

Historic Indianapolis Walking Tour

Introduction

Hi. Welcome to iziTRAVEL's Historic Indianapolis Walking Tour, presented by ListenUp Audio. We're so glad you'll be joining us today! I'm _____ and I'll be your guide. A few notes before we get started. This tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete. You can stop at any time and start again at the same spot later. If you'd like, you can put your phone in your pocket and just listen from here. I'll be giving you clear directions and the audio will automatically start playing when you get close to the next point of interest. If a site is closed or your path is blocked, don't worry. Just go around it. The tour will pick up at the next location. And this is important: PLEASE make sure you stay aware of your surroundings at *all* times and obey *all* traffic signals.

(pause)

Welcome to Historic Indianapolis, Indiana. As one of the most famous cities throughout the United States, Indianapolis holds a legacy that is as rich as it is diverse. Established in the early 1820s, it has since gone on to become not only the "Amateur Sports Capital of the World," but one of considerable military contribution as well. On our historic walking tour through the city's downtown, we'll visit some of its most iconic monuments and museums, taking in the rich legacy of the Hoosier State. Whenever you're ready to begin, please make your way to the following address: **125 South Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204**

Bankers Life Fieldhouse

We begin our tour at Bankers Life Fieldhouse, home to the Indiana Fever and Indiana Pacers basketball teams. Built in the late 1990s, the sports arena has become an icon of basketball ever since, ranking as the No. 1 NBA venue for several consecutive years in its early history. As host to a number of Championship and Division titles across its NBA and WBNA teams, everything about the Fieldhouse screams basketball. Its design was the first of its kind in the NBA, and its architecture is steeped in Hoosier legacy, paying homage to Indiana's rich, basketball heritage.

Retro-themed in nature, the Fieldhouse hosts a number of impressive amenities. It comfortably seats over 18,000 people, and its concourse level is nearly 60 ft. wide. Entering the arena for the first time, many visitors take quick note of the grand environment, one that evokes the sights and sounds of other legendary sports cathedrals like Notre Dame Stadium and Lambeau Field. Likewise, the arena's infusion of the Indiana Pacers' indigo and gold team colors is truly magnificent. Reminding visitors that basketball is a way of life here in Indiana, they can be seen most prominently in the arena's carpets and maple finishes.

Yet while the arena plays primary host to basketball games and tournaments, it plays secondary host to a few other sports and events as well. In years past, it has served as an ice-hockey rink and rodeo floor for bull-riding. Additionally, the World Swimming Championship once built an Olympic-sized swimming pool here in the early 2000s. With a legacy as rich as its resident teams, it's no wonder that Bankers Life Fieldhouse is considered the best of the best in sports arenas.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head west on Bankers Life Ct toward S Pennsylvania St. Turn left onto S Pennsylvania St. Turn right onto E Georgia St. Turn left at S Meridian St.

Turn right onto W Georgia St. Turn left onto S Illinois St. Turn right onto W Louisiana St, and the destination will be on your left.

Union Station

Leaving Indianapolis's best sports arena, we now find ourselves at one of its premier hotels. Unique in just about every way, Union Station was originally built in the late 1880s as a railroad station. As one of the city's busiest during this time, the station saw over 200 trains per day during its golden years. Though train travel quickly declined following World War II, the city of Indianapolis soon had an idea for the station's unused space. Plans were put into motion, and part of Union Station was painstakingly renovated into a hotel.

Dubbed Crowne Plaza, the new hotel at Union Station offers 273 luxurious guest rooms for its many yearly visitors. These same visitors often marvel at the grand, Romanesque architecture seen throughout the hotel and station, a style made popular in many railroad stations during the 19th century. As an added bonus, the station even features 13 authentic Pullman train cars from the 1920s. Acting as additional rooms, these train cars provide the station's most unique overnight stay; each named and decorated after famous celebrities from the 1900s. With affordable rates and access to the railroad still operating there today, Union Station remains one of Indianapolis's best experiences.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head west on W Louisiana St toward S Capitol Ave. Turn left onto S Capitol Ave. Turn right onto W South St. Turn left.

