

Traveler

Museum madness.

Story by Natasha Kassulke, photos Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Catching fall colors is incentive enough to pack up the car and take a road trip at this time of the year. But while you are on the road ahead, why not also take some time to step back?



A tour of the Platteville Mining Museum includes a walk down into the 1845 Bevans Lead Mine.

Wisconsin and its neighbors are home to a wide variety of museums. Here is just a sample to get the wheels rolling.

To learn more about other historic sites and museums in Wisconsin, visit the Wisconsin Historical Society website, wisconsinhistory.org.

Many local historical societies also have museums to visit. Search an online catalog of organizations affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society at wisconsinhistory.org and search for “local societies and museums.”

Underwater museums and maritime history

Centuries of exploration, travel, commerce and recreation on the Great Lakes have left an impressive trail of maritime

cultural resources along Wisconsin’s Great Lakes shorelines and bottomlands.

To generate a wider public appreciation of the state’s rich maritime past and encourage preservation of unique historic sites such as shipwrecks, lighthouses and historic waterfronts, the Wisconsin Historical Society, along with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Sea Grant Institute, established the Maritime Trails program.

Find a guide to Wisconsin’s Maritime Trails at maritime-trails.org/visit-wi-maritime-trails.php.

The Mining Museum and Rollo Jamison Museum

Platteville is home to two museums — the Mining

Museum and the Rollo Jamison Museum.

The Mining Museum traces the development of lead and zinc mining in the Upper Mississippi Valley through models, dioramas, artifacts and more. A guided tour includes a walk down into the Bevans Lead Mine, an 1845 lead mine.

Rollo Jamison, born in Beetown, Wisconsin in 1899, started collecting arrowheads on the family farm as a boy. With that, his interest in history was born and for 70 years he collected more than 20,000 artifacts of southwest Wisconsin history. The Rollo Jamison Museum takes visitors back to the turn of the century with exhibits of carriages, farm implements, musical instruments and more.

A tour of both museums plus a train ride on a 1931 locomotive takes 1 ½ hours and there are 90 steps into the mine where it remains 52 degrees year-round.

The museums with mine tours are open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through October. November through April the museums are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (mine tours are not available during this time). For more information, including admission cost, visit mining.jamison.museum.

Train museums

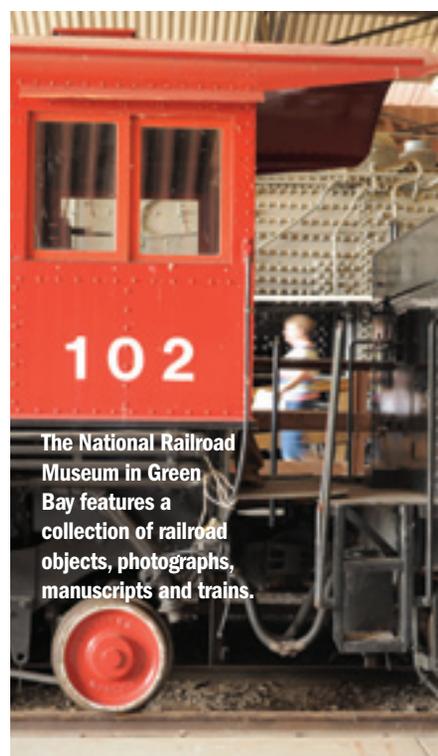
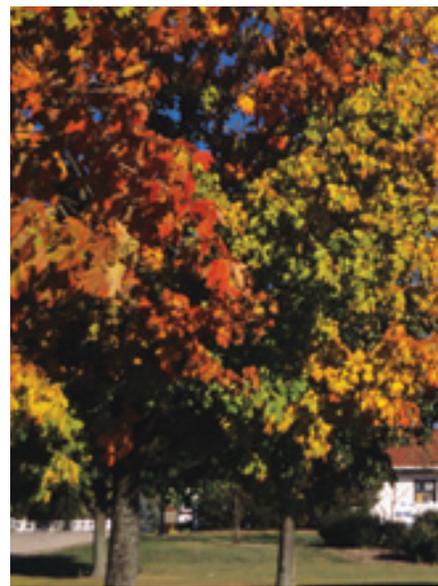
“All aboard” rings out often at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom. The featured ride is a 7-mile, 55-minute round-trip ride through the Baraboo Hills in rural Sauk County in restored 1915 steel coaches. The museum’s first-class fleet also consists of a diner-lounge car built in 1914 and a Pullman business car built in 1929.

