

MIDWEST AIRLINES • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009 • YOUR PERSONAL COPY

My MIDWEST

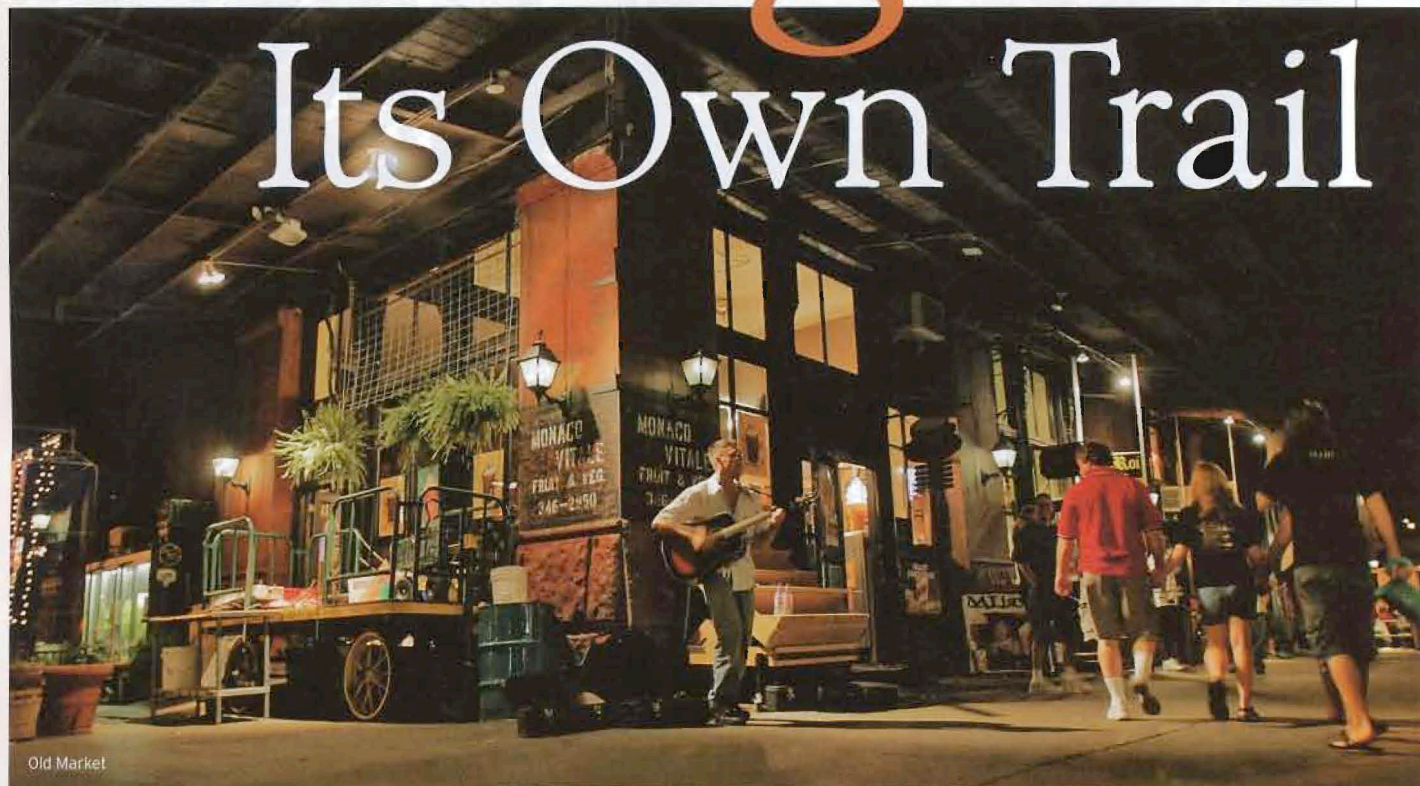


EASTERN WISCONSIN ARTISTS

Find out what's inspiring
the region's creative
communities.

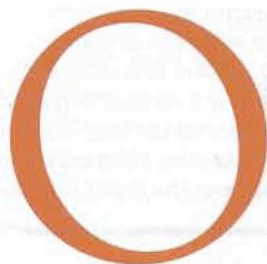
MIDWEST
AIRLINES

Blazing Its Own Trail



Old Market

Known during pioneer days as the “Gateway to the West,” Omaha has become a cultural destination perfect for a weekend getaway. By Tim McMahan



maha would like to correct some common misconceptions.