Lucas Oil Stadium

Moving from one experience to another, we arrive at Lucas Oil Stadium, home to the Indianapolis Colts football team. Built in the early 2000s, the stadium was designed as a multipurpose venue, having served this purpose and more in the years following. To date, it's played host to not only the 2012 NFL Super Bowl, but also basketball championships as well. NCAA Final Four games have been held here, and the arena doubles as a convention space.

Equally impressive in scope and design, the architecture of Lucas Oil Stadium was created to serve one purpose: to be unmistakable. As football games were often captured on television by the Goodyear Blimp, architects saw to it that Lucas Oil Stadium was designed as a beacon to the city. In this way, viewers would instantly know they were watching Indianapolis well before Peyton Manning, the Colts star quarterback at the time, was even shown on screen. To this end, the stadium was given quite a few distinguishable features, with its most famous being its retractable roof.

Equally impressive is the stadium's orientation. Somewhat skewed, it provides stadium-goers with a perfect view of the Indianapolis skyline. Adding to this, the stadium's façade was constructed using many of the same materials found in other famous American buildings, like the Empire State Building, Yankee Stadium, and even the Pentagon. Given this gorgeous construction, the stadium often serves as an exhibition space and concert stage between games. As one of the city's greatest marvels, it's no wonder that so many in Indianapolis flock to the stadium each year.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head north toward W South St. Turn left onto W South St. Turn right onto S Missouri St. Slight left toward S West St. Turn right onto S West St.

Victory Field

Marking another famous stadium on our tour, we find ourselves at Victory Field. Often regarded as the "best Minor League Ballpark in America," Victory Field opened in the mid-1990s as home to the Indianapolis Indians. As a veritable success story in just about every way, the field was designed from the ruins of a 14-acre site long neglected. Its \$20 million construction is largely seen as one of Indianapolis's greatest victories in urban planning, and it soon became the catalyst for the city's downtown revitalization. Though this process was delicate in nature, the end result is a beautiful one.

Several features of the new stadium continue to be a longtime hit with fans and visitors alike. Its skyline views, similar to that of Lucas Oil Stadium, provide a picture-perfect experience. Likewise, its near-13,000 seating capacity provides fantastic views of the playing field regardless of location. Adding to this, many visitors to the park often take to the lawn behind its outfield wall. Sitting on the grass with glove in hand, it's not too uncommon to catch a fly ball while sharing a picnic with friends and family. Overall, Victory Field remains one of the most aptly named stadiums in the country. Along with its success in revitalizing Indianapolis, the field has permanently helped to bolster the city's reputation as the "Amateur Sports Capital of the World."

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head north on S West St toward W Maryland St. Turn left onto Indianapolis Cultural Trail. Continue onto White River Trail, and the destination will be on your right.

NCAA Hall of Champions

Keeping with the sports theme, we take a moment to visit the NCAA Hall of Champions. Standing here at the Hall, it's easy to remember that the Hoosier State is one where athletics rule. As a secondary home to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the Hall provides a greater understanding of the NCAA itself, creating an emotional connection with the 400,000+ athletes honored within.

This greater understanding comes in the form of the Hall's multilayer design. Split into two levels, the first provides visitors with a sense of what it takes to "make the grade" so to speak. Here all 23 NCAA sports are represented, and the level includes trivia challenges, team rankings, highlights, and even artifacts donated from the Hall's 1,000 represented colleges. Its second level takes this one step further, adding two arenas upon which fellow athletes can compete. Here visitors can trash talk their friends virtually, or go head-to-head on the Hall's retro-styled basketball court. No matter the choice, current athletes are given a clear view of what it takes to make it into the Hall. To this day, it continues to be one of the city's greatest sports treasures.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head east on White River Trail. Turn left. Turn right. Walk for 75 ft. Take the elevator up to the 2nd floor. Walk for 26 ft. Head straight, and the destination should be on the left.

Indiana State Museum

We take a break from Indiana's sports legacy to dive deep into its history as a city. Starting with the Indiana State Museum, we uncover Indiana's secrets through an exploration of the stories, events, and people that shaped it into what it is today. Spread across three floors, this history is first captured by the architecture of the museum itself. Limestone, sandstone, steel, and more come together to form the building's façade, with each of Indiana's 92 counties represented by an individual icon.

