



# MINNEAPOLIS NORTHWEST

*Tourism*

## 2018 ACTIVITIES GUIDE



# Welcome to Minneapolis Northwest!

When you visit Minneapolis Northwest, you'll experience the fun and flavor of three distinct cities – Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, and Maple Grove – each offering their own blend of family friendly attractions, beautiful parks, outdoor activities, and top-quality hotels, restaurants and shopping. Our vibrant and versatile destination offers enjoyment for everyone, whether you're traveling for business or pleasure. Explore our cities and savor your time in Minneapolis Northwest!



## Brooklyn Center

Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, Brooklyn Center is 10 minutes from downtown Minneapolis and is the perfect place to experience the excitement of both the metropolitan area and the great outdoors. It is home to the historic Earle Brown Heritage Center, one of the state's most unique event and wedding venues, and hotel options to fit your every need, including Embassy Suites and DoubleTree by Hilton. When you visit Brooklyn Center, you can explore the beauty of North Mississippi Regional Park and step back in time for a nostalgic meal at 50's Grill.

## Brooklyn Park

As the sixth-largest city in Minnesota, Brooklyn Park is filled with attractions and activities for everyone from families to corporate travelers. The city's culturally rich neighborhoods feature acclaimed local restaurants with unique cuisines, such as Louisiana-style fare at Crazy Cajun or fresh sushi at Lemon Grass Thai. You'll feel like a pro when you play the championship course at Edinburgh USA or the nine-hole par-30 course at Brookland Golf Park. Additionally, the city's parks, miles of trails, and access to the Coon Rapids Dam make Brooklyn Park an excellent place to visit no matter the season.

## Maple Grove

Maple Grove is one of the fastest-growing communities in the state. Its Arbor Lakes Shopping & Dining District features brand name and boutique stores, excellent restaurants, and entertaining community events, like Chalkfest, throughout the year. Elm Creek Park Reserve draws active travelers, and the city's Central Park Ice Loop is one of only a few in North America.

*To begin planning your visit to Minneapolis Northwest, start by exploring this guide! Then visit our website, [www.MinneapolisNorthwest.com](http://www.MinneapolisNorthwest.com), and download our mobile app, Visit MplsNW, for an even larger variety of restaurants, attractions, events and information. And be sure to check out our blog for an entertaining insider's look at our area.*



# *Three Rivers*

PARK DISTRICT

board meetings  
available



**meeting facilities** - in natural settings  
**team building** - activities in the great outdoors

[ThreeRiversParks.org](http://ThreeRiversParks.org) • 763.559.6700





# January

**Saint Paul Winter Carnival** | Saint Paul

**City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival** | Minneapolis

**Red Bull Crashed Ice** | Saint Paul

**U.S. Pond Hockey Championships** | Minneapolis



# February

**Polar Plunge** | Maple Grove

**Fat Bike Frozen Forty/Frozen Feet 5K/10K/Half** | Maple Grove

**Beer Dabbler Winter Carnival** | Saint Paul

**Super Bowl LII** | Minneapolis



# March

**St. Patrick's Day Parade** | Minneapolis

**LuckyPalooza** | Saint Paul

**Winter Bluegrass Weekend** | Plymouth



# July

**X-Games** | Minneapolis

**Summer Faire Concert Series (Thursdays through August)** | The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**Red, White & Boom** | Minneapolis

**Maple Grove Days** | Maple Grove

**Basilica Block Party** | Minneapolis

**Loring Park Art Festival** | Minneapolis



# August

**Irish Fair of Minnesota** | Harriet Island

**Woofstock** | The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**Uptown Art Fair** | Minneapolis

**Lifetime Tri Maple Grove** | Maple Grove

**Minnesota Renaissance Festival (Through September)** | Shakopee

**Minnesota State Fair** | Minnesota State Fair Grounds



# September

**Twin Cities Harvest Festival and Maze (Through October)** | Brooklyn Park

**ValleySCARE & Planet Spooky (Through October)** | Shakopee

**Bark Park Expo & Wiggle Butt 5k** | Brooklyn Park

**Nordic Music Festival** | Victoria

**Rummage** | Minnesota State Fair Grounds





## April

**Minneapolis - Saint Paul International Film Festival |**  
Minneapolis

**NCAA Frozen Four |** Saint Paul

**A Scottish Ramble |** Saint Paul

**Longevity Expo |** Maple Grove



## May

**Festival of Nations |** Saint Paul

**Cinco de Mayo West Side Festival |** Saint Paul

**Maple Grove Half Marathon |**  
Maple Grove

**Art-A-Whirl |** NE Minneapolis



## June

**Arbor Lakes Chalkfest |** Maple Grove

**Tater Daze |** Brooklyn Park

**MSRA Back to the 50's Weekend |** Minnesota State Fair Grounds

**Earle Brown Days |** Brooklyn Center

**Twin Cities Pride Festival |**  
Minneapolis

**Town Green Sounds of Summer (Through September) |**  
Maple Grove



## October

**Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon |**  
Minneapolis - Saint Paul

**Twin Cities Oktoberfest |**  
Minnesota State Fair Grounds

**Autumn Woods Classic |** Maple Grove

**Fall Festival on Main Street |** Main Street Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**Twin Cities Book Festival |**  
Minnesota State Fair Grounds



## November

**Deer Widow's Weekend |**  
Albertville Premium Outlets,  
Albertville

**Santa's Magical Workshop |** The Fountains at Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**Holidazzle (Through December) |**  
Minneapolis



## December

**Hometown Holiday on Main Street |** Main Street Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**Winter Wonderland Weekend |**  
The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove

**A Norwegian Christmas |**  
Brooklyn Park

# Snapshots of Minneapolis Northwest



@jodzeee



@elmcreekterrainpark



@chelseagusek



@randyh169



@tlcarey



@travel\_b0ss



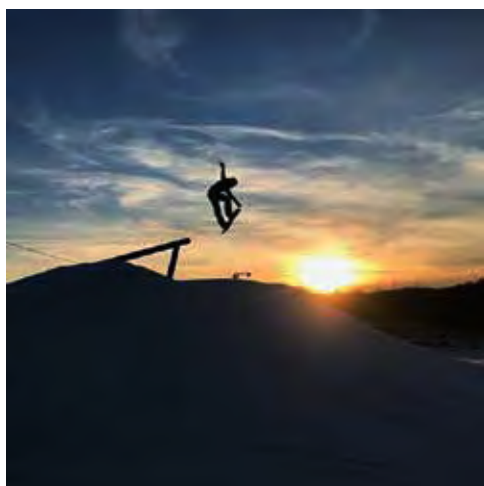
Show us how you embrace Winter in Minneapolis Northwest! #WeLoveMNW



@proKART



@birchlakephoto



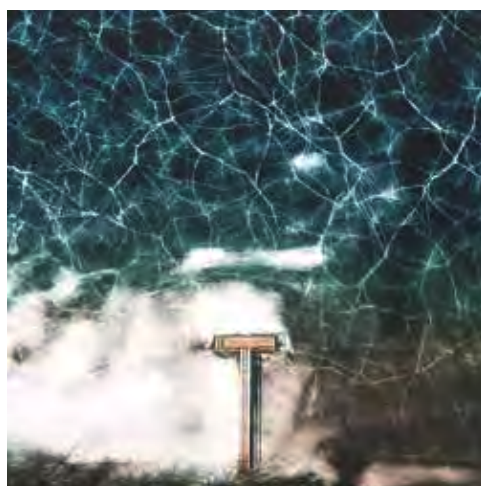
@chelseagusek



@wvito58



@meetfrankwu



@trapadams

# Five Reasons MNW is the Perfect Place to be in Winter



The communities on the northwest outskirts of Minneapolis combine the best of Minnesota — close enough to the big city to offer easy urban access, but also situated right on the doorstep of the great outdoors. Here's why winter is the best time of year to take advantage.

## 1. We love our winter sports.

If outdoor sports like fat biking and skijoring aren't in your vocabulary, it's time you experienced a Minnesotan winter. Head to Elm Creek Park Reserve and enjoy 13 miles of snowy trails for fat biking and skijoring or take on the hills of Elm Creek Winter Recreation Area, where there are 10+ miles of cross-country ski trails, as well as beginners' snowboarding and downhill skiing. Brooklyn Park's 160-acre Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park offers snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, and you may even see area deer.