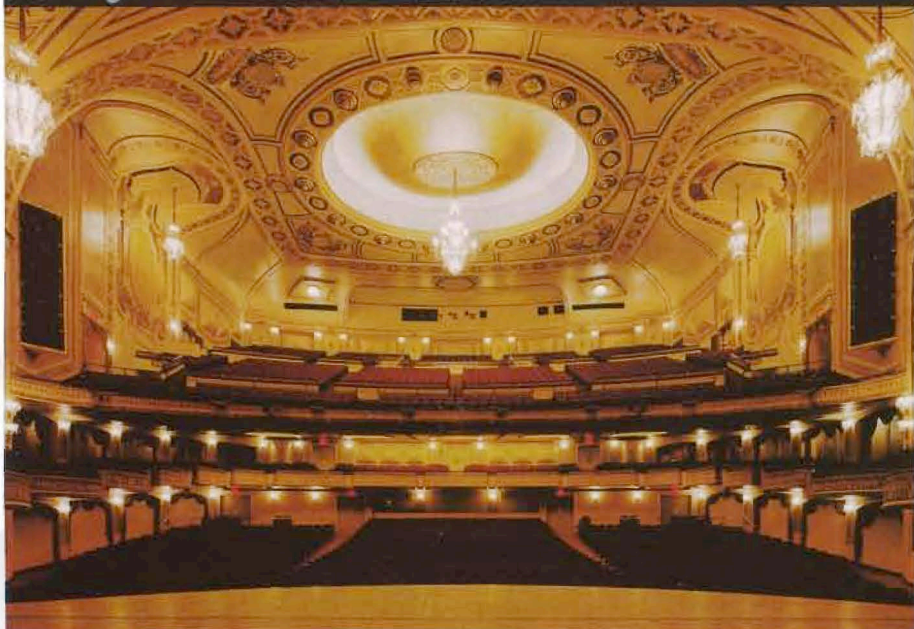
Number one: *It sits on a dry, flat prairie.* While you won't find any jagged peaks, much of the city is in the Missouri River Valley, surrounded by rolling hills, dotted with lakes.

Number two: *Omaha is a sleepy Midwestern town, where they roll up the streets at 8 p.m.* In

fact, there is a plethora of cultural and tourist attractions. In addition to its world-class zoo, art museum and distinction as the home of the NCAA College World Series, Omaha is renowned for its indie-rock scene. Still,

the largest city in Nebraska wholeheartedly embraces a sort of small-town charm. It's a city of neighborhoods, each with its own identity and culture, and all just minutes apart by car. Maybe that's the best part: You can see much of the city in a weekend.

START YOUR VISIT in Omaha's **Old Market.** Just 10 minutes from Eppley Airfield, the late 19th-century warehouse district has been converted into 20 square blocks of shops, restaurants and bars along brick-paved streets.



(From left): Orpheum Theater; Slowdown

Among the stores is **Nouvelle Eve**, a chic boutique that caters to women on the hunt for designer dresses and accessories. Just down the block is the **Nebraska Clothing Company**. Established in 1886, it's one of the city's oldest clothiers, now focusing on casual sportswear, like Bugeaters apparel. ("Bugeaters" was the nickname for the University of Nebraska football team in the late 1800s.)

A few steps away is the Passageway Gallery—a mall that was created by enclosing the alley between two brick-walled buildings—where you'll find art and sculpture at **White Crane Gallery**, Russian gifts at **Red Square** and an eclectic array of imports at **Souq Ltd.**

Music fans have three stores to choose from. For vinyl and indie music collectors, there's **Antiquarium Records**; **Drastic Plastic** stocks punk records and rock T-shirts; and **Homer's** has all the latest releases.

When you're done shopping, have a pint at English-style pub **Mr. Toad's**, sip a glass of wine at **La Buvette**, or grab a cup of coffee and a pastry at **Délice European Bakery & Café**. If you're looking for an upscale, urban hangout, try **Nomad Lounge**.

Fine-dining choices are all over the Old Market. **The French Café** is refined and elegant; **V. Mertz**, in the Passageway, serves modern gourmet cuisine; and

M's Pub serves bar food in a stylish setting.

At the end of your day, head to the stately **Magnolia Hotel**, which boasts 145 posh rooms and suites. It's walking distance from the Old Market; **Qwest Center**, the city's premiere indoor arena; ornate, 1920s **Orpheum Theater**; and the more modern **Holland Performing Arts Center**.

ANIMAL HOUSE

One of Omaha's best attractions can be a real zoo.



Henry Doorly Zoo is a leader in conservation and research. It's right up there with the Bronx Zoo as one of the best in North America, and it's a terrific place to spend a day.

The Henry Doorly boasts the world's largest indoor desert—the Desert Dome—under the world's largest glazed geodesic dome. Beneath the desert is the world's largest nocturnal exhibit, Kingdoms of the Night, while Lied Jungle is the world's largest indoor rain forest. At the 71,000 square foot aquarium, visitors can stroll by sharks in a 70-foot-long acrylic tunnel.

There also are all the lions, tigers, bears, elephants and giraffes you'd expect to find, spread throughout the zoo's 130 acres.

RAISING THE STEAKS
Omaha's stockyards helped put the city on the map. Now its steakhouses are keeping it there.

Fine steakhouses abound in Omaha, not the least of which are **Omaha Prime** and **Paxton Chop House**, both downtown. Old-time steakhouses include **Johnny's Cafe**, near the city's now-defunct stockyards, and **Venice Inn**, a family-run Italian steakhouse. Another favorite is **Drover Restaurant & Lounge**, known for its whiskey filet and cabin-like ambience.



