

18 Best Things To Do in Minneapolis - St Paul

Updated Sep. 24, 2024, [Rachael Hood, Senior Editor](#)

[18 Best Things to Do in Minneapolis - St. Paul | U.S. News Travel](#)

Chain of Lakes Regional Park (free)

No trip to the Land of 10,000 Lakes is complete without a stroll around some of the metro area's most popular. Each of the five bodies of water that encompass the Chain of Lakes byway district has something different to offer: Lake Harriet features live music during the summer, not to mention a bird sanctuary, rose gardens and two family-friendly beaches, while Bde Maka Ska (formerly Lake Calhoun) draws a more active crowd with plenty of boat and bike rentals and paths for jogging and biking. Though not as popular, the Lake of the Isles, Cedar Lake and Brownie Lake are great backdrops for a picnic or a stroll.

[Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park - Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board](#)

Minneapolis Institute of Art (free)

Sheltering more than 90,000 works of art that span more than 5,000 years, the Minneapolis Institute of Art is the place to go if you're an art aficionado. Whether you're interested in ancient Egyptian artifacts or European masterpieces by artists such as Titian and Monet, this museum has what you need to get your fix. Recent visitors attested the museum is well-suited for all ages, thanks to the kids scavenger hunt offered by the museum.

[Minneapolis Institute of Art](#)

Minnehaha Regional Park (free)

Sprawling along the banks of the Mississippi River, Minnehaha Park offers respite from the fast-paced atmosphere of Minneapolis. Situated about 6 miles southeast of central Minneapolis, the 167-acre park is a popular spot all year round. And the park's renowned 53-foot Minnehaha Falls – made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Song of Hiawatha" – have played an important role in the city's history, from serving as a treasured site among Native American tribes to powering a mill during the latter half of the 19th century.

[Minnehaha Regional Park - Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board](#)

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (free)

This is the ideal place to enjoy an outdoor stroll to see artwork outside with the Minneapolis skyline providing a picturesque backdrop. Be sure to grab a photo of the iconic Spoonbridge and Cherry sculpture. Though the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is part of the [Walker Art Center](#), the 11-acre outdoor exhibit serves as a beloved attraction in itself.

[Minneapolis Sculpture Garden | Walker Art Center](#)

Walker Art Center (paid admission)

Even if you're not incredibly passionate about art, a spin through the Walker Art Center is worth a few hours. It's famous for its collection of modern and contemporary art comprising paintings, sculptures and photographs from both American and European artists.

[Walker Art Center | Contemporary Art Museum | Minneapolis](#)

Mall of America (free)

Easy access from Graduate by Hilton using light rail. If you're facing a rainy day or simply can't bear the weight of your wallet, the largest shopping mall in the country is a welcome distraction. With more than 500 stores (and 5.6 million square feet of gross building area), this is the place to shop till you drop. If you're not in the mood to shop, the Mall of America is also home to several family-friendly attractions, including the Nickelodeon Universe amusement park – complete with more than 25 different rides and attractions – and the SEA LIFE Minnesota Aquarium.

[Home | Mall of America®](#)

Guthrie Theater (paid admission)

While at the theater, be sure to venture out on "The Endless Bridge" – a cantilever platform suspended 55 feet above the parkway with stunning views of the river and Mill City area. Named for founder Sir Tyrone Guthrie, the downtown theater is one of the nation's most renowned and one of the city's most beloved treasures. Opening in 1963 with a production of "Hamlet". Aside from its three individual performance spaces, the theater also boasts a full-service restaurant, two casual eateries and some of the best views of Minneapolis from the banks of the Mississippi River.

[Homepage | Guthrie Theater](#)

Stone Arch Bridge (free)

The Stone Arch Bridge is a must-see for any architecture buff. This 2,100-foot granite and limestone bridge (featuring a total of 23 arches) was constructed in 1883 and was vital to the city's development by increasing movement of people and goods into and out of Minneapolis. Designated a Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1971, it is the only stone arch bridge to have ever traversed the Mississippi River.