If you're into ice skating, one favorite spot is Maple Grove's Central Park Ice Skating Loop. It's an ice trail — one of only a handful in North America — that winds through a park in the heart of the city. Rent skates and hit the ice. If you like to slap a puck or two while you're on your skates, check out the Brooklyn Park ice arenas.

## 2. Did someone say Polar Plunge?

Yep, there's an annual Polar Plunge held right here in Minneapolis Northwest. Participants leap into freezing cold water, only to resurface with the color and form of a popsicle, all to raise money for Special Olympics Minnesota. Last year, more than 600 Plungers raised more than \$200,000 at the Maple Grove Polar Plunge. Mark your calendar for the 2018 event on Feb. 3!



### 3. Get ready to hit up some of Minnesota's best stores.



Arbor Lakes Shopping District

Okay, we have more than just cold – you'll find cozy stores, like Nordstrom Rack and GAP, with designer goods in the Arbor Lakes Shopping District. And the Mall of America's 520 stores? Less than 30 minutes away. You'll also find tremendous fashion bargains at Albertville Premium Outlets. Perfect Levi's 501s and velvet boots from Nine West? Check. There's also Cabela's, home to all the outdoor and camping goods you would ever want or need.

### 4. WhirlyBall takes bumper cars to the extreme.

If you haven't heard of it, WhirlyBall combines lacrosse, hockey, and basketball ... all while sitting inside a bumper car. Two teams of five players each try their best to score in the basketball-style hoop. There's only one location in Minnesota where you can take your WhirlyBall skills to the next level and that's WhirlyBall Twin Cities in Minneapolis Northwest. Give it a go and just try to tell us you didn't enjoy it.



WhirlyBall

### 5. The food scene could satisfy even the Minnesota Jolly Green Giant.

Zagat placed Minneapolis above Seattle and Miami as the 11<sup>th</sup> best food city in the country last year, so you know the dining in this part of the world is exciting. From crawfish étouffée and fried frog legs at Crazy Cajun, to papaya salad and roast duck curry at Lemon Grass Thai, and mostaccioli at Sweet Taste of Italy (all in Brooklyn Park), you'll find plenty of amazing meals in Minneapolis Northwest.



## Yellow Tree Theatre Founders Celebrate Theatre's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



In the land of 10,000 theatres, Minneapolis Northwest boasts one of the best. Learn more about the local founders of Yellow Tree Theatre who are thrilled to celebrate the theatre's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Yellow Tree Theatre was founded in 2008 by theatre artists and husband/wife team Jason Peterson and Jessica Lind Peterson who had the dream of enhancing the arts community in the Minneapolis Northwest area. "Looking back, we were pretty crazy to start up in 2008, but sometimes you have to be a little crazy in order to realize your dreams," Jessica says. She currently works as the Associate Artistic and Development Director, and Jason works as the Executive Artistic Director. Both occasionally act in their productions and Jessica is an active playwright.



Founders Jason & Jessica Peterson

Yellow Tree's Osseo location gives it a welcoming small-town feel. You're greeted with twinkling lights when you enter the lobby and are invited to partake in concessions (including a wine bar) while viewing its charming collection of books, décor and local art. The 120-seat theatre is a modern operation with state-of-the-art lighting and sound equipment, and the intimate space makes you feel like you're practically on stage with the actors.



The performances at Yellow Tree vary from quirky comedies and musicals to original plays and classic shows – many of which explore the complexity of the human spirit. The theatre is also known for its entertaining holiday performances, and Jessica has written all of them throughout the last decade. “I do love writing for the holidays because people are in the mood to celebrate and laugh with their families and friends,” she says.



“I love writing comedy and writing about Minnesota, and the freedom to be silly as a writer is just so wonderful.”

The theatre has come a long way from its humble beginnings and is considered a major player in the

regional theatre scene. In 2016, Yellow Tree was among just seven other theatres across the country awarded a National Theater Company Grant from the American Theater Wing, the same organization that runs the Tony Awards. “It was an incredible honor and so gratifying to know that our work in Osseo, Minnesota, is being recognized on a national level,” Jessica says. The theatre has also been recognized as the “Best Place to Find Unexpected Great Theater” by the *Star Tribune* (2014).

As part of their efforts to make live theatre accessible for all, Yellow Tree offers a variety of ticket discounts, such as their Young&Free ticket program for the 25 and under crowd and \$10 rush tickets (but beware – most shows sell out!). Discounts are also available for seniors, military veterans and students, and folks can even sign up to be a volunteer usher and see a performance for free.

Yellow Tree Theatre is much more than a theatre. Its passionate founders continually deliver high-quality storytelling to the local community and enrich the arts landscape of Minnesota. “It’s been a wild ride throughout the past 10 years, but it’s very gratifying to know that we have really become a strong artistic presence in our community and in the Twin Cities overall,” Jessica says.

Whether you’ve been to Yellow Tree Theatre before, have always wanted to check it out, or have never heard of it, now is the time to go!



The Woodhouse Day Spa



## Favorite Things to Do With Girlfriends in Minneapolis Northwest

There's never a bad time to schedule a night out, but gathering your girlfriends for a mid-winter weekend escape ranks right up there with good wine, years-long friendships and great shopping finds. When you and your girlfriends are ready to get away, look no further than Minneapolis Northwest for everything from world-class spa services, to the quaintest wineries and craft breweries. Check out our favorite ways to celebrate the friendships in your life, then gather your girlfriends and head to Minneapolis Northwest.

### Spas & Salons

Be pampered like royalty at one of our exclusive day spas. The Woodhouse Day Spa is one of the newest spas at the Shoppes at Arbor Lakes. From the moment you step inside, you and your friends will know you're in for a real treat as you're greeted by a posh atmosphere of crystal chandeliers, relaxing candles and plenty of comfy seating. You and your girlfriends will have the choice of foot treatments, massage therapy, sleep treatments, skin care and more.

If you're prepping up for a night out, then Simonson's Salon & Spa will do the trick. This full-service spa will give your

The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes





group a makeover including hair, face, body and nails. The staff prides itself on being up to date on the latest hair trends and fashion tips.

Other great options to check out are Etica Salon, MarcDaniel Salon, Kalla Lily Salon & Spa, Taj Salon & Spa, or Ta's Salon. Visit our website for a full listing of great spa and salon options.

## Shopping

You'll find some of Minnesota's best shopping in Minneapolis Northwest. The luxurious Shoppes at Arbor Lakes and Fountains at Arbor Lakes feature brand-name favorites like Victoria's Secret, Lane Bryant, World Market, Pottery Barn, Ulta Beauty and many more. The shopping district is known for its excellent finds and local favorites such as Goodthings and The Woods. Another great place to find fantastic deals is Albertville Premium Outlets, where up to 100 popular stores offer discounted items (some up to 65 percent off). Stores here include Calvin Klein, Coach, Polo Ralph Lauren Factory Store and Ann Taylor Factory Store.

## Breweries & Wineries

Don't leave Minneapolis Northwest without visiting some of our most popular breweries and pubs. Unwind after shopping and enjoy a cold beer or hard cider at Claddagh Irish Pub, where they regularly feature live music and Harry Potter or Friends-themed trivia nights. In Robbinsdale, Wicked Wort is the place to be. This brewery has plenty of tap handles to try new flavors, and

weekends are full of live music performed by talented musicians. If wine is more to your group's liking, you're in luck. Parley Lake Winery, in Waconia, is a 125-acre property with rolling hills, forests and, of course, a breathtaking vineyard. You and your girlfriends can sip on innovative



Schram Vineyards Winery & Brewery

wine flavors like Lake View White, Brianna Breeze and Frontenac Blanc. Other wineries in the region worth checking out are The Winery at Sovereign Estate and Schram Vineyards Winery & Brewery.

## The Paint Pub

Prove to your girlfriends that you're truly the creative one of the bunch by taking them to a painting party at the Paint Pub in Maple Grove. For two hours, you and your girlfriends will be given blank canvases and endless paint supplies and can purchase wine and snacks. A talented painter will instruct the whole room with a step-by-step guide to painting a specific subject. Each painter will create her own masterpiece version to take home.

*For more ideas for weekends away with your girlfriends, visit our website at [minneapolisnorthwest.com](http://minneapolisnorthwest.com) and discover activities for every season!*

## **Cooking His Way to the Top: Get to Know Pat Lundgren, Executive Chef at Minneapolis Marriott Northwest**



Working your way up to Executive Chef at a premier hotel isn't easy, especially before the age of 30, but it helps that Pat Lundgren always knew he wanted to work in a kitchen. The Brooklyn Park native graduated from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Minneapolis and began working as a prep cook and off-site caterer before joining the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in 2013. Once he started, Pat quickly advanced to Sous Chef, Executive Sous Chef and, at last, Executive Chef.

