

Lake Koocanusa Scenic Byway

Crafted by Man and Nature



4 Days/3 Nights

Gateway City: Kalispell, Montana



Much of the scenic beauty in America was created naturally, resulting in lush landscapes, majestic mountains, shimmering lakes, and rushing rivers. Lake Kootenai was not. It is man-made and took an extraordinary amount of effort to get completed. The journey began over 60 years ago, when a treaty between the U.S. and Canada coordinated control of the massive flooding that occurred every year during snow melt. Construction of the Libby Dam took 12 years and more than 2,000 workers. To accommodate all these new people, the Corps of Engineers built three new schools, added to other schools, and built the Libby airport. The entire town of Rexford was moved to higher ground which required another new school, water system, sewerage system, fire station, and roads. Montana Highway 37 was also relocated to higher ground and Kootenai Bridge, the longest and highest in Montana, was constructed to provide access across the northern end of the lake. Relocating the Great Northern Railroad line proved to be one of the most complex projects, requiring a seven mile tunnel through Elk Mountain. The Lake Kootenai Scenic Byway runs along the eastern edge of the lake, through a narrow fjord-like gorge between the Purcell Mountains and the Salish Mountains. Fortunately, even though a much larger plan for the lake was considered, the result was very useful flood control, a water system, and amazing scenic beauty. The reservoir starts rising in March as the snows melt and starts slowly retreating in mid-summer. All this time, the lake remains an ever changing, enchanting, and marvelous place to be.

