



ATTRACTIONS



We're a bit spoiled here.

The combination of being the state's seat of government (including Dane County administration) and being home to one of the country's most remarkable public universities, has created a perfect storm of things to see and do. Travel to other American cities and residents and visitors must make do with a pitiful handful of attractions. Some cities don't have museums, libraries, natural beauty and a vibrant arts culture. Woe unto them.

This chapter details some of the most popular visitor destinations in Madison—

places out-of-towners have heard about or want to see, along with a few, more obscure suggestions. Also included is a rundown of campus highlights. Many people come to Madison and only experience Camp Randall Stadium and the Kohl Center. There is an abundance of arts, history, nature and other fascinations on campus.

If your favorite isn't included in this chapter, don't fret, it's probably highlighted in another chapter.

Attractions are free unless otherwise noted.

CENTRAL

Wisconsin's Capitol Building

2 E. Main St., 266-0382
wisconsin.gov/state

"Rising between the picturesque waters of Lakes Monona and Mendota, the majestic granite structure glows like a beacon, accenting the Madison skyline." Like New Yorkers who have never visited the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty, the Capitol Building is one of those attractions residents and visitors recognize but perhaps have never toured.

Too bad, for it's well worth the time. Inside, visitors can see lavish decorations, 43 varieties of stone from around the world, hand-carved furniture and exquisite glass mosaics. The architecture, art and furnishings in the Governor's Conference Room are styled after the council chambers of the Doge's Palace in Venice, Italy. Fancy.

The building is modeled after the nation's Capitol. It's exactly 284.4 feet high—16 feet, 2 inches taller than our nation's Capitol. On the top is a gilded bronze statue named Wisconsin. She is 15 feet, 5 inches tall

and weighs 3 tons. Her outstretched hand points ahead, symbolizing our state motto, "Forward."

A tour will add to the visit. The guides are experts on the building and they can show chambers that are locked on the weekends. Tour stops include the Governor's Conference Room, the State Supreme Court Room and the Senate and Assembly Chambers.

The highest point in the building the public is allowed to visit is the first observation deck, at 92 feet. This deck is only open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The sixth-floor museum is also open during the summer months.

When you visit, you're likely to see yellow school buses lined up outside. More than 18,000 people visit in the spring alone—most of them in fourth grade. By state law, fourth-graders must study Wisconsin history and a trip to the Capitol is often part of the curriculum. Approximately 100,000 people visit throughout the year.

Free tours are offered year-round Monday through Saturday at 9, 10 and 11 a.m. and 1,

2 and 3 p.m.; and Sunday at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. A 4 p.m. tour is added weekdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Groups of 10 or more should make a reservation.

Be sure to save time for a stroll around the Capitol grounds. The 6.5 acres are the site of political rallies, picnics and concerts. They are especially pretty in the spring, when more than 50,000 tulips are in bloom.

GUIDE TIP

There are hidden, ancient treasures in the walls and halls of the Capitol Building. Find the starfish embedded in the second floor left stairway in the North Gallery. It's the fourth step from the bottom. The stone here is from Tennessee and the starfish was alive when Tennessee was under water and part of the seabed. Continue up those stairs to the North Hearing Room. On the wall to the left of the American flag you'll find a large snail fossil from the Mediterranean Seabed. It is 17 million years old.

Wisconsin Historical Museum

30 N. Carroll St., 264-6555
wisconsinhistory.org/museum

Located on the Capitol Square, the Wisconsin Historical Museum uses dioramas, artifacts and audiovisual programs and illustrations to interpret Wisconsin's past. Museum collections contain 107,000 historical objects and about 393,000 archaeological artifacts. They are used by staff, academic scholars, collectors, local historians, authors and the general public to document the history of Wisconsin from prehistoric times to the present. The collections help us understand important trends and events of daily life within diverse social, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

A permanent museum exhibit is "People of the Woodlands: Wisconsin Indian Ways." The exhibit examines stories of native people living in Wisconsin before and after the fur trade. Visitors can enter an Aztalan-style house and discover the seasonal activities of Woodland peoples in the 1800s-1900s and unearth the work of archaeologists.