The Minneapolis Marriott Northwest is one of the most well-recognized hotels in the Twin Cities and outer suburbs. With a top-quality restaurant, Wadsworth, and more than 62,000-square feet of event space, it takes a master Executive Chef and a superb kitchen and wait staff to pull

off everything from a quaint 10-person breakfast in the restaurant, to catering a 500-person event in the hotel's largest space, the Northland Ballroom. Logistics are particularly complex, and it's up to Pat and his sous chefs to determine what they need for equipment, staffing, and creative solutions when challenges arise.

Amy Lewis, Minneapolis Marriott Northwest's Director of Sales and Marketing, is often impressed with the number of events Pat works on. "Pat and his team regularly serve multiple parties each weekend, sometimes producing up to 1,000 meals at a time," Amy says. "To maintain the quality and creativity he does with the number of guests that we serve is a testament to his hard work and dedication to the hotel."



Wadsworth changes its menu four times throughout the year to highlight seasonal flavors, ingredients and dishes with a Minnesota twist.

“When a company holds an event at the Marriott and is inviting people from all over the country, even world, they want to show off some of the local favorites,” he says, “including chicken wild rice soup and casseroles.”



notes that sometimes the best food is where you'd least expect to find it.

What makes this Executive Chef feel successful is not having the title at such a young age, but receiving positive feedback from diners and guests, particularly from the larger events, from conferences to trade shows to

weddings. He shares the glowing reviews with his staff, and he is quick to point out that his sous chefs, prep cooks and all others are the ones that truly keep the restaurant and the banquets going.

To keep menus fresh and interesting, Pat gets his creative inspiration by attending events for foodies and other chefs. “We all want to show off our new creations and see what others are doing,” he says. When asked if he watches cooking shows to get the creativity flowing, Pat said he doesn’t. But after a slight pause he confesses he has watched Guy Fieri’s “Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.” He says he enjoys watching lesser-known restaurants, family owned places and even food trucks get highlighted, and

Outside of the Marriott, Pat and his wife are busy raising their two young daughters. They live in Brooklyn Park on an acre of land that offers a welcome respite from the frenzied kitchens, and they wouldn’t have it any other way.



# Snapshots of Minneapolis Northwest



@3squares



@mfranc0212



@jherou



@wickedwortbrewingcompany



@wandering.pine



@thehumblelens



Show us your Spring photos in Minneapolis Northwest! #WeLoveMNW



@ricelakephotos



@dreamhousecreative



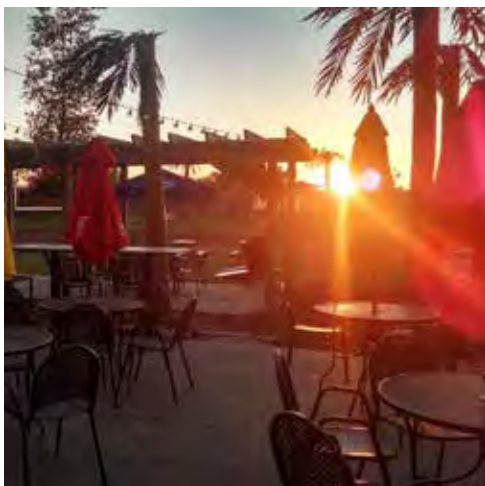
@rushcreek



@crystalphuong



@missq80



@thelookoutbarandgrill

Venetian Indoor Water Park



## Family Friendly Spring Break in Minneapolis Northwest: **Unlimited Options, Unlimited Fun**

IT'S HERE. Where are you going? What will you do? What will it cost? Take the stress out of spring break. Relax, refresh, and rekindle that family bond in Minneapolis Northwest this spring! Between all our great hotels, incredible dining options, and family friendly activities, we have the perfect, budget-friendly vacation your whole family will love.

For starters, where should you stay? Easy, a place your kids will LOVE: Holiday Inn & Suites in Maple Grove. Why? A little something called the Venetian Indoor Water Park! The weather won't matter when you step into this 25,000-square foot water paradise. You'll forget you are in the heart of Minneapolis Northwest, as you are surrounded by the unique Venice-inspired buildings and scenery throughout the water park!



Color Me Mine



The Maple Maze

For fun activities, we've got plenty of ideas for you. An idea sure to get the creative juices flowing is Color Me Mine. Pick which ceramic your kids will get most excited about. It is great for all ages and they'll love being able to bring home their masterpiece!

The Maple Maze at the Maple Grove Community Center is so much fun for children 12 years old and younger.





Central Park

There is a rock wall, pogo sticks, tubes to crawl through, slides, a treehouse and more! There is even a separate area for toddlers to explore and learn. All kids must wear socks, children 1-12 years of age are \$5 (\$6 for non-residents), and toddlers under one are free.

Central Park in Maple Grove is a hotspot for family fun! There is an awesome (and very large) playground that looks like a dream come true to kids of all ages (and their parents). Central Park has sweeping lawns, trails, pickleball courts, a splash pad, and more. Enjoy a stroll around the gardens and labyrinth as you look for flowers in bloom. From the nearly one-mile trail around the park, you can access 55 miles of Maple Grove trails! And it's free! For a small fee, you can rent pickleball, bean bags and bocce ball equipment.



Interactive Fountain - Central Park

Elm Creek Park Reserve offers nature and learning. With miles of trails to explore, a gigantic playground, the Eastman Nature Center, programs for children (and adults), it is the perfect way to spend a sunny afternoon! Get lost in nature on the park's more than 20 miles of hiking trails and watch for wildlife, from eagles and sandhill cranes to beavers and loons, as they come out of their winter hibernation! Are you tired of seeing the word 'free'? Good, because Elm Creek Park Reserve and Eastman Nature Center are both free!



Elm Creek Park Reserve

After all the excitement and running around, it's nice to have some quiet activities lined up too. An often overlooked option is the movies! Maple Grove has an awesome AMC movie theater that offers first-run movies, a fun and entertaining way to spend a couple of hours.

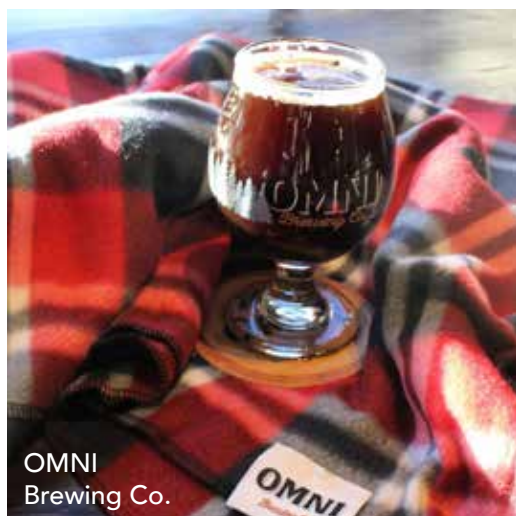


Travail Kitchen & Amusements

## Fun *Date Night* Ideas in Minneapolis Northwest

It is always exciting to go on a date in a new city, and Minneapolis Northwest has plenty of fun and unique date ideas that will take the stress out of planning and also give you a date to remember.

1. **Sip and snuggle.** OMNI Brewing Co. continues to be one of the most popular hangouts in Minneapolis Northwest. Cool craft beers like Loonacy and A Little Hoppy are brewed on-site, and you can take a brewery tour when you call in advance. Have your date coincide with any one of the brewery's special events, such as Food Truck Fridays and Saturdays, Infuseday Tuesdays, live music nights, taproom yoga or trivia nights. When the patio is open, snuggle outside near the fireplace on a cozy couch or play a friendly game of bean bag toss or shuffleboard.



OMNI  
Brewing Co.



2. **Dress up for dinner.** Book a table at a classy restaurant, such as award-winning Travail Kitchen & Amusements in Robbinsdale, a gastropub serving Midwest-inspired fare. About Travail, *Bon Appetit* magazine said: “They’ve got the best house-made charcuterie, crazy-low prices, and smart, ambitious food.” Arrive early for a drink at the bar, where the cocktails are as creative as the food presentations. Also consider Patrick’s Bakery & Café or 3 Squares Restaurant in Maple Grove. Each offers delicious menus, fine baked goods and lovely patios for outdoor dining. And nothing quite sets the mood like dining at an upscale steakhouse like Pittsburgh Blue in Maple Grove. Split a bottle of wine over a savory meal of steaks, chops or ribs, and don’t forget dessert!

