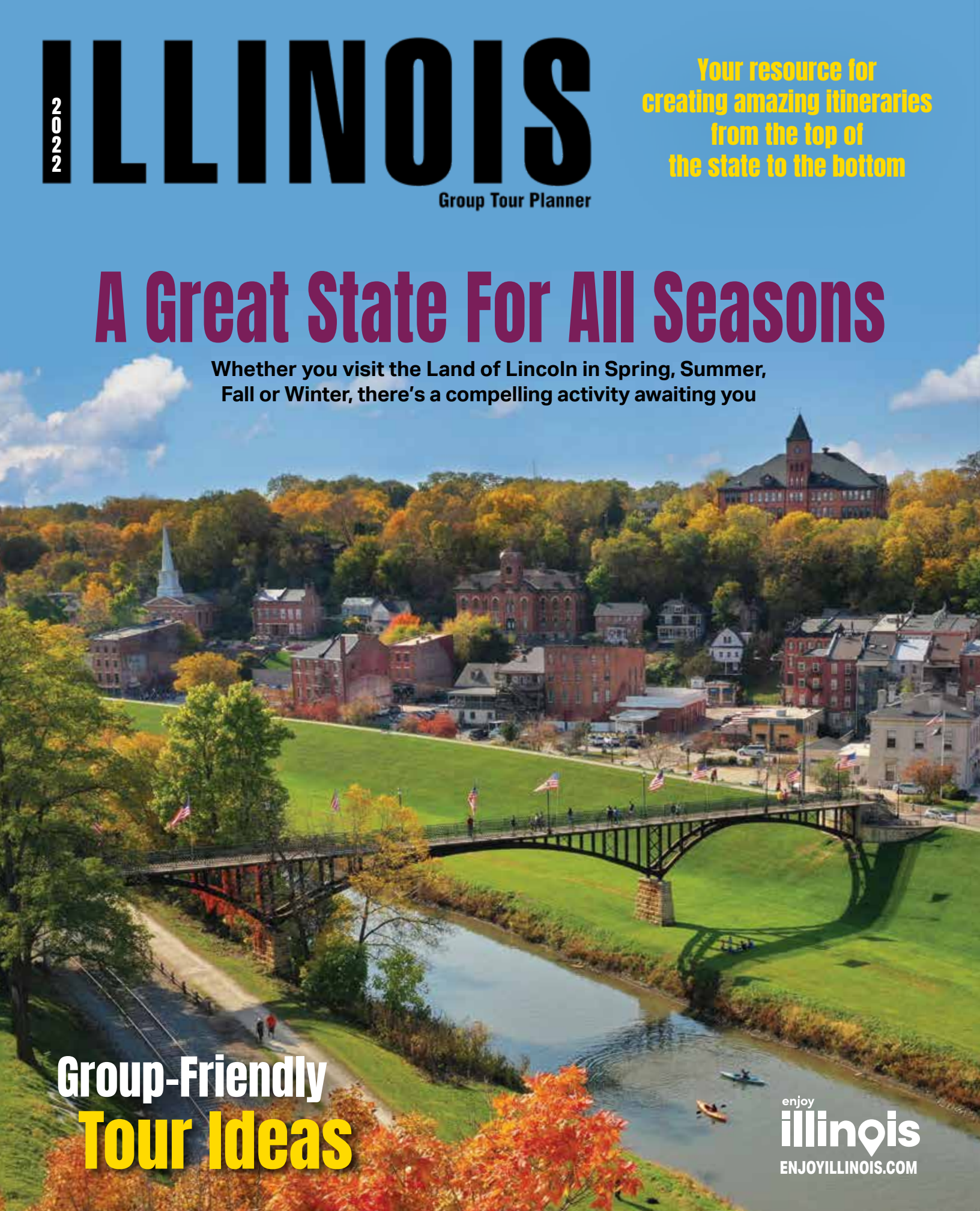
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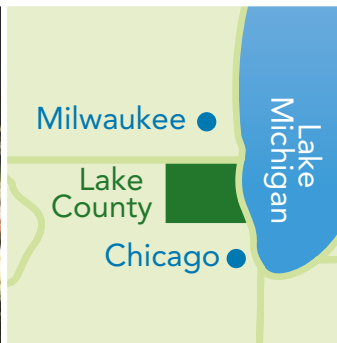
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# ILLINOIS

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ON THE COVER

Galena

(Photo courtesy of Enjoy Illinois)

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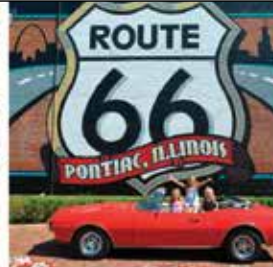



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**Karla Flannery**  
Deputy Director  
Illinois Office of Tourism

## Hello!

On behalf of the Illinois Office of Tourism, it is my pleasure to invite you and your travel companions to explore Illinois' incredible destinations and experiences. Our state is such a diverse place — and we take great pride in offering cultural attractions, unique businesses and friendly communities that are as diverse as our residents and visitors.

Many of our destinations are ideal for group travel. From the world-class museums, theaters and restaurants of our large cities to the picturesque charm of our small towns, your group will discover a bit of everything in Illinois.

In Chicago, you'll find one-of-a-kind experiences in every season. The historic metropolis is home to renowned cultural institutions, an award-winning dining scene, miles of sandy beaches and breathtaking architecture. Illinois' architectural excellence extends beyond the big city and into the rest of the state with the Illinois Frank Lloyd Wright Trail, which includes two UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Speaking of trails, plenty of adventure opportunities await outdoor enthusiasts in Illinois' beautiful state parks and natural areas. Shawnee National Forest is teeming with rolling hills, woods, open lands, lakes, creeks and rugged bluffs, making it the perfect destination for outdoor recreation.

I can't forget to mention Route 66, the mother of all road trips. Illinois is home to a 300-mile stretch of the famous American roadway, where you'll find endless history, nostalgic diners, quirky museums, and roadside attractions that offer fun photo opportunities. The road meanders through the state capital of Springfield, where you can step back in time to relive key moments in Illinois' storied history.

And that's just scratching the surface. To learn more about the incredible offerings and group itineraries throughout the state, we encourage you to visit [tourillinois.org](http://tourillinois.org) for more information and resources to start planning your next adventure in the Land of Lincoln.

We hope to see you soon.

Karla Flannery  
Deputy Director  
Illinois Office of Tourism

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**Published in Partnership with  
Tour Illinois, a committee of the Illinois  
Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus**  
500 E. Monroe  
Springfield, IL 62701

The publisher accepts unsolicited editorial matter, as well as advertising, but assumes no responsibility for statements made by advertisers or contributors. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information published, but the publisher makes no warranty that listings are free of error. The publisher is not responsible for the return of unsolicited photos, slides or manuscripts.

**Illinois Group Tour Planner** is published by Premier Travel Media, 621 Plainfield Road, Suite 406, Willowbrook, IL 60527. The magazine is distributed free of charge to qualified tour operators, travel agents, group leaders, bank travel clubs and other travel organizations.

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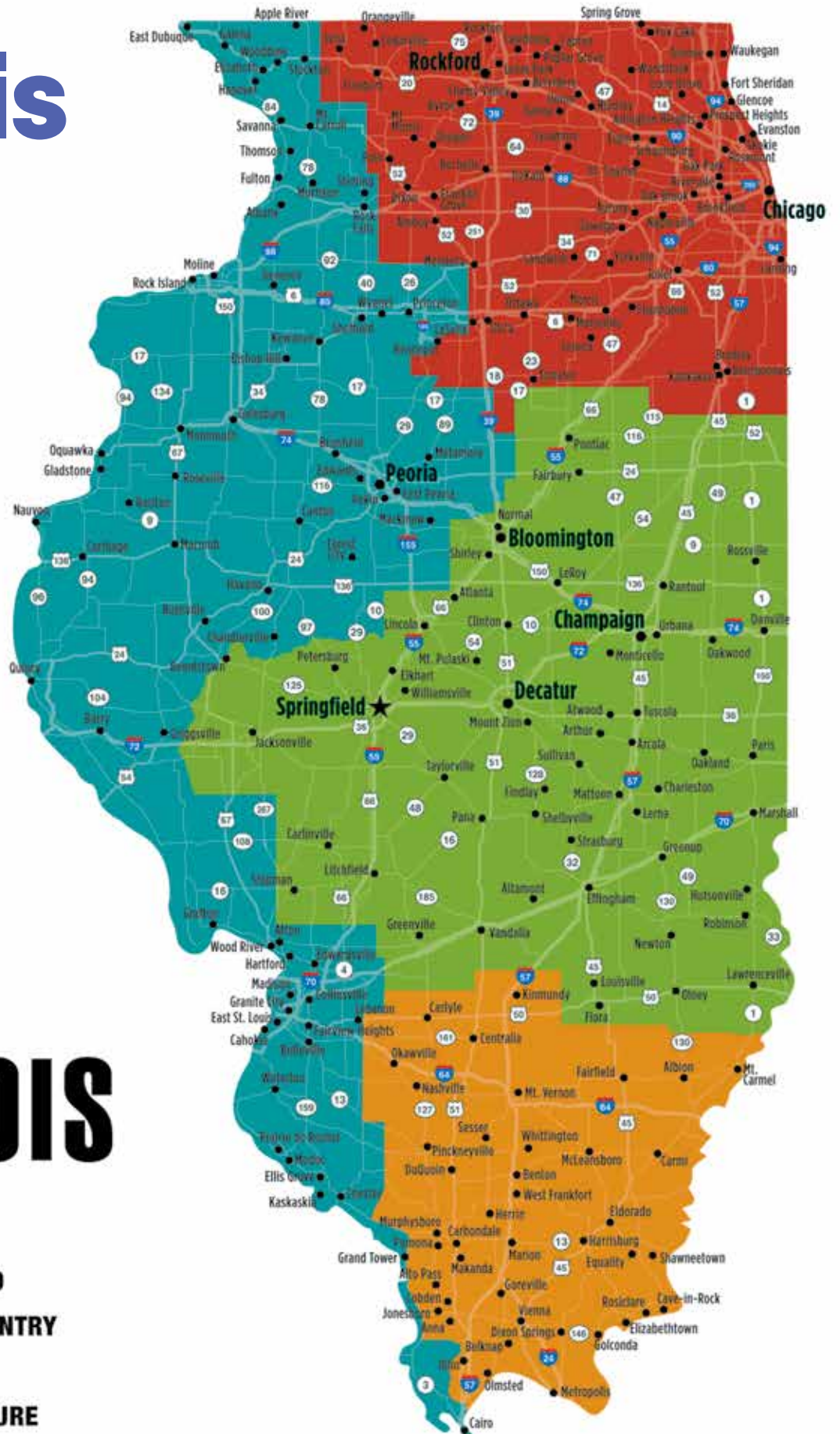
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# ILLINOIS

## STATE MAP

- CHICAGO & BEYOND
- GREAT RIVERS COUNTRY
- LAND OF LINCOLN
- TRAILS TO ADVENTURE

# SPRING

## BLOOMS BRIGHTLY IN ILLINOIS

By Christopher D. Silbernagel



*Starved Rock State Park in Oglesby*

All photos courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism

## History, natural beauty, fine wine and more await in the Land of Lincoln

**S**pring is a beautiful time in the State of Illinois. Depending on the month, the trees are either just beginning to bloom, their sprouts adorably fluttering up through the cooler winds of March and April, or in wonderful green glory by May. For those not as intrigued by the hypnotic charms and tranquility of nature, perhaps it's the arts or history that moves you. Whichever month groups decide to visit Illinois' unique sites, there's always something for everyone whether it's rural, urban or a mix of both worlds. No matter your preference, it's best to explore and be adventurous in a state that is filled with unbelievable sites to see, places to dine and so much more.

Along the Mississippi River, Moline's **Celebration River Cruises** are a delight for anyone with a taste for nature, as well as good food. There are many options to choose from departing from Moline, with narrated lunch or captain's dinner and dance selections available Tuesdays through Saturdays. A visit to Rock Island County's 40-plus acres of forest preserve at **Niabi Zoo** will keep groups close to nature before or after a cruise. The site features 200 different species of animals from around the world. Located in the heart of Moline, the **John Deere Pavilion** allows groups to explore interactive exhibits and films about the history of the largest agricultural manufacturing equipment company in the world. Come discover how John Deere forges the cutting edge every day.

Visit the historic **Butterworth Center** and **Deere-Wiman House**, two majestic mansions built in the late 1800s by Charles Deere, son of John Deere. You'll also be able to see how the Deere equipment gets put into action at **Grateful Graze**, a regenerative farm that produces pastured proteins in Cambridge. They raise grass-fed and grass-finished beef, lamb, timber heritage pork and mobile pasture chicken and eggs. The roots on their farm are now five generations deep.

100 miles due west of Chicago resides the rolling hills, old growth forests and the pristine rivers of the **Blackhawk Waterways**

in Northwest Illinois. With its quaint cabins and charming bed and breakfasts, it's the perfect weekend getaway. Every mile is steeped in history, surrounded by outdoor beauty and dotted with fabulous villages.

For a fun-filled stop, **Chestnut Mountain Resort** is a full-service 120-unit resort situated eight miles southeast of Galena on a wooded palisade overlooking the Mississippi River. This resort offers an array of outdoor activities year-round including the Soaring Eagle Zipline, an alpine slide, Segway tours, river cruises, bike rentals, mini golf and disc golf. About 30 minutes east of the resort is Stockton, the gateway to Galena Country, which is home to gorgeous larger-than-life **murals** painted throughout the downtown area. Discover these colorful, story-telling murals while exploring the historic village.

Heading to Chicago & Beyond, Rockford has numerous sites perfect for nature enthusiasts looking to enjoy cooler spring temperatures. Originally designed by Master Craftsman Hoichi Korisu, the **Anderson Japanese Gardens** are an authentic experience offering tranquil views to relieve your stress. Founded in 1978 by local businessman John Anderson, the gardens offer guided tours with paths for all capabilities. There's also on-site dining at **Fresco at the Gardens** with its beautiful terrace. Nearby, **Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens** provides a different experience as the third largest conservatory in the state. Situated along the Rock River, the 11,000-square-foot conservatory is famous for its tropical plant setting and beautiful late spring outdoor features. The **Sinnissippi Rose Garden** in particular is very popular for its variety of roses and great views of the river.

Near the border with Wisconsin in Spring Grove, **Richardson Adventure Farm's Tulip Festival** is a colorful delight for all ages. From mid-April through mid-May, the peak point of the 30 beautiful varieties of bulbs draws thousands of visitors to Spring Grove—not only from Illinois but from across the country. The farm also has some great food options available, with a daily trolley and different local food trucks throughout each week. Nearby, **Chain O'Lakes State Park** is a quiet spot for birdwatchers. By May, a variety of Neotropical migrants such as orioles, tanagers and warblers pass through, with some remaining to breed.

In the city of Chicago, spring means that the MLB season is in the cards. Baseball fans will not only have the opportunity to take in a game, but also enjoy guided tours.

Each stadium's tours vary, with **Wrigley Field** offering multiple weekend packages for groups to discover the history of the Friendly Confines.

West of Chicago is Naperville, which has been voted one of America's greatest cities to live. For foodies and history buffs, there's no better way to take in the city than the **Naperville Bites and Sites** tour. The tour stops at multiple family-owned and operated restaurants for great food and drinks, along the way discovering the downtown and riverwalk areas. While you'll surely see the **Naper Settlement** during your tour, an additional in-depth visit to the 12-acre outdoor history museum will provide details into pioneer life. Additionally, the **Benck Family Agricultural Interpretive Center** is currently being built, which is a state-of-the-art STEM learning center that will provide 4,250 square feet of exhibition space dedicated to the agricultural history of the region.

Not far from Naperville is the **Morton Arboretum** in Lisle. Covering 1,700 acres, the arboretum is dubbed "The Champion of Trees" for its Center for Tree Science research. Open to the public, the site offers gardens with over 4,000 plant species, an outdoor museum with a library, herbarium and more.

Located at Governors State University campus in University Park is the 100-acre **Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park**. Voted #1 Best Sculpture Park by *USA Today's* Readers' Choice (2021), "the Nate," as it's colloquially known, features 30 master works of large-scale sculptures across a beautiful prairie landscape. Free of charge and open 365 days a year, the park also offers programs for adults and children that harmonize art with nature in a meaningful way.



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Into the Land of Lincoln, anyone would be remiss not to explore historic Springfield to its fullest. For an encompassing scope of the state capital's history and architecture, there are a number of tour options available. The **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum**, for example, is a must, with its immersive experience into Lincoln's time growing up in a cabin up to his life living in the nation's capital. Free guided tours at **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** further delve into the Lincoln experience, allowing groups a deeper look at the only home that the 16th U.S. president ever owned. Of course, any visit to Springfield wouldn't be complete without at least a stop at the **Illinois State Capitol**. Completed in 1888, the building is beautifully designed in the Renaissance Revival and Italianate architectural styles. Its interior dome depicts scenes from Illinois history.

Pay a visit to Jacksonville, which features a variety of historic stops including the **Big Eli Ferris Wheel**, which debuted in Jacksonville in 1900 and still proudly stands in the city. Jacksonville is also home to popular attractions including the **Jacksonville Area Museum**, the **Governor Duncan Mansion**, former home to Governor Joseph Duncan, who served as governor of Illinois from 1834 to 1838, and **Woodlawn Farm**, the homestead of Jacksonville's Underground Railroad network.

Located by the riverfront and perched on the bluffs, Quincy is a picturesque city next to the Mississippi River in Western Illinois. Quincy's historic downtown is a popular attraction and features numerous buildings showcasing the city's late 19th century and early 20th century architecture. The **Historic Quincy Business District** is home to antique shops, gift stores, book stores and much more. Visit the **Quincy Museum**, which was built in 1890-91 and has a magnificent exterior, interior and houses a variety of educational programs and the **History Museum on the Square**, which houses permanent and rotating installations and features displays and artifacts from the pioneer era through modern times.

The **Allerton Park and Retreat Center** is a historical treasure hidden near the upper Sangamon River in Monticello, offering an extraordinary curation of art, nature and history. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and named one of the American Institute of Architects' 150 Great Places in Illinois, this private residence from artist and philanthropist Robert Allerton was donated to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1946. After a long day of activities, enjoy a peaceful and magical night at the Mansion. Befitting a

Georgian manor house with extensive plantings and over 100 ornaments and sculptures, the estate has 41 guest rooms and three guest houses, perfect for small or large groups.

Southern Illinois is known for stunning **Shawnee National Forest** and its Garden of the Gods, but there's certainly much more to see and taste far south. There are several wineries in the region that are part of the **Shawnee Hills Wine Trail**, many of which offer tours of their vineyards and superb tastings. **Alto Vineyards** is well known for being one of the first vineyards planted in the state.

Established in 1985, visitors can enjoy a selection of award-winning wines in Alto's large tasting room, which can also be rented out for private events. East of Alto is the unique **Blue Sky Vineyard** in Makanda, providing visitors the relaxing charm of the Italian countryside with its Tuscan-style winery. While there are plenty of other high-quality vineyards along the way, it's worth mentioning that in between these winery tours groups will be able to take in the natural beauty of **Giant City State Park**. The park has been aptly named for its huge bluffs and sandstone structures which have been dubbed "Giant City Streets" — leaving the impression on visitors that this once was the land of giants.

Moving west into Great Rivers Country, the **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** is sure to impress. Groups will be able to take a guided tour of this pre-Columbian Native American city, which consisted of over 100 man-made earthen mounds of various sizes and functions up until the 14th century. At its peak, Cahokia is estimated to have had a larger population than London at the time. The on-site Interpretive Center is currently closed, but outdoor tours provide an exciting learning experience for everyone.

While you're close to Cahokia Mounds, stop in at **Willoughby Heritage Farm** in Collinsville to experience life in 1940s rural Illinois. The farm retains its historic charm with the original farmhouse, barns and on-site animals. In nearby Alton, tours of the **Melvin Price Locks and Dam**, the largest and most technologically advanced lock system in the state, showcases the spectacular beauty and power of the Mississippi River.

Heading back north to Oglesby, **Starved Rock State Park** is another natural wonder of Illinois. Groups will be able to enjoy a number of unique year-round **Trolley Tours** from Starved Rock Lodge.

The tours will take groups through downtown Utica with stops at two visitor centers in the park. **IL**

# ILLINOIS SHINES IN THE SUMMER

When the weather gets warm, the Land of Lincoln gets active

By Jason Paha

**T**here's nothing like Illinois in the summer. While the Land of Lincoln is a marvelous destination regardless of the season, Illinois, and its wealth of attractions, excursions and photo-worthy backdrops, truly shines when the days get longer and the temperature rises.

