

TRAVEL



The Des Moines Arts Center installed an edition of Robert Indiana's "LOVE" at the Pappajohn Sculpture park in 2019. AP

MIDWEST MUST-SEES

7 cities to visit in 2022 for history buffs, nature enthusiasts, more

By **Jaclyn Jermyn**
Chicago Tribune

The year might have just kicked off, but if you're already in need of a change of scenery or a long weekend getaway, the Midwest has everything you need within driving distance.

Whether you're on the hunt for small-town charm or big-city nightlife, you really can have it all — and not stray far from home. Here are top picks for trips tailored to your needs, from a thriving arts scene in Des Moines to a college town steeped in history.

For small-town charm: Three Oaks, Michigan

If the slow pace of a small-town is what you're craving, head to Three Oaks, Michigan. Just over the Indiana-Michigan border, this one-stoplight town feels like a breath of fresh air.

Just off the main drag, you'll find Journeyman Distillery — one of the few certified organic and kosher distilleries in the country and housed in a former buggy whip and corset factory. The property also features three different lodging options available for rent.

When you start to get hungry, Drier's Meat Market is a must-visit for meat eaters. This tiny, family-run butcher shop boasts its signature baloney and has been in business since just after the Civil War. If your timing is right, check out one of the family-style private dinners dreamed up by chef and author Abra Berens at Granor Farm. Farm-to-table takes on a new significance when the produce is growing right outside the door.

For curious epicureans: Minneapolis

Chicagoans know good food. That's why you should keep Minneapolis in mind for a culinary getaway. Check into the

Hewing Hotel in the North Loop neighborhood. The name is a nod to Minneapolis' long history as a sawmill town, but inside there are plenty of modern, local touches like blankets from Faribault Woolen Mill.

After a drink in Hewing's rooftop lounge, try to snag a coveted reservation to Owamni, a captivating destination restaurant focusing on modern interpretations of North American Indigenous cuisine. Young Joni, helmed by James Beard Award-winning chef Ann Kim, is another delicious option. Head down the adjoining alley, and you'll find the cozy back bar serving up creative cocktails and wood-fired pizzas — but only when the red light outside the door is on.

To quench your thirst, try Fair State Co-op. One of the first collectively owned breweries in the country, Fair State is known for turning out innovative, small-batch brews only available in the taproom, like Cuttin' Grass, a funky, fresh saison worth stretching out your journey a little longer to savor.

For history buffs: Oberlin, Ohio

Home to liberal arts school Oberlin College, this quaint college town also has a storied abolitionist history, including as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Drop by the Oberlin Heritage Center for a crash course in this important local legacy, but also keep your eyes peeled for other memorials around town, like the sculpture designed by former Oberlin student Cameron Armstrong, dotted by plants enslaved people would have encountered on their road to freedom.

Oberlin's Main Street makes for an afternoon well-spent popping into local businesses like the Ben Franklin store. Selling everything from used books to art supplies, Ben Franklin has also become a community hub. If you're



Journeyman Distillery, based in Three Oaks, Michigan, aims to use as many local ingredients as it can. Its O.C.G. (Old Country Goodness), left, boasts organic apple juice and organic cider, both made from Michigan-grown apples. ABEL URIBE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE



Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's 600-acre Wisconsin home, is in Spring Green. Taliesin is among the most innovative American architecture ever and a living example of Wright's work and philosophies. MORRY GASH/AP 2004

looking for that souvenir you can't get anywhere else, head over to Ratsy's. With a motto of "never be normal," Ratsy's offers unique gifts and plenty of oddities — perhaps grab an "there's no place like Oberlin" postcard?

For metropolitan explorers: Detroit

The rise and fall of Detroit's automotive industry — and subsequent economic struggles — have historically dominated headlines about Michigan's largest city, but Michiganders have cultivated a cultural and business revival that envisions a vibrant future for the Motor City.

In neighboring Dear-

born, the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation has everything from a recreation of Henry Ford's Model T manufacturing line to the bus where Rosa Parks ignited the Montgomery bus boycott. For a deeper local perspective, go to the Detroit Historical Society, where you can immerse yourself in more than 300 years of Detroit history, from its beginnings as a fur trading post to the skyrocketing success of Motown.

Afterward, head to Eastern Market, which has been in operation since the 1800s. Open on Saturdays year-round, this open-air market hosts more than 200 local vendors. Hungry for more? Just a short walk away is Bert's Entertainment Complex, featuring

24,000 square feet of space dedicated to comedy and musical performances, soul food and local history. Leave with a new perspective on what makes Detroit special.

For close-to-home scenery: Galena, Illinois

Once an important mining town and home to Ulysses S. Grant, Galena may have you thinking you've stumbled upon a time capsule. More than 80% of its buildings are included in a National Register Historic District, including idyllic Main Street, lined with independent businesses.

This doesn't mean the town, just a three-hour drive from Chicago, doesn't have plenty of contemporary charms. At Blaum Bros. Distilling Co., co-founders Mike and Matt Blaum have been sourcing local ingredients and turning out tempting whiskey, gin and vodka since 2013. Distillery tours end in the tasting room, where you can fully appreciate the fruits of their labor.

Galena's proximity to both the Mississippi and Galena rivers offers plenty of hiking and biking opportunities with scenic outlooks. In the winter, head to the Nordic Center at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa for ice skating, sledding and miles of snowshoeing trails to enjoy the peace and quiet.

For art aficionados: Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa's capital might be a center for the American insurance industry, but its vibrant arts scene ensures the city is far from all work and no play. The early 20th century saw many striking Beaux-Arts buildings go up along the Des Moines River including the Hippee building, built for the Iowa Loan & Trust Co. in 1913 and now home to the trendy Surety Hotel.

Centrally located, Surety is a great jumping-off point for all downtown Des Moines has to offer. Just steps outside you'll

find the Des Moines Art Route, 6 miles of walking routes connecting you to public art. The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation has an app to guide you, but it's just as rewarding to explore the murals, sculptures and more in your own way.

Stop for a spell at Fong's Pizza, serving up tropical drinks and unique Asian-fusion options like Crab Rangoon pizza, then head over the river to the Pappajohn Sculpture Park where works by world-famous artists like Keith Haring and Yayoi Kusama stretch into the sky.

For nature enthusiasts: Spring Green, Wisconsin

Nestled in the hills of southwest Wisconsin, Spring Green was a favorite of Wisconsin native and architect Frank Lloyd Wright. He built his Taliesin home and studio, now a museum and UNESCO World Heritage Site, just south of the village.

Just across the road is Aldebaran Farm, where Wright spent childhood summers with family. The comfortable farmhouse is fully solar-powered, sleeps 12 and is available for short-term rental. If you're visiting between June and October, take in a show at American Players Theatre. You'll find a 1,089-seat outdoor amphitheater nestled in the woods — the world-class Shakespearean performances are a hot ticket.

Spring Green is part of the Driftless Area — untouched by ancient glaciers and full of rocky bluffs, deep tributary valleys and plenty of distinct fauna. Avoca Prairie and Savannah, a 970-acre state natural area in nearby Iowa County, is home to the largest tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi River. It's a unique opportunity to imagine what the region looked like long before we were born.

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