3. **Paint a masterpiece.** You don’t have to be Van Gogh to have a great date night at the Paint Pub. Named one of the trendiest nights out in the Twin Cities, the Paint Pub is an art studio café where you and your date can create a featured painting by following the steps provided by the instructor. Sample wine or beer as you paint side-by-side and compare and contrast your final works of art. The studio also has sandwiches, snacks and desserts, so you and your date can grab a bite before, during or after you paint.



Paint Pub

4. **Explore the great outdoors.** Elm Creek Park Reserve is the bee’s knees for outdoor dates. During warmer months, play a game of disc golf on their 18-hole course, have a picnic or take a dip in the chlorinated swimming pond. During colder seasons, explore the park’s winter wonderland on cross-country skis, fat bikes or tubes. Also include Eastman Nature Center in your itinerary for a casual stroll on the floating boardwalk and a visit to the newly renovated nature center. Depending on the time of year, you may see trumpeter swans, wild turkeys, bluebirds, foxes, deer, and abundant native wildflowers.



Dave & Buster's

5. **Compete for the dinner bill.** You already know that Dave & Buster’s is a popular place for kids, but did you know it has adults-only hours? It’s true, which means you and your date can compete against each other in old-fashioned pinball, Dance Dance Revolution or auto racing to see who picks up the tab. And you won’t strike out if you take your date to Bowlero in Brooklyn Park. Not only does Bowlero have bowling lanes galore, it also features giant video and arcade games, billiards, bumper cars, and a full-size laser tag arena.



Lemon Grass Thai



## Top Dining Discoveries to Satisfy Your Cravings

Looking for a unique dining experience or an exciting meal out with fellow foodies? Visit Minneapolis Northwest, where you'll find plenty of exceptional and tasty restaurants. Authentic, international dishes are a few of the meals listed on the menu, thanks to the mix of cultures and traditions in our area.

### Lemon Grass Thai

Thai food with a twist—owner and head chef Ann Sengmavong brings together Thai and global cuisines that are inspired by her travels from around the world. Go traditional with pad thai or try the red, green or yellow curry or massaman curry dishes. At Lemon Grass Thai, you'll also enjoy the savory house specialties like the Bangkok duel, shrimp and chicken in a spicy lime vinaigrette. The restaurant also has a full sushi menu, plus beer, wine and sake.

### Cajun Deli

Get ready for a true hands-on experience! With crawfish, shrimp and crab boil by the pound, Cajun Deli offers a taste of New Orleans in Minneapolis Northwest. In addition to the seafood boils, po' boy



Cajun Deli



sandwiches with fried shrimp, fried tilapia and fried catfish make this menu worth exploring!

### Fiesta Cancun

It's always sizzling at Fiesta Cancun. This authentic Mexican restaurant features south-of-the-border favorites like tacos, enchiladas, burritos and quesadillas. Try a Michelada, beer with lime juice and spices served in a chilled salt rim glass, or sip on some of the best flavored margaritas in town.

### India House

Craving a spicy northern curry or prefer a vegetarian staple of the south? You'll find both at India House, where authentic recipes are made with fresh ingredients and prepared by chefs who are trained in traditional Indian cooking. If you can't decide between northern and southern Indian dishes, India House offers a buffet during lunch, where you can enjoy it all.



### Roasted Pear

Opened by Craig and Karen Rebers in 2003, this family owned restaurant offers a warm and inviting setting to enjoy a meal. Whether it is celebratory or casual,

Roasted Pear has a dish to match any occasion. With salads, sandwiches, burgers, pasta and more, you're guaranteed to leave full and satisfied—though you'll want to save room for one of the daily handcrafted desserts.



### Kyoto Sushi

Craving some sushi? Then you'll want to check out Kyoto's lunch and dinner buffet, featuring all-you-can-eat sushi, maki, hand rolls, teriyaki, tempura, soups and more. Did we mention all-you-can-eat?!

### **NOLA Bistro & Lounge**

NOLA Bistro & Lounge is a unique fusion restaurant on the outskirts of Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove, that serves food inspired by cities across the globe including London, New Orleans, Mumbai and Zurich. NOLA also has options for people following a vegan, vegetarian, or gluten-free diet.

### **Nadia Cakes**

For the cupcake connoisseur, look no further than Nadia Cakes. Here you'll find a tempting selection of award-winning cupcakes topped with fresh, made-from-scratch cream cheese frosting. Owner and head designer Abby Jimenez is a self-taught pastry chef and was featured on TLC's "Fabulous Cakes," and won an episode of Food Network's "Cupcake Wars."

For our full list of top dining discoveries, visit <https://www.minneapolisnorthwest.com/blog/food-for-thought-top-15-dining-discoveries-to-satisfy-your-cravings-1/>.



NOLA Bistro & Lounge

*During your visit to Minneapolis Northwest, use #WeLoveMNW on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to share what you're enjoying—those photos may even be featured on our website!*



Nadia Cakes



## A Friendly Familiar Face: J.J. Voda at Embassy Suites by Hilton Minneapolis North

While Minneapolis Northwest is filled with great attractions, delicious restaurants and plenty of fun things to do, it wouldn't be the welcoming place that it is without the warm hospitality of those who work here. Jamaree "J.J." Voda is one of those people, a familiar friendly face, dedicated to bringing great events to the Embassy Suites by Hilton Minneapolis North in Brooklyn Center and ensuring that each guest has a wonderful stay with her signature outgoing personality!

As Director of Sales and Marketing, J.J. leads a team that includes a catering manager, sales manager, and a sales coordinator. She sets the bar high for herself and her team, but she is a true team player. J.J. is the kind of person who won't ask more of her staff than what she is willing to do, according to Catering Manager Nancy Hanson.

With more than 20 years in the hotel industry, J.J. knows that it's all about relationships and that's what she loves most about it. This goes beyond her work and into her personal life. "My passion is to serve people and their needs beyond their expectations, whether it is in the hospitality industry or in someone's personal life by being a loyal friend and helping enrich their lives in whatever way that I can," J.J. said.



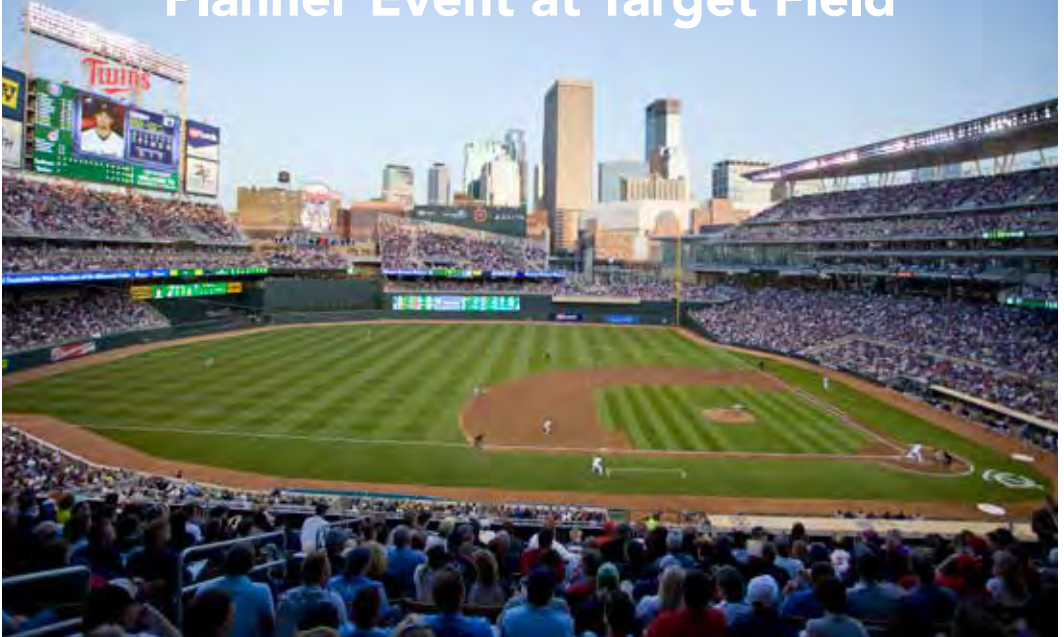
Sales Team (left to right): Chris, Nancy, J.J., Lydia, Latonia

From guiding the team to group selling and helping with events, everyday is different, and J.J. wouldn't have it any other way. She manages a plethora of events, along with her team, including associations, government, sports, weddings and business travel sales.

