

Summer

in the City of

Lakes

Splash into this year's
Annual Conference locale.

By Terri Peterson Smith

While Minneapolis has a reputation for brutally cold winters, the City of Lakes is a hot spot for science and innovation year-round. And summer has something for everyone! The city is a hub for great food, culture, outdoor activities, and shopping, too. Uff da! So much to do.

Take Me to the River

To explore authentic Minneapolis, begin at the riverfront, just over a mile from the Convention Center. The modern city was built on native Dakota land. Walking the iconic Stone Arch Bridge where the mighty Mississippi rushes below brings a sense of history swirling upward, lifted upon the cool mist from St. Anthony Falls roaring before you. The Dakota called this area *Mni Sóta Makoce*, “Land Where the Waters Reflect the Clouds,” from which the state derived its name. The location is still considered sacred Dakota space.

Minneapolis’s early industry was founded on these falls. Railroad tycoon James J. Hill built the Stone Arch Bridge in 1883 for his trains full of grain to cross the Mississippi River. Now it offers a serene point for pedestrians to view St. Anthony Falls. It’s no Niagara, but, hey, it’s the only significant waterfall on the entire river—big enough to power the city’s mills. In the 1840s, the falls drove the state’s sawmills; starting in the mid-1870s, they turned stone flour mills on these riverbanks. To harness that hydropower, millers built a covered canal to divert water drawn from the river above the falls—and a series of water tunnels that nearly destroyed all of the river’s natural features.

Early flour millers used stone wheels and methods that had not changed for hundreds of years. But when C. C. Washburn and John Crosby (founders of the company that became General Mills) and Charles A. Pillsbury came on the scene in the 1870s, that all changed. Their great rivalry spurred innovations in science, technology, and marketing that made Minneapolis the “Flour Milling Capital of the World” for half a century and launched the metropolis.

Nowadays, walkers, runners, and bikers traverse the historic riverfront paths of Mill Ruins Park. While the old buildings have mostly been turned into condominiums, the Mill City Museum remains a place to explore that industry. It’s built into the ruins of Washburn’s mill, which was the largest and most technologically advanced flour mill in the world when completed in 1880. Exhibits include the steel roller mills that replaced grindstones, and exhaust systems created to prevent flour dust explosions like the one that blew Washburn’s first mill sky-high.

Innovation Abounds

The seed of industry took root on the riverfront and has grown well beyond the world of flour, sprouting a bouquet of other businesses. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul (the state capital, about 12 miles away) are the homes of Target, UnitedHealth Group, Medtronic, 3M, and many more. The region is the birthplace of Scotch tape, Honeycrisp apples, heart pacemakers, and even Bundt pans.

The Twin Cities offer a multitude of venues to stoke interest in science and engineering. The University of Minnesota, just downriver from the old mills, contributes mightily to the region's continuous flow of innovation. Programs such as its mind-blowing Physics Force shows, geared to K–12 students, are designed to entice young people into the STEM pipeline. (See physicsforce.umn.edu.) The university's Bell Museum is celebrating its 150th year of showcasing natural history. Located in new state-of-the-art digs on the University of Minnesota Saint Paul campus, this Smithsonian Affiliate explores the origins of the universe and the diversity of life on earth and features famous wildlife dioramas, hands-on K–12 labs, and a planetarium.

Also in Saint Paul, convention-goers will find the Science Museum of Minnesota, a modern 370,000-square-foot space that covers all aspects of science and engineering with hands-on demonstrations, interactive experiences, and its popular Omnitheater. The *Science Superheroes* exhibit (on display through September) spotlights the research and fieldwork the museum's own scientists conduct around the world.

Finally, fans of electricity and magnetism—and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein!*—love the Bakken Museum, a hidden gem that resides in south Minneapolis on lovely Lake Harriet. Its founder, Earl Bakken, created one of the world's first battery-powered cardiac pacemakers and was also a founder of Medtronic, now the world's largest medical technology company. Electricity and its many medical applications fascinated the engineer. With this museum, he sought to inspire others to enjoy and pursue the realms of science he loved; exhibits include a hair-raising static electricity experience and a Science Studio with new activities every weekend.

