

Mil-walk-ee—Walk is Her Middle Name.

How Buffalo Can Benefit from Becoming Walker-Tourist Friendly.

Travel due west across the Great Lakes and you'll discover a hidden gem in the American Midwest: Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In fact, Milwaukee's latitude lies about one-half a degree north of Buffalo. While the Queen City has struggled to reinvent herself following the decline of her manufacturing economy, the Brew City seems to have gotten something right.

The name Milwaukee comes from the language spoken by the native peoples of southern Wisconsin. Perhaps they had foresight into Milwaukee's post-industrial future. Maybe that's why her middle syllable sounds like *walk*, because today this jewel on the bluffs of Lake Michigan is a walking tourist's dream come true.

I first visited Milwaukee during a blast of Indian Summer in mid-October. The leaves were vibrant hues of gold and red set against a rich blue autumn sky. Warm sunshine and cool Lake Michigan breezes made for a perfect walk-and-tour getaway and a chance to discover a city that I previously knew in name only. As I roamed through the city center I found myself thinking two things: 1) Buffalo, a city with many similarities, could learn a few lessons about how to reinvent her downtown by following the Milwaukeeans' lead, and 2) What a great undiscovered place this is to visit.

Plan a Visit

The best thing to pack for your tour of downtown Milwaukee is undeniably a sturdy pair of walking sneakers, and maybe even a pedometer for those counting their steps. Before you take to the sidewalks, be sure to swipe some of the detailed walking maps of downtown along with local tourism guides. These are readily available in area hotels and on brochure racks.

These guides are packed with coupons, current events, maps, destinations, and more to help you get the most out of your Milwaukee visit.

Starting on the far eastern shore of Lake Michigan, enjoy a leisurely stroll along several miles of lakefront parkland complete with paved trails, piers, and unrestricted lake views. The lakefront is actually composed of several parks including Juneau Park, Veterans Park, McKinley Park Marina, and Lakeshore State Park.



The Milwaukee Art Museum

Don't be surprised to see colorful kites soaring in the brisk lake breezes and couples picnicking on the lawns. Rent a paddle-

boat and enjoy the lagoon in the center of the park.

During your waterfront walk, allow plenty of time to visit Pier Wisconsin, home of Discovery World and the Milwaukee Art Museum. Discovery World offers an all-ages hands-on educational experience. Exhibits showcasing geography of the Great Lakes, nuclear energy, and aviation are just a few things Discoverers have to look forward to. Your Discovery World admission also includes a visit to the Reiman Aquarium, a great place to get close-up and interact with marine life. If you're looking for an immersion experience, consider sailing aboard *S/V Denis Sullivan*, a replica Great Lakes schooner that docks outside Discovery World.

Right next door is the Milwaukee Art Museum. A complex of three buildings, the Quadracci Pavilion is most striking of all. Its postmodern design left me

gaping at parallel rows of white lines, dramatic angles, and sail/wing-like structures. Just viewing the pavilion is an experience in itself, and in fact, this structure has become the defining symbol of downtown Milwaukee. Below dramatic architecture is Windhover Hall, a glass enclosed atrium on Lake Michigan that suggests the appearance of a ship's bow about to set sail.

Throughout the museum you'll find thousands of works and exhibits in a variety of media.

Despite being an urban center, Milwaukee's downtown features a wide share of the county's 15,000 acres of parkland. Green spaces with benches, picnic tables, and shady trees provide a little bit of nature in the urban jungle, and even community gardens are starting to make an appearance. Abstract sculptures, memorials, and statues often adorn parks and provide some art appreciation and reflection opportunities.

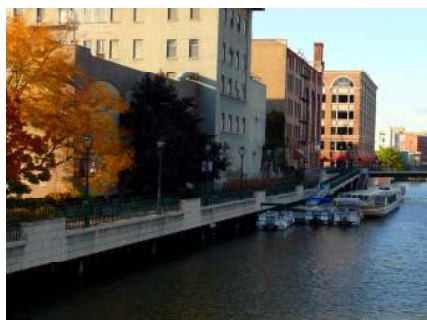
The business district of downtown features a blend of modern office towers and accurately preserved historic structures. Gothic-

influenced design is apparent in the numerous church steeples soaring heavenward from many city blocks. The Wisconsin Center office tower encompasses an arches-and-triangles theme that is apparent both in its interior design and exterior. Step in to the marble lobby and enjoy spotting the "Easter-egg" hidden semi-circles and triangles.