Her career in hospitality has taken her to a variety of tourist destinations, starting out as a blackjack dealer in Las Vegas, and working at hotels in Georgia and Florida, before coming to the Twin Cities. Of her two decades in the industry, 18 years have been with Hilton Worldwide and 12 years with Embassy Suites.

Amid the busy and ever-changing hospitality industry, J.J. remains true to her Thai roots, speaking the language fluently with close friends and trying out the many Thai restaurants in the Twin Cities. One of her favorite spots is Lemon Grass Thai in Minneapolis Northwest! In her free time, she can be found tending to her garden, containing around 400 Thai pepper plants, and getting a good run or workout in at the gym.

# Minneapolis Northwest Tourism Hosts Planner Event at Target Field



On a sunny afternoon in early May 2017, Business Development Managers Jackie Darsow and Josh Anderson treated 16 planners to a fun afternoon at Target Field as they watched the Twins take on the Oakland A's. While the outcome of the game didn't favor the hometown team, the event was a big win for everyone in attendance.

Jackie and Josh work to connect meeting planners with venues and help to bring events and conferences to the Minneapolis Northwest area, and they especially enjoy making sure our partners know they are valued and appreciated. "In today's digital age, we

communicate so much via email that it's nice to take our clients out and spend some time together face-to-face to catch up and enjoy a ballgame," Jackie says.



The event also provided an opportunity for Minneapolis Northwest to demonstrate our event-planning expertise and ability to think outside the box. "This kind of event helps us show our planners what we are capable of and that we can meet their needs no matter what type of event they're looking for," Josh says.



This was Jackie and Josh's first time planning an event at Target Field and they had a great contact with the Twins who helped them create a fantastic outing. "They helped us select the menu, the game and even had us down to Target Field to ensure we picked the suite that fit us best," Jackie says.

Jackie and Josh selected the one-of-a-kind Kirby Puckett suite, which was outfitted with a TV, wall-sized photos of current Twins players and a framed Kirby Puckett jersey. The intimate space provided enough room for people to mingle and move around as they pleased, and the suite's location directly behind home plate gave everyone a perfect view of the field.



The business development team's attention to detail ensured food and beverages were included in the event, such as hot dogs and all the fixings, chips, dip, fun individual cartons of popcorn, and plenty of cookies. Folks wore their Twins gear and alternated between watching the game from outside the suite in the seats and inside the suite on bar stools and lounge chairs.

The Minneapolis Marriott Northwest assisted the Minneapolis Northwest team during the game and hosted a happy hour afterward at Wadsworth, where the conversation and laughs continued. The day was the perfect opportunity for our partners to step



back from business and simply enjoy a first-hand look at how the Minneapolis Northwest staff works seamlessly to help execute fun, unique events. "Our clients were happy and most importantly, we got to connect with them in person," Jackie says.

*Head to our website to catch up with Jackie and Josh and learn about their passion for helping their planners execute highly successful events.*

# Snapshots of Minneapolis Northwest



@minnemamaadventure



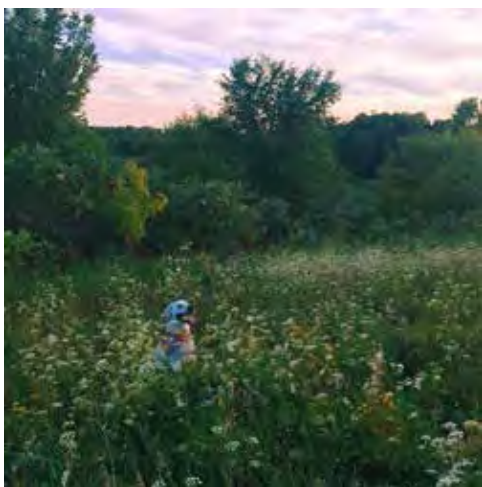
@debrabernard



@elizabeth\_after60



@earlebrownheritagecenter



@angela7hickman



@worldofmiko



Show us your Summer photos in Minneapolis Northwest! #WeLoveMNW



@grace\_aragon



@missunkist89



@maplegrovernmgov



@seethrujeyes



@edinburghUSA



@theshoppesatarborlakes

# Our Favorite Things to Do With Kids in Minneapolis Northwest in the Summer!



School's out and the kids are ready to discover summer adventures! Minneapolis Northwest is at its best in the summer, and with so many festivals, events, and attractions, parents: here's your guide to our favorite activities to plan your family trip around!

## **Favorite Festivals & Events**

### **Earle Brown Days, Tater Daze & Maple Grove Days**

It seems there's a festival to enjoy every weekend in Minneapolis Northwest! Brooklyn Park celebrates its history as an early potato-growing community with Tater Daze, a unique three-day event with fireworks, carnival rides, a 5K Spud Run/Walk, parade, pancake breakfast and Tater Mash dance! Earle Brown Days, in Brooklyn Center, brings the community together for face-painting, arts and crafts, live music and a plethora of blow-up slides and bouncy houses. And, Maple Grove Days fills a weekend with a kids' fun run, bed races, an evening parade, inflatable rides and a grand fireworks display most of the city gathers to see!

### **Chalkfest**

Entering its third year, Chalkfest draws up to 50 artists from around the world to create gorgeous, larger-than-life and 3D chalk designs on Main Street in Maple Grove. Plan to come both days, June 9 and 10, to see the chalk pieces being created from start to finish! There's also live music or dance, food and a children's activity station where children can create their own chalk art.







Camp Arbor

### Summer Music, Concerts & Movies

#### Camp Arbor, Weekly Movie Nights & Town Green Sounds of Summer Series

The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes welcomes you to visit one of its free weekly Camp Arbor children's events. Let the kids get their wiggles out by dancing to the Teddy Bear Band. Or, catch Sounds of Summer at Town Green, an outdoor bandshell overlooking the water, that seats up to 300 guests. Throughout the summer, dozens of bands, musicians, and dancers perform. Families with smaller children will want to catch the puppet show or interactive music concerts. Finally, the whole family will enjoy movie nights at Town Green, Centennial Civic & Veterans Memorial Amphitheater in Brooklyn Center or Central Park in Brooklyn Park.

### Get Outside & Discover

#### Elm Creek Park Reserve

Elm Creek Park Reserve will keep your whole family entertained for hours. It's home to a chlorinated swimming pond surrounded by soft sand to lounge on, a massive playground full of fun obstacle courses to tackle and plenty of shaded bench areas for the parents. Challenge your kids to a game of disc golf on the park's 18-hole course, or go on a stroll or bike ride on one of the designated trails.

#### Eastman Nature Center

Elm Creek Park Reserve is home to Eastman Nature Center, an interactive venue where families can browse through displays of live reptiles and amphibians, explore indoor birdwatching and enjoy hands-on activities like putting on a puppet show and building a fort. Eastman Nature Center has a busy schedule with kid-friendly events to discover like Swans, Befriending Bumble Bees, Feeding Frenzy, Pond Puddling, and even short-term summer camps.



Eastman Nature Center



Central Park Playground

### **Central Park Playground**

Visit Central Park of Maple Grove, which is home to an impressive playground. Kid-friendly obstacle stations such as sand pits, monkey bars and slides will keep your tots busy for hours, and there's a designated toddler play section with its own features. Pack a swim suit because your kids will want to make a splash at the impressive interactive water fountain play area.

### **Rainy Days are Perfect for...**

### **Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove & Brooklyn Center Libraries**

Opened in June 2016, Brooklyn Park Library is not your ordinary run-of-

the-mill library. With a \$23.5 million investment, the library has incredible resources and interactive areas for toddlers through teenagers. Teens will especially enjoy their own tech space where they can learn about working in a recording studio, etc. Parents can also enroll their younger kids in summertime courses like baby story time, movie nights and tinker tots stories. Children will love Brookdale Library, in Brooklyn Center, where whimsical art installations, including one called Jungle Animals Climbing, welcome them to the children's area. And, be sure to visit Maple Grove Library during special raptor events to get up close and personal with majestic eagles, hawks, owls and falcons!



Central Park Interactive Fountain



## At the Hop

### Wagner's Drive-In and 50's Grill

Show your kids how the cool cats used to order their burgers and milkshakes at Wagner's Drive-In. Have your meal served on a platter hanging from your car window or use the outdoor picnic tables while munching on tasty chili dogs and root beer floats. The kids will especially enjoy the Hot Rodders menu with simple favorites like chicken strips and grilled cheese sandwiches.