The Science Museum of Minnesota boasts a collection of more than two million objects. © Lane Pelovsky/Meet Minneapolis



The Bakken Museum's exhibits encompass science, technology, invention, and plant medicine. © Corey Gaffey Photography/The Bakken Museum

Tasteful Tours

Minneapolis remains a food-focused city, though it has diversified since all those millers ground flour on the banks of the Mississippi. Each new wave of settlers—Scandinavians, Germans, Vietnamese, Hmong, Mexicans, and Somalis, to name a few—added their own food traditions to the mix. That's one reason the city's chefs regularly stack up James Beard Foundation Awards the way snow piles up in February. But Minneapolis is a destination for adventurous eaters any time of year. The city's savvy food entrepreneurs have recently launched a host of trendy new drinking and dining spots meticulously integrated into and around historic buildings.

For example, you'll find the restaurant Owamni adjacent to Mill Ruins Park. The eatery perches above the river, overlooking the sacred Owánniyomni, a Dakota word meaning "the place of the falling, swirling waters." Built into a former mill, this restaurant serves modern Indigenous foods. In it, Native Americans reclaim a bit of their original place on the river.

Chef and owner Sean Sherman, aka "the Sioux Chef," is a proponent of true Indigenous cuisine that he calls "decolonized cooking." The menu eschews the dairy, wheat flour, and processed sugar that European settlers brought with them. No fry bread here. Instead, you might taste native corn tacos with cedar-braised bison, smoked trout with dandelion pesto, and grilled forest mushrooms, or dip into beautiful purple purees of berries, crunching lightly baked crackers made from sweet corn's ancestor, teosinte. The offerings depend on what's in season to make up a changing menu of Indigenous cuisine with a contemporary edge.

Nearby, a farmers market pops up adjacent to the Mill City Museum every Saturday, April through October. Wander the stalls to buy organic produce and munch premade goodies from the market—everything from pizza to momo dumplings.

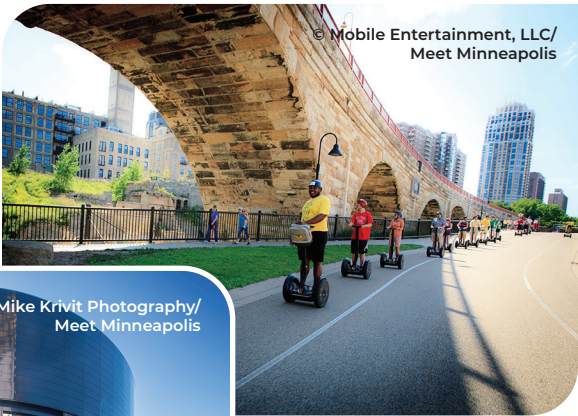
Cross the Stone Arch Bridge and take in the signature scene of the river against the modern downtown buildings. The neighborhood north and east of the river, fondly called "Northeast," was settled largely by immigrants with Eastern European roots who came in search of milling jobs. Stop at Kramarczuk's, a bastion of Northeast cookery that Wasyl and Anna Kramarczuk opened in 1954 shortly after emigrating from Ukraine. You'll find pierogis, holubets (stuffed cabbage rolls), and freshly baked old-world breads, pastries, and cakes. Kramarczuk's deli features a nearly unlimited variety of house-made sausages and a wide selection of Eastern European beers.

For a different taste of the city, Hai Hai (hai means two in Vietnamese) serves gorgeous Vietnamese street food in a former Northeast strip club called Deuce Deuce. Using her grandmother's recipes, Chef Christina Nguyen creates eye-popping and mouth-watering dishes such as Hanoi Sticky Rice (with ground pork, Chinese sausage, and pickled onion), Balinese Cauliflower, Sugarcane Shrimp, and Water Fern Cakes—all meant for sharing.

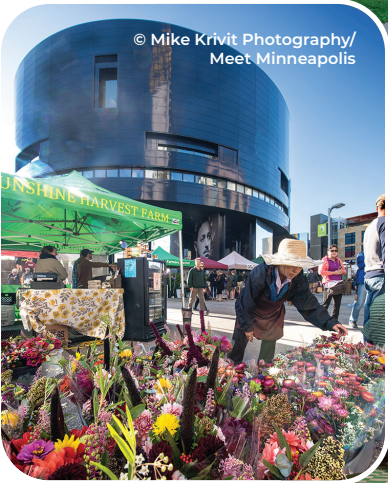
Establishments have also sprouted in a section of old warehouses and grain silos in the Prospect Park neighborhood. Surly Brewing is known for its hoppy "Furious" IPA, but it also serves melt-in-your-mouth brisket. Across the road, an old machinery building now houses The Market at Malcolm Yards, filled with a delectable array of local food businesses whose offerings range from meatballs to empanadas and Korean fried chicken to sushi.