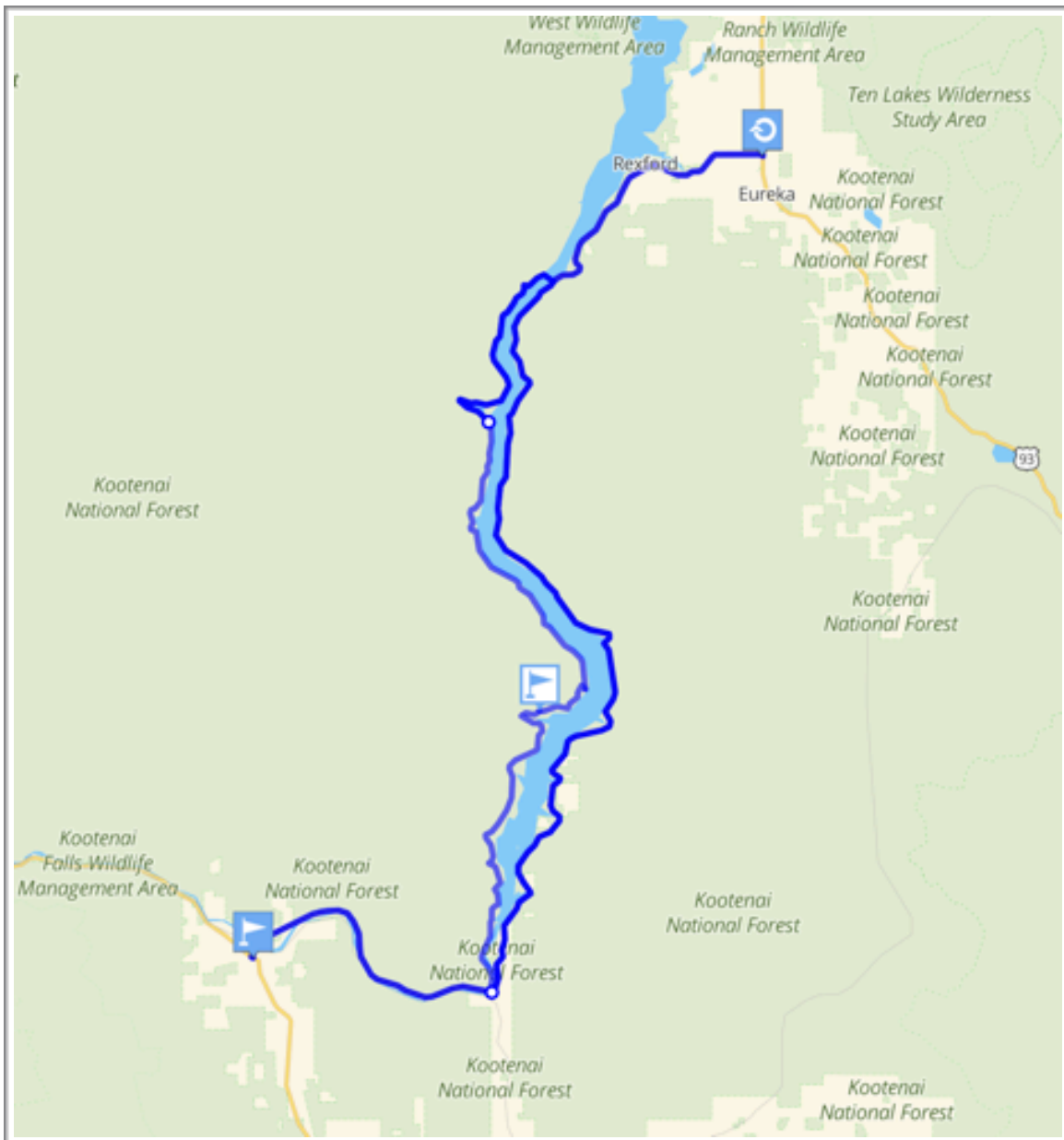


Touring the Byway

We recommend starting your journey in Kalispell where you can take the Downtown Historic District Walking Tour to learn a bit about the city and tour the Conrad Mansion Museum and the Northwest Montana History Museum, while staying at the Kalispell Grand Hotel right in the Historic District. On Day Two you'll be heading to Whitefish, where you can explore the Whitefish Museum, the Sunti World Art Gallery and Café, and the Going to the Sun Gallery before heading through the Kootenai National Forest to Eureka for the evening. After an overnight at the Homestead Cabin Resort, you can explore the Tobacco Valley Historical Village and take the Eureka Riverwalk.

As you start the Lake Koocanusa Scenic Byway, you can see the town of Rexford that was completely relocated to higher ground and The Hoodoos that jut out of the lake. Further south in Libby, you can explore the Heritage Museum and tour the Libby Dam Visitor Center to learn more of the story of how the lake was created. When you reach Thompson Falls, if you want to explore the Old Jail Museum, it is open only in the afternoon. After a relaxing stay at the Rocky Point Ranch, you'll be on your way to Missoula on the Clark Fork Scenic Drive that passes over and under Interstate 90, 17 times on the way to the city.

In Missoula, the Downtown Missoula Historic and Art Walking Tour will introduce you to the city, and the Montana Natural History Center, the geology and natural story of the region. The Montana Museum of Art and Culture and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula also await, which you can visit before strolling the Riverfront Walking Trail. Stay at the Blue Mountain Bed and Breakfast. From there, we wish you safe passage if you're traveling another Montana Scenic Drive, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



DAY ONE



Kalispell

Kalispell was platted by Charles Conrad when he realized the railroad was going to come through. Named the Salish word for “flat land” or prairie above the lake, Kalispell became a division point for the railroad between St. Paul, MN and Seattle. Soon after “the iron horse snorted through” the remaining buildings from a neighboring town gone bust were moved to Kalispell on log rollers. The first brewery was established in 1894, and today local craft breweries produce more than 40 varieties of ales and lagers made with Montana-grown malts, hand-picked local hops, huckleberries, and Flathead cherries.

Downtown Historic District Walking Tour

Take a walk past buildings from the 1890s and early 1900s including the Conrad Mansion, the Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell Grand Hotel, and the Northwest Montana History Museum. The tour includes Main Street and First Avenue East from Depot Park on Center Street, south to the 400 block. Near the tour route, St. Matthew’s Catholic Church, dating from 1910, remains the city’s most commanding Gothic landmark. 602 South Main Street, 406-752 678



Conrad Mansion Museum

The residence of Charles Conrad sits proudly on three landscaped acres atop a bluff overlooking the valley. The shingle-style Norman building, a revivalist version of vernacular architecture in Normandy, France, is surrounded by large ever-blooming flower beds that provide constant color during the summer season, plus hedges, evergreens, and lawns.