In Brooklyn Center, 50's Grill is like stepping into a time capsule. Expect to be greeted by glowing jukeboxes, 50's tunes, and kitschy neon signs. Waitresses in poodle skirts serve homemade pies, malts, bison burgers and hamburger steak with crinkle-cut fries. The old-fashioned hand-scooped malts come in delicious flavors like banana hot fudge and orange frosty.



Brookdale Library

*For even more ideas of how to spend your family's summer vacation in Minneapolis Northwest, be sure to visit our website!*



Brooklyn Park Library

## Chalkfest Artist Profile



Chalkfest, an incredible festival with artists from around the world coming to Main Street Arbor Lakes, showcases amazing chalk designs and huge, mind-boggling 3D creations.

In 2017, Hector Diaz and Ken Mullen, a.k.a. The Chalk Guys, made their Maple Grove Chalkfest debut with larger-than-life 3D characters from “The Wizard of Oz.” Masters at 3D designs, they will once again be creating a piece for Chalkfest

2018, and you’ll want to keep a close eye on them June 9 and 10! But, let’s back up a bit and tell you about The Chalk Guys.

Hector and Ken met when they were in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and have been having fun ever since. Though they both were interested in art while growing up, neither received formal art training. In fact, you could say they stumbled into chalk art when Hector came across the Lake Worth Street Painting Festival about 20 years ago. Enthralled by the art he saw, he signed up to participate the next year. He found he really enjoyed creating the work and interacting with the visitors. The following year, Hector invited Ken to do a collaborative piece with him, and The Chalk Guys were born.



After hearing about 3D chalk art, The Chalk Guys decided to give it a try – drawing The Beatles at Abbey Road, 20 feet tall and completely in chalk. Their love for The Beatles is evidenced by the



numerous drawings they have created depicting the foursome.

Now, these lifelong friends do 18-20 pieces a year. Asking Hector how they are able to think of new pieces, he said that he and Ken “never grew up.” They both love joking around and their fun-loving nature informs their work and how they think of new creations. Their signature is goofy and whimsical.

When asked what keeps him motivated and inspired, Hector said the interaction with the crowd is one of his favorite things. He loves when people ask questions and get involved in the process. “If even just one kid walks away and is inspired to create something, that would be amazing for us.”

The Chalk Guys believe that once a piece has been brought to life, it’s done. It isn’t fun recreating the same thing, and they want each piece to be unique. Which means that if you miss them at Chalkfest this year, you’ll NEVER see what they created. Don’t miss it!

So, what do The Chalk Guys do besides create incredible art? Both have families and full-time jobs. Hector is a graphic artist and Ken is a web developer. They both take art classes at local colleges to build their repertoire of skills. Even their hobbies are creative: Hector plays the bass; Ken is a drummer; and both are involved with bands.

Do The Chalk Guys have any advice for people attending Chalkfest? “People tend to come on the second day only. But the process is part of the fun! You’ll miss out on the full experience because this is truly a unique opportunity to watch artists create in front of you.” Hector also enjoys visitors’ questions and says talking to the artists is highly encouraged! Crowd interaction is one of the reasons artists love these festivals!

Stay tuned to see what The Chalk Guys will unveil at Chalkfest 2018. They wouldn’t give any hints about what they are going to create, but we know it is going to be amazing. Make sure you are part of the excitement June 9 and 10! We’ll see you there!



## A Slice of *Happiness* (And a Pint of Beer) in Minneapolis Northwest

Pizza and beer go together like ... pizza and beer. When the sun is shining and you're planning your weekend with friends or your next trip, look no further than the pizza places and breweries in Minneapolis Northwest.

*Rocky Rococo Pizza & Pasta (Brooklyn Park)* needs to be on your list. The pizza dough is made fresh daily and is turned into good old-fashioned, pan-style pizza (meaning the crust is something you can enjoy all by itself). There are also delicious Italian breadsticks, a salad bar, build-your-own pasta bar, and thin crust pizza.



Pig Ate My Pizza

*Punch Neapolitan Pizza (Maple Grove)* utilizes a centuries-old technique that the original Neapolitan masters used to create truly tasty pizza. These divine pies are fired in a 900-degree wood-burning oven giving the crust that authentic flavor that sets them apart. However, the Punch Salad and the Chopped Italian Salad are also masterpieces.



Punch Neapolitan Pizza

*Pig Ate My Pizza (Robbinsdale)* is award-winning (*Time* magazine named it one of the 10 best pizza places in the country in 2015) and creative. The Hot Ghandi will have you happily sweating and the Piggy Pie (meat lovers on a brioche crust) will change your life. Plus, there are fabulous starters and desserts that you need to try.



*Pieology (Maple Grove)* wants to feed your imagination. With 78 billion flavor combinations (three kinds of crusts, seven sauces, six cheeses, seven meats, 16 veggie toppings, and five “drizzles”) you customize your pizza with any topping or sauce you desire and they’ll fire it up and have it cooked for you in five minutes.

*Chanticlear Pizza Grill (Maple Grove)* has declared “The Pizza Is King” and that shows in their quality ingredients and dedication to serving you the best pizza. Sit down and enjoy pizza and a fantastic buffet featuring soups and pastas with made-from-scratch ingredients.



Pieology



Omni Brewing Co.

*OMNI Brewing Co. (Maple Grove)* has a beer for everyone, whether you prefer IPAs or a mild brew. Try the Lake Day, “a tasty standby for all kinds of people” or Omnipotent, a warm, delicious Scottish Ale.

*Wicked Wort Brewing Company (Robbinsdale)* prides itself on being a comfortable place for adults to kick back and enjoy freshly crafted malt beers. Try the seasonals or ask for a Birdtown Blonde Ale or the surprisingly light Old Sport London Brown Ale to get started.

*Granite City Food & Brewery (Maple Grove)* is of course known for delicious food, but the craft beer is exceptional. With six regulars on tap and a variety of seasonal brews featured throughout the year, you’ll have a tough time choosing just one (which makes a flight a solid decision). If that doesn’t work for you, try The Northern, an American Lager, or if you can handle it, the Batch 1000, a Double IPA.



Wicked Wort Brewing Company

# Golfing is a Gimme in Minneapolis Northwest

Minnesota ranks as one of the best states in the country for golfing and Minneapolis Northwest takes pride in its championship golf courses and the variety of golf available. Whether for business or pleasure, give yourself the green light to golf at any of our excellent courses.



Edinburgh USA

**Edinburgh USA** in Brooklyn Park is an 18-hole championship golf course that has hosted seven LPGA tour events, the 1992 USGA Public Links, along with other local amateur and professional championships. It is perhaps best known for its famous 17<sup>th</sup> hole, which boasts an island fairway and a peninsula for a green. Edinburgh has received major acknowledgements, including “Best of State” category and “Top 75 Affordable Courses” by *Golf Digest*, and “Top 100 Courses You Can Play” by *Golf* magazine. After a recent \$2 million remodel, the number of sand traps was cut from 81 to 64 and the sand replaced with cool, green grass, making this already impressive course more appealing to golfers at all skill levels.

**Rush Creek Golf Club** in Maple Grove has a beautiful layout and a stunning 18<sup>th</sup> hole to provide the perfect ending to your game. The championship course has hosted three LPGA Tour events and the 2004 U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship. The Mac Nine par-3 course is a family friendly addition to the facility and is also great for short game practice and beginning golfers. When visiting Rush Creek, be sure to stop by the acclaimed Highlander Restaurant where you can enjoy dinner in front of the stone fireplace or capture the breathtaking view of the course while watching the sunset on the terrace.

Head to **Centerbrook Golf Course** in Brooklyn Center for a fun and challenging nine-hole, par-3 layout that can be played in 90 minutes or less.





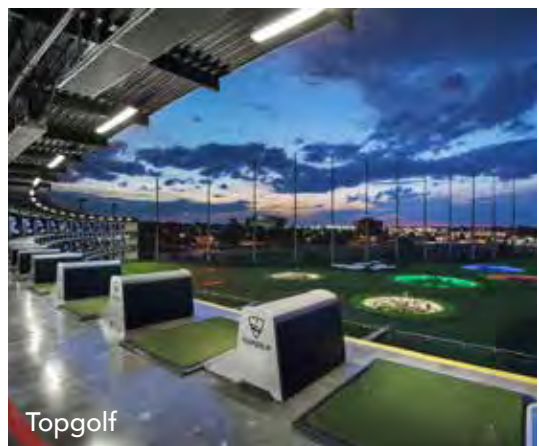
Rush Creek Golf Club

You can also try Fling Golf, an entertaining blend of golf and lacrosse, as an alternative to the traditional sport. Fling Golf players join conventional golfers on the greens and scoring is consistent with the regular game. And like the championship courses, Centerbrook is a terrific location to hold family, charity and team-building events.