From there, wander over to the O'Shaughnessy Distilling Co., a new state-of-the-art operation in a repurposed potato-processing facility. The owners, local cousins of Irish descent, lured one of Ireland's top whiskey makers to Minneapolis. Brian Nation now makes American whiskey in the traditional Irish style using triple copper-pot distillation. Those shiny pots rise over the lovely tasting room like giant sculptures.

Finally, nothing more bitterly splits Twin Citians than whether Matt's Bar or the 5-8 Club makes the better melted cheese-stuffed hamburger, called the Jucy Lucy at Matt's and the Juicy Lucy at 5-8. Both venues have garnered national attention for their "Lucies," essentially two ground beef patties sealed together at their edges with a generous dollop of American cheese between them. They're grilled to medium-well until the cheese assumes the consistency and temperature of tongue-burning lava and then delivered with a side of sass from your server.



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© John Yuccas/The Culinary Portfolio/Meet Minneapolis

From top to bottom: A Segway tour rolls past the Stone Arch Bridge; the Mill City Farmers Market features more than 100 farmers, food makers, and artists; the Jucy Lucy (shown here) and the Juicy Lucy vie for best burger among Twin Citians.



From left to right: Nice Ride Minnesota offers more than 400 stations to help you get around while reducing your environmental footprint; visitors to Bde Maka Ska Park can walk, bike, boat, canoe, kayak, and paddle board on more than 518 acres.

Summer Lakes in the City of Lakes

© Mike Krivit Photography/Meet Minneapolis



© Gilmour Creative/Meet Minneapolis



It's Great Outdoors

When it's time to work off some of that food, you're in luck—the Minneapolis waterfront lies smack in the middle of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The 72-mile river park offers quiet stretches for fishing, boating, bird-watching, bicycling, and hiking. The visitor center at the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam provides a great place to start a tour of the recreation area. Rangers lead short walks from the visitor center onto the lock walls and explain how the locks (which closed in 2015) raised and lowered boats and barges. For paddlers, Mississippi River Paddle Share (www.paddleshare.org), a self-serve kayak-sharing system, rents everything you need to get out on the river, all aligned with the city's bike rental system, Nice Ride Minnesota (www.niceridemn.com; see "Getting Around").

You may want to tour Minneapolis's famed Chain of Lakes, roughly 15 miles of paved bike and walking paths, and arguably the city's most popular destination. Enjoy the impressive architecture of homes around the Lake of the Isles; rent a canoe or stand-up paddle board at Bde Maka Ska (Dakota for "White Earth Lake"); or take in one of the free nightly concerts at the Lake Harriet band shell.

Other outdoor destinations require less exertion. Target Field, for example, is home of the Minnesota Twins, and CHS Field is where the Twins' Triple-A farm club, the St. Paul Saints, pitches comedy along with baseballs. The area's newest team, Minnesota United (nicknamed the "Loons" after the state bird), plays soccer at the futuristic Allianz Field in Saint Paul. Soccer aside, the \$250 million stadium itself is a sight to behold with 88,000 square feet of transparent and laminated polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) mesh fabric stretched over a steel skeleton surrounding the pitch and backed by 1,700 LED lights. By stretching the fabric over the stadium's sweeping steel ribs, designers aimed to mimic the undulating motion of Minnesota's abundant waters. The LEDs evoke the look of the Northern Lights.

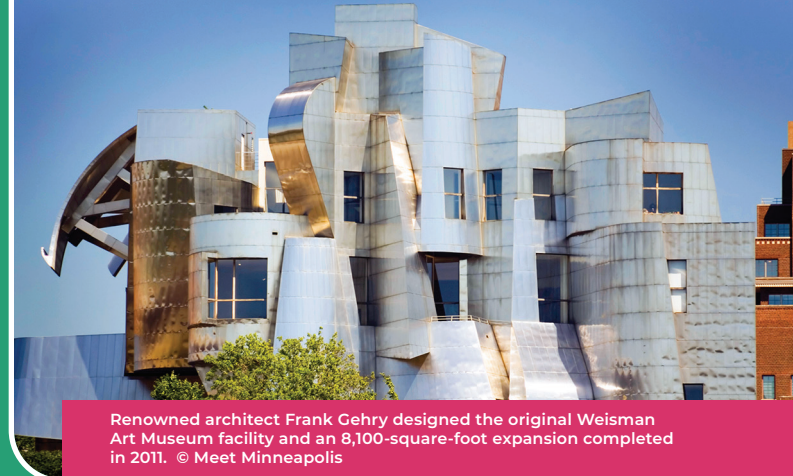
Getting Around

Full exploration of the Twin Cities often requires a car or rideshare, but below are a few other options:

Walk: The Skyway System is a network of second-story enclosed footbridges connecting one building to the next. It's a great option in winter and rain.