Chicago has been called one of the best summer cities in the world. With its array of outdoor activities and its alluring lakefront, that designation seems wholly accurate.

Groups looking to savor the city's magnificent skyline can spend time at the downtown lakefront's Museum Campus, a 57-acre park that resides near Lake Michigan and surrounds three of the city's most renowned institutions: the **Adler Planetarium**, **Shedd Aquarium** and the **Field Museum of Natural History**. The Adler Planetarium, America's first planetarium, hosts more than half a million visitors each year with its dazzling skywatching events and numerous scientific programs; the Shedd Aquarium is the country's largest indoor aquarium and

the Field Museum contains nearly 40 million artifacts and specimens.

Another lakefront destination, **Navy Pier**, features a variety of shops, restaurants, live music and the nearly 200-foot-high **Centennial Wheel**, which offers unparalleled 360-degree views of Chicago and Lake Michigan. Groups looking to experience wildlife in the heart of Chicago can visit **Lincoln Park Zoo**, home to nearly 200 species from around the world. In nearby Brookfield, **Brookfield Zoo** houses a whopping 5,500 animals on 216 acres of nature park, creating memorable experiences 365 days a year.

Chicago is, of course, a world-class baseball town, as it is home to two Major League Baseball teams. Its surrounding cities, though, also offer excellent baseball options. The **Kane County Cougars**, an American Association baseball team who plays in Geneva, are always a popular draw. The same can be said for picturesque Geneva, which is renowned for its beautiful parks, historic homes, fine restaurants and

downtown specialty shops. The **Chicago Southland**, an area representing 63 municipalities south of Chicago, abounds with attractions including Crestwood's **Windy City Thunderbolts**, who bring affordable family entertainment all summer long. The northwest suburb of Schaumburg sports the **Schaumburg Boomers** of the Frontier League, who captured the first professional baseball championship for their city in 2013. When groups aren't enjoying a ballgame, they can make a stop at the **Woodfield Mall** in Schaumburg, one of the largest shopping destinations in the country with nearly 300 stores and restaurants.

Those seeking a picturesque excursion can visit **Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens** in Palos Heights. The site consists of 158 acres including the Calumet-Sag Canal, 3.5 miles of hiking trails, 20-acre Lake Katherine, Navajo Creek, a waterfall, forested areas, prairies, an arboretum and a wetland restoration project.

In the city of Joliet, an hour southwest of Chicago, the **Joliet Slammers** play in one of

## Montrose Beach in Chicago



Photo courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism

the most beautiful ballparks in minor league baseball and the team's games are always an event. Not far from the ballpark, history comes alive during tours of the **Old Joliet Prison**, a castle-like penitentiary where scenes from *The Blues Brothers* movie were filmed. Another popular Joliet stop is downtown's **Rialto Square Theatre**, an architectural beauty from the vaudeville era.

Forty miles from Chicago resides Aurora, the state's second-largest city. Aurora attracts groups with Broadway shows, concerts, comedy and more at the **Paramount Theatre**, a jewel dating from 1931. Another Aurora attraction is the **Chicago Premium Outlets** shopping mall, an outdoor center that offers more than 160 stores including Nike, Kate Spade New York, Vera Bradley and more.

Another shopping Mecca is **Gurnee Mills**, Illinois' largest shopping and dining destination with more than 160 stores. After a day spent at **Gurnee Mills** or the noteworthy amusement park **Six Flags Great America**, groups can spend the night at Gurnee's **Great Wolf Lodge**. This 80,000-square-foot water park features a completely renovated indoor water park with water slides, a crooked creek, a water playground and more.

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Just down the road is Old Mill Creek, home to the spectacular **Tempel Lipizzans**. The Tempel Lipizzans' history spans more than six decades while the story of the Lipizzan and classical riding spans more than five centuries. Each performance, to music, is a study in classical horsemanship as the horse and rider display impressive athleticism that will wow your group.

Galena is an excellent summertime stop in northwest Illinois as it features multiple stops listed on the National Register of Historic Places. With more than 125 shops and restaurants, one door after another for half a mile, there is a host of variety, quality and special activities and sales.

Groups can visit the **Ulysses S. Grant Home** (the 18th president of the United States), enjoy a tour of the **Elihu B. Washburne State Historic Site** (a popular U.S. Congressman from 1853-1869), and stop in at the **Galena and U.S. Grant Museum**, which explores Galena's history and houses national treasures like the "Peace in Union" and "General Grant on the Battlefield" paintings. **The Old Blacksmith Shop**, an authentic 1897 blacksmith shop with working forges is filled with tools and equipment from its 100-year history. There is a Historian on site and the gift shop is well-stocked with Galena-forged items made by blacksmiths.

In the **Quad Cities**, explore the world-renowned Mississippi River—one of the five top recognized attractions in the world—aboard a riverboat. Experience the power and mystique of the river that captivated Mark Twain as it sweeps around the great riverbend and flows east to west. The Quad Cities offers several options for visitors to get out on the river. Board the **Celebration Belle** riverboat for a lunch cruise. You'll love the buffet and narrated history tour on the Mississippi River. The **Backwater Gamblers** waterski show is also a great stop for evening summer entertainment. They perform a free show every Wednesday and Sunday evening on the Rock River. For small, adventurous tours, reserve time to go kayaking on a guided tour on the Rock River.

**Mercado on Fifth** hosts vibrant markets every Friday evening in the summer on 5th Avenue in Moline. The family-friendly events are dedicated to honoring Hispanic culture and supporting minority-owned small businesses. They feature food trucks, mobile boutiques and retail vendors, children's activities, and live music and entertainment. Their season starts at the beginning of June and continues through the end of September.

A trip to Rockford is a good idea for a

number of reasons, one of them being the **Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens**, the third-largest conservatory in the state. Nicholas offers an 11,000-square-foot plant exhibition area complete with water features and seating areas.

When one thinks of summer, one thing that often comes to mind is a road trip. And there is no finer road trip than a journey down the Mother Road, which begins in the heart of downtown Chicago and travels 300 miles southwest. **Historic Route 66** provides an unforgettable experience today just as it did in days gone by as a multitude of iconic attractions can be found along the way. Groups can make stops at famous establishments like **Lou Mitchell's Restaurant and Bakery** in Chicago, the **Launching Pad** diner in Wilmington, home to the **Gemini Giant, Ambler-Beckler Texaco Gas Station** in Dwight, **Illinois Route 66 Association Hall of Fame and Museum** in Pontiac, **Litchfield Route 66 Museum and Welcome Center**, **Pink Elephant Antique Mall** in Livingston, **Willey Theatre** in Edwardsville and the **World's Largest Catsup Bottle** in Collinsville. In Springfield, visit the largest Route 66 Shield at **Route 66 Motorheads Bar, Grill, Museum and Entertainment complex** or take a picture on the iconic Brick Road.

Located at the confluence of the Illinois River and the Fox River, Ottawa is filled with scenic wonders and historic landmarks. Ottawa is known as the gateway to **Starved Rock** and also features a historic downtown filled with boutique shops and modern eateries. Ottawa is a hub to four state parks (including the famous and aforementioned Starved Rock) and a nature preserve all within 20 minutes of its downtown.

Further downstate in Peoria, groups can enjoy a cruise on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers on the famous paddleboat riverboat, the **Spirit of Peoria**. This paddleboat offers numerous cruises from overnight trips up and down the river to relaxing hour-long sightseeing cruises. Peoria comes alive during summer as its minor league baseball team, the **Peoria Chiefs**, plays entertaining games that include a slew of family-fun promotions. Just across the river from downtown Peoria, East Peoria proudly sports a new downtown shopping district: The **Levee District**, a vibrant mixed-use center that houses a variety of retailers and dining options.

Another noted destination in Central Illinois is Bloomington-Normal, home to numerous theaters including the **Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts**, the **Community Players Theatre** and the **Historic Normal**

**Theater.** The area also hosts multiple festivals including the **Sugar Creek Arts Festival** in Normal where more than 170 arts and crafts vendors display their impressive creations. Lively music and delectable food accompany the art displays.

A summer staple in Bloomington-Normal is the **Illinois Shakespeare Festival**. Drawing nearly 10,000 visitors each year, this professional repertory company produces work by Shakespeare and contemporary plays created in his spirit. Enjoy family-friendly entertainment, behind-the-scenes tours and live music. Did you know Champaign County is home to second-largest fine arts museum in the state? Enjoy a guided tour through **Krannert Art Museum's** diverse permanent collection, which contains more than 10,000 works of art, and represents the cultures of African, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Immerse yourself in Japanese culture at the University of Illinois' **Japan House**. Discover the way of tea through a traditional Tea Ceremony, the time-honored art of Chado. Codified almost 400 years ago by Sen Rikyu, the greatest tea master, the four spirits of tea signify the highest ideals of the Way of Tea: harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility. Its core elements involve the acts of serving and receiving a bowl of tea with the utmost sincerity, appreciation, and attentiveness, while bearing an attitude of single-mindedness and a keen awareness of the concept *ichigo, ichie* (one life, one opportunity).

Thirty miles south of Champaign resides Arcola, home to the **Aikman Wildlife Adventure**. This family-friendly zoo features more than 200 animals and gives visitors the chance to not only walk through the park, but drive along a designated path to peek into the enclosures. Housing many species of exotic and domestic animals, this zoo offers fun and educational experiences for visitors.

The village of Downs is home to **Epiphany Farms Estate**, a farm that specializes in a farm-to-table experience and operates using sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural methods for raising crops and animals. Those looking to enjoy the great outdoors can visit **Kickapoo State Recreation Area**, located just outside of Danville, which offers a variety of activities for any group outing.

In Monticello, groups can visit the **Allerton Park and Retreat Center**, a 1,517-acre park, nature center and conference center. Surrounded by vast gardens decorated with timeless art, the Allerton stands alone in its historical beauty. Groups can stay in one of the 41 antique-decorated rooms on site or register for one of the three

houses scattered among the estate.

As part of one of Illinois' National Historic sites, the **Lincoln Home** in Springfield is one of the most popular historic sites to visit. The house was built in 1839 and has been restored to its 1860 glory. Some of the rooms that can be seen on tours include Abraham Lincoln's bedroom, the formal parlor and the kitchen. Springfield is also home to the **Old State Capitol**, a reconstruction of Illinois' fifth statehouse, the first to be located in Springfield. It is here where Lincoln gave his famous "House Divided" speech in 1858, stationed his presidential campaign in 1860 and was honored and laid in state after his assassination in 1865.

South of Springfield in southwest Illinois, groups can enjoy a leisurely cruise on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers aboard the **Hakuna Matata**, an excursion boat anchored in Grafton. Scenic and themed cruises are available. Ride to the top of the river bluffs on the **Grafton SkyTour**, an open-air chairlift and enclosed gondola ride that offers scenic views of the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Spend the evening in Alton taking in a Prospect League baseball game with the

**Alton River Dragons**. Entertainment takes center stage on the weekends when **Alton Little Theater** showcases laugh-out-loud comedies and heartfelt dramas. The senses come alive at Edwardsville's **Tenderloin Farms** for all things lavender, including soaps, bath bombs, eye pillows and U Pick.

Carbondale is a fabulous outdoor destination filled with rivers, lakes, a variety of golf courses and beautiful parks. It also contains dozens of museums and historic sites including **Woodlawn Cemetery**, the **R. Buckminster Fuller Dome Home** and the **Old Illinois Passenger Depot Railroad Museum**. Groups looking to get a look at some of Southern Illinois' most incredible sightlines can visit **Shawnee National Forest**. Famed for its awesome Garden of the Gods, Shawnee has a system of 403 miles of equestrian and hiking trails and magnificent jutting walls of rock and lush forest. If hiking sounds a bit too strenuous for your liking, the **Shawnee Hills Wine Trail** may be more your speed. Surrounded by the beauty of the Shawnee National Forest, this trail features 11 award-winning wineries located along a 35-mile scenic drive. **IL**





# ILLINOIS AUTUMN ATTRACTIONS

Harvest season in Illinois features haunted houses,  
fall festivals and beautiful foliage

By Miles Dobis



Illinois' expansive state parks and architecturally distinct neighborhoods are granted additional beauty each autumn with clear blue skies and the dazzling colors of turning leaves. Your group will enjoy touring the state during this season for the milder weather and countless festivals where local communities celebrate the harvest. From haunted houses to winding corn mazes, there's an autumn attraction for every interest.

One of the best ways to experience the state's dazzling variety of fall colors is a low-impact hike in a state park along one of Illinois' protected waterways. Located near the convergence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers in southern Illinois, **Shawnee National Forest** features rolling hills, lakes, creeks and rugged bluffs. The park's most famous landmark is the Garden of the Gods, a collection of ancient sandstone formations that date back 320 million years and descend four miles below the Earth's surface. Groups can walk along the quarter-mile interpretive trail for clear views of formations like Camel Rock, Table Rock and the Devil's Smokestack, and a ranger can accompany your party to point out seasonal wildflowers and autumn leaves.

Visitors to the popular Starved Rock State Park along the Illinois River will also want to admire the fall colors in nearby **Matthiessen State Park**. Hikers can walk through a landscape of gentle wooded valleys (called "dells") that features table-top waterfalls and angular sandstone formations made even more beautiful by vivid colored leaves. Groups can walk through a series of interconnected plank walkways and staircases to see several waterfalls that cascade over rocks before returning to the motorcoach. Nearby **Buffalo Rock State Park** is located on a bluff that was once an island on the much-wider Illinois River. An enormous limestone bluff provides sweeping views of the river and surrounding forest, and a park ranger can explain how these very rocks were passed by French explorer Louis Joliet in 1673.

Leaf peepers don't want to miss out on a fall color drive along the **Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway** in southwest Illinois. This 33-mile stretch of roadway features the stunning Mississippi River on one side and soaring tree-lined limestone bluffs on the opposite side creating one of the most scenic fall color drives in the Midwest.

Looking for a spooky haunted house to include in your visit? Illinois is home to several buildings inhabited by specters that are

prepared to welcome groups with a taste for the macabre. **Joliet Prison**, which once housed famous criminals such as Leopold & Loeb and Babyface Nelson, is now a spine-tingling environment of castle-like guard towers and wrought iron gates. Groups can visit the Joliet Historical Society to learn about the prison's history, but you can also register for a Haunted History Tour to enter cellblocks occupied by infamous inmates. Guests will learn about the "singing ghost" that lingers in the Old Convict Cemetery, the specter of a warden's wife who was murdered in her bed, and the mysterious vibrations that emanate from Death Row. Budding ghosthunters will also want to visit Alton – cited as The Most Haunted Small Town in America. Haunted tours are offered year round, but gear up in September and October. Hop on board an **Alton Odyssey Tour** trolley and discover the most haunted sites in the city. Or stroll through the city's haunted downtown streets on a **Haunted Alton Walking Tour** that includes the incredibly spooky **Mineral Springs Hotel**. Visit **McPike Mansion** in Alton, which according to legend was built on a Native American burial ground and was potentially the site of an Underground Railroad stop before construction began in 1869. Join the thousands of annual visitors and paranormal investigators who believe that Eleanor and Henry McPike still roam the corridors at night and a mysterious woman appears in the bathtub.

If you want to spend your Illinois adventure exploring beautiful homes that aren't haunted, consider a day touring the beautiful Prairie School buildings of Oak Park. This charming village located just outside the Chicago city limits is where famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright moved with his family in 1889. He would become a fixture of the community for the next 20 years and design 25 Oak Park buildings while perfecting his Prairie style. Orient your group to the area with a tour of the **Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio**, which Wright designed himself and contains his draft room and original sketches. The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust conducts several tours throughout the neighborhood within walking distance of the studio, and the wide streets are particularly attractive during the autumn months. Groups will also want to visit **Unity Temple**, a triumph of modern design and one of Wright's favorite projects. After a fire severely damaged the local Unitarian church in 1905, he was commissioned to re-imagine the building on a tight budget and resorted to a concrete exterior because it was inexpensive. The material was rarely used



*Old Joliet Prison tour*

in public buildings, and especially for places of worship, but the combination of necessity and inspiration resulted in an iconic building with striking columns and elevated windows that allow natural light to enter but deny worshipers an outside view. Architecture buffs can also tour the **Laurent House** in Rockford, another exceptional Usonian space. Built for a paraplegic U.S. Navy veteran and completed in 1949, this home fuses form and function with a single-story design, open floor plan and floor-to-ceiling windows that maximize views of the backyard to create a sense of tranquility.

Groups who want to celebrate the harvest can take advantage of Illinois' dozens of u-pick orchards and farms that welcome motorcoach groups. With nine miles of winding trails across 28 acres, the corn maze at **Richardson Adventure Farm** is the largest in the world. Visitors to this **Spring Grove** attraction can also embark on a wagon ride on a vehicle created from repurposed bus seats, fly through a 750-foot zip line and relax next to the community campfire. See and pick hundreds of pumpkin, squash and gourd varieties from over 30 countries at the **Great Pumpkin Patch** in Arthur. Here, visitors can admire over 5,000 mums, wander the beautiful gardens that grace the grounds and purchase delicious cinnamon rolls, cookies and signature angel food cakes at the Homestead Bakery. Those seeking a good scare can head to Jacksonville, and take a **Haunted Jacksonville Tour**, which takes visitors on a tour of the most haunted spots of this beautiful city.

Visitors who want to pick their own apples should visit **Jonamac Orchard** in Malta



*An Amish buggy ride is an ideal way to enjoy an autumn afternoon.*

to explore the seemingly endless rows of apple trees and select delicious varieties like Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, Granny Smith and Fuji. Groups who visit the 65-acre site during harvest season can pick apples from nearly 5,000 trees, indulge in apple donuts from the bakery, ride on a tractor cab and get spooked in the haunted corn maze. Groups can also tour the Cider House to see Jonamac's cider pressing operation before entering the tasting room to try apple wines and hard ciders and watch the sunset from the Cider Garden Patio. Also popular with fall visitors is **Edwards Apple Orchard West** in the town of **Winnebago**. Groups can tour a 100-year-old dairy barn, pick 18 varieties of apples in the orchard and enjoy fresh apple donuts.

Groups can take a walk through a 15-acre corn maze at **DeMange Farms** in rural St. Jacob in southwest Illinois or stroll through the pick-your-own pumpkin patch—there are plenty of varieties on hand – on this working farm. Grab a bag or a basket of apples at **Liberty Apple Orchard** in Edwardsville and choose from the 15 varieties available. Loads of fall activities are waiting for you at **Bengston's Pumpkin Farm** in Homer Glen, where you can pick out pumpkins on a hayride out to the patch, watch pig races, visit the Fun Barn or Haunted Barn, do some gem mining, watch animatronic skeletons singing tunes, enjoy some rides and more. Try out some snacks, like apple cider donuts, churros, kettle corn, or something more filling, like Uncle Bub's Award Winning BBQ, Anna's Tacos or Home Run Inn Pizza.

Tranquil forest preserves and native prairie fields line the banks of the **Fox River**, a major tributary that becomes especially beautiful in the autumn. The 32-mile **Fox River Trail** features a combination of paths that run under forest canopies and through charming riverside downtowns, and adventurous groups can rent stand-up paddleboards or canoes to view the fall foliage while floating downstream. The Fox

River flows through several communities that feature group-friendly shopping opportunities, wineries and restaurants that take advantage of their beautiful waterside locations. Begin your Fox River Valley tour in the city of Elgin, which was established as a stagecoach stop in 1835. Groups can taste hand-dipped shakes at **Val's Frozen Custard and Burgers**, purchase classic sweets in an antique storefront at **Around the Corner Candy** and enjoy a refreshing ale at **Black and Grey Brewing Co.** Downstream is the **Fox River Trolley Museum**, which oversees a collection of 30 antique electric trolleys and locomotives that date back to 1887.

Continue to the city of St. Charles, whose downtown features Art Deco architecture and riverside dining that captures autumn beauty for touring groups. Visitors can sample craft beer and watch the boats float downstream at **Alter Brewing + Kitchen**, eat hearty Italian cuisine at **Fratelli's Ristorante** and catch a rock show at the **Arcada Theater**. Upstairs is the **Club Arcada Speakeasy & Restaurant**, a tribute to 1920s nightclubs that features Prohibition-themed cocktails, swing music and magic performances.

With its grand Victorian homes along the Fox River and over 100 specialty shops, Geneva has solidified itself as Kane County's premier shopping destination. One stop is all your group will need to admire the historic mansions along 3rd Street, enjoy a gourmet brew at **Graham's 318 Coffeehouse** and splurge on a dress at **Mish Boutique** or **Jori & June**.

