



4 Most Walkable Towns in the Midwest

Travel planning can be a daunting task. What are the best places to visit? How can you get the most out of your trip? And the ever-popular question, how much driving time will I need? Sometimes you want to breathe fresh air and have a walk. If your trip takes you to the Midwest, here are four towns to visit where you can get a breath of fresh air and a big taste of the towns without having to fight traffic.

Saugatuck, MI

If you are looking for art galleries, shopping and great food, Saugatuck, Michigan just along the Kalamazoo River may be for you. The former lumber town became a noted art colony in the late 19th century and today it is still a haven for artists. Visitors can also get in some water activities including a tour on the paddle-wheel boat, The Star of Saugatuck.

Butler Street is a place where you click into the vibe of the town. Start at The Butler, a favorite neighborhood restaurant, for some Lobster Rolls or Great Lakes Walleye. After enjoying your meal, head east toward Butler Street, turn left onto Butler Street. Walk a couple of feet forward and you will see the Rose Garden. Take a moment and literally stop and smell the roses. What a great treat!

When you finish your visit, continue north along Butler Street for a unique shopping experience. When you get to Mason Street, cross to the other side of the street and continue north. On your left you will see two galleries, James Brandess (landscape painter) and Jeff Blandford (potter).

Galena, IL

This next town is for history and architecture enthusiasts. Galena, Illinois is a time capsule of architecture and United States history, one of them being the home of former President Ulysses S. Grant. Galena is so steeped in history that over 85% of the city's buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Main Street has combined this historic architecture with modern day life. Walking not even a mile down the street, there is much to see. Start at the Courtyard Restaurant in the oldest hotel in the city, the DeSoto Hotel. It is still a fully functioning hotel, minus a couple of floors that were removed years ago.

From there, walk south on Main Street and in just a few feet, on your left is a three-story building with a white façade. This is the Schmohl Building (aka the St. Louis Building). There was an extensive renovation in 2018, and currently retail shops are on the bottom floor. The top floors house the new Ulysees Suites.

A little further down the street you will come to the Coatsworth Building. This building was converted into apartments around 2021. Before that, it housed a wholesale leather store run by the then future President Ulysses S. Grant and his brothers.

Stillwater, MN

Next, we have the birthplace of Minnesota, Stillwater. Born in 1849 as a successful lumbering town built on the banks of the St. Croix River. Between 1853 and 1914, Stillwater was home to the state prison system. The Warden's House is still standing and is available for tours.

Stillwater is a town where history can be imagined in its storefronts right down Main Street. Start at the corner of South Main Street and Myrtle Street, just outside Black Letter Books is the marker commemorating the birth of Minnesota. Do not miss the opportunity to browse this unique bookshop dedicated to the discerning reader and collector. When you finish browsing, head south on South Main toward East Chestnut Street. If you are feeling a bit nostalgic for candy from years gone by, Grandpa Joe's Candy Shop will be a little way down.

Turn left onto East Chestnut Street. At the end of the street will be the Stillwater Lift Bridge. This vertical-lift bridge connects Minnesota and Wisconsin and was completed in 1931. On

either side of the bridge is Lowell Park, a wonderful place to spend some time relaxing and maybe even get the chance to see the bridge lift for boats coming through.

Shullsburg, WI

Last, but not least, is Shullsburg, Wisconsin. Founded in 1827, Shullsburg is the oldest city in the state of Wisconsin. While it is known for lead mining, perhaps the more interesting fact is the mark that Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, a Dominican priest has left on the city.

Father Mazzuchelli not only named many streets in Shullsburg, but he also designed many church buildings in the region, St. Matthew's Catholic Church is one of them. That is where our walk begins. The church was completed in 1861 and is bounded by Peace, Charity, Truth and Judgement Street.

From the church, head south on North Judgement toward East Truth Street. This will take you through a residential neighborhood where many of the houses built in the 1800s can be seen. Turn right on West Water Street and on the right is Water Street Market and Café. A former cash grocery store in 1905 is now this extremely popular restaurant. Pop in for a hearty meal or a slice of their homemade pie. Continue west on West Water Street, cross South Iowa Street and you will find the treasure of Shullsburg, Shullsburg Creamery. Founded in 1934, this award-winning creamery has a long history of family and community in their cheesemaking.

The Midwest is rich in well preserved history. It is a great area to visit at any time of the year. We hope that this list has given you some ideas if you are already planning to visit the Midwest or has peaked your interest in travelling to the area.

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