Continue west through downtown and you'll soon run into Milwaukee's second waterfront: The Riverwalk. This nearly three-mile stretch takes walkers along both sides of the city's namesake river where you can enjoy a variety of restaurants, shops, art galleries, and nightlife. Signs direct walkers to various points of interest along the mezzanine which include the Historic Third



The Wisconsin Center



Milwaukee's Picturesque Riverwalk

Ward and the Shops of Grand Avenue.

The Third Ward is a classically preserved neighborhood where architecture, museums, galleries, boutiques, and cuisine take center stage. Wrought-iron arches bound the neighborhood and special street lighting gives it a unique feel. Third Ward is home to the Milwaukee Public Market where you'll find local artisan cheese vendors, ethnic foods, and lots more on its two floors.

Just across the river from Third Ward is the Shops of Grand Avenue. This open-air retail venue has a mix of local shops and cafes along with national chains. The Shops are suitable to most any shopping budget with retailers TJ Maxx, Borders, and The Boston Store anchoring the district.

Depending on the season, you can also take a guided, themed walking tour of downtown Milwaukee or even a chartered boat tour on the river. Numerous museums, galleries, theaters, breweries, gourmet restaurants, and other cultural opportunities are within a few blocks' walk of many downtown hotels.



The Miller Valley—Home of Miller Time

Beyond Downtown

While Milwaukee is a great place to exercise your legs and wear out your shoes, just a few miles from the city center are numerous other attractions to complete your Midwestern vacation. Motorcycle lovers will go "hog wild" at the Harley Davidson Museum. As Harley's hometown, the Milwaukee museum provides a worthy tribute to this two-wheeled slice of American motoring history.

Just up the road from Harley is the world headquarters of Miller Coors. The approximately three-block Miller Valley is lined with stunning German architecture and the towering brewery structures. Miller offers a complete brewery tour starting with a background film and then moving through various stages of the

beer-making process. Lively tour guides ensure an animated tour which includes a ghost story inside the original Miller chilling caves. Your tour will conclude in the bier garten where snacks and generous samples are on tap. Teetotalers and those underage need not worry; soft drinks are also provided. After all that sampling, make sure you're fit to drive by walking the several blocks of Miller Valley and enjoying the Germanesque surroundings.

Buffalo of the Future?

Milwaukee, an often overlooked city in America's northern Midwest, has a lot of similarities to our own Buffalo. It has an ethnically diverse past that influenced its glorious architecture and arts scene. Nick-named the Brew City, beer making has long been an art and tradition in Milwaukee. Manufacturing, once an economic driver, has largely disappeared. As a port, Milwaukee enjoys a prime location on the shores of the Great Lakes. However, while Buffalo struggles to come up with its renaissance and twenty-first century rebirth, she might take a lesson from a city who's already there. A clean, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown; easy accessibility; enjoyable waterfront; and a thriving cultural scene make Milwaukee both a vacation-worthy destination and a model city for Buffalo's renaissance. And for what it's worth, the closest Bass Pro is a two-hour drive south near Chicago.



Rock Bottom Brewery and other restaurants line the Riverwalk.

When to Go

Milwaukee's climate is a lot like Buffalo's. Spring is generally cool, summer is hot, fall can be a beautifully colorful season with unpredictable weather, and winter is cold. A walking tour is probably best planned in late spring through fall.

Staying Here

Downtown Milwaukee has a variety of lodging

choices to fit any budget and taste. Restored boutique hotels, some on the Register of Historic Places, dot the downtown landscape while major chains ranging from high-end to budget friendly are all available.

Dining Here

The Rock Bottom Brewery and the Wicked Hop are a couple of popular local restaurants on or near the water. Numerous mom-and-pop eateries ranging from fine dining to cafes line most downtown blocks. For those on a budget, mid-priced chains and fast food joints are available, albeit with fewer locations than typically seen in a major urban center.

Getting Here

Major airlines offer service into Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport, which itself is a worthy destination. Inside the main terminal enjoy the Mitchell Gallery of Flight Museum which provides a detailed look at Wisconsin's contributions to the aviation industry. One exhibit tells the story of the airport's history and its namesake general, while others trace Wisconsin's role in cargo, commercial, military, and even Final-Frontier aviation. There's even a Buffalo connection to be discovered. Milwaukee-themed shops and the Miller Restaurant—serving a delicious signature Wisconsin cheese panini—are all reasons to spend a little extra time at this airport.



If you prefer to drive, Milwaukee is about a 600 mile road trip from Buffalo. Expect to spend about 11 hours making your way along the Great Lakes through Cleveland, Chicago, and into southeastern Wisconsin.

Useful Resources

www.mkedcd.org/DowntownMilwaukee
www.countyparks.com
www.mam.org
www.discoveryworld.org
www.visitmilwaukee.org
www.keymilwaukee.com