[Stone Arch Bridge - Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board](#)

Cathedral of Saint Paul (free)

Explore the beautiful interiors, but be sure to take in the view of downtown St. Paul from the stairs of this iconic building. Then go for a stroll along Summit Avenue to see Victorian mansions and

historic sights. Located at the highest point of St. Paul and west of the city's main downtown area, the Cathedral of Saint Paul is a historical site dating back to 1915. The impressive Renaissance-style architecture is enhanced by marble columns and stained-glass windows. The exterior of the building is made of Minnesota Rockville granite.

[Cathedral of Saint Paul - Saint Paul, MN](#)

Weisman Art Museum (free)

Designed by avant-garde architect Frank Gehry, the Weisman Art Museum is the place to go for a glimpse at some of America's most renowned contemporary art. Here, you'll find pieces by such famed artists as Georgia O'Keeffe and Roy Lichtenstein, not to mention an impressive collection of ceramics and Korean furniture. This museum also hosts notable touring exhibits.

[WAM home | Weisman Art Museum](#)

Minnesota Zoo (paid admission)

Situated about 30 minutes south of downtown Minneapolis in the suburb of Apple Valley, this 485-acre complex shelters an impressive menagerie of nearly 5,000 animals – from camels to flamingos – as well as an Imax theater.

[Minnesota Zoo Home - Minnesota Zoo](#)

Minneapolis Skyway System (free)

If you're taking a trip to Minneapolis, chances are you will find yourself trekking through the Skyway System at some point during your vacation. For locals, this 9.5-mile system of elevated pathways covering 80 city blocks of downtown Minneapolis is simply a part of the daily commute. But for visitors, it can be considered an attraction in itself. In fact, the skyway is the largest contiguous network of enclosed, second-level bridges on Earth, and some sections date back to the 1960s.

[Minneapolis Skyway Guide | Meet Minneapolis | Meet Minneapolis](#)

Historic Fort Snelling (paid admission)

Established in the early 19th century as a frontier outpost, Fort Snelling is the oldest structure in Minnesota. Its perch over the converging point of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers allowed it to successfully control trade routes in the Upper Mississippi Valley. Today, Fort Snelling acts as a living history museum, with costumed tour guides offering ample information on its past. There are also exhibits detailing the site's history within the visitor center and "activity centers" scattered across the site that help visitors learn more about the Dakota homeland, immigration, soldiers and more. During the summer, the fort hosts numerous history-themed events, including demonstrations, competitions and youth programs.

[Historic Fort Snelling | Minnesota Historical Society](#)

Mill City Museum (paid admission)

Situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River and housed in what was once the largest flour mill in the world, the museum recreates an authentic mill experience with equipment, railroad cars and family-friendly hands-on exhibits demonstrating milling techniques. The museum also boasts its own baking lab for cooking demonstrations.

[Mill City Museum | Minnesota Historical Society](#)

Midtown Global Market (free)

If you're looking for a more unique and local shopping experience, skip the [Mall of America](#) and head to the Midtown Global Market, where nearly 50 vendors sell food and trinkets ranging from local produce to Moroccan cuisine, Mexican pastries and Asian spices. There are also cultural events – from musical performances to Irish step-dancing lessons.

[Midtown Global Market](#)

Target Field (paid admission)

If you want to catch a sporting event, visit Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins.

[Target Field: Home of the Twins | Minnesota Twins](#)

American Swedish Institute (paid admission)

The American Swedish Institute is a museum, a cultural education center, a café, a destination store, a historic mansion, and more.

[American Swedish Institute – Museum and Cultural Center](#)

Minnesota Children's Museum (paid admission)

From the irresistible pretend town in Our World to the delightful toddler play spaces in Sprouts, our experiences spark joy and foster growth through the awesome power of play.

[Visit - Minnesota Children's Museum](#)