If you'd like to try some of the best wine the Midwest has to offer, **Fox Valley Winery** in Oswego offers samples of fruity Zinfandels, rich Merlots and dry Roses. Their expansive tasting room welcomes groups and encourages visitors to enjoy their glass on a comfortable couch or in the gallery space that showcases works from local artists.

Groups should also consider including an **Illinois Maker** to their itinerary when

visiting the state. This collection of creators and artisans includes breweries, restaurants, art studios and farms that support the local economy and present unique products crafted by hand. Visitors to Lake County north of Chicago can learn how to make delicious Italian desserts at **Tony Cannoli**. Register for a class to learn how Tony started in his grandmother's kitchen, the secrets of a delectable cannoli filling and how to make other Italian specialties like dolce chips. **Lamb's Farm** in Libertyville welcomes groups to learn about its mission to hire and support developmentally disabled employees, tour the farmyard and enjoy a hearty barbecue meal. Craft beer aficionados will want to sample popular creations like the Comfortably Blonde IPA and Boxcar Porter at **Tighthead Brewing Company**, and groups can register for an in-depth glassblowing workshop at **Peter Patterson Glassworks** (both businesses are located in Mundelein). Group tours are available at **David Stine Furniture**, an Illinois Maker located in Dow in southwest Illinois. Stine creates custom furniture from the hardwood trees that grow on his property. In Alton, groups are always welcome at **My Just Desserts**, famous for its soups and sandwiches but an Illinois Maker because of the desserts.

In Galena, tour the home of the United States' 18th president, **Ulysses S. Grant**. On Aug. 18, 1865, Galena celebrated the return of its Civil War hero Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Following a jubilant procession filled with flag waving and speeches, a group of Galena citizens presented the general with a handsomely furnished house on Bouthillier Street. Operating since 1854, **Dittmar Farms** in Elizabeth, a family-owned and operated farm, specializes in apples, sweet corn, and pumpkins. The farm features seasonal activities such as scenic hayrides, u-pick apples, a corn maze, and u-pick pumpkins.

The largest Amish population in Illinois can be found in Arthur. The area's farmers continue to work the soil—some of the richest in the world—using horse and plow. Discover their process to plant, grow, and harvest corn and soy.

Go behind-the-scenes when you tour the impressive Amish woodworker, **Das Holz Haus'** facility. This large facility creates custom, hand-crafted furniture and cabinetry, focusing on intricate details that make your house a home. The Amish buggy is a common sight in the Amish Country and you won't leave without getting to ride one. Visit a local Amish buggy maker and experience an in-depth tour of his buggy shop. **IL**

# WINTER

## COZY CONFINES AND FROSTY FUN

Delights include snowy heights, eagles in flight and light-filled nights

By Randy Mink

**W**inter may not be peak travel season in Illinois and the rest of the Midwest, but those who embrace the colder months reap unexpected rewards. Instead of hibernating, visitors simply put on an extra layer or two as they prepare to hit the road and make exciting new discoveries. Indoors and out, Illinois has much to offer tour groups, from snow-packed hiking trails and daunting ski slopes to cozy lodges and festive yuletide events.

Botanical conservatories, with their lush vegetation and splashes of color, are oases of nature sure to perk up anyone wallowing in the winter doldrums.

These climate-controlled spaces vicariously transport us to warmer places.

**Garfield Park Conservatory**, a 1908 landmark on Chicago's West Side, is one of the largest and most stunning in the nation. Its eight indoor display gardens span two acres, showcasing thousands of plant species from around the world. The Palm House, the largest room, features more than 70 graceful palms and other plants from warm habitats. Other highlights include the Fern Room and Desert House. In Rock Island, the Tropical Sun Garden is the centerpiece of the **Quad**

**City Botanical Center**. Growing under the atrium's 70-foot-high skylight are jasmine, orchids, bromeliads and a collection of fruit-bearing plants, including coconut, cocoa, coffee, vanilla and banana trees. A 14-foot waterfall and koi pond add to the otherworldly magic. Along the banks of the Rock River in Rockford, reminders

*Maggie Daley Park ice rink in Chicago*

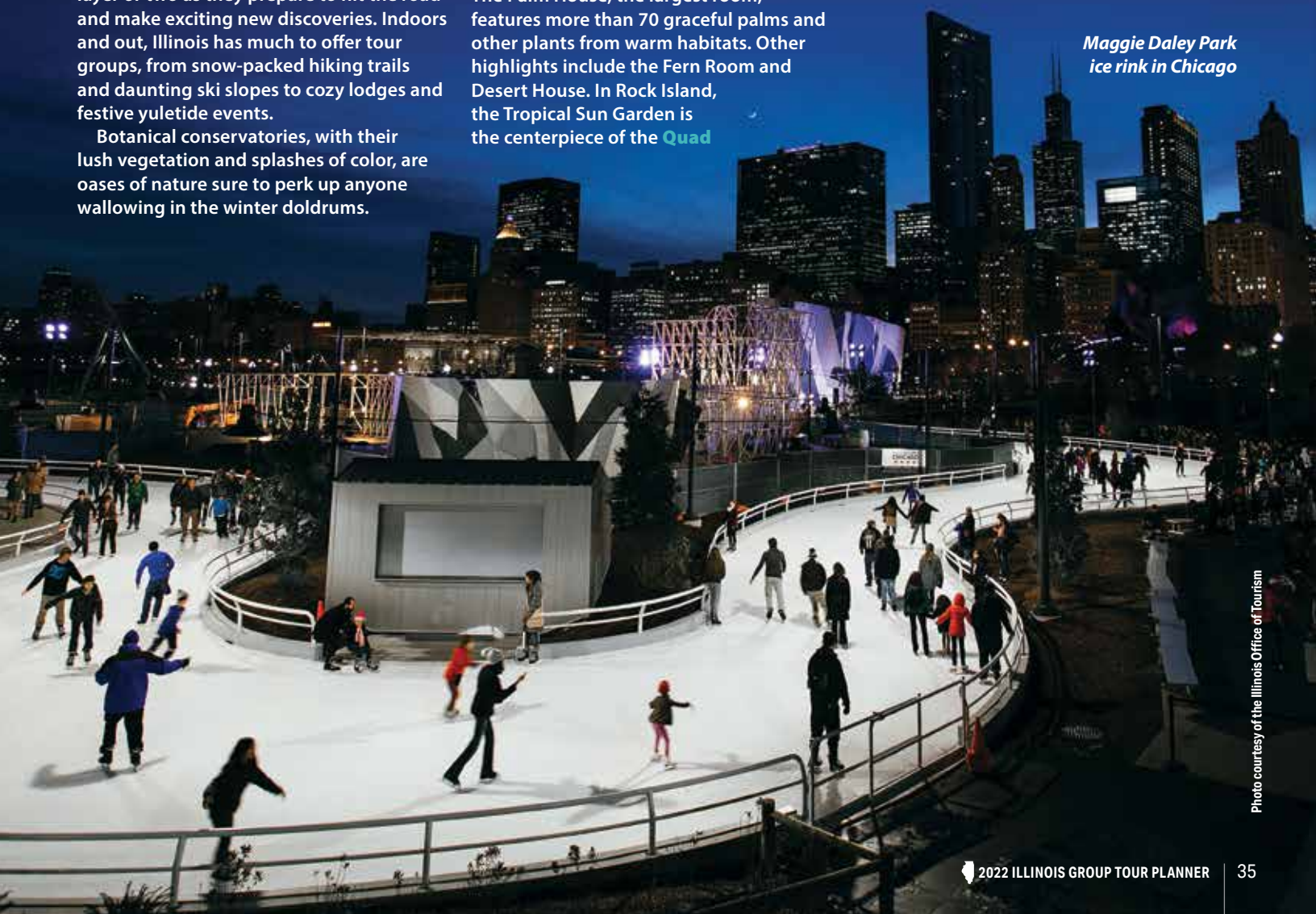


Photo courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism

of the tropics beckon visitors to **Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens**, where water features, seating areas and sculptures enhance the landscapes under glass. The glass-domed conservatory and greenhouse areas of Springfield's **Washington Park Botanical Garden** take visitors on a trip around the world, to tropical Africa, the jungles of Asia and the rainforests of South America.

Illinois resort hotels with indoor water parks provide travelers another way to pretend it's summer. Both **Great Wolf Lodge** in Gurnee and **Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Resort** (across from Starved Rock State Park) offer waterslides, hot tubs, a wave pool and lazy river, not to mention mini golf, arcade games and multiple bars and restaurants to make the cocoon complete. Among amenities at the park's **Starved Rock Lodge**: an indoor pool, sauna and whirlpool.

**Accelerate Indoor Speedway & Events** in south suburban Mokena offers go-kart racing and axe throwing year-round, plus a full arcade with the latest games and redemptive prizes. Speed demons can race F1-inspired electric Italian karts up to 50 mph.

Bald eagles, once rare in Illinois, now make the state one of their favorite winter hangouts, fueling tourism in many locations. Spotting

them along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers is a popular activity from late December to early March, with January and February the best months for eagle viewing. The wintering birds fly south from the icy climes of northern Minnesota and southern Canada in pursuit of fish and milder weather. Preferring the open waters around locks and dams, they often can be seen sitting on ice floes or perched in trees. At times the skies may be full of soaring eagles. Illinois' bald eagle population is estimated at 3,000. Only Alaska draws more of America's bird.

Along the Mississippi in the Quad Cities area, eagle watching spots include Lock and Dam No. 15 at **Schwiebert Riverfront Park** and **Arsenal Bridge** in Rock Island, **Sylvan Island** in Moline and **Illiniwek Forest Preserve** in Hampton. In Quincy, birdwatchers flock to Lock and Dam No. 21. Among hubs for eagle sightings in the Alton area of southwestern Illinois are **National Great Rivers Museum/Melvin Price Locks and Dam**, **Pere Marquette State Park** (on the Illinois River) and **Lewis & Clark Confluence Tower**, whose platforms offers panoramic views of the meeting of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. In Alton and Grafton, be sure to take a guided **Eagle Shuttle Tour** available on Saturdays in January

for optimal eagle watching enjoyment. On selected weekends, many communities, state parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas along the Mississippi Flyway, the avian equivalent of a superhighway, offer naturalist-led programs and tours focusing on the migrating birds of prey.

Farther north on the Illinois River, **Starved Rock State Park** attracts large eagle populations thanks to nearby **Plum Island Eagle Sanctuary**, which is owned by the Illinois Audubon Society. Bird enthusiasts can view eagles from atop Starved Rock or catch an eagle trolley tour (lunch included) that departs from the park's lodge for the Illinois Waterway Visitors Center.

For high-speed excitement, active groups schuss over to **Snowstar Winter Park** in Andalusia, a great place for downhill skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing and ice skating. The 28-acre playground, resting above the Mississippi River just outside the Quad Cities, offers 15 trails and a terrain park with 40+ jumps, rails and boxes for all levels. Snowstar's four ski lifts, two magic carpet tows and a tow rope make it easy getting to the top.

Also overlooking the Mississippi, Galena's **Chestnut Mountain Resort** lures skiers and snowboarders with Farside Terrain Park and 19 downhill runs that range from smooth and easy to steep and heart-pounding. One of the Midwest's top ski resorts, Chestnut Mountain features a 475-foot vertical drop, and the longest descent is 3,500 feet. Situated on 220 rolling acres, it offers more than 100 slopeside rooms and three eateries, plus an indoor pool, sauna and hot tub. Nearby, the Nordic Center at **Eagle Ridge Resort** maintains miles of groomed trails for snowshoeing (rentals available) and offers ice skating and sledding as well. For more winter sports action in northwest Illinois, there's **Snow Park at Alpine Hills** in Rockford, which offers tubing and a terrain park for snowboarders.

Even in suburban Chicago, the hills are alive with the sounds of happy skiers. **Villa Olivia** in Bartlett is a center for skiing, snowboarding and tubing, providing seven runs, a chairlift and six rope tows. Skiers and boarders also find their way to the slopes of **Four Lakes Alpine Snowsports** in Lisle.

Many Illinois state parks welcome winter visitors eager to get out and explore nature on hiking and cross country ski trails. On paths that pass sandstone bluffs and skirt the Illinois River, hikers at **Starved Rock State Park** can reach seven overlooks to view frozen waterfalls in the canyons and perhaps spot a daring ice climber. Afterwards, it's time to cozy up before the fireplace in one of the cabins or at the rustic



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1930s lodge. A few minutes away, **Matthiessen State Park** offers six miles of tree-lined trails for cross-country skiing and maintains an equipment rental kiosk on snowy weekends.

The area's flat, 61-mile **Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail**, following the route of the historic I&M Canal between Channahon and LaSalle, is ideal for cross-country trekking when the ground cover allows. It boasts Illinois' longest continuous snowmobile trail as well. **Illini State Park** in Marseilles has two miles of skiing trails. Also in this north-central part of the state, cross-country fans frequent **Buffalo Park State Park** just west of Ottawa, **Echo Bluff Park and Recreation Area** near Spring Valley and **Goose Lake Prairie State Park** near Morris.

**Rock Cut State Park** near Rockford offers a winding system of cross-country ski trails that showcase winter's beauty, with skis and snowshoes available for rent. In the southern part of the state, winter is a good time for hiking in the wilderness preserves of **Shawnee National Forest** because the weather is generally mild and explorers can pretty much have the trails all to themselves.

For those who would rather watch than play, arenas across Illinois teem with sporting activities throughout the colder months. Chicago's United Center hosts the National Hockey League's (NHL) **Chicago Blackhawks** and National Basketball Association's (NBA) **Chicago Bulls**. In the suburbs, the **Chicago Wolves** of the American Hockey League play at Allstate Arena in Rosemont, while the **Windy City Bulls** of the NBA G League, an affiliate of the Chicago Bulls, hold court at NOW Arena in Hoffman Estates. The **Rockford IceHogs**, the American Hockey League affiliate of the Chicago Blackhawks, compete at BMO Harris Bank Center in downtown Rockford. Moline's TaxSlayer Center is home to the **Quad City Storm** professional hockey team. The semi-professional **Peoria Rivermen** hockey club plays at the Peoria Civic Center.

Groups planning a Christmastime trip in Illinois will find plenty of places that make the season merry and bright. The drive-through **East Peoria Festival of Lights**, for example, is a 38-year tradition that welcomes buses as well as cars, and step-on tour guides are available to comment on the electrifying extravaganza of Folepi's Winter Wonderland. (The festival's mascot is Folepi the wooden soldier, whose name serves as an acronym for "Festival of Lights, East Peoria, Illinois.") On view from Thanksgiving weekend until New Year's, the display includes the majority of floats from the festival's kickoff Parade of Lights, plus illuminated arches, circus animals, a candy cane factory, Western town, and prehistoric-

and space-themed lands.

**Old Capitol Holiday Walks** in Springfield feature ice skating on the grounds of the Old State Capitol, touring exquisitely decorated Christmas trees in the Memorial Festival of Trees, unique downtown shopping opportunities, and multiple historic sites and attractions cloaked in holiday cheer.

In Belleville, the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, which sprawls across 200 hilltop acres overlooking the Mississippi River Valley, hosts Christmastime's **Way of Lights**, an annual crowd-pleaser since 1970. Illuminated scenes with more than one million lights tell the story of Christ's birth. Other highlights include camel, donkey and pony rides, and the visitor center has a life-size LEGO-brick Nativity scene.

The Grandpa Gang in Alton creates a winter **Christmas Wonderland** in Rock Springs Park with over four million lights shaping holiday displays like the iconic Robert Wadlow, the world's tallest man, and a scenic light tunnel. World Wide Technology Raceway in Madison gets into the holiday spirit with the annual **WonderLights Display** along its racetrack. The light show is synchronized to a musical soundtrack.

Nearly three million lights enchant yuletide revelers at **Holiday in the Park**, an annual walk-through event at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee. From Thanksgiving weekend to early January, visitors strolling the theme park's midway encounter dazzling displays of light complemented by music, stage shows, costumed characters and s'mores roasting pits. The rollercoasters are silent, but a few family rides are open. At Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, the annual **Lightscape** spectacle invites visitors to embark on a one-mile path through colorful ribbons of light, step inside a cathedral of golden light and listen to a playful choir of "singing" trees. **Light Up the Lake** at Navy Pier in Chicago is an indoor display of large light sculptures.

**Holiday Magic** at Brookfield Zoo is Chicagoland's longest-running lights festival, featuring a 41-foot-tall Christmas tree adorned with thousands of brilliant LED lights and choreographed to seasonal tunes, some 700 other Christmas trees and larger-than-life illuminated animal sculptures, including a giraffe, bison, bear and reindeer. Indoor and outdoor animal habitats such as Tropic World, Pachyderm House, Big Cats and Great Bear Wilderness are open during Holiday Magic. At Lincoln Park Zoo on Chicago's North Side, **ZooLights** abounds with photo ops.

The German-inspired **Christkindlmarket**, a seasonal fixture in downtown Chicago's Daley Plaza since 1997, is a magnet for Christmas



Photo courtesy of Choose Chicago/Ranvestal Photographic

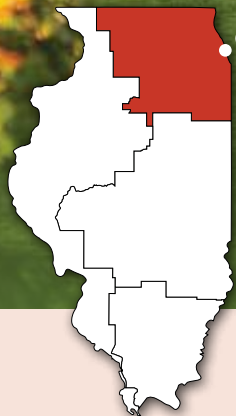
### **Christkindlmarket in Chicago**

shoppers from mid-November to Christmas Eve. Striped tents manned by vendors from Germany, Austria, Poland and other countries brim with high-quality, handcrafted imports—ornaments, wooden toys, nutcrackers, Nativity sets, jewelry, cuckoo clocks, the list goes on. Food and drink stands offer German beer and spiced wine, fresh pretzels, roasted nuts, gingerbread, apple strudel, sausages, sauerkraut and potato pancakes.

Another holiday favorite in Chicago is **Christmas Around the World**, the Museum of Science and Industry's grand exhibition of Christmas trees decorated by groups according to their ethnic traditions. Two theatrical performances in Chicago's Loop have become Christmas traditions: Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** at the Goodman Theatre and Joffrey Ballet's **The Nutcracker** at the Auditorium Theatre.

Many travelers celebrate the season big-city style by drifting in and out of fashionable shops on Chicago's **Magnificent Mile**, a glittering retail corridor on North Michigan Avenue that stretches from the Chicago River to Oak Street. Just to the east, **Navy Pier** is loaded with shops, kiosks and attractions; heated gondolas of the towering Centennial Wheel provide 360-degree views of the skyline and Lake Michigan. In Schaumburg, shoppers will find everything on their lists at **Woodfield Mall**. One of the nation's largest enclosed shopping centers, it boasts nearly 300 stores and a new dining pavilion. **IL**

Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford



CHICAGO

## Savor Gardens, Art, Shows and Fabulous Food

*Rockford, Rochelle, Dixon, Aurora, Schaumburg, Chicago, Lisle, Joliet, Kankakee*

All photos courtesy of Illinois Office of Tourism

### DAY 1

#### MORNING

Begin your excursion in Rockford with a trip to the **Anderson Japanese Gardens**, one of the top Japanese gardens in North America. This 12-acre oasis includes two gardens, a pond strolling garden and a contemporary Garden of Reflection.

#### AFTERNOON

Another popular Rockford attraction is the **Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens**, the third largest conservatory in Illinois. Nicholas features an 11,000-square-foot plant exhibition area complete with water features and seating areas. Another fine option is the **Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden** in Rockford, where your group will view hundreds of different species of trees and plants.

Enjoy lunch at the **Stockholm Inn** in Rockford, an iconic Swedish-American eatery known for delicious food and a

homey atmosphere. Groups looking to explore northern Illinois can take a 25-mile drive to the town of Rochelle, where they can shop at quaint shops like **Artists Garden**, **Bill's Trading Post** and **Cheri Picked Vintage**.

#### EVENING

Take in a show at the **Coronado Performing Arts Center**, which has played host to artists, shows, concerts and events since 1927. This iconic Rockford venue is a place where history and entertainment unite. Those craving a warm and welcoming dinner establishment can visit **Lino's** in Rockford, which serves pizza along with main courses of parmigiana, gnocchi, tortellini and a range of steaks and seafood.

### DAY 2

#### MORNING

Less than an hour from Rockford resides the city of Dixon, where groups can visit

the **Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home**. Nestled near the Rock River, this historic landmark is the place where the beloved president was shaped.

