

When it's High Time for Me Time

It's a (solo) date—explore arts and culture on a budget, view nature indoors and out, and restore your winter-weary soul.



PHOTO COURTESY TRAVEL WISCONSIN

Take a Singular Stroll

Feeling artsy? Start on the second floor of the [Memorial Union](#) and enjoy free gallery exhibitions with a view of Lake Mendota. Stay and attend one of the many events listed on the electronic kiosks on the main floor, or cross Langdon Street and pop into the [Wisconsin Historical Society](#) headquarters on Library Mall. There, you'll find a young John Muir's desk clock in the lobby and, one floor down, an impressive display of arrowheads and other artifacts unearthed from across the state. (The historical society's full-fledged museum, located on the Capitol Square, contains four floors of permanent and rotating exhibitions.)

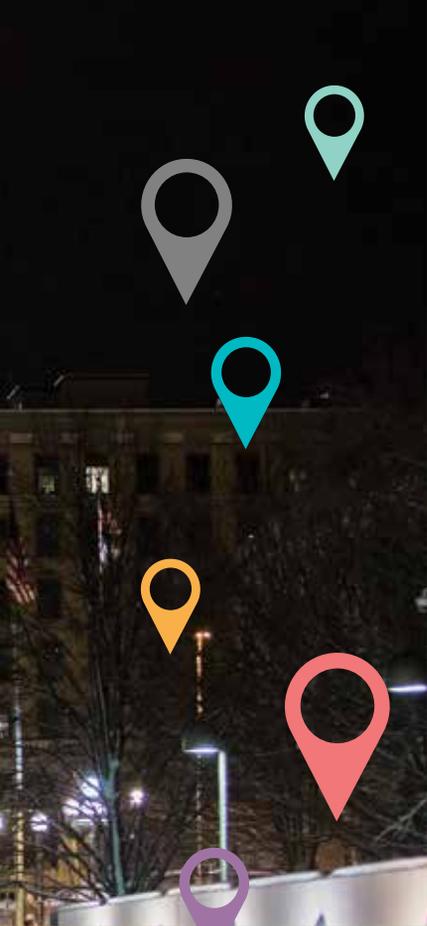
Follow the East Campus Mall to the university's [Chazen Museum of Art](#), home to the second-largest permanent collection in the state. For a free concert, catch Sunday Afternoon Live at the Chazen Feb. 2 at 12:30 p.m., or just warm up over a steaming cup of coffee or tea in the first-floor café, which boasts some of the best people-watching in town.

Cross the arts plaza and duck into the ultra-modern [Hamel Music Center](#) to take in a musical performance with state-of-the-art acoustics. Or continue up State Street where the [Madison Museum of Contemporary Art](#) offers thought provoking exhibitions in a sunny, modern setting.

Still standing? Pop into the [Overture Center for the Arts](#) and peruse three stories of visual arts just off the Rotunda lobby. End your tour in the top floor's [James Watrous Gallery](#) which features Wisconsin-themed exhibitions curated by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters. If you time it right, you may just hit a gallery opening and find yourself sipping and snacking with the local art set.

HAMEL MUSIC CENTER





▪ Olbrich Botanical Gardens Bolz Conservatory

Summer isn't the only season for outdoor lovers—even if you prefer to leave your parka at home. Billed as a “living museum and source of serenity for many,” the Bolz Conservatory on Madison’s far east side is home to a diverse range of plants, koi and free-flying birds overhead. Sip and stroll during the once-per-month Cocktails in the Conservatory or soak up some vitamin D in the 16 acres of outdoor gardens. (Admission to the outdoor gardens is free; admission to the Bolz Conservatory is a modest \$2.)

olbrich.org

▪ Aldo Leopold Nature Center Bird & Nature Outing (Saturday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m.)

Refresh yourself with the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits of the outdoors on this naturalist-led hike. Beginning in the Aldo Leopold Nature Center’s prairie, woodland, oak savanna and wetland habitats, the trek continues into Edna Taylor Conservation Park, which is dotted with ponds. Winter birds will be flitting about. Your flora and fauna neighbors await!

aldoleopoldnaturecenter.org

▪ D.C. Smith Greenhouse and Botany Garden and Greenhouse

On UW-Madison’s campus, take in the tropics at the D.C. Smith Greenhouse and the Botany Garden and Greenhouse, both of which offer water features and a warm oasis to sit for a spell. The D.C. Smith Greenhouse is located at the corner of Babcock and Linden drives, while the Botany Greenhouse is located in the basement of Birge Hall just off Bascom Hill. The latter is comprised of eight greenhouse rooms that take you through a journey of the tropics, desert, bog and fern forest. Botany-related visual art is integrated into both the indoor and outdoor gardens. (Note both greenhouses are only open weekdays.)

dcsmithgreenhouse.cals.wisc.edu;
livingcollection.botany.wisc.edu

▪ *Holly Marley-Henschen is a writer, editor and communications consultant in Madison. Her favorite way to treat herself in the city is to sit, practice yoga, bike or jog along the shore of a lake.*

▪ *Masarah Van Eyck is a Madison-based writer and publicist. Her favorite way to treat herself in the city involves an interesting view, a notebook and a handful of Sharpies.*

Madison

