



# Great River Road

## NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

Group Travel Itinerary



Along the majestic Mississippi River on Iowa's Eastern boarder  
World class vistas, charming river towns, magnificent lime-stone bluffs, and thriving river wildlife=





## GRR NSB

### Group Travel Itinerary

Iowa's river towns have a flair all their own. Experience it for yourself when you follow the Mississippi River between Iowa's southern and northern borders along Iowa's portion of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Part of a 3,000-mile long network of Federal, state, and county roads, the Great River Road stretches the length of the Mississippi River from the headwaters in Lake Itasca, Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

## Unique Adventures



This is where Iowa history as we know it began! Julien Dubuque is credited with being the first European settler to set foot in Iowa. He arrived around the end of the 18th century when the Country of Spain owned the land. The Governor of Spain gave Dubuque a land grant to work a lead mine on the 189-acre area that was to be called the, "Mines of Spain". Over 200 years later, the **Mines of Spain Recreation Area** encompasses over 1,000 acres and is a brilliant spot for wildlife watching, canoeing, hiking, and learning at the E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center. Visit the overlook and the 100-year old monument where Julien Dubuque is buried and revel in the beauty of the Mississippi River.

Major American history happened along the Mississippi River when the United States was in its infancy. Step into the past as a costumed guide leads you through the reconstructed **Old Fort Madison**. Learn about the booming business at the trading post and the violent battles surrounding the Fort during the War of 1812.

If the fine arts are of interest to you, you can't miss the **Figge Art Museum** in downtown Davenport. The Figge is the premier art exhibition and education facility between Chicago and Des Moines, with world-class rotating exhibitions and an impressive permanent collection featuring internationally important art from the 15th century to present time.

For the ultimate Mississippi River celebration, the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** in Dubuque, a

Smithsonian Affiliate, engages all ages with beautiful aquariums and astonishing history. Set on the banks of the Mississippi, the campus has a plethora of activities including the chance to feed sting rays, tours of a retired river boat and a 3D/4D theater.

On one of the most picturesque sections of the Upper Mississippi River Valley, tucked into the dramatic hills is Iowa's only national monument, **Effigy Mounds**. The site has 200-plus American Indian burial mounds, many in the shape of animals known as effigies. The natural area and interpretive center offer opportunities to contemplate the meanings of the mounds and the people who built them. Fantastic hikes with the reward of a photoworthy view.

## Scenic Spots



Rising 450 feet above the community of Lansing & the Upper Mississippi River Valley, **Mount Hosmer** provides opportunities for picnicking and hiking but is most well-known for its incredible "birds-eye" view of the Mississippi River and Black Hawk Bridge.

Many famous explorers noted the strategic importance of the Mississippi River. The legend, Zebulon Pike, was commissioned by the United States in 1805 to explore the Mississippi River Valley after the Louisiana purchase. He reported that the area now known as **Pike's Peak State Park**, would be an ideal location for a fort because of its expansive views. Although that never came to fruition, this park offers exceptional overlooks 500 feet up the dramatic bluffs that will illuminate the area's appeal to Pike. Two years after his trip to Iowa, Pike was again commissioned by the US Government to make another Western exploration; the one where he discovered what is now Pikes Peak, Colorado. Iowa's Pikes Peak has been owned by the federal government for hundreds of years and for this reason, probably looks much the same as when Zebulon Pike first explored it. A delight for fall leaf watchers.

In that first excursion, Zebulon Pike made his mark all along the Mississippi River. **Crapo Park and Arboretum** in Burlington is reported to be the site where, in 1805, Zebulon himself first raised the American flag on Iowa's soil. Ninety years later, Phillip Crapo established the 85-acre park, which is best known for its multitude of perennial flowers, shrubs and trees. The park also includes the Black Hawk Spring and Cave, which you can crawl through for more than 100 feet.



As you travel the Great River Road, tucked between the Mississippi River and the Limestone Bluffs is the area now known as **Guttenberg**. No matter which way you enter, you'll find dramatic overlooks of the historic town including an aerial perspective of US Army Corp of Engineer Lock and Dam Number 10. This historic German community is nestled in the heart of the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, next to stately and numerous local, state and private natural resource areas. A real gem!

## Points of Discovery

Let your imagination flow down to the river landing, where the waters of Village Creek gently converge with the Mississippi River near Lansing, Iowa. Imagine a place once bustling with clanking tools and shouts of fishermen hauling in the day's catch; the low, mournful sound of the steamboat whistle echoing through the steep bluffs and along the sacred, earthen mounds. Towering glaciers passed around this very spot—scraping and scouring all but this land, a breathtaking region known as the Driftless Area. The **Driftless Area Education and Visitor's Center** features three levels of cultural, recreational, natural and historical interpretation on the significance of this unique area.

For an in-depth look at the area's fisheries, book a chat at the **Guttenberg Hatchery & Aquarium** in historic downtown Guttenberg. Located within the Upper Mississippi River Fisheries Station, the aquarium houses fish species common to the area. At this particular DNR station, staff are experts in the field of harvesting brood stock for spawning operations. This means, millions of fish eggs are collected, fertilized, and hatched here before being transported to 'Rearing Stations' and then to Iowa's lakes and rivers.