#### AFTERNOON

Groups looking for a shopping outing can proceed to Aurora, home to **Chicago Premium Outlets**. This outdoor center has more than 170 stores including Adidas, Coach, Nike, Kate Spade New York and more. With amenities including fireplaces, art installations and a reflecting pond, Chicago Premium Outlets is a popular shopping destination.

Another nearby hot spot is **Woodfield Mall** in Schaumburg. One of the largest shopping destinations in the country, Woodfield Mall houses more than 2 million square feet of shops including Armani Exchange, Aveda, Coach, H&M, Macy's and more.

#### EVENING

For dinner, stop at **Two Brothers Roundhouse** in Aurora, a full-service

## DAY 4

### MORNING

A trip south to Kankakee will take groups to a charming area where more than 50 decorative barn quilts welcome visitors to explore Kankakee County's scenic countryside. Take a guided tour of these 8-foot-by-8-foot quilt patterns at select homesteads across the area.

### AFTERNOON

Another noteworthy Kankakee stop is the **B. Harley Bradley House**, the first house designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright in his famous Prairie Style. The riverfront house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is adored by architecture fans from around the world. The **Kankakee Railroad Museum** was founded in 1999 and features large operating model train displays and railroad memorabilia housed in a restored train depot.

brewpub, restaurant and music venue. Two Brothers features one of the largest and most interesting beer gardens in the state. This historic 70,000-square-foot facility sports a roundhouse that was constructed in 1856 to serve Aurora on the Chicago & Aurora Railroad. The building is the oldest limestone roundhouse in the United States and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cap the night with a stop at the historic **Paramount Theatre** in Aurora. Opened in 1931, the theater presents Broadway shows, concerts, comedy and more in a classic setting.

## DAY 3

### MORNING

Those seeking a trip to Chicago can visit the famous **Art Institute of Chicago**. One of the world's oldest and largest art museums, the Art Institute houses a collection that spans centuries and the globe. Its permanent collection of nearly 300,000 works of art is augmented by more than 30 special exhibitions mounted yearly. For a hearty breakfast or lunch, stop at **Lou Mitchell's Restaurant** in Chicago. This legendary diner was founded in 1923 and is located near the start of U.S. Route 66 and serves delicious coffee, pancakes, omelets, burgers and homemade diner food.

### AFTERNOON

George Pullman created one of the first racially diverse industrial communities when he launched the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1867 to manufacture luxury sleeping train cars. At the **Pullman National Monument**, groups will experience the interactive exhibits at the Administration Clock Tower Building, explore the factory grounds and tour Pullman homes. While in the historic district, groups can also see Hotel Florence, Greenstone Church and visit the A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum, which celebrates the contributions of Porters and the experiences of the African American railroad worker.

Twenty-five miles west of Chicago is the city of Lisle, home to the **Morton Arboretum**, a 1,700-acre public garden

and outdoor museum. Protecting more than 100 rare and endangered tree species, the arboretum's grounds include more than 4,100 different plant species and more than 200,000 catalogued plants. Another afternoon option is a 46-mile trip south of Chicago to Joliet.

This hearty city features two riverfront casinos (**Hollywood Casino and Hotel** and **Harrah's Casino**) along with the **Joliet Area Historical Museum**. This historical museum documents the history of Joliet and surrounding Will County and features the Route 66 Welcome Center.

### EVENING

Chicago is renowned for its Broadway-style shows and has a multitude of excellent options for groups to enjoy a live performance. The **Cadillac Palace Theatre** has been entertaining audiences since 1926 while the **James M. Nederlander Theatre** (also opened in 1926) at one time presented first-run motion pictures and now lights the stage with a variety of fun theater shows.

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Circa '21 Playhouse in Rock Island

Photo courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism



# Natural Beauty, Historic Stops Beckon Groups

*Galena, Rock Island, Moline, Nauvoo, Quincy, Alton, Hartford, Collinsville*

## DAY 1

### MORNING

Begin your day with a walk down **Galena's Historic Main Street** to browse specialty stores and boutiques along curving streets that were first paved in the 1840s. You can also embark on a **Galena Trolley Tour** to pass famous buildings like the **DeSoto House Hotel** (where Abraham Lincoln delivered a speech from the balcony in 1856) and the **Dowling House** (one of the state's oldest surviving buildings and exceptional example of Galena's limestone-based architecture).

### AFTERNOON

Orient your group to local history with a visit to the **Ulysses S. Grant State Historic Site**. The famed Civil War general lived and eventually retired here before and after his presidency, and a docent can offer a thorough tour of this Italianate-style manor that retains its 1865 furnishings. Next, register for a tour and tasting at **Blaum Bros.**

**Distilling Co.** Established by brothers Mike and Matt in 2014, the business allows groups to learn about the distilling process, walk through the barrel aging room and sample small-batch whiskey, bourbon and rye.

### EVENING

Conclude your day with dinner at **Fried Green Tomatoes**, an acclaimed restaurant on Main Street that features prime-cut steaks, fresh seafood and a Wine Spectator award-winning wine list.

## DAY 2

Follow the Mississippi River downstream to the Quad Cities, an area that blossomed in the 19th century as a steamboat trade hub and includes two Illinois cities (**Rock Island** and **Moline**) that retain thriving entertainment districts and historic downtowns. Visit the **John Deere Pavilion** in Moline to learn about how a modest blacksmith began to sell handmade

shovels and developed America's premier agricultural equipment company. This glass-enclosed space houses vintage equipment, interactive tractor exhibits and previews of 21st century farming innovation.

### AFTERNOON

Spend your afternoon discovering the importance of the Mississippi River to Illinois history. Register for a tour of the **Rock Island Arsenal**, a 946-acre island that includes the **Rock Island Arsenal Museum** (which houses weapons used in the Battle of Little Bighorn), the **Colonel Davenport House** and the **Mississippi River Visitor Center**. Here you can see Lock and Dam No. 15, the largest roller dam in the world.

### EVENING

Enjoy a delicious meal and a spirited theater performance at **Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse**. Once a grand movie house, this beautiful Art Deco space offers a delicious buffet and Vegas-style seating for groups to enjoy Broadway-caliber musicals and murder mysteries.



## DAY 3

**Nauvoo**, established by Joseph Smith and his followers, was the world's original Mormon settlement until religious intolerance forced over 10,000 people to flee to Utah in 1844. However, the city retains much of its 1840s character and welcomes groups to explore its preserved buildings. Orient your group at the **Joseph Smith Historic Site**, which provides background on the Mormons' migration west before you begin a walking tour of the town. Tours can include the **Webb Brothers' Blacksmith Shop** for ironwork demonstrations and a home that belonged to famed Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints president Brigham Young.

### AFTERNOON

More architectural jewels await in the city of **Quincy**, whose historic district includes beautiful examples of Queen Anne, Gothic and Arts & Crafts architecture. The city's Greek Revival highlight is the **John Wood Mansion**, home of Quincy's founder and the 12th governor of Illinois. Visitors can walk through a preserved log cabin built in 1837 and a parsonage building housing Adams County artifacts that date back centuries.

### EVENING

The city of **Alton** welcomes groups to the **Old Bakery Beer Company**. Housed in a former bakery that dates back to the 19th century, this industrial space now offers groups a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the organic brewing process and samples of local favorites like citrus wheat and porter.

## DAY 4

### MORNING

The region east of St. Louis is where famed explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark would stop before venturing to the Pacific Ocean. The **Lewis & Clark Historic Site in Hartford** reconstructs Fort Dubois, where the Corps of Discovery made its final preparations during the

winter of 1803-1804. Exhibits replicate 1803 U.S. Army designs, and daily interpreters explain to visitors the harsh Midwestern winters the crew endured. Visitors can also climb the **Lewis & Clark Confluence Tower**, which honors the Corps of Discovery launch on May 14, 1804 and rises over 150 feet tall for a great view of the Missouri and Mississippi river confluence. Be sure to stop in at **Mississippi Mud Pottery** for handcrafted pottery created near the banks of the Mississippi River.

### AFTERNOON

Conclude your itinerary at the **Cahokia Mounds Historic Site** in **Collinsville**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that encompasses over 2,000 acres of archaeological remains and 70 burial mounds. Group tours can include the interpretive center (which houses a recreated Cahokia village), several natural trails and a walk to the top of the 100-foot Monk's Mound (the largest man-made mound north of Mexico).



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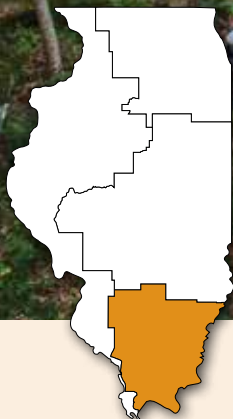
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Zipline in Shawnee National Forest



Photos courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism



# Exploring Southern Illinois: History, Heritage and Hiking

**Centralia, Carlyle, Aviston, Breese, Wamac, Nashville, Pinckneyville, Du Quoin, Makanda, Metropolis**



Shawnee National Forest abounds with hiking traffic.

## DAY 1

### MORNING

Begin your tour of Southern Illinois at the **Centralia Area Historical Society Museum** in downtown Centralia. Two floors of a former wholesale grocery warehouse brim with railroading, mining, oil industry, agricultural and Civil War artifacts along with other treasures from yesteryear that will have your tour members waxing nostalgic about the old days. Head west to Carlyle and stop at **Ten Pin Antique Mall**, where thousands of items are for sale in a repurposed bowling alley that still has the old signage, bowling lanes and scoring monitors.

### AFTERNOON

Lunch and a tour are scheduled at **Hidden Lake Winery** in Aviston, which boasts a lovely patio overlooking a

private lake. One of five wineries that compose the Carlyle Lake Wine Trail, it makes wine on the premises from Illinois-grown grapes and serves locally sourced foods. In Breese, soda pop takes center stage on a plant tour of **Excel Bottling Company**, the only independent bottler in Illinois that still uses returnable bottles. Guests can sample Frostie Root Beer and Excel's popular Ski brand, a citrus-y pop ubiquitous in Southern Illinois, and other products. The fifth-generation family business also makes craft beers, teas and fruity sparkling waters.

### EVENING

Back in the Centralia area, the group has dinner at **Jerry's Bar & Grill** in Wamac. Ideal for groups, the restaurant has spacious rooms and an extensive menu that lists everything from the breaded pork tenderloin sandwich to Mexican and Chinese favorites.

## DAY 2

### MORNING

Located between Nashville and Okawville, **Rainbow Ranch Petting Zoo** features not only traditional farm animals but also exotic critters like kangaroos, zebras and camels. Everyone likes the macaw show, and springtime visitors may get a chance to bottle-feed the baby animals. The group continues south to Pinckneyville, “The Friendly Little City,” for a visit to the **Illinois Rural Life Museum**, which boasts an outstanding collection of farming implements and other antiques displayed in two huge buildings. Catch a demonstration of the rope-making machine, learn about coal mining, see a lard kettle and sausage stuffer, and admire a farmhouse, general store, and doctor and dentist offices from way back when. Also in Pinckneyville, your group visits the 1871 **Perry County Jail Museum**, where the sheriff and his family lived in quarters above the inmates. Go inside a jail cell and see prisoner artwork still on the walls. If time allows, check out **Pinckneyville Antique Mall**.

### AFTERNOON

A good lunch choice is **St. Nicholas Brewing Company** in Du Quoin, a brewpub housed in a former hotel dating from 1879. Menu favorites include catfish with hushpuppies and fries, gourmet mac & cheese, barbecue pork and sourdough-crust pizzas. Or take the group to **Alongi’s Italian Restaurant**, a local favorite since 1933. Then it’s on to the region’s most prominent natural playground—**Shawnee National Forest**. Consisting of federally managed lands covering eight counties in the Shawnee Hills, the forest abounds with wilderness recreation areas across the breadth of the state’s southern tip. A group visit to **Giant City State Park**, nestled within Shawnee National Forest near the town of Makanda, may include a hike on the one-mile Giant City Nature Trail, known for the narrow passageways (or “streets”) threading through massive sandstone

walls. The picturesque bluffs, ridges and canyons can be viewed from the water tower observation deck near the park’s historic lodge.

### EVENING

Tonight your group feasts on a fried chicken dinner, served family-style, in the **Bald Knob Dining Room** at rustic Giant City Lodge, an impressive structure of white-oak timbers and sandstone blocks built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The 34 nearby cabins provide cozy overnight accommodations with all the amenities, including full bathroom, television and heating/air-conditioning units.

## DAY 3

### MORNING

Your group can fly high above the trees on the **Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour**, which consists of eight zip lines that zig-zag across the national forest’s bluffs and valleys in the Makanda area. The tour also includes three aerial suspension bridges and two short ground hikes. In town, there’s time to shop for art and gifts at stores like **Makanda Trading Company**.

### AFTERNOON

After a sandwich lunch at **Makanda Country Store**, enjoy a scenic drive to the eastern side of Shawnee National Forest, where more adventures await at the **Garden of the Gods**, the region’s most popular recreation site. Observation Trail, a quarter-mile stone path with interpretive panels describing the area’s geology, weaves through massive boulders affording spectacular overlooks of the pristine woodlands. Trail highlights include rock formations like Camel Rock and Devil’s Smokestack. Next, head south to the Ohio River town of Metropolis.

### EVENING

Enjoy dinner at **Bridges Dining Company** inside the riverfront **Harrahs Metropolis Casino**. Menu choices cover the gamut, from steaks and seafood to

burgers and pasta. Save room for the bread pudding with vanilla sauce or the decadent carrot cake. Before calling it a night, group members may want to try their luck at the casino’s table games, slot machines and new video poker room.

## DAY 4

### MORNING

See why Metropolis is known as the “Home of Superman” with a visit to the **Super Museum**, which contains one of the world’s largest collections of memorabilia relating to the TV, movie and comic book hero. Artifacts range from Hollywood costumes and props to lunch boxes, toys and food products bearing the Superman logo. Across the square, pose with the 15-foot-tall bronze **Superman Statue** by the Massac County Courthouse. At **Fort Massac State Park**, see a replica of a strategically situated frontier fort on the Ohio River and learn about its historical significance through a video and exhibits at the visitor center.



Randy Mink photo

Pay a visit to Metropolis, Superman’s hometown.

*Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitor Center in Bloomington*



All photos courtesy of the Illinois Office of Tourism



## Lincoln Lore, Farm Visits and Memories of Route 66

*Pontiac, Fairbury, Bloomington-Normal, Rantoul, Champaign, Arthur, Arcola, Effingham, Springfield, Jacksonville*



*Springfield is home to an amazing array of historic sites.*

### DAY 1

#### MORNING

From the Chicago area, cruise down Interstate 55 to Pontiac, a stop on old Route 66, and arrive at the free-admission **Pontiac Museum Complex**. Inside the former city hall building are the **Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame & Museum**, the nostalgic exhibit **Life in the 1940s: A Traveling Tribute to the Greatest Generation** and **Livingston County War Museum**, a treasure chest of military uniforms, photos and artifacts representing conflicts from World War I to Afghanistan. The huge Route 66 shield mural on the building's exterior makes a good photo op. If time allows, check out the free **Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum**, a shiny showroom displaying vintage Pontiac- and Oakland-brand cars.

#### AFTERNOON

Lunch is at **Edinger's Filling Station**, a restaurant themed around Pontiac's Route 66 heritage. Or take the group to the **Old Log Cabin**, a historic eatery dating back to the early days of Route 66. A short drive south leads to Fairbury, a small town big on specialty shops purveying everything from antiques to home decor. A tour of **Kilgus Dairy** shows how cows give us their rich milk. Enjoy homemade soft-serve ice cream and shop for other locally made products at the farm's Country Store. Continue southwest to Bloomington.

#### EVENING

Dinner tonight is at Bloomington's **Epiphany Farms Restaurant**, a rustic-chic eatery that offers seasonal farm-to-table cooking.

## DAY 2

### MORNING

Learn about Abraham Lincoln's connections to Bloomington-Normal at **Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitor Center** on the ground floor of downtown's Bloomington's beautiful old courthouse, which houses the **McLean County Museum of History**. Then see how a wealthy Victorian family lived during a tour of Bloomington's **David Davis Mansion**, the stately home of a lawyer who mentored Lincoln.

### AFTERNOON/EVENING

Have lunch at Bloomington's **Avanti's Italian Restaurant**, a group favorite that has been serving Italian-American food since 1971. Next, visit **Ryburn Place at Sprague's Super Service**, a gift shop in a restored Route 66 gas station in Normal.

Continue to Champaign, where group members learn about goat cheese-making, pet the goats, and sample cheeses and goat-milk gelato at **Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery**. Next, prance over to **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch** in Rantoul and get a chance to feed and be kissed by an Alaskan reindeer. The ranch also offers hayrides, a fall corn maze and pumpkin patch, and special festivities at Christmastime. Stay for a chuckwagon BBQ dinner and Western-style entertainment at the ranch's banquet facility.

## DAY 3

### MORNING

Follow I-57 south to the Amish communities around Arcola and Arthur. A step-on guide will show you the backroads traveled by Amish farm families in horse-drawn buggies. Next, there's time to shop for gifts, crafts and antiques in downtown Arthur. Tours in fall visit **The Great Pumpkin Patch** at a farm that celebrates the season with fun exhibits and displays of over 100 varieties of pumpkin, squash and gourds.

### AFTERNOON

Have lunch at an Amish home or feast on Amish-style cooking at the all-you-can-eat buffet at **Yoder's Kitchen** in Arthur, famed for its fried chicken and homemade noodles. Then hop over to **Aikman Wildlife Adventure** in Arcola for a drive-through safari experience. More than 70 species, including camels, zebras and other exotic animals, inhabit the park. Continue south on I-57 to Effingham.

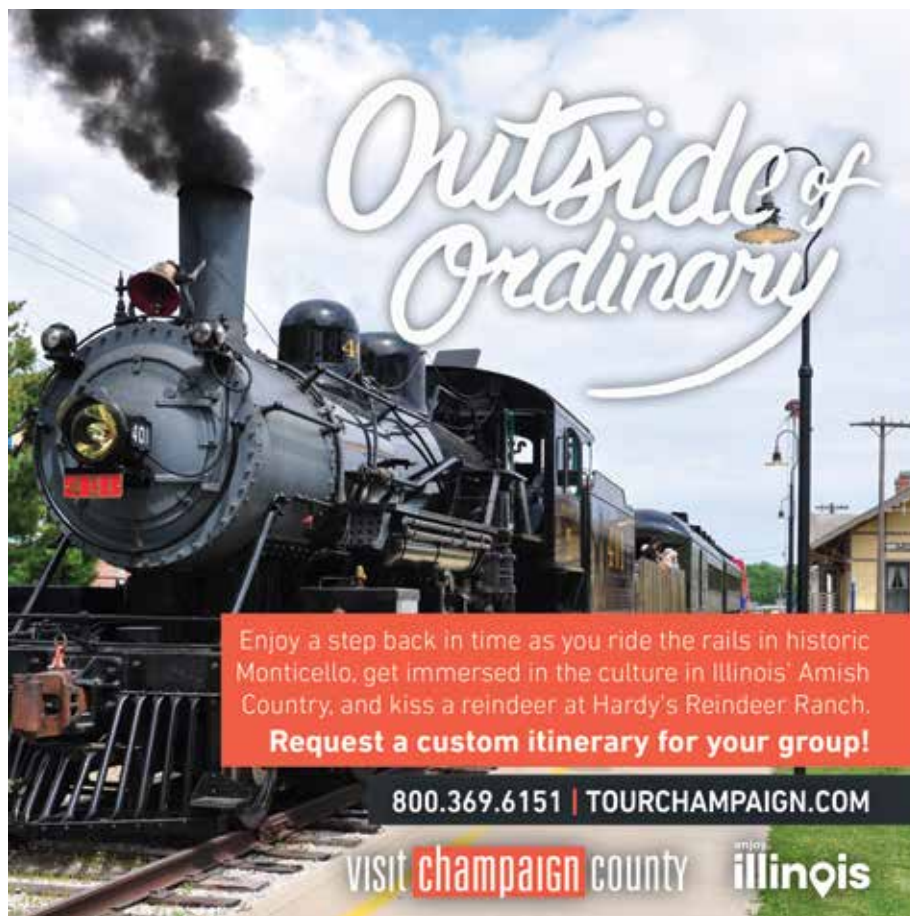
### EVENING

Dinner tonight in Effingham is at **Niemerg's Steak House or Firefly Grill**, a destination restaurant celebrated for its culinary innovations and food from its own gardens and nearby farms. Opened in 1978, Niemerg's is a locally owned, independent restaurant proud to have served more than 24 million customers with made-from-scratch meals just like their grandmother taught them.