A choice cut from Paxton Chop House

EXPLORE

KEEP IN MIND, the Old Market is just a fraction of what the city has to offer. North of downtown, you'll find a slice of the city's music scene, Omaha's claim to fame—along with Boys Town and Warren Buffett.

Its new nexus is at **Slowdown**, a music venue opened in 2007 by the folks who created Saddle Creek Records—the label behind nationally known bands Bright Eyes and Cursive. With the best sound system in town, the club has hosted indie bands like Built to Spill, Okkervil River and Rilo Kiley. When the stage is dark, Slowdown turns into a hipster lounge with a jukebox, photo booth, board games and nary a television in sight. It was named Club of the Year in *Esquire's* 2008 Esky Music Awards.

The up-and-coming area around Slowdown—with the unfortunate moniker of "NoDo" (North of Downtown)—has cultural offerings including a two-screen independent moviehouse, **Film Streams**. Take a pit stop at **Blue Line** coffee bistro, which offers coffee, sandwiches, salads and drinks.

For a more diverse music experience, head to Benson. Once a town of its own, it was annexed by Omaha in 1917, has been revitalized over the past two years and now boasts a number of music venues. At the top of the list is **The Waiting Room**, a destination for touring indie bands and the city's own burgeoning talent. Just down Maple Street is **Mick's Music & Bar**, specializing in live, acoustic, folk fare.

But it's not all about music. Benson has thrift stores, art galleries and coffeehouses, as well as the neighborhood's only tapas bar, **España**, where the homemade sangria flows like the nearby river.

In addition to Benson, there's historic Dundee, which has a smattering of shops, an ice cream parlor, bars and restaurants along tree-lined streets. Culturally diverse South Omaha—which began as a settlement of Eastern European immigrants—is home to Omaha's Hispanic community and a vibrant mix of shops and restaurants.

But maybe you just need to relax in the great outdoors. Head to **Lauritzen Gardens** and **Fontenelle Forest Nature Center** in Bellevue (15 minutes from Omaha), where you can lie on your back and see every point on the horizon.

In the end, perhaps Omaha's just flat enough—it makes for a heck of a view. ■

MIDWEST AIRLINES offers daily flights to and from Omaha. Details can be found at midwestairlines.com.

Your OMAHA TRAVEL GUIDE

SHOPS/GALLERIES

Antiquarium Records
402-345-0294
myspace.com/antiquariumrecords

Drastic Plastic
402-346-8843
myspace.com/drastiqueplastique

Homer's
402-346-0264
homersmusic.com

Nebraska Clothing Company
402-346-6114
nebraskaclothingco.com

Nouvelle Eve
402-345-4811
nouvelleeve.com

Red Square
402-342-8878

Souq Ltd.
402-342-2972
souqltd.com

White Crane Gallery
smsbarnes.com
402-343-1066



RESTAURANTS/NIGHTLIFE/WHERE TO STAY

The Barley Street Tavern
402-408-0028
barleystreet.com

Blue Line
402-932-4463
bluelinecoffee.com

Delicé European Bakery & Café
402-342-2276
deliceeuropeanbakery.com

Drover Restaurant & Lounge
402-391-7440
droverrestaurant.com

España
402-505-9917

The French Café
402-341-3547
frenchcafe.com

Johnny's Cafe
402-731-4774
johnnyscafe.com

La Buvette
402-344-8627

Magnolia Hotel
402-341-2500
magnoliahotellomaha.com

Mick's Music & Bar
402-502-2503
micksomaha.com



Mr. Toad's
402-345-4488

M's Pub
402-342-2550
msspubomaha.com

Nomad Lounge
402-884-1231
nomadlounge.com

Omaha Prime
402-341-7040
omaha-prime.com

Paxton Chop House
402-341-1222
paxtonchop.com

Slowdown
402-345-7569
theslowdown.com

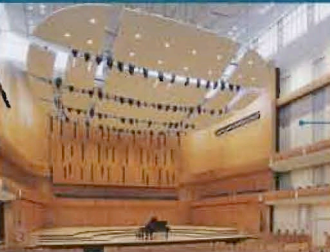
Venice Inn
402-556-3111
canigliasveniceinn.com



V. Mertz
402-345-8980
vmertz.com

The Waiting Room Lounge
402-884-5353
waitingroomlounge.com

WHAT TO SEE/DO



Film Streams
402-933-0259
filmstreams.org

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center
402-453-5615
fontenelleforest.org



Henry Doorly Zoo
402-733-8400
omahazoo.com

The Holland Performing Arts Center
402-345-0202
omahaperformingarts.org

Lauritzen Gardens
402-346-8252
omahabotanicalgardens.org

The Orpheum Theater
402-345-0202
omahaperformingarts.org

Qwest Center
402-341-1500
qwestcenteromaha.com