As a veritable work of art itself, the museum beckons its visitors to explore Indiana's past, present, and future through a variety of cultural and scientific exhibits. Beginning with its *200 Years of Indiana Art* exhibit, visitors gain a fascinating glimpse into how Indiana is viewed by artists and other peoples from around the world. Paintings, sculptures, textiles and more showcase the state's beauty and depth, with styles ranging from early pioneer, to modern contemporary. Likewise, the museum's *Amazing Maize* exhibit explores the science, history, and culture of corn as it relates to early Mesoamericans. Showcasing the impact corn has had and continues to have on America today, this particular exhibit provides valuable insight into how Native Americans farmed and cultivated this extraordinary crop. Adding more to the mix, the museum's *Retro Arcade* exhibit celebrates the museum's bicentennial with retro game stations, featuring the likes of arcade classics such as Q-Bert, Paperboy, Asteroids, and more. Mixing learning and fun, the Indiana State Museum provides a unique experience with every visit.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head east on N California St toward N California St. Turn left to stay on N California St. Turn left onto W Washington St, and the destination will be on the left.

Eiteljorg Museum

While our last stop touched briefly on Native American culture in the Midwest, our current one dives right into it. Standing in front of the Eiteljorg Museum, it's hard not to admire the great, jumping statues of deer in its main fountain. Titled *The Greeter*, the deer do just that, giving visitors an early glimpse at the breathtaking exhibitions in store for them at the Eiteljorg. As the only museum of its kind in the Midwest, it was founded to collect, preserve, and inspire an appreciation for Native American arts and culture. Starting with its design, the museum draws direct inspiration from the mesas, canyons, and pueblos of the American Southwest. Likewise, the museum is anchored in the circular style prevalent to these Native American communities. At 118,000 square feet, it's truly a sight to behold, especially considering the dedication to this level of authenticity.

Taking equal measures with its exhibitions, collections at the Eiteljorg have consistently been ranked among the world's best. These diverse exhibitions range from the histories of Western pistols and motorcycles, to the intersection of African and Native American cultures, and even explorations of Jewish life in the Wild West. Additionally, special exhibits like the Eiteljorg's *Grand Canyon* exhibit, offer a scientific view of one of America's greatest wonders. More than just a deep cut into the Earth's crust, the exhibit explores the Grand Canyon's cultural impact on the communities around it. From its environmental impact, to its impact as an experience and a place of expression, the mysteries of the Canyon are truly spectacular. With all these exhibits and more, the Eiteljorg remains the perfect stop for anyone interested in some of Indiana's best scientific experiences.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head east on W Washington St toward N West St, and the destination will be on your left.

Indiana Repertory Theatre

As we've delved deep into artistic expression already, it only seems fitting that our next stop add a new layer. Here at the Indiana Repertory Theatre, guests are treated in just this fashion, privy to some of the best shows and live experiences the city has to offer. Designed from the ground up to outshine all other venues, the theatre was originally constructed to be a veritable "movie palace." Its mix of Spanish, Indian, and Egyptian architecture is nothing short of breathtaking. Though decades of modernization around the theatre soon had it falling into disrepair, it was purchased years later by new owners and transformed into what it is today.

That transformation included a host of new auditoriums and performance spaces, and the theatre has quickly become a cultural hotspot within the city. Faithful renditions of *The Great Gatsby* and *A Christmas Carol* have earned the theatre critical acclaim. Likewise, upcoming shows like *The Three Musketeers* and *The Cay* have theatre lovers anxious to see what else is in store. With a mission

statement to always “engage, surprise, challenge, and entertain,” the Indiana Repertory Theatre marks one of our most exciting visits yet.

Whenever you’re ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head east on W Washington St toward S Illinois St, and the destination will be on the left.

Indianapolis Artsgarden

Just beyond the theatre, we come to the breathtaking glass dome known as the Indianapolis Artsgarden. Towering at seven stories, it sits suspended over two of the city’s busiest streets, owned and operated by the Arts Council of Indianapolis. Designed as a skywalk and entertainment venue for the city’s Circle Centre Mall, the Artsgarden plays host to a large variety of exhibitions, and more than 300 annual performances.