Eat, drink and be merry at Obed and Isaac's Microbrewery and Eatery in Springfield.



## DAY 4

### MORNING

Near the intersection of Interstates 57 and 70 in Effingham, get the day off to an inspirational start at **The Cross at the Crossroads**, a towering 20-story structure of white steel whose arms span 113 feet. The visitor center shows a short video on its construction, and kiosks around the Cross offer push-button audio messages.

Then motor over to **MY Garage Museum**, which has an outstanding collection of prototype, concept and racing cars, plus rare Corvettes and Volkswagens, a restored 1910 gas station and all kinds of automotive memorabilia.

Depart Effingham for Springfield, the capital of Illinois and hometown of Abraham Lincoln.

### AFTERNOON

Lunch in Springfield is at **Motorheads Bar, Grill & Museum**, a Route 66-themed eatery filled with car-culture nostalgia. Then head to the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** with its high-tech exhibits and theater shows. Next is **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** for a ranger-led tour of the only home Lincoln ever owned.

If time allows, visit **Lincoln's Tomb** in Oak Ridge Cemetery. Those seeking to take a road trip from Springfield can visit charming Jacksonville, home to a variety of historic sites including **Beecher Hall**, which was built in 1829-30, and **General Benjamin Grierson Mansion**, the former home of the famed Civil War hero.

### EVENING

Back in Springfield, pay a visit to the legendary **Obed and Isaac's Microbrewery and Eatery**, an Illinois Made favorite, where you can dig into a horseshoe. The open-face sandwich, a delicious Springfield specialty, consists of bread covered with french fries, cheese sauce and choice of meat.

After your meal, the eatery's outdoor bocce ball court and life-size games are sure to keep travelers entertained.

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**Decatur Area  
Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
202 E. North Street  
Decatur, IL 62523-1129  
217-423-7000 or  
800-331-4479  
decaturcvb.com

**Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
201 E. Jefferson Ave.  
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217-342-5310 or 800-772-0750  
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**ILLINOISouth Tourism**  
4387 N. Illinois St., Suite 200  
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618-257-1488  
illinoisouth.org

**Jacksonville Area  
Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
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217-243-5678  
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jacksonvilleil.org

**Logan County Tourism Bureau**  
101 N. Chicago St.  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
217-732-8687  
destinationlogancountyil.com

**Shelby County Office of Tourism**  
315 E. Main Street  
Shelbyville, IL 62565  
217-774-2244 or 800-874-3529  
lakeshelbyville.com

**Springfield  
Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
109 N. 7th Street  
Springfield, IL 62701  
217-789-2360 or 800-545-7300  
visitspringfieldillinois.com

**Visit Champaign County**  
17 E. Taylor St.  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217-351-4133 or 800-369-6151  
visitchampaigncounty.org

**TRAILS TO ADVENTURE**

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carbondaletourism.org

**ILLINOISouth Tourism**  
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Swansea, IL 62226  
618-257-1488  
illinoisouth.org

**Mt. Vernon  
Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
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618-242-3151  
enjoymtvernon.com

**Southernmost  
Illinois Tourism Bureau**  
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618-833-9928 or 800-248-4373  
southernmostillinois.com

**visitSI**  
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Marion, IL 62959  
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Barbecue at the  
Southern Heritage Classic

## SAVOR THESE SOUTHERN HERITAGE FESTIVALS

Bring your group and absorb every  
aspect of culture and spirit  
the South has to offer

By Heather Dale

Like thick Spanish moss draping old oak trees, the South is saturated with rich culture, old traditions and the most bona fide comfort food in the country. A surefire way to experience all of the above is by attending one of the many heritage festivals happening in the South.

Down in Louisiana, **The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** promises two weekends of legendary musical performances by icons like the Foo Fighters, Death Cab for Cutie, The Who and Boyz n the City just to name a few. Shop authentic hand-made specialties from various artisans featuring an array of eclectic cultural souvenirs. Wander through the Congo Square African Marketplace



Photo courtesy of SMC Entertainment

and experience the energy of the music and extraordinary art and cuisine of the African diaspora. Browse other procurements at the Louisiana Marketplace where artisans handmade and sell imaginative Creole and Acadian creations. You can even watch skilled demonstrations of artistic trades like pottery spinning and metalwork at Contemporary Crafts in Heritage Square surrounded by tents emanating the honeyed sounds of gospel, jazz and blues.

In the deep south, Memphis, Tennessee holds two festivals – one in the spring and one in the fall. Founded in 1977, **Memphis in May International Festival** is the official celebration of the city with cultural events happening all month long. The festival also honors a different country each year with the aim of bringing world culture to the city of Memphis. This year, there will be exhibits highlighting Ghana’s West African heritage throughout museums, community centers, schools and galleries across the city.

Photo courtesy of SMC Entertainment



The Southern Heritage Classic always draws a crowd.

The beloved **Beale Street Music Festival** at The Fairgrounds in Liberty Park, part of Memphis in May, is jam-packed with world-renowned singers and musical performances by Lil Wayne, Toad the Wet Sprocket, The Smashing Pumpkins, Modest Mouse and many more. With barbeque being a staple in the South, Memphis in

May puts on the World Championship Barbeque Cooking Contest also located at The Fairgrounds. Watch pitmasters from around the country prepare mouthwatering barbeque and compete for the World Champion title and other prizes. Memphis in May ends with The Great American River Run 2022, a 5K, 10K and half marathon



Southern Heritage Classic

Photo courtesy of SMC Entertainment

along the Mississippi River and downtown Memphis. More than 2,300 runners from 38 states participated in the 2021 race.

Fall in Memphis has been celebrating HBCU college football, higher education and Southern heritage for more than 30 years. The **33rd Southern Heritage Classic Cultural Celebration** includes an itinerary of events with the core being the HBCU rivalry game between Jackson State and Tennessee State. Start gameday at the Classic Tailgate full of mouthwatering grub, football and fun for all ages at Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium.

Enjoy a round of golf at the luxurious Tunica Resorts in the **Memphis District Golf Classic**, the official golf tournament of the Southern Heritage Classic festival. In keeping with traditional celebrations, the Classic Parade pays tribute to the festival and deep Southern culture of Memphis. Enjoy the exciting Classic Battle of the Bands competition featuring high school show bands and heart-pounding dance routines from area students. Continuing the celebration, the Classic Fashions & Brunch is put on by the Memphis Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. Since 1982, the coalition's aim has been empowering Black women worldwide.

The Lowcountry of the South Carolina coastal plains and islands is home to the Gullah people, African American South Carolina islanders who carry on rich traditions, some of which were brought over from Africa during the slave trade. Celebrate Gullah heritage in Beaufort, South Carolina at the **Original Gullah Festival** happening at the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront. Share the robust Creole and West African history, feast on authentic Creole and Gullah cuisine and learn about Gullah culture at Lest We Forget, a free educational platform to discuss the history and customs.

Performing for over a decade, the **St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival** in coastal northeast Florida has been celebrating Celtic people in America's oldest Celtic city with Scottish and Irish music, food and hand-crafted and imported treasures. Immerse yourself in Celtic traditions with bagpipes, Celtic dance

performances, storytelling and historical presentations. Nosh on authentic Celtic fare like Irish soda bread and enjoy the entertainment of the historic St. Patrick Parade established in 1601. Originating in Scotland during the 11th century, the Highland Games at the Celtic festival provide family-friendly entertainment from kilt-wearing, weight-throwing athletes sure

to appease everyone's curiosities.

Go beyond the average adventure and plunge into the abundant Southern culture through the many heritage festivals happening this year. From show-stopping dance and musical performances to world-renowned artists and musicians, not to mention the delectable Southern cuisine, there is something for everyone to enjoy. **LGT**

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# FORTS AND BATTLEFIELDS

*of Pennsylvania*



Fort Ligonier



# SEE WHERE GREAT EXAMPLES OF HEROISM, PATRIOTISM AND PERSEVERANCE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE BIRTH OF A NATION

By Randy Mink

A state steeped in American history, Pennsylvania has been on the front lines of some of our nation's most important military campaigns. From the environs of Philadelphia to the Laurel Highlands in the mountainous western regions, many historical sites commemorate key chapters in the French and Indian, Revolutionary and Civil wars.

Here are five places that group tour organizers will want to send their troops:

**Valley Forge National Historical Park, King of Prussia.** The 1777-78 winter/spring encampment at Valley Forge was one of the most famous episodes of the American Revolution. Spread across 3,500 acres of rolling hills, woodlands and lush meadows threaded with winding roads and hiking trails, this picturesque National Park Service site tells the story of General George Washington and his men through monuments, statues, cannons, earthworks, ruins and historical buildings. No battle was fought here, but Valley Forge was a pivotal

stop on the road to victory and American independence from the British.

Some 12,000 soldiers of Washington's Continental Army, along with officers' wives and children, populated what was essentially the fourth-largest city in the Colonies at the time. Shortages of food, clothing and medical supplies plagued the troops during the harsh winter, and approximately 2,000 soldiers died of exposure and disease. But the six months they spent in training sharpened their skills and morale, producing a cohesive, more efficient fighting force capable of defeating the British in the remaining five years of the war. (The army had recently lost battles at Brandywine and Germantown, and used the winter lull to recoup. Philadelphia, 18 miles away, was occupied by the British at the time.)

The park's newly renovated visitor center shows a short film that puts guests in a patriotic mood, and new exhibits are being unveiled in 2022. In summer, 90-minute trolley tours from the visitor center feature major stops along the 10-mile driving loop. At Muhlenberg Brigade, a collection of nine reconstructed log huts, living history

Photo courtesy of Go Laurel Highlands



Photo courtesy of Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board

Valley Forge National Historical Park

programs with costumed interpreters provide glimpses into camp life.

Several stone farmhouses served as officers' homes, one being Washington's Headquarters, which at present is closed because of flood damage. Washington rented the house from a Quaker family and lived there with his wife Martha, servants and military aides. (Of the 81 historical structures on the grounds, 12 are from the encampment era.) The 60-foot-tall National Memorial Arch, built in 1917, pays tribute to the soldiers' patriotism and suffering, Washington Memorial Chapel, an Episcopal church built in 1903 to honor Washington, has a 58-bell carillon and stained-glass windows that trace the founding of our country.

**Brandywine Battlefield Park, Chadds Ford.** Involving 30,000 soldiers, the Battle of Brandywine was the largest single-day engagement of the American Revolution. It had the most combatants, claimed the most casualties and covered the largest land area of any battle in the war.

The 52-acre Brandywine Battlefield Park was the epicenter of George Washington's Continental Army encampment but is often mistaken as being the entire battlefield. Today's battlefield landscape encompasses

more than a dozen municipalities in the Philadelphia area.

In its September 11, 1777 defeat, the American side lost thousands of soldiers and retreated to Valley Forge while the British went on to occupy Philadelphia. Despite the setback, Washington told Congress, "Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits; and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained."

Step-on guides are available to board buses for touring the various sites that make up the battleground. The visitor center has a small museum and an 18-minute orientation film. Guided tours are given at reconstructed stone farmhouses where Washington and French hero Marquis de Lafayette stayed on the eve of the battle.

**Fort Necessity National Battlefield, Farmington.** In the Laurel Highlands of western Pennsylvania, southeast of Pittsburgh, this open meadow saw the July 3, 1754 battle that marked the beginning of the French and Indian War. It also was the first major event of George Washington's military career.

The young Washington, only 22 years old, had been sent by Virginia's governor

to defeat the French, who were fighting the British for control of the vast Ohio River Valley territory between the Appalachian Mountains and Mississippi River. He led the inexperienced, poorly supplied Colonial Virginia Regiment alongside British regulars from South Carolina in the unsuccessful contest against a strong force of French troops and Native Americans.

Visitors start at the National Park Service's Interpretative and Education Center, which has exhibits on both Fort Necessity and the National Road, America's first major highway built entirely with federal funds. The 20-minute orientation film *Road of Necessity* takes viewers along the path from Washington's first trip over the Alleghenies to the creation in the 1800s of the trans-Appalachian National Road, which in the 1960s was largely bypassed by Interstate 70.

A short walk from the center are a wooden stockade, entrenchments and earthworks that have been reconstructed on their original sites. Nearby is Mount Washington Tavern Museum, a stagecoach inn built along the National Road in the 1830s.

**Fort Ligonier, Ligonier.** Tales of the French and Indian War also come to life at this full-scale reconstruction of a British army fort, once home to a community of 5,000 people and the site of a key 1758 battle. Replica artillery batteries, cannons, wagons and buildings recall life on America's western frontier. Fort Ligonier is about an hour north of Fort Necessity.

The only original feature that remains from the 18th century is the floor of the powder magazine, which can be seen by descending a steep entrance. Women's roles



Fort Necessity National Battlefield



Photo courtesy of Go Laurel Highlands





Photo courtesy of Destination Gettysburg

and medical care in the British army are explained in the hospital ward.

The museum in the recently remodeled Center for History and Education holds rare George Washington artifacts, including hand-written memoirs of his days in western Pennsylvania and saddle pistols given to him by Marquis de Lafayette during the Revolutionary War. The portrait collection boasts an original of the fort's namesake, Lord Ligonier, by the leading artist of the 18th century, Sir Joshua Reynolds, as well as Rembrandt Peale's romantic portrayal of young George Washington in his Virginia Regiment uniform.

Re-enactments take place during certain weekend events. October's Fort Ligonier Days, a three-day festival held at the fort and in the quaint town of Ligonier, has been featured in the American Bus Association's Top 100 Events in America.

Guided tours, meals and even sleepovers at Fort Ligonier can be arranged for groups. Specialty tours include two that focus on how

alcoholic spirits impacted 18th century life (beer or whiskey tasting included).

**Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg.** Had it not been for the heroic feats on this southern Pennsylvania farm land the first three days of July in 1863, America would be a different country. A Union victory that marked the beginning of the end for Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army, the Battle of Gettysburg is regarded as the turning point of the Civil War. The largest battle ever fought on American soil saw more than 51,000 soldiers killed, wounded or captured. More than 165,000 men amassed at Gettysburg.

The logical place to start is the park's Museum & Visitor Center, where the film *A New Birth of Freedom*, narrated by actors Morgan Freeman, Marcia Gay Harden and Sam Waterston, is highly recommended before taking a bus tour of the grounds with a licensed battlefield guide. The 22-minute film documents the causes and consequences of the Civil War and the battle that would be fought

at Gettysburg. Twelve galleries showcase hundreds of artifacts and educate guests through short videos and interactive exhibits.

A museum highlight is Cyclorama, a magnificent circular oil painting created by French artist Paul Philippoteaux with the help of 20 other artists in 1883-1884. Measuring 377 feet in circumference—longer than a football field—and 42 feet high, the nation's largest painting is enhanced by lights and sound, immersing guests in the ferocity of Pickett's Charge, which took place on the decisive third day of the Battle of Gettysburg.

The battlefield has more than 1,300 monuments and memorials—the largest collection of outdoor sculpture in the world. There are 368 cannons and carriages, three observation towers and 29 miles of paved roadways. One memorial recalls the 272 words spoken by President Lincoln at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery four months after the battle. His eloquent, two-minute speech on November 19, 1863, is today known as the Gettysburg Address. **IGT**

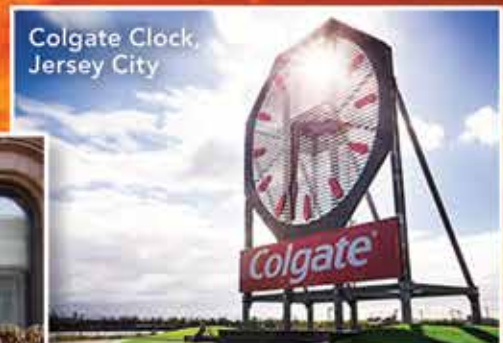
# Only in Hudson County, NJ



Statue of Liberty



Turn of the Century  
Hoboken Brownstones



Colgate Clock,  
Jersey City



Ellis Island

If you're looking for bucket-list sights, historic attractions, serene nature, cultural immersion, and a creative culinary scene, you've come to the right place. **Hudson County** offers everything from festivals and award-winning restaurants to scenic parks and ferries to the Statue of Liberty — all in one, easily navigable destination. At Liberty State Park, you can catch unparalleled views of the Manhattan skyline along the promenade, or visit the state-of-the-art and interactive Liberty Science Center. Liberty State Park also offers cruises to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, not to mention boating, canoeing, hiking, biking, and nature walks.

## STATUE OF LIBERTY

A visit to the historic Statue of Liberty can include a stop at the Statue of Liberty Museum (home to the original torch), or a climb to her crown to see the views and soak up U.S. history. Skip the NYC lines and visit the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island with a ferry ride from Jersey City instead. This hassle-free alternative includes roundtrip ferry transportation from Liberty State Park. You can easily park, buy a ticket, then head off with Statue Cruises—the only authorized official provider of tickets and tours to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island (advance tickets required).

## ELLIS ISLAND

Few destinations transport visitors back in time like Ellis Island, where 12 million immigrants once arrived and took their first steps on to American soil. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum is the island's most popular attraction. Admire historic artifacts throughout the museum's exhibits, or spend time researching your own ancestors with trained historians at the site's American Family Immigration History Center. Visit Ellis Island by booking a Statue Cruises trip to Ellis Island and the Statue, departing from Liberty State Park.

## HUDSON COUNTY WALKING TOURS

**Downtown Jersey City:** This downtown walking tour includes some of Jersey City's most popular highlights, with stops at the Colgate Clock, Paulus Hook Monument, and Barrow Mansion.

**Weehawken:** From the historic dueling ground of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr to the iconic Weehawken Water Tour, this experience takes you on an immersive stroll through Weehawken's past.

**Kearny:** History is everywhere in Kearny, and this locally curated walking tour will introduce you to a handful of renowned and important sights, including the Irish Heritage Monument and the Kearny War Memorial.

**Hoboken Firehouses:** The Mile Square City is full of historic firehouses, and this scenic walk will take you by some of the best of them, with a stop at the Fire Department Museum, too.



SCAN FOR INFO

From history and scenery to recreation and restaurants with a view, there's something for everyone at Liberty State Park—and we have the perfect three-day itinerary for you to soak it up. This itinerary to Liberty State Park and beyond is great for both groups and individuals.



## HUDSON COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE AFFAIRS | TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Rachel Magee  
rmagee@hcnj.us  
201-459-2070 ext. 6417  
Visithudson.org

Hudson County, NJ

# Take a Trip to Liberty State Park & More

## Day 1

Begin your group trip with the jewel of the Hudson County area: the **Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island**. Access is only available via Statue Cruises. Group ticket reservations are required. While Lady Liberty is, of course, the star of Liberty Island, you'll also want to stop by the island's Museum, which tells the story of the statue's journey to America and houses the original torch.

From Liberty Island, take the ferry to **Ellis Island**, where your group can explore the place where 12 million immigrants took their first steps on American soil. In the Immigration Museum, visitors can see historical artifacts, or head to the American Family Immigration History Center to search relatives with help from trained historians. It's a moving experience that truly grounds you in America's history. For the ultimate New Jersey dining experience, look no further than **Liberty House**, a scenic and posh restaurant overlooking the lower Manhattan skyline with delicious food. There are dozens of options for accommodations on your Jersey City group getaway. Try **Hyatt Regency Jersey City on the Hudson** for stunning vistas.

## Day 2

Now that you've seen two of America's top bucket-list attractions, it's time to go deeper with one of our favorite and most historic Hudson County greenspaces: **Liberty State Park**.

Grab a bite at a local favorite like **Amelia's Bistro**, located two miles from the park and a delicious brunch menu. Start your Liberty State Park day with a self-guided walk through the **Historic Central Railroad**

**of New Jersey**. This is where new immigrants, who'd just come through Ellis Island, continued on to their new homes across the U.S.

Conclude the day with a scenic and serene stroll along the one-mile **Liberty Walk Promenade**. Here, you can see the best of Hudson County's views, including sweeping vistas of the Manhattan skyline, plus the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. End your day with dinner at **Maritime Parc** or another group-friendly Jersey City favorite just beyond the park like **Porta**, a lively hangout known for delicious Neapolitan pizzas. Other local group dinner options include Mediterranean restaurant **Satis Bistro** and hip American-fare hangout **Left Bank Burger Bar**.

## Day 3

Head deep into historic Hudson County over in the Journal Square neighborhood, a destination with everything from the stunning **William J. Brennan Courthouse** to a 14-foot statue of the famed **Jackie Robinson**. While this neighborhood promises history, it's also a destination for dessert fans—with **Monteleone's Bakery**, or **Phillipine Bread House**.