Have you ever heard of the "Gold Rush of the Midwest"? Well, there was a rush for a valuable commodity right here in Iowa, but it wasn't a precious metal, it was mother of pearl! At the **National Pearl Button Museum**, you'll learn Muscatine's history in becoming the Pearl Button Capital of the World and the fascinating story of the connection between a booming industry and small town growth.

The Hopewellian mounds at the **Toolesboro Indian Mounds and Museum** in Wapello will take you back to ancient American Indian history. These mounds are among the best-preserved and accessible remnants of an ancient culture flourishing from around 200 B.C. to 300 A.D. The 5-acre site includes several large surviving mounds, a museum, and a prairie demonstration plot.

## Local Flavors

A Mississippi attitude isn't all in big views and museums. Restaurants along the Mississippi embrace the beauty and personality of the Mississippi and have created dining experiences to match. At **Go Fish Marina** in Princeton, river watch how recreationists take advantage of the restaurant's dockside delivery. Soak up the sunset during dinner on the large patio built right over the river.

Try some of **Bent River Brewing Company's** signature beers in charming downtown Burlington. To pay homage to the river, some of their brews are named Mississippi Blonde, Paddle Wheel Pale Ale, and Undercurrent IPA.

The City of McGregor nestled between the Mississippi River and the towering bluffs of Northeast Iowa in near proximity to Pikes Peak State Park. Although small in size McGregor is big on character! Enjoy the old timey feel of streets lined with 19th century buildings housing antique and specialty shops, and restaurants. **By the Spoonful** is a great place for a quick bite to eat. The shop specializes in Iowa-made goods, dairy treats, locally sourced meats, and homemade take and bake meals! For a sit down meal in McGregor, you can't go wrong with **Old Man River Restaurant & Brewery**. OMR has a nice atmosphere and a good selection of microbrews on tap.

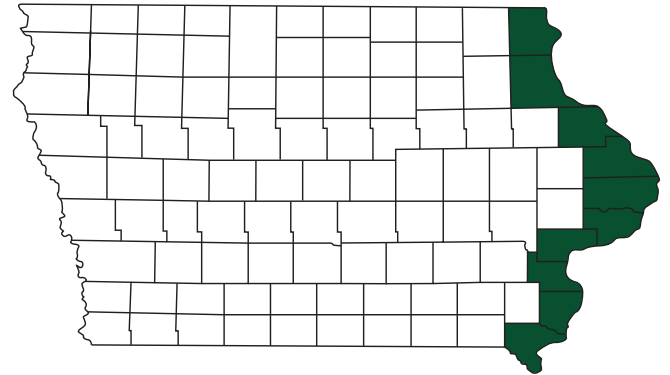
Wine and shopping anyone? **PromiseLand Winery** is a lady's paradise on the Great River Road in the Southern hills of Guttenberg. Inside the elegant looking building is a spacious tasting room, an event room, and five fun boutiques! Take a walk or drive up to the vineyard to see where the award-winning wines begin. Enjoy some music in the front courtyard when the weather is nice or warm up by a cozy fire when it's too cold to be outside. Whatever the occasion, PromiseLand Winery is a unique and gorgeous destination!

## Lodging Locales

The Great River Road has a wide variety of lodging options from traditional to rustic to high end. **Hotel Julien** in Dubuque and **Hotel Blackhawk** in Davenport are both beautifully restored luxury hotels in two of the larger river towns along the Mississippi route. Hotel Julien has been a hotel since the 1830s and gained notoriety from such famous guests as Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Buffalo Bill Cody and Al Capone. After undergoing a massive renovation, this elegant boutique hotel is a magical blend of rich history and modern luxury.

Spend the day in bustling, downtown Davenport with Hotel Blackhawk as your 'home-base'. The elegant, historic boutique hotel is fully modernized and has over 130 guest rooms and panoramic views of the Mississippi River. The hotel's exquisite interior and exterior architecture has both Italian Renaissance and Art Deco design elements and is within walking distance of attractions like the Adler Theater & River Museum and the Figge Art Museum.

Depending on your outings, also try:  
**Cobblestone Inn & Suites (Marquette)**  
**The Landing (Guttenberg)**  
**Grumpsters Log Cabins (McGregor)**  
**Blue Heron Inn (Lansing)**



## For More Group Tour Options

### Contact the Local Convention and Visitors Bureaus

Burlington CVB  
River Park Place  
610 N Fourth St  
319-752-6365

Muscatine CVB  
215 Sycamore St  
563-272-2534

Clinton Area CVB  
721 S Second St  
563-242-5702

Keokuk Area CVB  
429 Main St  
319-524-5599

Travel Dubuque  
300 Main St  
800-798-8844

Quad Cities  
1601 River Drive,  
Suite 110  
309-736-6833

Fort Madison  
614 Ninth St  
319-372-5471