Of the exhibitions listed, one of its most popular included its *Art & Soul* exhibit, which celebrated many of Indiana’s African American artists and their pieces. Featuring a church choir, African American food, and an additional student art exhibition, this particular event was a hit with residents and visitors alike. Adding to this, the Artsgarden is widely known for their Garden Jam performances. Famous concerts include those from the likes of The England Brothers, the Artsgarden Chamber Ensemble, and The Fifetones respectively. Likewise, future performances from the likes of Brick Street Poetry and Neil Jacobs promise to provide an equally fantastic experience. Overall, the Artsgarden is but a taste of the rich culture Indianapolis has to offer. Visitors are encouraged to check out their event and performance lineups at their earliest convenience.

Whenever you’re ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head east on W Washington St toward S Illinois St. Turn left onto N Illinois St.

Mile Square

Known as the “heart” of Indianapolis, Mile Square is the first square mile ever conceived in the city. Established in the early 1820s by surveyor Alexander Ralston, the original Mile Square was bounded by North, South, East and West streets. Its central circle was originally intended as the site for the new governor’s mansion, though further planning eventually placed the city’s Soldiers and Sailors monument there instead. Adding to Mile Square’s boundaries, diagonal streets act as its main “arteries” so to speak. Labeled Massachusetts, Virginia, Kentucky, and Indiana Avenue, these streets funnel in the bulk of the Mile’s traffic.

Yet despite Mile Square’s purposeful design, its conception was actually one seeped in a bit of irony as well. Despite initial plans to cull four square miles of forest to make room for the city of Indianapolis, few believed it would ever grow that large. Under this assumption, the layout of Mile Square was actually devised to be the *whole* of the city of Indianapolis. Though history has proven that

to be quite false, it's still funny to think about early pioneers thinking that one square mile would be it. In any case, it makes for a fantastic story, and one often told to visitors like yourself when they happen upon the square.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head south on N Illinois St toward W Market St. Turn left onto W Market St. Enter the traffic circle, and the destination will be on the right.

Soldiers and Sailors Monument

Just a short walk from Mile Square, we come to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. As mentioned previously on our tour, this particular monument replaced the governor's mansion originally intended to mark this location. Built to honor those who fought in America's Civil War, it was completed at the turn of the 20th century, ultimately standing at 284 ft. tall. Its top is crowned with a statue of Victory, often referred to as a statue of Miss Indiana. Additionally, history shows that the statue once dictated the height at which other city buildings could be constructed. Though this restriction is no longer in effect throughout the whole of Indianapolis, it remains in place for any other structures built within the Circle.

Appropriately named Monument Circle, the official area of the statue has become an important gathering place for citizens and visitors alike. Flanked by a fountain, the monument marks a perfect spot to sit and eat your lunch, with many people choosing to do so regularly. Additionally, the monument plays an active part in Christmas events every holiday season. Lights are strung about it to create what the city calls "The World's Largest Christmas Tree." Adding to this, the site is home to many protests and celebrations, making it one of more popular spots with which to campaign or fundraise for a given cause. Bordering many of the city's other cultural attractions, it's a popular stop along many tours.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head southeast toward E Market St, and the destination will be on the left.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

Nestled firmly within the confines of Monument Circle, we come to the Hilbert Circle Theatre. As another of the city's movie palaces, Hilbert Circle has the unique distinction of being the city's first. Built in the early 1900s, the Hilbert Circle Theatre pre-dates the Indiana Theatre by about 10 years, designed in a similarly grand fashion. Its exterior is carved in beautiful, white terra-cotta, while its Greek statues further display the finer points of its Neoclassical Revival architecture. With a seating capacity of just over 3,000, the theatre was an instant hit with residents and visitors alike. Movies premiered to sellout crowds for 65 years, and soon the theatre underwent its own transition.

In the years following, the Hilbert Circle Theatre soon welcomed new owners and a new identity. Now housing the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, its renovations included a brand-new concert hall. Officially dubbed the ISO, it has since gone on to become the largest performing arts organization in the state, maintaining a position as one of the only 15 full-time orchestras in the nation. Cascading its music across Monument Circle and beyond, the ISO and Hilbert Circle Theatre remain a cultural favorite among the downtown area.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head northeast toward E Market St, and the destination will be on the right.

Christ Church Cathedral

Having visited the oldest square mile in Indianapolis, it seems only fitting to make a stop at one of its oldest structures as well. Known as the oldest building still standing in Monument Circle, the Christ Church Cathedral dates all the way back to the late 1850s. Having replaced an earlier church on the site, it serves as a reminder to an age long gone by, actively used today as an Episcopalian place of worship.