**Sundance Golf Banquet and Bowl** is an 18-hole, par-72 golf course located in Maple Grove. Set in the rolling hills of an old farm, it has the perfect amount of ponds, wetland and bunkers to keep the course interesting and fun. It is traditionally one of the first courses to open and is among the last to close, providing you with an enjoyable, longer season. Sundance also has 24 lanes of bowling and a sports bar and grill for an extra good time.

**Brookland Golf Park** in Brooklyn Park has earned a reputation for providing one of the best golf experiences in the region. Their nine-hole, par-30 design is great for someone looking for a more laid-back round of golf. Brookland has a friendly and inviting atmosphere with a pro-shop, putting green and lessons for all levels of play. You can also play Disc Golf or FootGolf, where players use soccer balls on a traditional golf course with 21-inch diameter cups!

**NEXT ON THE TEE:** Watch for Topgolf to open in Minneapolis Northwest in 2018! The popular high-tech all-season golf center will open in Brooklyn Center and feature 100+ climate-controlled hitting bays (with balls tracked by data-absorbing microchips), full-service restaurant and bars, private event spaces and meeting rooms, a rooftop terrace with fire pit and more than 200 HDTVs. You won't want to miss this incredible golf experience!



# Minneapolis Northwest Tourism Hosts Taste of MNW Tour

For meeting and group planners, finding the perfect place to host an event can be challenging. Minneapolis Northwest Tourism strives to make it easier by providing resources like an Event Assistance Fund and hosting events to give planners access to area venues, hotels and restaurants.

Last summer, we hosted a Taste of MNW Tour to introduce new and seasoned event planners to everything our area offers.

Held at locations as varied as the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites – Maple Grove, OMNI Brewing Co., Love That Olive, Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis North and Edinburgh



OMNI Brewing Co.

USA, the Taste of MNW tour provided attendees an opportunity to tour each location, participate in team-building activities and sample signature food and drink items at each venue, giving way to the theme Taste of MNW.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

**Earle Brown Heritage Center** – This unique facility blends its rich historic charm with well-appointed on-site services and attention to detail. The planners were guided by staff through the expansive space while sampling delicious raspberry granola bars and fruit with candied bacon on a kabob.

**Edinburgh USA** – Though Edinburgh USA has been around for a long time,



Signature Food Item - Embassy Suites  
by Hilton Minneapolis North





Mississippi Gardens

adding it to the tour was a great reminder that it has a gorgeous, championship golf course. Known for its famous 17<sup>th</sup> hole with an island fairway and peninsula, Edinburgh USA is the site of the largest putting green in the United States. Attendees participated in a putt contest and indulged in Coconut Chicken Tenders and Mango smoothies.

**Mississippi Gardens** – Owned by former NHL hockey player Jordan Leopold and his wife Jamie, this premier venue is located on the bluffs of the Mississippi River and sits on nearly five acres of beautiful scenery. The facility spans 11,000-square feet and features a 2,706-square foot deck with panoramic views of the bluffs and Mississippi River. Attendees received a tour of staged event areas and were served appetizers on the deck and non-alcoholic Moscow Mules, which were a perfect fit for the venue and scenery.

**Minneapolis Marriott Northwest** – The tour

ended with a stop in Brooklyn Park at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest where the staff served a variety of food for sampling. The planners were taken on a tour of the convention space as well as the hotel rooms before pausing for great conversation and specialty cocktails in the grand foyer.

*The Taste of MNW was a huge success, and we are already planning a Summer 2018 tour! For more information or to read a full recap of this year's event, visit: [minneapolisnorthwest.com/groups-planners/](http://minneapolisnorthwest.com/groups-planners/)*



Earle Brown Heritage Center

# Snapshots of Minneapolis Northwest



@minnemamaadventure



@danstevens32



@indy\_puppy



@jcampbell003



@michaeldockhamphoto



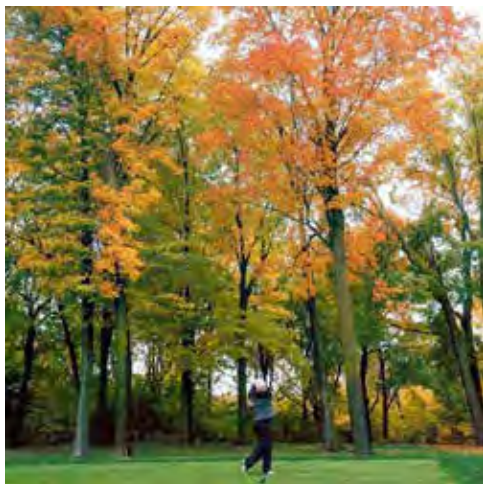
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Show us your Fall colors in Minneapolis Northwest! #WeLoveMNW



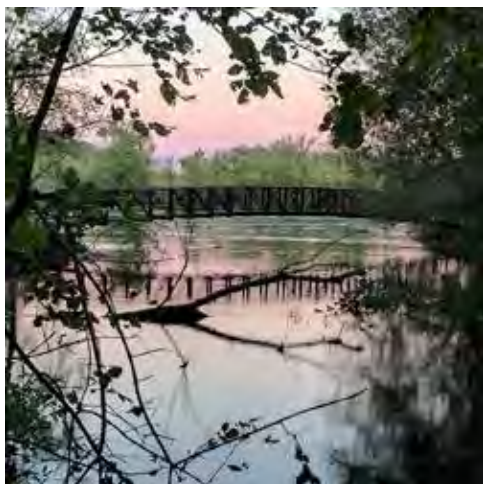
@leilanaidi



@westpax



@rachmg777



@that.lisa.k



@eidemhomestead



@eagleone1\_drone



## Fall Itinerary for Family Fun in Minneapolis Northwest

*Autumn is the perfect time to bring the family to Minneapolis Northwest for a weekend full of fun. From experiencing the breathtaking fall colors to finding your way out of a corn maze, there is always something to do ... and a place to feed your hungry kiddos!*

### Rise and Shine

#### The Original Pancake House

Start the day with a hearty breakfast. Whether you are in the mood for pancakes, waffles, decadent crepes, eggs or the mother of all favorites ... bacon ... the Original Pancake House is a sure bet

to satisfy everyone's craving! The Original Pancake House is a family business with an inviting and cozy atmosphere. Try well-known favorites like the Dutch Baby, Eggs Benedict or Georgia Pecan pancakes!

#### Fat Nat's Eggs

You guessed it from the name, Fat Nat's Eggs specializes in creating the most diverse dishes using ... eggs! Using fresh ingredients prepared daily, every meal is made to order to ensure you get a breakfast to remember. You can choose from seven different kinds of Eggs Benedict or take the adventurous route and try a Fat Nat's specialty like Huevos Rancheros Carnitas that will spice up your morning!





## **Fall in Love With the Great Outdoors**

### **Twin Cities Harvest Festival and Maze**

Get lost in the excitement of autumn at the popular Twin Cities Harvest Festival and Maze. The festival features Minnesota's largest corn maze, measuring 20 acres, and offers entertainment for the whole family! Besides a corn maze, there is a corn pit where kids can swim through corn, a straw-bale maze, a petting zoo featuring familiar and exotic animals, and hayrides! But wait ... there is more ... including live music, pony rides and a pumpkin patch.

### **Eastman Nature Center**

Situated within the Elm Creek Park Reserve, nestled in the sugar maple floodplain forest of Rush Creek, is Eastman Nature Center. Families can learn about the great outdoors through a variety of special events throughout the fall, and kids will love the hands-on activities, dressing up in costumes and putting on a puppet show! Live reptiles and amphibians add to the rotating interpretive displays throughout the building.

## **Lunch Break**

### **50's Grill**

Step back in time at 50's Grill where the jukebox is jumping and the food is served up with a smile. With dishes like homemade meatloaf and chicken potpie,

you'll feel as if you never left home! Before you leave, treat the kids (and yourself!) and order a malt—you've escaped to the 1950's, well before the era of counting calories.