Another permanent exhibit is "On Common Ground: Two Hundred Years of Wisconsin History." It explores Wisconsin history from settlement days to the present, including a frontier lead mine, immigration routes to the state, a lumber camp and Wisconsin's political heritage.

Many temporary exhibits keep things fresh and create good reason to visit often. For example, "Skating for Gold: Wisconsin's Olympic Speed Skaters, 1976-2006" looked at why skaters from the Badger state have dominated the sport: Between 1976 and 2002, seven speed skaters born and raised in Wisconsin have brought home 13 medals, nine of them gold. "The Milwaukee Mile: A Century of Racing History" explores the oldest racetrack in continuous service in the United States: the Milwaukee Mile.

Exciting programs offered throughout the year include lectures, demonstrations, workshops, storytelling, videos and fee-supported classes.

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Museum admission is free, but donations are happily

received. Recommended donations are \$4 for adults, \$3 for children under 18, and \$10 for a family. A gift shop carries books, native arts, cards and souvenirs and members receive a discount.

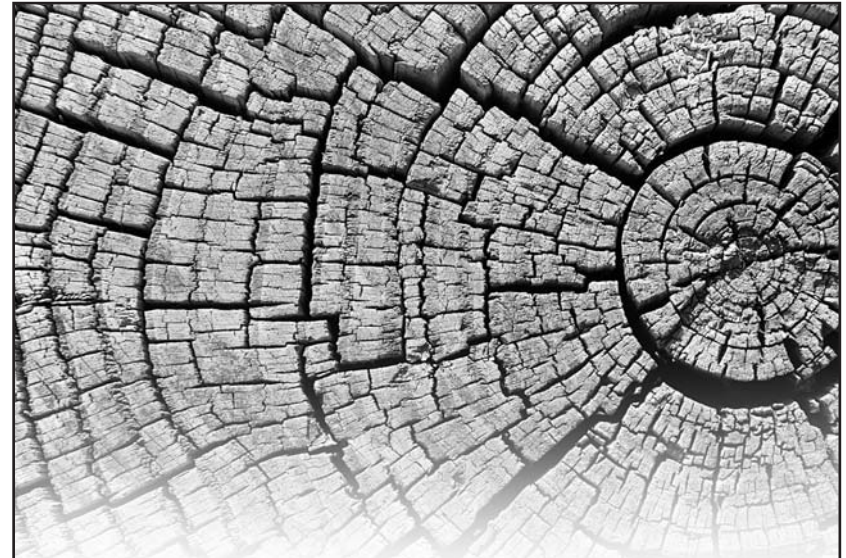
GUIDE TIP

The Wisconsin Historical Museum hosts an informal brown-bag lunch-and-lecture series on the first and third Tuesday each month through November: History Sandwiched In. Visitors are invited to bring a lunch and enjoy a program of historical perspective. Check the website for program updates.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

30 W. Mifflin St., 267-1799
museum.dva.state.wi.us

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum, located across the street from the State Capitol, is dedicated to the state's citizen-soldiers. The museum has two main galleries, a changing exhibits area and a gift shop. The museum is much



USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory

One Gifford Pinchot Dr., 231-9200
fpl.fs.fed.us

The Forest Products Laboratory is the nation's leading wood research institute. FPL is recognized both nationally and internationally as an unbiased technical authority on wood science and use. More than 250 scientists and support staff conduct research on expanded and diverse aspects of wood use. Research concentrates on pulp and paper products, housing and structural uses of wood, wood preservation, wood and fungi identification, and finishing and restoration of wood products. Sound dull? Tell that to your weathered deck and garage adorned with blistered and peeling paint.

Free tours of the labs are available November-March, Monday-Thursday at 2 p.m. Call the number listed for a reservation.

To see that research in real-life application, visit the Research Demonstration House. Tours of the house are available April-October. The Advanced Housing Research Center tests real-world, housing-related areas such as engineered wood products and structures, moisture control, material design and performance, coatings and finishes, adhesives, wood preservation and composites. The emphasis is on the improved use of traditional wood products, recycled and engineered wood composite materials, durability, moisture control, natural disaster resistance and an improved living environment.