Pedal: Minneapolis is known for its biking culture. Nice Ride (niceridemn.com) provides conventional bikes and e-bikes for use around both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Stands can be found just about everywhere. In addition, the Fit Tourist (thefittourist.com) offers biking and walking tours to explore Minneapolis along the river and beyond.

Ride: Metro Transit's light rail system can be a great option for certain destinations. The Blue Line connects downtown Minneapolis with the airport and Mall of America. The Green Line connects downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, and downtown St. Paul. Metrotransit.org offers a complete schedule and excellent trip-planning information.



Renowned architect Frank Gehry designed the original Weisman Art Museum facility and an 8,100-square-foot expansion completed in 2011. © Meet Minneapolis

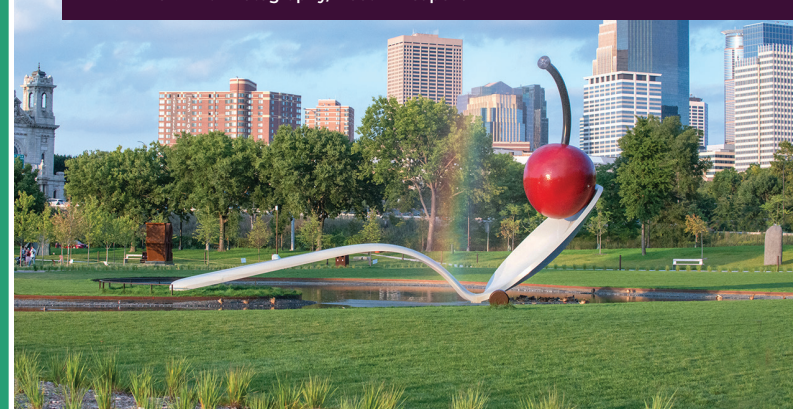
Get Cultured

According to Travel and Leisure magazine, “Minneapolis has quietly emerged as the Midwest’s culture capital, blending top-notch museums, eye-catching public art, and a unique string of performing arts spaces.” For contemporary art, it’s a short bike ride along the riverfront from downtown to the University of Minnesota campus and its futuristic Frank Gehry–designed Weisman Art Museum. The much larger Walker Art Center, one of the five most-visited contemporary art museums in the country, along with the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, features tours, art-making activities, and events. Snap selfies with the giant blue rooster “Hahn/Cock” by German sculptor Katharina Fritsch or the iconic Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen sculpture, “Spoonbridge and Cherry,” with a remarkable view of the Minneapolis skyline as a backdrop.

You’ll find a vast collection of the world’s art traditions (including American, African, Asian, and European) at the Minnesota Institute of Art, or MIA. Specialized collections reside at the American Swedish Institute and the Museum of Russian Art. Or, to see artists in action, stop at the Northrup King Building in the Northeast neighborhood. The 102-year-old Northrup King seed warehouse serves as home to over 300 artists and creatives who open their studios daily. Its Open Saturdays and First Thursdays make especially good times to explore all four floors and chat with the artists.

For live performance, the renowned Guthrie Theater offers productions—classical to contemporary—on three stages. Music venues range from Orchestra Hall for classical music to the intimate Dakota jazz club and Minneapolis’s iconic rock music club, First Avenue, which features local and national artists. One of the city’s favorite sons, Prince, got his start at First Avenue, and the venue made an appearance

The 1,200-pound “Spoonbridge and Cherry” draws the eye of visitors to the Walker Art Center’s sculpture garden. © Mike Krivit Photography/Meet Minneapolis



Top: Launched in the 1970s, First Avenue is one of the oldest independently owned and operated music venues in the United States. Bottom: In 2019, Orchestra Hall became the first performing arts center in the country to be LEED v4 O+M Silver certified.