The museum — inside and outside in the train yard — features railroad displays and restored equipment. The Coach Shed is filled with restored wooden passenger cars and freight cars including the Mid-Continent’s nationally renowned Badger #2 “Fish Car.”

The museum is only

open during weekends now, through Oct. 16. Trains depart at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. A “Pumpkin Special” runs the weekend of Oct. 15-16 and features a ride to pick out a locally grown pumpkin. For more information, including the costs of various trip rides, visit midcontinent.org.

Green Bay is home to another railroad museum, the National Railroad Museum. The museum features a collection of railroad objects,



The National Railroad Museum in Green Bay features a collection of railroad objects, photographs, manuscripts and trains.



"All aboard" rings out often at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom.

photographs, manuscripts and trains. The museum is open all year with hours through December being 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Tours are self-guided or guided. On a guided tour you will learn about the highlights of the collection including the General Motors Aerotrain, Gen. Eisenhower's WWII command train, the Union Pacific Big Boy, the Pennsylvania Railroad GG-1 electric locomotive, the Pullman porters and the Wisconsin 40 & 8 boxcar.

Visit nationalrrmuseum.org for more information and admission prices.

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, is home to museum exhibits on the culture and history of America's rivers.

The museum, in association with the Smithsonian Institution, features a backwater marsh, 4-D theater, discovery center and aquariums, sturgeon touch tank, Woodward Riverboat Museum, steamboat William M. Black and more.

The museum is open now

through Oct. 31 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and November through May from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more information including admission costs visit rivermuseum.com.

International Crane Foundation

A living museum of sorts as it features some of the rarest birds on Earth, the International Crane Foundation is located between Baraboo and Wisconsin Dells. Hike through a restored Wisconsin landscape and take a tour to learn about crane biology, the value of wetlands and the diversity of the world's 15 crane species. In fact, it is the only place on Earth where you can see all 15 of the world's crane species!

Want to prepare for your visit or can't make it there on your own? The ICF's Crane Media Collective is a searchable database of crane images, sound files, documents, periodicals and video clips (gallery.savingcranes.org).

The ICF is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through Oct. 31. For more information including admission prices, visit savingcranes.org.

The Wade House

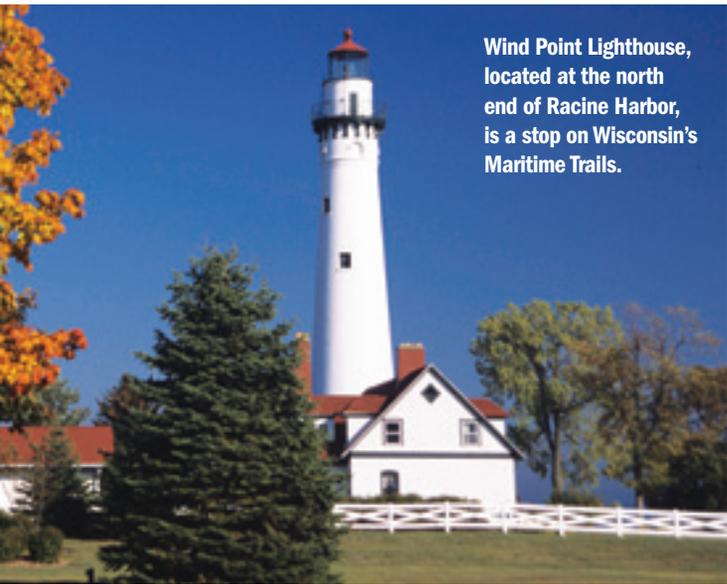
Return to the time of stagecoach travel and see a community where Yankee refinement met the Wisconsin wilderness at the Wade House, located just west of Plymouth, on the south side of Highway 23 in Greenbush.

The Wade House is home to the Wesley W. Jung Carriage Museum, Wade House Stagecoach Hotel, Dockstader Blacksmith Shop, Herrling Sawmill and more. Learn about the origins of American Halloween customs at Wade House the weekends of Oct. 8-9 and Oct. 15-16.

Hours through Oct. 30 are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Hours change Nov. 2 through May 13 and are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Visit wadehouse.wisconsinhistory.org for admission prices and more information. 

Natasha Kassulke writes from Madison, Wisconsin.



Wind Point Lighthouse, located at the north end of Racine Harbor, is a stop on Wisconsin's Maritime Trails.



The International Crane Foundation is the only place on Earth where you'll see all 15 of the world's crane species, like this African black crowned crane.