330 Woodland Avenue, Kalispell, MT 55901, 406-755-2166, self-guided and docent led tours offer year around, May 15-Oct 15, docent led tours 11AM and 1PM. Adults \$20

Northwest Montana History Museum

Housed in the restored Central School building, this museum features exhibits about history of the Northwest Montana region and Flathead Valley including artifacts, documents, and photographs that tell the story of Big Sky Country. In addition to permanent exhibits, rotating curated exhibits are presented throughout the year.

124 Second Avenue East, Kalispell, MT 55901, 406-756-8381, M-F 10AM-5PM, Sat 10AM-3PM, Adults \$5



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Kalispell Grand Hotel 100 Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901, 406-755-8100

The Grand was one of the first hotels built on the frontier and the only one remaining in Kalispell. It hosted the well to do at double the going rate for running water, door locks, and wake-up calls.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Hops Downtown Grill 121 South Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901, 406-755-7687 Try the bison burger and other interesting tastes.

The DeSoto Grill 227 First Street West, Kalispell, MT 59901, 406-314-6095 Great food and great service.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Art Galleries

Montana Modern Fine Art 127 South Main Street, 406-755-5321, **Sassafras Arts, Crafts and Antiques** 120 South Main Street, 406-752-2433 and **Paint, Metal and Mud** 8 First Street East, Suite 104, 406-755-8886

Western Outdoors 48 South Main Street, Kalispell, MT, 59901, 406-756-5818
Featuring more than 2,500 boots and 1,500 hats.

Bear Country Gallery 4054 US Highway 93 South, Kalispell, MT 59901, 406-752-6735

Flair Gifts and Cards 123 Main Street, Kalispell, MT, 55901, 406-407-7210

DAY TWO



Whitefish

Situated in an enormous valley that stretches 60 miles, Whitefish was not developed by outside investors. Instead, over 50 years ago, residents created a vision for a memorable city, pooling their money and decisions to create the Whitefish Mountain Resort, Whitefish Lake Golf Club, and the town of Whitefish. Locals are welcoming, freely swapping stories at the local galleries, coffeehouses and saloons. With its covered sidewalk main street, cultural arts center, historic depot museum, and public library, this quaint, picturesque western town offers a change from the fast-paced hustle.

Whitefish Museum

Housed in the massive 1928 Alpine Whitefish Depot with half-timbered walls, large dormers, and working railroad station, the Stumptown Historical Society created a museum that reminds visitors that before the railroad, the area made its living with lumbering. In addition, an interactive display recreates the desk of Lucien Gordon Becquart, a telegrapher who worked for the Great Northern Railroad for 40 years. A display also tells the story of Whitefish's most-noted author, Dorothy M. Johnson, who penned the classics *The Hanging Tree*, *A Man Called Horse* and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. The Historical Society also offers a walking tour to explore Central Avenue and downtown Whitefish, with buildings dating from the early 1900s.
500 Depot Street, Whitefish, MT 59937, 406-862-0067

Sunti World Art Gallery and Café

This gallery hosts internationally acclaimed work of old masters, authentic plein-air impressionism, and exceptionally detailed hyper-realism, coupled with American-made raku, antique Turkish rugs, Khmer Cambodian-style wood carvings, and hand-embroidered zardozi from India.
345 Spokane Avenue, Whitefish, MT 59937, 406-862-1084, M-Sat 10AM-5PM,
Sun 1PM-5PM

Going to the Sun Gallery

Featuring the work of regional artists producing contemporary work and jewelry, that is complemented with fine art and antique furnishings.
137 Central Avenue, Whitefish, MT 59937, 406-862-2751

Kootenai National Forest

The Kootenai National Forest here covers nearly all of the land in the region with thick forest landscape punctuated with striking cliffs, spires, river canyons, and the magnificent peaks of the Cabinet, Wilderness, and Whitefish Ranges. Over 191 species of birds have been recorded, along with elk, whitetail and mule deer, mountain goats and bighorn sheep, moose, black bears, mountain lions, grizzly bear, coyotes, weasels, mink, beaver, otter, squirrels, bobcats, lynx and other smaller mammals who roam the land. Fairy slipper orchids, cactus, columbine, violets, phlox and Indian paintbrush add some color.