See one more side of Hudson County before you head out: downtown Jersey City. This jam-packed destination boasts parks like Van Vorst Park to Hamilton Park. Don't miss Grove Street, one of the county's most happening thoroughfares, with food options like **Madame Claude Bis** (French fare), or fabulous bagels at **Wonder Bagels**. Go shopping! Hudson County doesn't disappoint when it comes to shopping, from the new **American Dream** in East Rutherford (just north) to Hudson County's many local markets, with many in Jersey City.

# Rediscover ATLANTIC CITY

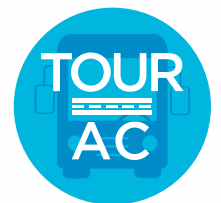


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*Meet AC received funding through a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.*



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# VIRGINIA



2022/2023 EDITION

GROUP TOUR GUIDE

Inside:

5 Top Art Museums

Agritourism  
Blossoms

Cultural Trails

## Experiencing Virginia's Capitols

## Welcome to Virginia!

On behalf of the Virginia Tourism Corporation and our statewide tourism partners, we look forward to welcoming your groups to Virginia!

We are excited to show off our new and renovated attractions such as the DEA Museum, Arlington House, Turning Point Suffragist Memorial and Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways Museum. The Archer, The Landing @ Hampton Marina, Natural Bridge Historic Hotel & Conference Center, The Liberty Trust and Hyatt Place Harrisonburg are just a few of the new or renovated hotels.

Virginia is easily accessible by major highway systems, Amtrak rail service, nine airports and soon - Metrorail service connecting Washington, D.C. and the Northern Virginia stations in between - to Washington Dulles International Airport.

Virginia offers unparalleled history, cultural and performing arts, outdoor adventures and scenic vistas, music and artesian trails, an exciting culinary scene, and craft beverages to customize an unforgettable tour experience! Our commitment to customer service, safe travel, quality tours and partners with years of experience are a few reasons why groups come back year after year.

We look forward to assisting you with tour planning. For personal assistance, contact me at [jjohnson@virginia.org](mailto:jjohnson@virginia.org) or 24/7 visit [Virginia.org/groups](http://Virginia.org/groups) for more information and resources to plan exciting group tour experiences.

Safe travels,



**Joni Johnson,**  
**Director of Domestic Sales & Marketing**  
**Virginia Tourism Corporation**



**Pleasure House Oyster Farm**



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation

**The Floyd Country Store is home to the Friday Night Jam.**



Photo courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation

**Pippin Hill Farm is Charlottesville's newest and most comprehensive boutique winery & vineyard.**

# VIRGINIA

2022/2023 EDITION

GROUP TOUR GUIDE

Virginia Museum  
of Fine Art



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For more than 90 years, Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. has been helping people transform their lives through profound personal change of mind, body and spirit.



**ON THE COVER:** A team of white horses pulls the red carriage (red sociable) past the Capitol.

Photo courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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Point of Honor



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LYNCHBURG, VA





SCAN FOR INFO

Also known as the Hill City, our view of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the James River makes LYH a unique destination for travelers seeking new adventures while being immersed in a historic downtown setting, and surrounded by natural beauty. Here are just a few of our must-see experiences in LYH, we can't wait to host you!

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## Lynchburg, Virginia

# The Ultimate LYH Experience

## Day 1

Begin your experience as you arrive in Lynchburg with lunch at the **Depot Grille** in **Historic Downtown**. This railroad-themed restaurant overlooking Riverfront Park and the James River is housed in a former freight station and a local favorite. Next, get introduced to and explore the rich history of Lynchburg and Central Virginia at the **Lynchburg Museum at the Old Courthouse**. The museum shares stories about the people and fascinating events that shaped the region through exhibits including antique toys, military items from all wars, furniture & silver made here, and much more. Sit back and relax on the motorcoach as **Lynchburg Historic Tours** guides you through the seven must-see historic districts of Lynchburg. These prosperous neighborhoods sprang up during the 19th century when tobacco tycoons, shoe production, doctors and attorneys made Lynchburg the wealthiest city in the nation for its size. After checking in to your hotel of choice for the next two nights, journey downtown for your **Lynchburg Dining Experience**, a foodie's paradise.

## Day 2

Day two begins after a nice breakfast at your hotel by visiting the home of the internationally acclaimed poet who was part of the Harlem Renaissance, the **Anne Spencer House & Garden Museum**. Anne Spencer was the only Black woman and the only Virginian included in the Norton Anthology of Modern American and British Poetry. Established in 1806, the restored **Old City Cemetery and Arboretum** is a Virginia Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic

places. Walk through the cemetery that features a Civil War section, significant African-American history, and four small museums equipped with push-button audio. Next, visit **Seaquest**, an interactive petting zoo aquarium where you can experience earth's majestic wonders while interacting with the innumerable species with which we share this planet. Enjoy lunch at **Charley's Restaurant**, which has grown into one of Lynchburg's favorite restaurants with steaks, seafood, salads and more. A short drive from the restaurant, walk the grounds and take in the secluded retreat of **Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest**, now a National Historic Landmark.

Head back to your hotel to freshen up for your evening on the town. Offering fine cuisine in an upscale industrial setting, **Shoemakers American Grille** is located in the **Cradock Terry Hotel** and treats guests to big city dining in the heart of downtown Lynchburg. Next, enjoy an evening of entertainment at **The Historic Academy of Music Theatre** before calling it a night.

## Day 3

Your final day begins after breakfast with a visit to **Point of Honor**. Discover the charm and surroundings of life in the early 1800's as you explore the house and grounds of the original owner and builder, Dr. George Cabell, whose patients included American patriot Patrick Henry. A tour of this remarkable Federal-style home, with its classic architecture and rich furnishings, echoes true grace and southern hospitality. Visit the **Lynchburg Community Market**, the third-oldest farmer's market in the country or dip in to one of the many local shops that feature local artisans and craftspersons, where you'll find special reminders of your trip to Lynchburg.

# 5 TOP VIRGINIA ART MUSEUMS

These treasure chests captivate gallery-goers in Richmond, Norfolk, Roanoke and Williamsburg

By Randy Mink

From exquisite examples of Tiffany glass and American folk art to the paintings of European masters like Rubens, Renoir and Picasso, some of the nation's premier art treasures can be found in Virginia. Treat your group to an uplifting and eye-opening experience at one or more of these five cultural powerhouses:

**Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.** One of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) holds a collection that spans 6,000 years, from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman pieces to contemporary American works. It is the country's only art museum open 365 days a year with free general admission.

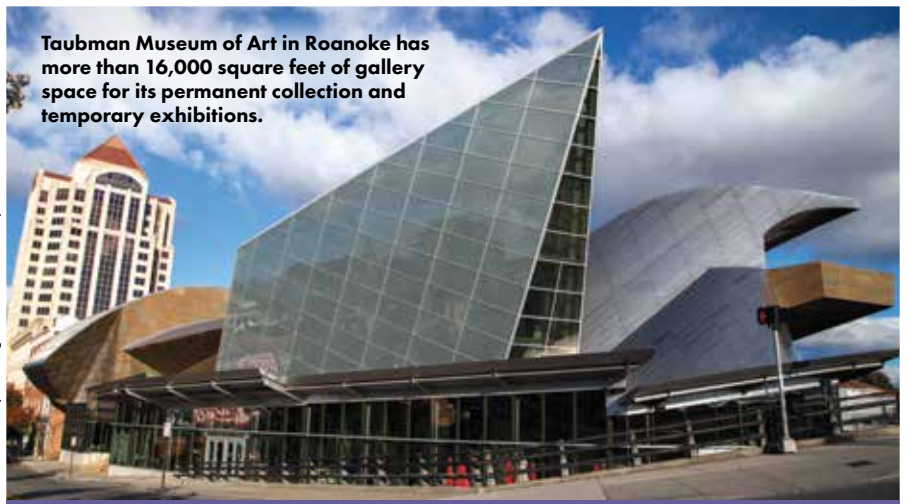
A suite of five galleries showcases the largest public collection of Russian decorative arts outside of Russia and includes an extraordinary group of five Fabergé Imperial Easter eggs created for the last two Russian tsars. Intricately decorated with precious stones and enamel, the jeweled eggs are among the museum's 200 objects attributed to the Fabergé firm. Inspired by the traditional Russian custom of giving decorated

eggs at Easter, Tsar Alexander III commissioned the first Imperial Easter egg in 1885 as a gift for his wife, Empress Maria Feodorovna.

VMFA also boasts one of the finest collections of American art and the largest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris. Many are impressed by the life-size marble statue of the

**Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke** has more than 16,000 square feet of gallery space for its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions.

Photo courtesy of Virginia Tourism Corporation



Roman emperor Caligula. Other treasures include British sporting art, English silver, French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings (Degas, Cézanne, Renoir), and renowned

collections of South Asian, African and Himalayan art. The museum also features a sculpture garden. Together with the adjacent Virginia Museum of History and Culture, VMFA anchors the

Photo courtesy of Chrysler Museum





Museum District of Richmond.

**Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and The Dewitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum, Colonial Williamsburg.** A recent 65,000-square-foot expansion has enhanced the visitor experience in a building that houses two world-class museums. Beyond the new entrance and orientation area, a grand concourse provides access to both museums, which now have more space

for displaying their vast collections.

Mrs. Rockefeller, with a keen eye for appreciating the art of the common man, began collecting American folk art in the 1920s and created a collection of some 400 pieces, which were eventually given to Colonial Williamsburg. The collection has since grown to over 4,000 pieces that date from the 18th century to the present day. On display are paintings, pottery, sculptures, musical

instruments, weathervanes and toys.

There are carved wooden figureheads from ships, carousel animals and advertising figurines that stood outside of tobacconist shops. Textile galleries showcase quilts, fashions and costumes.

The Dewitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum houses a variety of the “finer things,” including the world’s largest collection of furniture from the early South and one of the largest troves of

# VIRGINIA ART MUSEUMS

British ceramics outside of England. Guests also see more than 20 tall case clocks, plus exhibits of glassware, silver and jewelry. One of the world's best collections of Revolutionary-era weaponry includes muskets, swords and bayonets used by American, British, French and Hessian troops in the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars. The Making Music in Early America gallery features antique pianos and guitars made in England.

**Chrysler Museum, Norfolk.** One of America's most distinguished mid-sized art museums, the Chrysler holds more than 30,000 objects encompassing a 5,000-year span. The core of the collection comes from Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., an avid art collector who donated thousands of objects from his private

collection to the museum, which originally was known as the Norfolk Museum of Arts & Sciences. He was the son of the founder of the Chrysler Corporation, his wife Jean a Norfolk native.

The stately Italianate-style building on the Hague Inlet of the Elizabeth River makes a fitting repository for the treasures. Displayed in 50 galleries, diverse holdings include pieces from ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Asia and Mesoamerica; canvases from the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods; decorative arts from the 12th Century to the present; an outstanding Civil War photography collection; and modern and contemporary art.

One of the country's most comprehensive glass collections features more than 10,000 pieces,

including major works by Emile Galle, Rene Lalique and Louis Comfort Tiffany. Lamps and grand windows highlight the Tiffany collection. Artists at the state-of-the-art Perry Glass Studio, adjacent to the Chrysler, offer narrated glassmaking demonstrations.

Paintings by Dutch and Flemish masters include works by Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck, while those of 19th century French painters like Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin and Pierre Auguste Renoir also delight gallery-goers. Among other artists represented at the free-admission museum: Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol.

**Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke.** A soaring 77-foot glass atrium dominates this striking glass-and-steel structure, a cultural gem in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia. Its collection of 2,200 works ranges from 3,500-year-old Egyptian figurines to paintings and sculptures by contemporary Roanoke artists. General admission is free.

The museum, a focal point in downtown Roanoke, is best known for its permanent collection of American art from the 19th and 20th centuries. These works are shown on a rotating basis in exhibitions in the Fralin Center for American Art, the main gallery level on the second floor. Through September 24, 2023, the exhibition *American Art from 1850-1950 from the Taubman Permanent Collection* will feature paintings by masters like Norman Rockwell, Childe Hassam, Thomas Hart Benton, Thomas Eakins and John Singer Sargent. Recent past exhibitions have spotlighted jewelry worn by Hollywood celebrities in films and on the red carpet, and costumes by Academy Award-winning designer Ruth E. Carter, who has worked on movies like *Black Panther*, *Coming 2 America* and *Selma*. ■



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Inspired by the beauty of our ocean views, Virginia Beach is a place where expression thrives. Through vibrant visual arts and lively stages, these adventures take you into the heart of your own creativity.

## Virginia Beach, Virginia

# Enjoy all of the Art, History and Culture Virginia Beach Has to Offer

## Day 1: Behind the Scenes

Arrive in Virginia Beach and spend the afternoon strolling the boardwalk, enjoying the entertainment provided by the majestic Atlantic Ocean. The 28-foot wide marvel is perfect for a casual stroll, bike ride or a little shopping. Check into any of our group-friendly hotels before heading over to the **Sandler Center for the Performing Arts** for *Backstage Broadway - Behind the Scenes* for a reception and meet the cast. Then try your hand at dinner at **Town Center**. Experience a fresh approach to seafood at **McCormick & Schmick's**, or a micro-brewery tasting at **Gordon Biersch**. Save room for dessert at **Cold Stone Creamery**, or **The Royal Chocolate**.

## Day 2: Art on the Atlantic

Enjoy an old-fashioned breakfast at **Doc Taylor's**, inside a 1920s beach cottage, which was once the office of the town doctor. Explore your morning creativity with a visit to the **ViBe Creative District**, a lively hub for the area's creative talent. Visit the **Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art** to experience *The Great Create*. Regularly changing exhibits feature painting, sculpture, photography, glass and other visual media.

Hop on a boat for a dolphin cruise to see bottlenose dolphins in their natural habitat in the Atlantic. Watch the wake as these graceful creatures race to keep pace. After you have earned your sea legs, head out

for dinner at one of many oceanfront restaurants then enjoy a **Little Theatre of Virginia Beach** production. Virginia's oldest continually operating community theater is committed to providing year-round live theater.

## Day 3: History takes Flight

Enjoy a fluffy pancake breakfast at **Pocahontas Pancake House & Waffle Shop** before heading to **Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment**. Be sure to sign up for one of the amazing experiences – *Unlocking the Mystery of Your Dreams* or *Cayce Exercises*. Then, stop in for the **Surfman Chronicles** accounts of shipwrecks, mysteries and more at the **Virginia Beach Surf & Rescue Museum**, or visit the **Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum**, an 1895 beach cottage and the oldest remaining structure on the oceanfront.

For a WWII-themed lunch, head over to the **Military Aviation Museum** for *SwingTime in the Skies*. Next visit the **Mermaid Factory** to make a great Virginia Beach gift and then to the **Mermaid Winery** to toast your artistic side.

## Day 4: Live Studio Exit

Enjoy breakfast in your hotel and for your morning exercise, take a walk up the **Cape Henry Lighthouse**. On your way home, stop by **Christian Broadcasting Network** and tour their state-of-the-art studio. Join the audience for a live taping of *The 700 Club*.



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# AGRITOURISM IS BLOSSOMING ON VIRGINIA FARMS AND VINEYARDS

## Explore its one-of-a-kind agricultural initiatives

By Heather Dale

Springtime in Virginia evokes the spirit of Mother Nature waking up from her winter slumber. The landscape comes alive in the warm temperatures emanating the sweet scents of flora and fauna. Ranch hands and farmers prepare for another season of rebirth and robust agritourism. With the first songs of the robins and thrushes, roadside produce stands and farmers' markets begin popping up inviting folks to enjoy the literal fruits of their labor. Not only does community-supported agriculture offer everyone the opportunity for fresh food options, but it also provides an

experiential learning opportunity with fun and unusual participatory activities everyone will enjoy.

In the crisp Virginia fall, visit corn mazes, U-Pick pumpkin patches and cider mills where you can try your hand at farming practices. The lovers state has such diverse agriculture, anyone is sure to find an adventure that suits their curiosities from walking alpacas in the Blue Ridge Mountains to plucking oysters from the Lynnhaven River in Virginia Beach. In the beautiful foothills and countryside, and along the coastal waterways, there's an abundance of natural resources to cultivate and study.

The **Lynnhaven River** in Virginia Beach is home to the brag-worthy Lynnhaven oyster, a delicacy that was once revered by European and Russian royalty during the 17th century. Captain Chris Ludford, owner and farmer of **Pleasure House Oysters**, provides a unique coastal experience on his **Waterman Tour**, one of the many excursions he offers. You'll get to tour his farm and taste the Lynnhaven oyster at its freshest. Get right in the river and explore the farming process and the oysters' cultivation from seedling to the dinner table. Ludford nurtures their development for two years producing a true piquant delicacy.

From regional wine grapes to purple fields of pleasantly scented lavender, **White Oak Lavender Farm** and **The Purple WOLF Vineyard** in Harrisonburg is a must-visit, especially during U-Pick season, the ultimate hands-on endeavor. In mid-June when the landscape is exploding with purple hues and woody floral aromas, head out into the fields with your sheers and instructions provided by the friendly farm staff and pick your bounty. Sign up and take a class like lavender wand weaving or fresh lavender wreath making.

If you're fascinated by U-Pick



Photo courtesy of Point of View Alpaca Farm

Marvel at the breathtaking 360-degree panoramic mountain views of the ancient Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains at Point of View Alpaca Farm in Mt. Sidney.



operations, **Great Country Farms and Bluemont Vineyards** is another not-to-be-missed venue offering hands-on activities for everyone from wine enthusiasts to casual sippers. Located in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Loudoun County, Great Country Farms and its sister site, Bluemont Vineyards – a familial collaboration – offers an unparalleled example of a working farm. Since the 1970s, the Zurschmeide family has been producing abundant farm-to-table food and wine opportunities for everyone in and around the community.

Hop aboard a Great Country Farms wagon and head out into the orchards to pick fresh seasonal fruits. When you're finished, mosey across the street to Bluemont Vineyards with your riches

and learn the sangria-making process from the masters themselves. Get competitive with your group and team up to make your own sangria and decide who takes the grape.

Truly unwind on a beautiful scenic walk through the **Point of View Alpaca Farm**. Marvel at the breathtaking 360-degree panoramic mountain views of the ancient Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains. Owners Teri and Dave Grembi offer a unique twist on a peaceful stroll through nature:

“We are located on a very scenic 25-acre farm in Mt. Sidney, in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley,” the Grembis said. “We feature an amazing mile-long alpaca walk that takes our customers through pastures, past lavender fields, through the woods and typically ends on

the bank of a river.”

Agritourism is a vital part of American culture. The goal of educating while entertaining and sustaining is the trademark of what agritourism stands for. Unique interactive eco-friendly experiences link agricultural processes to tourism by bringing people to farms, ranches and other agrarian businesses. Visitors have the chance to get their hands dirty, learn something new and help keep farms running by supporting their efforts. The end result is the idea that fresh food can reach everyone's kitchen table regardless of income, all while sustaining one of the most vital operations in the country.

Cross something off your bucket list and visit Virginia's plethora of agritourism attractions. ■

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## Charlottesville & Albemarle County, Virginia

# Experience History, Food & Wine in Charlottesville & Albemarle County

## Day 1

Charlottesville and Albemarle County are home to world-renowned historic sites, including the homes of three of the country's founding fathers. Visit **Monticello**, **Thomas Jefferson's home**, and the University of Virginia, both of which are a single **UNESCO World Heritage site**. Jefferson was the third president of the United States, author of the Declaration of Independence and the founder of the University of Virginia. Hundreds of thousands of visitors tour Monticello each year and learn about Jefferson's legacy and complicated history.

**Michie Tavern** is a great spot to enjoy lunch and a tour on your way to or from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. Located just half a mile from Monticello, this historic tavern dates to 1784, giving visitors a glimpse into the past and the chance to enjoy an 18th Century, Southern dining experience. Michie Tavern's popular lunch buffet features southern fried chicken, hickory-smoked pork barbecue, mashed potatoes, black-eyed peas, buttermilk biscuits, cornbread and more. Lunch is served daily from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you save room for dessert, don't miss out on the delicious peach cobbler.

Not far from Monticello and Michie Tavern is **James Monroe's Highland**, the home of another U.S. President and Founding Father. Highland was purchased by Monroe in 1793 and home to the Monroe family for nearly 25 years. This historical site was acquired by the College of William and Mary (Monroe's alma mater) in 1974 and today they host events, offer daily tours, and have a great museum shop.