© George Heinrich Photography/Meet Minneapolis

in his film *Purple Rain*. Even if you don’t attend a show, you can get a photo with Prince’s star (among those of other notables) on the wall outside. Serious Prince fans also make the pilgrimage to his home and studio, Paisley Park, located in Chanhassen, half an hour from downtown.

Shopping Small and Large

Minnesota does not charge sales tax on clothing and shoes, which makes a great excuse for a shopping spree! For local artisanal goods and distinctive apparel, hit the city’s fantastic independent retailers. In the trendy North Loop (about three miles from the convention center), find stylish boutiques such as Hazel & Rose for sustainable fashion and handmade ceramics, MartinPatrick3 for high-end clothing and home furnishings, and The Foundry Home Goods for minimalist utilitarian items. On Lake Street, the century-old Ingebrechtsen’s Nordic Marketplace is the source for all things Scandinavian, ranging from glassware and sweaters to meatballs and lingonberry sauce.

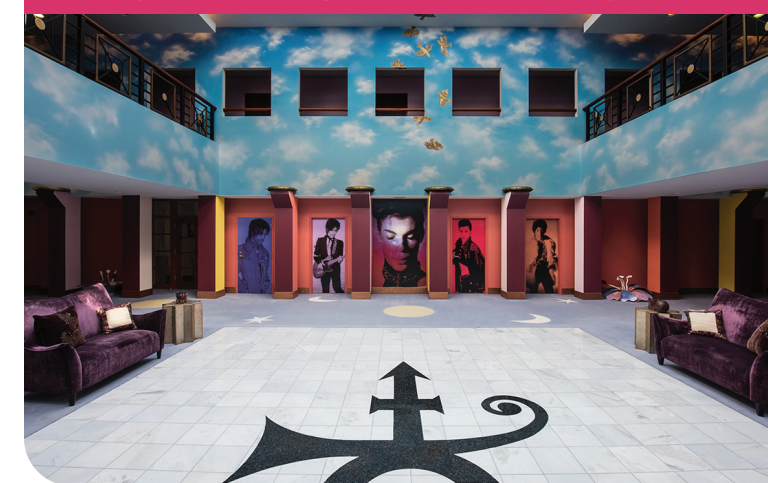
Book lovers will discover slices of paradise at terrific independent bookstores. For example, Birchbark Books and Native Arts, a cozy shop with the renowned author Louise Erdrich—an enrolled Turtle Mountain Chippewa—at the helm, emphasizes the works of Indigenous writers Erdrich calls the “Indigerati.” Visitors will find notes from the Pulitzer Prize- and National Book Award winner around the store with her suggestions and comments.

Magers & Quinn in the Uptown neighborhood offers a massive book collection, featuring many unusual and hard-to-find editions as well as thousands of current releases, often discounted. The whimsical Wild Rumpus bookstore focuses on children’s literature but offers a delightful experience for grown-ups, too. Among the books live an array of furry and feathered creatures that may include birds Mo and Curly, chickens, rabbits, a ferret, and chinchillas named Caldecott and Newbery.

A simple light-rail ride from downtown delivers shoppers to the big dog of Minnesota shopping, the Mall of America (MOA) in Bloomington. It’s the largest shopping and entertainment complex in North America, with 520 stores ranging from Nordstrom and Macy’s to small local vendors found in the

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Paisley Park welcomes visitors for tours, concerts, festivals, and other special events. © Paisley Park/NPG Records/Meet Minneapolis



Community Commons. When it’s time to put down the shopping bags, MOA visitors may take a break at any of 50 dining options and enjoy blockbuster entertainment opportunities. The mall features a 300-foot underwater glass tunnel at SEA LIFE, a giant aquarium with views of more than 10,000 aquatic creatures. Rides at Nickelodeon Universe, the nation’s largest indoor theme park, thrill both children and adults. Finally, FlyOver America provides a fully immersive simulation ride that uses virtual flight technology to take guests on an aerial tour of the United States.

No matter what kind of travel floats your boat, the City of Lakes offers tons of activities that will make you happy as a clam.

Terri Peterson Smith is a Minnesota-based freelance writer specializing in travel, food, and the environment.



The 13-foot-deep underwater tunnel at SEA LIFE (top) and the seven acres of rides, entertainment, dining, and shopping at Nickelodeon Universe (bottom) are among the attractions at the Mall of America. © Mall of America/Meet Minneapolis