Eureka

Until the railroad pushed through the region, this area was home to the Kootenai tribe. In 1904, a longer and easier railroad route through the Tobacco Valley was constructed to replace the existing route, and Eureka was born. Today, it radiates the classic, rural Montana lifestyle. Highway 93 is better known as Main Street.



Tobacco Valley Historical Village

The village features nearly a dozen structures built between the 1880s and the 1920s including a general store, schoolhouse, library, church, two log cabins, a hand-hewn house, railway depot, caboose, and fire tower. Several of the buildings, rescued from the Libby Dam, are all filled with exhibits and artifacts from the founding of Eureka. The Fewkes General Store serves as a museum and depository for archival materials donated by organizations and residents of the Tobacco Valley.

4 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917, 406-890-0625 Memorial Day-Labor Day,
1PM-5PM

Eureka Riverwalk

A 2-mile loop trail that leaves the Historical Village area and continues southeast along the Tobacco River has natural and historical interpretive sites, exercise stations, and benches.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Homestead Cabin Resort 18 Drop Tine Road, Eureka, MT 59917 406-882-4929
Accommodations at the highest rated resort in the area are well-built individual cabins decorated in lodge décor with Amish furniture. Windows are positioned for natural sunlight and great views. All are complete with a bedroom, bathroom, family room, and kitchen.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Front Porch Dewey Burger and Fish Company 307 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917, 406-297-1234 Great burgers and American choices.

Café Jax 207 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917 Try the breakfast pancakes and other comfort food goodies.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Front Porch Trading Company 307 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917, 406-297-9090

Mountain Gift Shop 205 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917, 406-297-2321

Silver Fish Gallery 301 Dewey Avenue, Eureka, MT 59917, 406-207-7660

DAY THREE

Rexford

As you start on the Lake Koocanusa Scenic Byway, you will see the town of Rexford which was completely relocated to higher ground to accommodate Lake Koocanusa.

Rexford Bench Campground – The Hoodoos

Be sure to view the Hoodoos, impressive sandstone formations that jut out from an inlet along the lake. Take the half mile trail from the campground that allows a full view of the formations.

Libby

John Fisher and Stephen Allen first searched around Libby for minerals in the early 1860s and named the town for Allen's daughter Elizabeth (Libby). Their success on Libby Creek in 1867 attracted nearly 600 men to the mining camp. Fortunes varied, with some miners making as much as \$1.25 per pan while others made only two cents per pan. Most men left when winter came and by the 1870s, the camp was virtually deserted. Later when the Snowshoe lode was discovered in 1889 on Leigh Creek, the area was unprepared for a major find requiring the ore be shipped to Great Falls before the mine could be electrified.

The Heritage Museum

This unique twelve-sided, 130-foot diameter log structure preserves artifacts from the region focusing on early settlement, mining, and logging, coupled with the Museum Cookhouse, Outdoor Pavilion, and Swamp Creek Community Hall. 34067 US Highway 2, Libby, MT 59923, 406-293-7521, May-Sept, M-Sat 10AM-5PM, Sun 1PM-5PM, Donations accepted

Libby Dam Visitor Center

Take a tour of the Dam and take advantage of picnic sites, fishing, golf, the bookstore, and lake and river access.

17877 Montana Highway 37, Libby, MT 59923, 406-293-5577



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Venture Inn 1015 West Ninth Street, Libby, MT 59923, 406-293-7711

Northwest Montana's finest place to stay, featuring a full-service restaurant, pool and hot tub, and unlimited outdoor recreation.

Destination Distinctive Dining

The Black Board Bistro 803 Mineral Avenue, Libby, MT 59923, 406-293-4505

Outstanding find in Northwest Montana.