## **Grand Finale**



### **Dave & Buster's**

Featuring more than 200 games in its Million Dollar Midway, Dave & Buster's is fun for the whole family! Enjoy this premier entertainment complex and play everything from billiards to shuffleboard. We guarantee you will have worked up an appetite after hitting the Million Dollar Midway, so sit down as a family and enjoy a wide range of delicious food to satisfy everyone at the table.

Show us where you decided to go as a family. Post your photos on social media using [#WeLoveMnw](#) and you could be featured on our website!





## Get Your Fix for Louisiana Fare in Minneapolis Northwest

Crazy Cajun in Brooklyn Park packs a punch of authentic Louisiana flavor and is increasingly known as the best place to get crawfish in the Twin Cities. A cowboy hat-wearing crawfish greets you as you walk in, along with a mouth-watering garlic and spice aroma. Several tables in the dining area have built-in buckets for your shells, so you know this place is serious about seafood. You'll also notice that Crazy Cajun is crazy about the Minnesota Vikings, and many Vikings players visit this eatery during the football season for a true southern-style feast fit to feed a king.

Crazy Cajun's menu overflows with choices. Start by nibbling on tasty appetizers, such as Crab Balls and Boudin Balls, each deep-fried to perfection. Additional southern starters include gator bites, fried oysters, frog legs and crawfish pie, or start with a cup of seafood or chicken and sausage gumbo.

The real star of the menu is the seafood boil where you can choose from crawfish, mussels, king crab, blue crab, snow crab, clams, and jumbo shrimp. (The crawfish and blue crab are seasonal, so you may want to call ahead of time if you're looking for these specific boils.) Once you select your meat for the boil, pick one of two sauces - the house garlic butter sauce (Cajun-style) or the





coco sauce made of sweet coconut cream, garlic, butter, and basil leaf. Add on to your seafood boil with halved ears of sweet corn, hunks of potatoes or pork sausage. Bonus tip: plastic bibs and wet-naps are available!

For something a little less crazy at Crazy Cajun, try out one of the many fried baskets available and choose from jumbo butterfly shrimp, walleye fillets, catfish fillets, popcorn shrimp, and oysters. Sides of thick crinkle fries and hush puppies, made with savory cornmeal batter and chopped onions, round out the generous portions.



It's hard to imagine a Louisiana-style restaurant without po' boys ... which is why Crazy Cajun has delicious po' boys stuffed to the gills with your choice of shrimp, crawfish, catfish, or oysters. And if any meals get a little too spicy, just order a basket of sweet potato fries or quench your taste buds with the tap beers and wine selection available (including frozen sangria!).

Lucky for Minneapolis Northwest, Crazy Cajun owner and chef, John Nguyen, found the perfect spot for his restaurant right in Brooklyn Park. Nguyen comes from Houston and puts his own spin on his mother's recipes. Sometimes he steps away from the kitchen to wander the dining area and chat with customers. You never know when you'll meet him when you dine at Crazy Cajun.



*Read more about Crazy Cajun and check out their weekly specials at [www.minneapolisnorthwest.com/directory/crazy-cajun](http://www.minneapolisnorthwest.com/directory/crazy-cajun).*

# A Dream Realized: Meet Jamie Leopold, Owner of Mississippi Gardens



Located 15 minutes from downtown Minneapolis sits Mississippi Gardens, an elegant premier wedding and event center overlooking the Mississippi River. It's the realization of Jamie Leopold's dream of running a family business and making fairytale events come true.

Jamie and her husband Jordan met as sophomores at Robbinsdale Armstrong High School in Plymouth and quickly became sweethearts. Both attended the University of Minnesota, and while Jordan established himself as an elite college hockey player with potential to turn pro, Jamie studied retail merchandising and business development. She also worked as a catering coordinator, where she got her first taste of event planning.

The couple married and moved to Canada in 2002 when Jordan began his NHL career with the Calgary Flames. Throughout Jordan's career, Jamie spent time in

Colorado, Florida, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and St. Louis, and the couple welcomed four children along the way.

Despite moving around, the Leopolds carried a strong sense of home with them and talked about what they could do together once Jordan's playing days were over. Jamie had wanted to own her own event center and help make fairytale weddings come true, and the couple kept their eyes on the property that would eventually become Mississippi Gardens.





Obtaining the property was a complex and lengthy process, and Jamie also knew how important it was to gain the support and trust of the neighborhood's residents. She went door-to-door with a drawing of a wedding that her daughter had made and talked with folks one-on-one, sharing their family's plans and listening to both the encouragement and concerns of the residents. All of this happened while Jordan was still playing hockey and Jamie was looking after their four children. When asked how they got through it, Jamie laughs and says, "There was certainly a lot of learning along the way, a lot of trial and error."

The result of Jamie's hard work is Mississippi Gardens – close to five acres of lush, beautiful land sprinkled with flower beds and towering trees, and an 11,000-square foot building with wood beams and floor-to-ceiling windows. The 2,076-square foot deck ties it all together, providing stunning panoramic views of the Mighty Mississippi. The property is part of the National Park Service and the Leopolds work with the Department of Natural Resources to ensure the riverbanks and wildlife are protected.

Mississippi Gardens also maintains a solid partnership with Mintahoe Catering & Events, the exclusive caterer of the venue. Erin Hegedus, Event Consultant for Mintahoe, says working with the Leopolds is like being with family. "Once I met them I couldn't have asked for a better situation," Erin says. "They are so down to earth, straightforward and honest, and they would give the shirt off their backs to you."

While Mississippi Gardens identifies primarily as a wedding facility, Jamie wants businesses and organizations to

know that during the week their space is perfect for all kinds of events – from meetings and lunches, to team-building activities and training days. They provide a full set of audio-visual equipment for speeches, slideshows and presentations, and delicious catering from Mintahoe. Groups often find the space a welcome change from a typical meeting room, and in the warmer months, groups can take advantage of the grounds with bean bag toss, bocce ball and golf putting.

With a booming business and now five children, Jamie and Jordan are busier than ever and Mississippi Gardens continues to be a family oriented endeavor. "They are very present, even when initial tours are being done," Erin says. "When a client comes into the space, they know they are cared for and they are welcomed into the Mississippi Gardens family."

Read more about Jamie's story and Mississippi Gardens on our blog!



## Fall in Love With Minnesota Sports

*Minnesota should be at the top of your list when it comes to sports. Skeptical? We get it, but not only do we have a plethora of recreational sports for you to enjoy, such as fishing, hunting, skiing, snowboarding, etc., we also have six professional teams for you to cheer on.*

When fall comes around some sports may be winding down, but there is still a chance that you could catch some late season Twins games at Target Field or watch the Lynx dominate in the playoffs. They just took their 4<sup>th</sup> WNBA Championship title in 2017! If you miss those, we've got plenty more to keep you entertained while you're enjoying your time in Minneapolis Northwest. And if everything falls perfectly into place you could potentially watch the Twins, the Lynx, the Vikings and the Wild all play on the same weekend.

Just a short drive away is U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings.

You must catch a game in the new stadium. Whether you're a local or just visiting, it's an experience you won't forget. This 66,200 seat, state-of-the-art facility will host Super Bowl LII in February 2018!

With fall also comes the Wild home opener at the Xcel Energy Center. If you're visiting the State of Hockey this fall, you owe it to yourself to check out a game. There isn't a bad seat in the house and the atmosphere is going to get you on your feet and keep you cheering all night.

You can't talk fall sports without mentioning the Minnesota Timberwolves. Their season starts now and draws you



into the action from game one. Target Center, their shared home with the Lynx, just underwent a complete renovation and you'll want to check it out! Upgrades include a new advanced high-definition scoreboard, new suites, more natural light and spectacular views!

Let's not forget about the Minnesota United FC soccer team! They are opening their own stadium in 2019, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy games this fall. The National Sports Center holds 8,000 of the most passionate fans you'll find anywhere and each game is an event like no other. Get there early and tailgate or hang out afterward and get autographs!

We also have some of the best college sports around, courtesy of the University of Minnesota. With Gopher football, hockey, volleyball and basketball, there is plenty of sports action happening here.



Minnesota Wild

Looking for something a little different? Check out the Minnesota RollerGirls. The RollerGirls play in a women's league that competes on flat track roller derby rinks. With more than 80 skaters and four home teams, it's unique, exciting, and fun!

All of this and more is just a short drive from Minneapolis Northwest. We'd love to help you plan your sports itinerary!



U.S. Bank Stadium

We would love to hear about your experience in Minneapolis Northwest!  
Post your photos to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag  
#WeLoveMNW and you may even be featured on our website!



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