Enjoy dinner at the **Dairy Market**, a new group food destination located in the historic Monticello Dairy Building. Located in Downtown Charlottesville, not far from the University of Virginia, the space is home to a dozen food stalls of varying cuisines, a brewery, restaurant, bar, and several retail shops.

## Day 2

Your group will start the day with a walking tour of the historic Grounds of the **University of Virginia**. See and learn more about the Lawn, the Rotunda and **UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers**. This memorial honors the 4,000 to 5,000 enslaved people who lived and worked at UVA between 1817 and 1865.

**The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center** is an important place where your group can explore a permanent art exhibit, a rotating contemporary art gallery, and a robust calendar of events. These exhibitions and events highlight Charlottesville and Albemarle County's African American history and culture of the African diaspora.

The nearby **Downtown Mall** is a historic, pedestrian mall that is a great spot to enjoy lunch, shop and stroll. Many restaurants offer outdoor dining and groups will be able to choose from a variety of cuisines and price points.

A visit to the Charlottesville area isn't complete without a stop at one of the **40+ wineries on the Monticello Wine Trail**. Experts at one of our regional wine tour companies will plan a customized route suited to your group's interests and safely transport you from winery to winery.

# EXPLORE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA'S EXCITING CULTURAL TRAILS

## Groups can visit this hidden gem in the Appalachian Mountains

By Isabella Wilkes

**S**outhwestern Virginia is truly a hidden gem of the East Coast. Nestled away in the awe-inspiring Appalachian Mountains, this separation from the rest of the Commonwealth has allowed a unique culture to flourish. A region once heavily reliant on coal and tobacco economies, its residents have turned to what they call a “creative economy” as a way to sustain local artisans and re-energize these historic communities through cultural tourism.

There is no better way for your group to explore the offerings of this region than a cultural trail, and this region has two you don't want to miss. ‘Round the Mountain and The Crooked Road trails are invaluable guides to help your group navigate and explore the music, art and culture of Southwest Virginia.

### ‘ROUND THE MOUNTAIN: SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA'S ARTISAN NETWORK

‘Round the Mountain Trail is a nonprofit artisan advocacy organization established in 2006 to promote the development of communities through arts and culture. This trail seeks to connect tourists with the hundreds of artisans in the state.

**Southwest Virginia's Cultural Center**

**& Marketplace** in Abingdon, should be your first stop on the cultural trail. This expansive new facility includes a marketplace of local artisans, a visitor's center uncovering the hidden treasures of the region, a cafe serving local wines and beers and live music several nights a week. Your group will want to stop by the beautiful visitor's center that features a hand-carved wooden map of the region's 19 counties and four cities.

**The Marketplace** hosts more than 180 local artisans and has more than 5,000 pieces for sale. Most of what is sold at the Marketplace is made with traditional styling passed down through families for generations. Ann Childress makes hand-built pottery inspired by the region's natural beauty. There are multiple woodcarvers, like **Maurice VanHook** and **Kevin Forrester**, from whom you can purchase hand-carved figurines. Countless other artisans featured here spend thousands of man hours on their meticulously crafted paintings, quilts, glasswork and more.

The Appalachian region is deeply influenced by its agriculture and the Southwest abounds with family-owned farms. The **Abingdon farmer's market** is the main gathering place for the community and features more than 100

vendors selling high-quality, locally sourced produce. **David and Debbie McLeish Farm** features another surprising staple in the Southwest region: alpaca breeding. You can visit these unlikely furry friends, along with dwarf goats and miniature babydoll sheep.

‘Round the Mountain Trail also features multiple galleries. In Tazewell, you'll find the bright and airy **Lost Pearl Art Gallery**, which houses fine art, collectables and hand-crafted items to fit any budget. The **Arts Depot** in Abingdon has three galleries, seven resident artists and an event center.

### THE CROOKED ROAD: VIRGINIA'S HERITAGE MUSIC TRAIL

**The Crooked Road** is a 330-mile driving trail through Southwest Virginia that connects major music venues, historic landmarks and museums that celebrate the region's traditional music. More than 300 years of culture mixing in this region has created the unique stylings of old-time string bands, ballads, bluegrass, gospel and more.

This tour has a multitude of venues and festivals where your group can enjoy music performances any time of the year.

If your group is up for a bit of line

dancing to local bands, **Carter Family Fold** in Hiltons is a must-visit. **The Birthplace of Country Music** is where the local radio station, **WBCM Radio Bristol**, broadcasts live every day.

Here, you can also listen to the 1927 Bristol Sessions recordings, songs recorded by local artists like Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family that have shaped commercial country music today.

If you find yourself on the Crooked Road Trail in August, you won't want to miss the **Old Fiddlers Convention at Felts Park**, the world's oldest and largest gathering of fiddlers that features performances all throughout the second week of the month.

There are multiple locations to interact more deeply with the musical



Photo courtesy of Morgan Harris/Virginia Tourism Corporation

Great music plays a huge part in Southwest Virginia's cultural trails.

traditions of the area. At **Ralph Stanley Museum** in Clintwood, your group can experience American mountain music with a gorgeous view of the Appalachian Mountains with plenty of public parks to explore afterwards. The **Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Ferrum College** also has worked to document and preserve the folk heritage of the

Southwest region. Along the trail, there are 26 Wayside Exhibits.

After falling in love with the music culture of Southwest Virginia, your group might want to stop by **County Sales** in downtown Floyd, which carries the world's largest selection of bluegrass, old time and early country music recordings. ■



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# GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND ENJOY SOME ART

Virginia's college campuses are home to a variety of spectacular exhibitions

By Hailey Johnson

If you are still hungering for more culture after visiting such esteemed destinations as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Chrysler Museum of Art, Virginia has you covered.

There is a caveat though: They require going back to school (sort of).

From the museum at Hampton University to the Fralin at the University of Virginia, these art museums are all located on college campuses with each boasting collections as impressive as big-name museums.

## MAIER MUSEUM (RANDOLPH COLLEGE) • LYNCHBURG

There is an intriguing backstory about the opening of the Maier Museum at Randolph College in Lynchburg. Nearly 50 years ago, right around when the Cold War began, then-President Harry Truman, fearing a nuclear bomb war was imminent, ordered all government agencies to prepare for conflict.

One of these included the National Gallery of Art. In better times, its location was convenient, being located right at the National Mall. After careful consideration of where the country's

art could move, should it have to, a decision was made in the winter of 1951: Randolph College. This would be the site of a confidential storage facility known as Project Y for the National Gallery of Art. To hide its construction, and later, completion, the hillsides that the campus was located on, which was covered in varying-sized trees, aided in its protection.

While the NGA's artwork eventually stayed in D.C., the facility began using the front rooms of the art gallery to display exhibitions and collections during the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the Maier Museum of Art houses an outstanding collection of American art, chiefly paintings, works on paper and photographs dating from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Open to visitors year-round, the museum serves both the academic community and the general public and offers changing exhibitions and educational programs.

## HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MUSEUM • HAMPTON

A visit to the Museum at Hampton University can be sparked by two



reasons: It's the oldest African-American museum in the nation and the oldest museum in Virginia.

Founded in 1868, the museum features galleries dedicated to African-American, African, Native American, Asian and Pacific art and artifacts. The museum contains more than 9,000 objects representing cultures and people from around the world. Within its fine arts collection is the largest existing collection of works in any museum by the artists John Biggers, Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence and Samella Lewis.

## FRALIN MUSEUM OF ART (UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA) • CHARLOTTESVILLE

Up until last fall, the Fralin Museum at the University of Virginia had been



Museum at Hampton University

closed for 17 months as it was under heavy renovation.

Today though, the fabled Fralin is back and visitors can enjoy the museum's permanent collection of nearly 14,000 works including African art, American Indian art, European and American painting, photography and works on paper.

With a brand-new roof, an environmental systems overhaul and six new exhibitions, visitors can once again walk around the museum with the sounds of their shoes hitting the re-finished terra cotta floors – realizing its closure was well worth the wait.

### **RADFORD UNIVERSITY • RADFORD**

Since opening, the two art museums at Radford University have

been committed to “enhancing the understanding” of art as an enduring human endeavor. To do this, both house an intriguing combination of past, current and even future artists, amounting to over 1,200 works. Inside the Art Museum at Covington Center, selected works by celebrated sculptor Dorothy Gillespie (which the museum touts as the largest collection of the artist in the nation) can be savored.

At the Museum on Tyler, occasional guest artist exhibitions take place along with more student work. Even when not in the museums, art surrounds the campus as mosaics, sculptures and shaped marble pieces can be found among the grounds – signs the Museums' mission statements go long beyond their doors.

### **MADISON ART COLLECTION AND LISANBY MUSEUM (JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY) • HARRISONBURG**

Containing art and cultural objects from the Neolithic through the 20th century, the Madison Art Collection is located in the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University.

Although the Lisanby Museum is temporarily closed until the fall, its current online art season makes up for the wait. In the current exhibit, “Out of the Darkness,” the museum features the works of Ben Shahn and Marc Chagall – artists known for tying their Jewish heritage into their art. ■

# EXPERIENCE VIRGINIA'S THREE CAPITOLS

The story of Virginia's first legislative assembly begins in Jamestown, continues to Williamsburg and onto Richmond

By Dave Bodle

Even after enduring their ocean journey, Virginia's original settlers still felt a need to have some form of government. John Smith, who was the group's leader, headed the early Virginia Council. Eleven years later, the Virginia Company of London pushed through a series of reforms that became the "Great Charter." These instructions were sent to George Yardley, who would become governor in 1619.

Yardley was charged with selecting two males from each of the 11 settlements that had spawned as more men, women and families arrived in Virginia. They were to attend an assembly for the purpose of passing laws and bettering the colony. The 11 that became known as burgesses joined the governor and a council appointed by the Virginia Company. The governor had veto power and could dissolve the assembly at any time. (The ability to dissolve the General Assembly becomes significant 100 years later.) The meeting of the first assembly took place from July 30 through August 4, 1619. The meeting

took place in Jamestown Church, the colony's largest building at the time.

Several committees were formed and charged with reviewing the Great Charter and new laws that addressed concerns brought to the assembly by the burgesses. Any law passed by the assembly was subject to approval by the Virginia Company in England. The House of Burgesses only met a few times after 1619 and the assembly wasn't recognized by the English crown until 1627. The Virginia Company continued appointing governors and issuing instructions, but a people's representative form of government had begun. During the 1640s, the assembly evolved into a two-house form of government that continues in today's Virginia General Assembly. Other English colonies adopted the Virginia model and eventually the democratic government of the United States of America did the same.

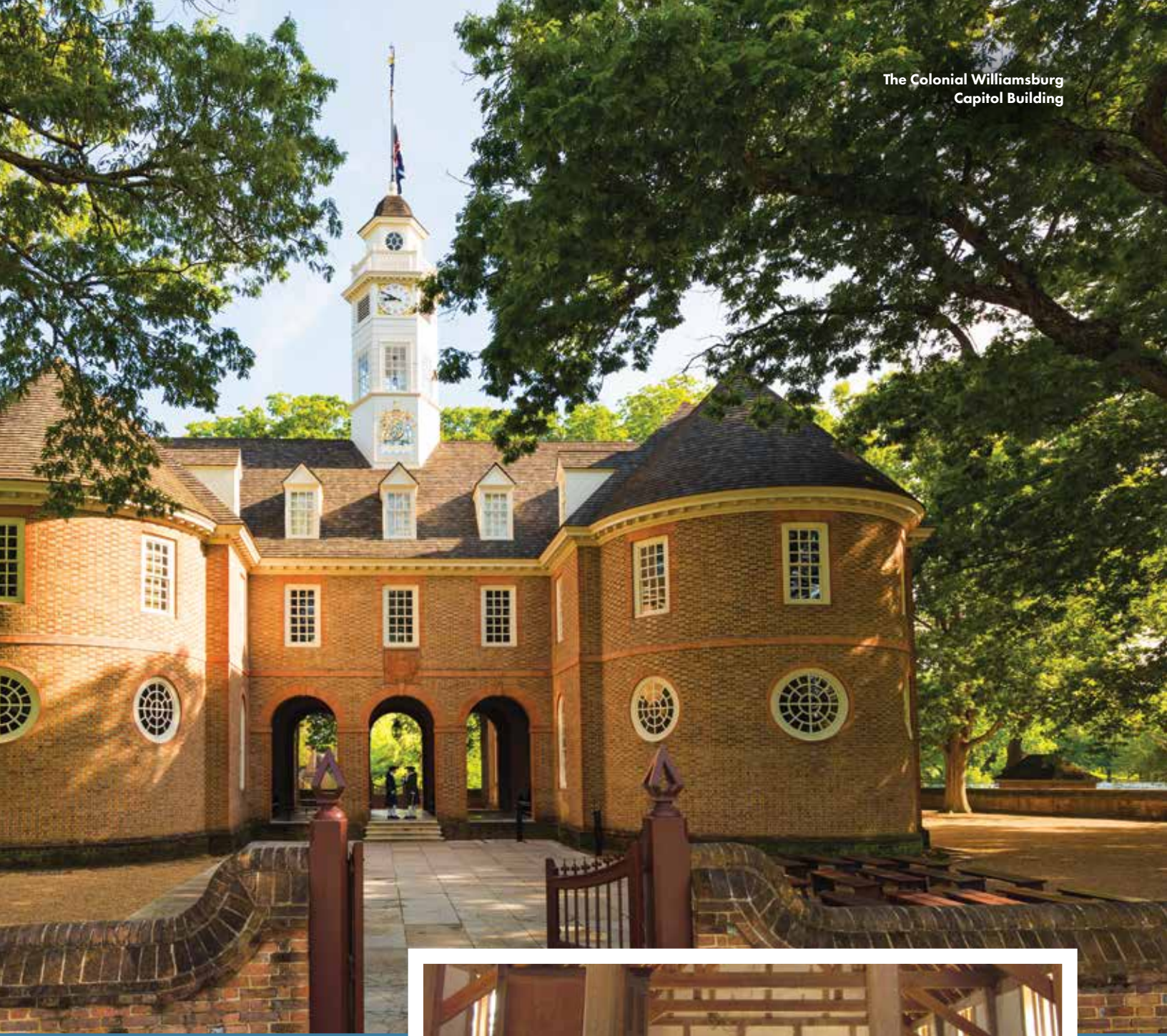
As the English settlements moved west and north, new Indian tribes were encountered. Often, English colonists were not welcome and hostilities followed. Sir William Berkeley, Virginia



Photo courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

governor, did little to protect the frontier. In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon formed an unofficial militia. They mistakenly killed some friendly Indians, which sparked retaliation and Governor Berkeley's anger. Bacon's rebellion was underway. The two armies met in Jamestown and rather than giving up, Bacon burned the city including the church and the statehouse. Hostilities, fire, brackish drinking water and a second statehouse





fire in 1693 convinced the General Assembly a move was necessary.

To learn more about Jamestown cultures from three continents, their struggles, tragedies and the shaping of a new nation, begin planning your visit at [jyfmuseums.org](http://jyfmuseums.org).

After considerable lobbying beginning as early as 1693 by students at William & Mary College, the General Assembly agreed. In 1699, Virginia's government



**The first legislative assembly in 1619 was held in Jamestown Settlement's fort church.**

Photo courtesy of Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation

# EXPERIENCING VIRGINIA'S CAPITOLS

Photo courtesy of Steven Morris/Virginia Tourism Corporation



The Capitol was designed by Thomas Jefferson and first occupied in 1788 by Virginia's General Assembly, America's oldest English-speaking legislature. During the Civil War, the Confederate Congress also met here. Free one-hour guided tours are offered daily, including some holidays. Visitors also may tour on their own. Impressive interior designs and colors from 1910 have been replicated in the Rotunda, House and Senate chambers.

followed the colonial settlement inland trend and relocated to Middle Plantation, home of the college. The new capital city was designed a mile away and named Williamsburg. Although the Governor's Palace took 16 years to build, it was designed and built to face the Wren Building on the college's campus where the General Assembly met.

Construction of the Williamsburg Capitol building in Williamsburg began in 1701 and was completed in 1705, although the legislation moved in during 1704. The Colonial Capitol was a two-story H-shaped brick structure and functioned as two buildings. Each wing hosted one of the two houses of the Virginia legislature, the Council and the House of Burgesses. Due to the history of fires in the previous capitols, Harry Cary, the contractor, did not place fireplaces in the new capitol building. However, chimneys were added for fireplaces in 1723 to keep the capitol dry. Given the history of capitol fires you probably expect another disaster. Almost 25 years later on January 30, 1747, the building burned.

It was considered by many legislators that now was the time to move the Capitol to a location that was better for trade and had access to navigation. Governor William

Gooch preferred the Capitol be rebuilt. By a 40-38 vote, the burgesses agreed. Imagine the voices that were heard in that new Capitol building.

The walls of the new Capitol heard fiery speeches and major decisions. There were Patrick Henry's powerful speech against the Stamp Act and discussion on George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights. It was men like George Washington, George Wythe, Thomas Jefferson and others whose voices played a part in revolution. Following the Boston Tea Party, Governor Dunwoody dissolved the legislature as punishment.

The Virginia voices would not be quieted and they began meeting in Raleigh Tavern. After a series of Virginia Conventions on May 15, 1776, the 5th Virginia Convention declared freedom from England. The building was last used as the Capitol on December 24, 1779 when the General assembly voted to move the Capitol to Richmond in 1780.

Colonial Williamsburg tells a compelling story of Virginia life and the Virginian Nation Builders who occupied early Williamsburg. Begin planning your tour by visiting online at [colonialwilliamsburg.com](http://colonialwilliamsburg.com).

It was in 1785 that Jefferson, then the Ambassador to France, was asked to help design the new Capitol building. He called for a classical Roman temple style. Governor Patrick Henry laid the cornerstone that same year. The Capitol was completed in 1798. Its design and construction have influenced others.

One very inspiring accent within the building is the statue of George Washington, the only one he ever posed for. It's his actual height of 6-foot-2 and he's presented as a statesman, soldier and farmer with implements that show each. Washington was 53 years old when he posed, after the American Revolution, but before his presidency. The statue was installed in 1796. Throughout the guided tour historical statuary and paintings, newly restored legislative chambers and rare exhibit objects are showcased.

Our nation's oldest legislative assembly served as the Confederate Congress from 1861-1865 and had its first multi-racial session in 1867-68. This marvelous structure is filled with history and a must see. Begin planning online at [virginiacapitol.gov](http://virginiacapitol.gov).

***Extend your visit for more Virginia and United States history and fun***

## HAMPTON

Make time for the **Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center**. The fort served as a refuge for contraband during the Civil War. Add the **Casemate Museum** to your itinerary. It's at the fort and continues the fascinating story of this attraction. Standing near the entrance to Hampton University, the Emancipation Oak was the site of the first Southern reading of president Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Bring history forward at the **Virginia Air & Space Science Center** and **3D IMAX Theater**. The new Space

Explorer Gallery joins amazing exhibits, films and aircraft and is a must see. Allow time for a ride on the vintage carousel just outside the Center's front door. [VisitHampton.com](http://VisitHampton.com)

## NEWPORT NEWS

There's much to explore in Newport News, and **The Mariners' Museum and Park** is a good place to begin. A 3D movie in the Explorers Theater followed by the USS Monitor Center, home of the Civil War ironclad's gun turret and more, gets you going. Allow time for the miniature ships displays and the International Small Craft Center and more. **Virginia Living Museum** is home to a great animal attraction. Discover wonders from the Chesapeake Bay and a cypress swamp to a limestone cave

and the Appalachian Mountains. Explore the wonders of space in the Abbitt Planetarium. [Newport-news.org](http://Newport-news.org)

## WILLIAMSBURG

Jamestown Settlement and Colonial Williamsburg played a significant part in our history, but there's one place where our freedom was cemented. The **American Revolution Museum at Yorktown** blends vibrant exhibits, films and outdoor living history to tell the story of the original colonies and the Constitution. There's still plenty to do in Williamsburg from a wealth of attractions and shopping to outdoor activities and restaurants. Remember to find time for the wonderful art museums within Colonial Williamsburg. [Visitwilliamsburg.com](http://Visitwilliamsburg.com)

## RICHMOND

The Virginia Capitol is certainly an awesome reason to visit Richmond. There are plenty of additional options that will fit any itinerary. **American Civil War Museum** explores the war from all its complex perspectives – Union and Confederate, enslaved and free African-Americans, soldiers and civilians. The ACWM's new theater and film will open May 2022. There's much to see in the gardens and the architectural splendor of **Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Agecroft Hall, The Valentine and Maymont Mansion and Estate. Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia** is a wonderful stop. You can learn more about the **Virginia Museum of Fine Art** in this guide. Start planning at [Visitrichmondva.com](http://Visitrichmondva.com) ■

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# WELLNESS AND ENLIGHTENMENT IN VIRGINIA BEACH

## Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. helps people transform their lives through profound personal change of mind, body and spirit

By Dave Bodle

For more than 90 years, Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. has been helping people transform their lives through profound personal change of mind, body and spirit. Cayce was known as the "father of holistic medicine" and the most documented psychic of the 20th century.