Known especially for its music programs, the Christ Church Cathedral is a favorite among those who relish in choral and organ instrumentation. Its Cathedral Choir of Boys has roots dates all the way back to the early 1880s, and their reputation is one of international fame. With several tours and recording credits to their name, they can be seen frequently at the Church and other appropriate venues. Simple yet elegant in its design, the cathedral remains an integral part of Indianapolis's rich history.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head west toward N Meridian St. Exit the traffic circle onto N Meridian St, and the destination will be on the right.

University Park

Like many of the other stops on our tour, our next shares a storied history in transformation and renovation. Established in the late 1820s, University Park was originally intended as the site for a state university. Though this idea never came to pass, the land was soon cleared for a seminary school. Serving this purpose for eight years, the park was again transformed into a gathering space for Union soldiers for upcoming confrontations in the American Civil War. At the war's conclusion, preparations were finally made to permanently and definitively transform the space into the park it is today.

Crowned beautifully by the five-tiered fountain directly at its center, the new park has become one of the city's most iconic National Landmarks. Its fountain is adorned with sculptures of bronze fish, children playing, frogs, and even a woman draped in a toga.

Similarly, the outer perimeter of the park features statues of U.S. Presidents and mythical creatures. These add a new layer to the green space, bolstering University Park's reputation as one of the city's most charming enclaves.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head north on N Meridian St toward W Vermont St, and the destination will be on the right.

Indiana War Memorial and Museum

Nearing the end of our Indianapolis tour, we come to one of its most iconic downtown structures. Officially known as the Indiana War Memorial and Museum, the massive structure stands in honor of the Indiana men killed from WWI, all the way through the Vietnam War. As a monumental project in of itself, construction actually spanned several decades. Its basic roots were established as early as the mid-1920s, but construction wasn't completed until the 1960s. Due to this delay, history sadly shows that its architect, a man by the name of General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, never actually lived to see his creation completed. Having been the American Commander in Europe during WWI, he died several years later. In this way, his legacy lives on through the memorial itself.

True to this legacy, the memorial is actually designed after the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in modern day Turkey, one of the world's Seven Wonders. It ascends 210 feet into the air, marked by six, massive columns on all sides. Its south side features the largest bronze sculpture ever made in America. Titled "Pro Patria," its translation reads "For the Fatherland" in Latin. Walking inside, visitors are immediately greeted by the structure's interior museum. Artifacts ranging from the American Revolutionary War, all the way through to modern day times, tell of Indiana's rich, military history throughout these conflicts. As one of the city's largest and most recognized monuments, the Indiana War Memorial and Museum marks one of our tour's most profound attractions.

Whenever you're ready continue, please proceed via the following route: Head north on N Meridian St toward W Allegheny St. Turn right, and the destination will be on the left.

Veterans Memorial Plaza

As we come to the end of our walking tour, we take one last moment to reflect upon Indiana's truly diverse history. Standing here at Veterans Memorial Plaza, the giant obelisk at its center reminds us that Indiana is more than a sports state; it's one of military contribution as well. Erected in commemoration of all Indiana veterans, the Obelisk stands at 100 feet tall, surrounded by a fountain on all sides. At its base sit four bronze tablets, with each representing the four "essential elements" of the United States as a whole.

Representing the elements of hope, law, science, and education respectively, the tablets speak towards the Plaza's commemorative use as a gathering space. Its space is used annually for the city's 4th of July celebrations, while local schools hold annual Back to School

festivals upon the grounds as well. Flags for all fifty U.S. wave proudly along its perimeter, while its lawn and landscaping provide the ideal spot for personal reflection and relaxation. As the final stop on our Indianapolis walking tour, it marks the perfect place to rest, think back on all you've seen, and enjoy the view.

This concludes our historic walking tour of Indianapolis, Indiana. If you'd like to make your way back to where the tour began, please proceed via the following route: Head south on N Meridian St toward W Allegheny St. Turn left at E Vermont St. Turn left toward N Pennsylvania St. Turn left toward N Pennsylvania St. Take a slight right onto N Pennsylvania St. Turn left onto Bankers Life Ct, and the destination will be on your right.