Born 1877 on a farm in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, Cayce's psychic abilities appeared in his childhood with an uncanny ability to memorize pages of books by sleeping on them. Later in life, Cayce had the ability to place himself in a state of relaxation and meditation with his mind in contact with all time and space. In this state of a super-conscious mind, he was able to answer broad and specific questions. The responses to these questions became known as "readings."

You're likely surprised that Cayce was a regular with his church attendance and a Sunday school teacher. In his youth, he vowed to read the Bible every year of his life. He passed in 1945 having accomplished that promise made to himself. Once asked how to become a psychic, Cayce advised to become more spiritual.

Cayce's first readings began in Dayton, Ohio during the late 1920s. By 1931, he

had told himself to move to the sea. He chose Virginia Beach and founded A.R.E. The greater part of the early readings dealt with holistic health and the treatment of illness. One hundred years later, individuals continue to receive relief from ailments through the information provided in those readings. A favorite is his reading that a virus cannot live in an alkaline environment. Orange juice is the key to an effective alkaline acidic balance.

While in his self-induced sleep, Cayce did not seem to focus only on the body and physical pains. In their entirety, the readings show 10,000 wide-ranging topics with vast subject matter. When narrowed down, the readings seem to fall into five categories, 1. Health Related Information, 2. Philosophy and Reincarnation, 3. Dreams and Dream Interpretation, 4. ESP and Psychic Phenomena, 5. Spiritual Growth, Meditation and Prayer.

Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. is a nonprofit supported through its membership. In an excerpt from a 1938 Edgar Cayce letter, "The A.R.E. is not a creed, cult or doctrine. It is merely a name used to designate a group of people joined together with a certain common attitude



toward the field of religion, philosophy, science and life. Its central drive is the attempt to apply all knowledge to the problem of better living."

### VISITING THE A.R.E. HEADQUARTERS CAMPUS IN VIRGINIA BEACH

Every year, the A.R.E. Headquarters campus attracts more than 100,000 individuals from around the world, including vacationers and group tours. Built in 1975, the Visitor Center houses the library, meditation room, bookstore and gift shop. The A.R.E. Health Center & Spa is located in Cayce's historic hospital building, along with Cayce/Miller Café featuring Graze Kitchen and Catering.

The library is the jewel of Edgar Cayce's legacy and stands as a memorial to his life and work. More than 14,000 readings are on display. The famous



Meditation room

couch where Cayce self-induced his sleep is on display along with the desk his secretary, Gladys Davis, used to transcribe the readings. The original reading was given to the person requesting the reading, while a carbon copy was preserved.

The library also contains 80,000 volumes specializing in the fields of metaphysics, parapsychology, comparative religious studies, holistic health, ancient civilizations and foreign language editions of Edgar Cayce books. Many of the books in the collection are difficult to find elsewhere.

On the third floor of the Visitor Center is the Meditation Room, accessible by elevator and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Meditation was an important part of the Cayce concept. The diverse artwork embraces all of the world's religions. The stained-glass

windows were donated by Fredrica Fields. She was given a reading as a wedding gift, but did not open it for 45 years. Impressed by the reading that she would become involved in stained prisms and glass, she chose to make the donation. By this point in her life she was a famous and accomplished stained-glass artist. The Meditation Room is available for use at any time the building is open. Visitors are welcome to join a weekday noon-time meditation.

The A.R.E. Bookstore & Gift Shop provides a variety of books and products for those interested in Edgar Cayce's readings. Among the offerings are Cayce healthcare products, unique jewelry, gemstones, candles and incense and much more. The Harris Prayer and Meditation Garden located on the side of the Visitor Center features a wooden stairway leading to



Aerial view of A.R.E. campus



Library

a peaceful garden with stone walkways, a waterfall and relaxing benches.

The A.R.E. Health Center & Spa has a fascinating history. Opening in 1929, the historic landmark originally named "The Cayce Hospital for Research and Enlightenment" was Cayce's dream to help others with the holistic health information from his readings. Suffering through the Great Depression the hospital was eventually lost. The building was repurchased by A.R.E. and opened in 1967 and renovated in 2014.

Today, the A.R.E. Health Center & Spa continues to focus on holistic healing through massage therapy,

bodywork, hydrotherapies, acupuncture and chiropractic care. All are found in the Edgar Cayce readings supporting the body's innate healing abilities. Spa Packages and Rates can be found online [atedgarcayce.org/are-health-center-spa/spa](http://atedgarcayce.org/are-health-center-spa/spa). Or call to book an appointment at 757-457-7202.

A.R.E.'s Cayce/Miller Café features Graze Kitchen & Catering under the proprietorship of Chef Shelley Kilby, winner of *Food & Wine Magazine's*, "Best New Chefs in America" 2003. Seasonal menus prepared with fresh, locally sourced ingredients are Chef Kilby's passion. The Café is located on the main

floor of the Cayce Hospital Building sharing space with the lobby of the A.R.E. Health Center & Spa.

Groups are welcome on the campus. Regular and pre-arranged tours of the Visitor Center and films are available at no cost. Telephone 800-333-4499 or begin planning online at [edgarcayce.org](http://edgarcayce.org). ■

# THIRD VIRGINIA LOCATION DESIGNATED AS A CIVIL RIGHTS SITE

## Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History has received designation

By Dave Bodle

The sites are places where activists challenged segregation and inequality in the 1950s and 1960s to advance social justice. Danville is one of three locations in Virginia. The other sites are in Richmond and Farmville. The U.S. Civil Rights Trail encompasses more than 120 sites, primarily in the South.

"Danville played a critical role in the civil rights movement, so we are extremely proud to be added to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail," said Elsabe Dixon, the museum's executive director. "Inclusion and diversity are cornerstones of the Danville museum's experience. We invite everyone to visit the museum and discover the many remarkable stories."

In August 2019, the museum installed the first long-term civil rights timeline available to the public. The Movement:

Danville's Civil Rights is an exhibition that details the events that took place in Danville during the 1960s, the work done by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1958 to establish support for Martin Luther King's visits to Danville. It also outlines the role of Sutherlin Mansion and then the Danville Public Library, a "whites only" library in 1960.

The museum also features the Camilia Williams exhibition, which highlights the relationship this New York City Opera diva had with her hometown, Danville.

Mayor Alonzo Jones in a letter of support for the application, stated, "Danville has made great strides and I am excited about our future, but we must not forget that our city's heritage is also rich with struggle – a struggle that I believe is significant to the civil rights movement."

U.S. Civil Rights Trail sites must: Be associated with events that made a significant contribution to the civil rights movement during its height; 1950s and 1960s. Or, has been associated with the life of a person(s) who was significant in the civil rights movement. Or, embody the distinctive characteristics of a tourism site, including but not limited to being open to the public, or public view as a tourist attraction, providing guided or self-guided experiential activities, or displaying a series of commemorative markers that communicate context for the history of the civil rights movement. The museum applied summer of 2021 for inclusion as a site on the trail.

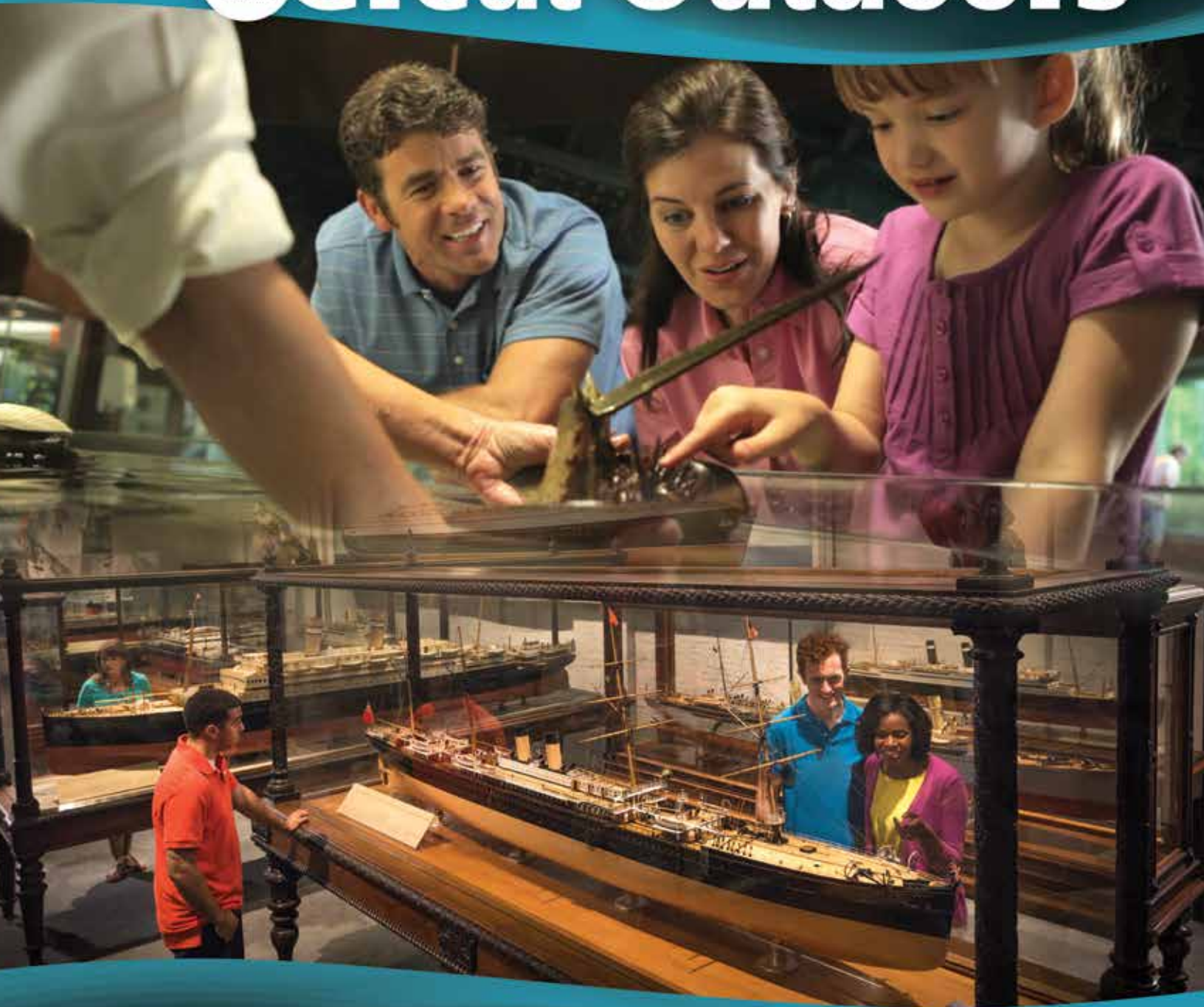
For more information about the museum and its exhibits, visit online at [DanvilleMuseum.org](http://DanvilleMuseum.org).

Photo courtesy of Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History



Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History offers three fine art galleries, historic period art, Civil War exhibits, as well as the Sutherlin Mansion.

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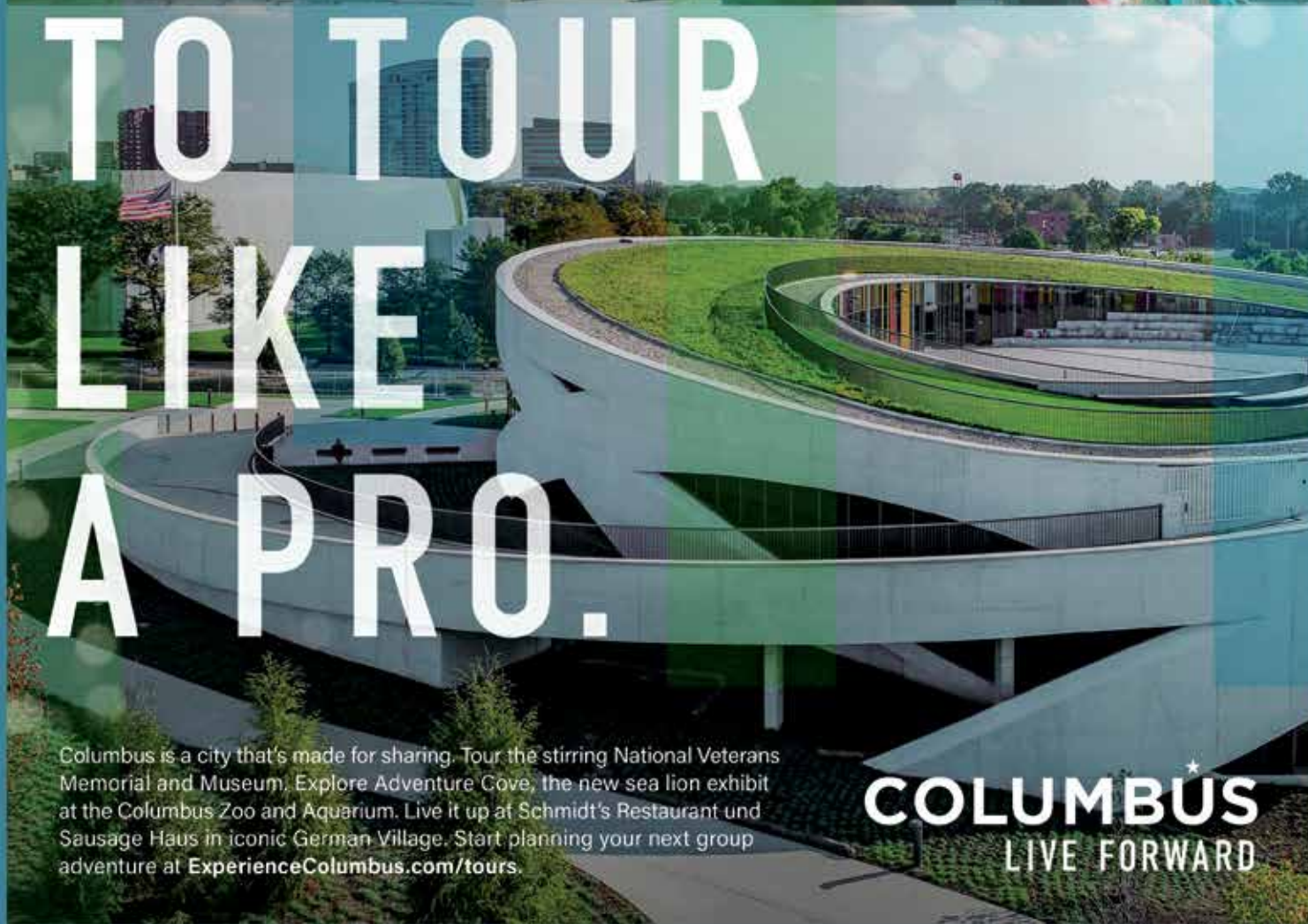
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Photo courtesy of Angel Island Immigration Museum

## Discover California's IMMIGRATION HISTORY

Explore the West Coast's multicultural roots through vibrant art installations, oral histories and educational exhibits at these cultural museums

By Heather Dale

California is home to the largest population of immigrants in the United States, and their history and heritage are part of the Golden State's eclectic story. Discover these stories at some of the top cultural museums in the U.S.

Considered the "Ellis Island of the West," **Angel Island Immigration Station** in San Francisco has a storied past from a time of racial exclusion and war. According to executive director Ed Tepporn, "These stories are documented in Angel Island detainees' experiences and stories of lengthy interrogations, invasive medical screenings, and months-long detentions.

Over a million persons from 80 different countries – including China, Japan, Russia, India, Germany, Korea, and Mexico – passed through the US Immigration Station at Angel Island during the period it was open from 1910 to 1940. Today, the site is designated as a California Historical Landmark and a National Historic Landmark."

There are two museums and over 14 acres to explore on Angel Island. At the **Detention Barracks Museum**, read more than 200 poems carved into the old Barracks walls by immigrants languishing in confinement, the nightmare to their American Dream. The poems miraculously survived a fire in 1940

that destroyed the building and today serve as a reminder of the hardships and despair immigrants endured.

Housed in the former immigrant hospital, the second site, **Angel Island Immigration Museum**, or AIIM, provides insight into the complexity of the immigration process and shares true accounts from those who lived it. Here, you can learn about immigration policies, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and social injustices immigrants faced once they arrived in America.

Located in the oldest and last surviving structure from the original Los Angeles Chinatown, the **Chinese American Museum**

shares more than 150 years of Chinese immigration history. Many generous Chinese American families have donated precious heirlooms which the museum proudly displays for visitors. Vintage artifacts such as antique toys, furniture, clothing and other treasured possessions give these stories a universally fundamental human aspect.

From time-yellowed photographs to wrinkled correspondences between loved ones, discover their experiences through two exhibitions that highlight Chinese immigration in California. **Origins: The Birth and Rise of Chinese American Communities** in Los Angeles is a permanent exhibit celebrating the ascent of Chinese American communities in and around Los Angeles. The Journeys exhibit also emphasizes the history of Chinese immigrant settlement communities in Los Angeles in permanent annals exploring four discernable periods defined by immigration events and discriminatory laws. Read brief personal recollections from Chinese immigrants about the adversities they overcame and how their heritage became part of Los Angeles' cosmopolitan identity.

Also located in Los Angeles, **La Plaza De Cultura Y Artes** prides itself as "an institution of stories." This museum shares with its visitors the artful Mexican, Latina/Latino and Chicana/Chicano cultures and their haunting stories of immigration to the United States.

Study Mexican artist Alfredo "LIBRE" Gutierrez's poignant sculpture recognizing the hardships Mexican immigrants faced during their grueling journey to El Norte. To get a personal portrayal of life as an immigrant in California, visit the permanent exhibit, **LA Starts Here!**, and consider vintage artifacts, photographs and oral histories from Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Starting in the pre-colonial era through the present day, this exhibit compels visitors to deeply reflect on and appreciate how California's multicultural cloth was woven from many different ethnic threads.

At the **Japanese American National Museum** in Los Angeles, step back in time at the Common Ground exhibit. Stand inside Heart Mountain Barracks, an authentic American concentration camp preserved from Wyoming and envision the

incomprehensible living conditions suffered by Japanese compatriots.

While there, visit Collections, a permanent exhibit displaying more than 150,000 artifacts like letters telling first-person accounts of life in American concentration camps, clothing, photos, art and everyday effects. The showpiece chronicles the history of Japanese Americans from the late 19th century through the first-generation pioneers and into the WWII Japanese incarceration and post-war relocation period.

During 1963 in San Francisco, the **Chinese Historical Society of America** was a solo voice for Chinese living in the U.S. Learn how the Chinese culture enriched communities in California with their sacred heritage and ingrained customs. The museum shares contributions of Chinese culture through art exhibitions, educational programs and publications in an inspirational learning environment.

In their permanent and virtual exhibit, the Chinese American Exclusion/Inclusion installment identifies the importance of Chinese culture in America. Learn about the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and what Chinese immigrants suffered in their fight for the American Dream.

Witness life as a Chinese American in San Francisco native James Leong's historical mural, **One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in America**. With a paintbrush and deep devotion to his Chinese heritage, Leong tells a story of hard work

and daily life teeming with distinguishing traditions, abundance of family, wartime and heartbreaking sacrifice.

Once your minds and souls are satiated, fill your bellies with the taste of California at these delectable ethnic restaurants:

- **Hayato**, a two-Michelin-star restaurant in Los Angeles, masters delicate and flavorful Japanese cuisine served in handcrafted ceramics imported from Japan. Chef-owner Brandon Hayato Go inspires foodies with his years of culinary training in Japan with cultural creations like snow crab claw sunomono and datemaki tamago.
- Hailing from Mexico City, **LA Cha Cha Chá** is a flora-filled, elegant rooftop setting in the Arts District with expansive views of downtown Los Angeles serving up elevated Mexican cuisine. From thick homemade tortilla chips and fresh guacamole to grilled mushroom tacos, the taste of Mexico is in every bite.
- Experience an amalgamation of ethnic flavors at **Orsa & Winston**. In downtown Los Angeles, Michelin-star chef Josef Centeno cooks up enticing Japanese-meets-Italian dishes sure to dazzle the palate. A genuinely unique food-as-art experience, taste the pairings of Japanese and Italian fare plated with decorative artistry. **LGT**



Angel Island Immigration Museum Shadows exhibit



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