Cabinet Mountain Brewing Company 206 Mineral Avenue, Libby, MT 59923, 406-293-2739 American pub with great food and lots of options.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Zero uno Zero Robotics 28132 Highway 2, Libby, MT 59923, 406-334-7319

Highlighting fabulous and under-represented artists from all around the country.

Thompson Falls

The Thompson Falls area was explored by David Thompson in 1809, who also founded the North West Fur Trading Company at Saleesh House just four years after Lewis and Clark passed through Montana. The lovely falls on the Clark Fork River provide the rest of the town's name. The railroad came through in 1881, followed by a gold rush two years later in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, that spurred growth from traffic on the Murray Trail to the mines. The Thompson Falls Dam was built atop the original falls in 1915.



Old Jail Museum

This museum is located in the former old jail and sheriff's residence, which is adjacent to the Saleesh House of the North West Company. It preserves historical artifacts, images, maps and more, to celebrate the pioneers who explored, mapped, settled, and farmed this corner of Montana.

109 South Madison Street, Thompson Falls, MT 59873 406-827-4002, Memorial Day-Labor Day, Daily Noon-4PM



Destination Distinctive Dining

Minnie's Montana Café 921 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT 59873, 406-827-3747
American Café with vegetarian, vegan, gluten free options, and comfort food.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Linda's Montana Gifts & Gallery 913 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT 59873,
406-827-4383

Sunflower Gallery 301 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT 59873 Located in one of the oldest homes in Thompson Falls, built in 1900.

Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Rocky Point Ranch 106 River Walk Lane, Thompson Falls, MT 59873, 406-827-6030 The beautiful lodge where you'll be staying sits on a 60-acre working ranch right on the river. Surrounded by the Cabinet Mountains, wildlife often surprise and entertain you while you enjoy the scenic beauty. Use the Wifi if you really want to take out your computer, or hike and explore.

DAY FOUR

Clark Fork Scenic Drive

After you follow the St. Regis-Paradise Scenic Drive from Thompson Falls to St. Regis, you can take the Clark Fork Scenic Drive to Missoula. It's nearly 150 miles of scenic beauty as the river winds to the southeast. It all started 12,000 years ago when most of this region in Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon was covered with the icy floodwaters of Glacial Lake Missoula. When the water finally flowed out to the Pacific Ocean it left behind the rocks, peaks, and landscape we see today. The area is so intertwined that the Clark Fork River is considered the headwaters of the entire Columbia River Basin. It's an interesting journey from St. Regis to Alberton where the road and the river cross back and forth under Interstate 90, 17 times. Alberton is famous for its dramatic river gorge.

Missoula

C. P. Higgins and Francis Worden opened a trading post on the Blackfoot River in 1869, that was followed by the arrival of the Mullan Road connecting Fort Benton with Walla Walla, Washington. Fort Missoula was opened in 1877 to protect the growing community. The arrival of the railroad in 1883, along with the Missoula Mercantile Company, made the city a trading center. The University of Montana opened in 1895. Missoula's location within a heavily forested area made logging the mainstay industry until the mid-1970s. Saws could be heard over two miles away on a clear summer night.



Downtown Missoula Historic and Art Walking Tour

Learn more about Missoula on the downtown walking tour, which has one of the largest collections of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the country. Locations like the Atlantic Hotel and the Diner Café, with huge historic neon signs, that have long been repurposed, peacefully coexist with the 1910 Missoula County Courthouse and the 1909 Palace Hotel. The downtown partnership has funded over 20 works of public art that appear along the route.

Montana Natural History Center

The Montana Natural History Center features displays of the flora and fauna, ecosystems, and geology in the state, including the Montana Ecosystem, The Magic Planet, a Naturalist Forest Station, Glacial Lake Missoula, Explore Fossils, Explore Geology, and the outdoor Nature Adventure Garden.

120 Hickory Street, Suite A, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-327-0405, T-F 9AM-5PM, Sat Noon-4PM, Adults \$4

Montana Museum of Art and Culture

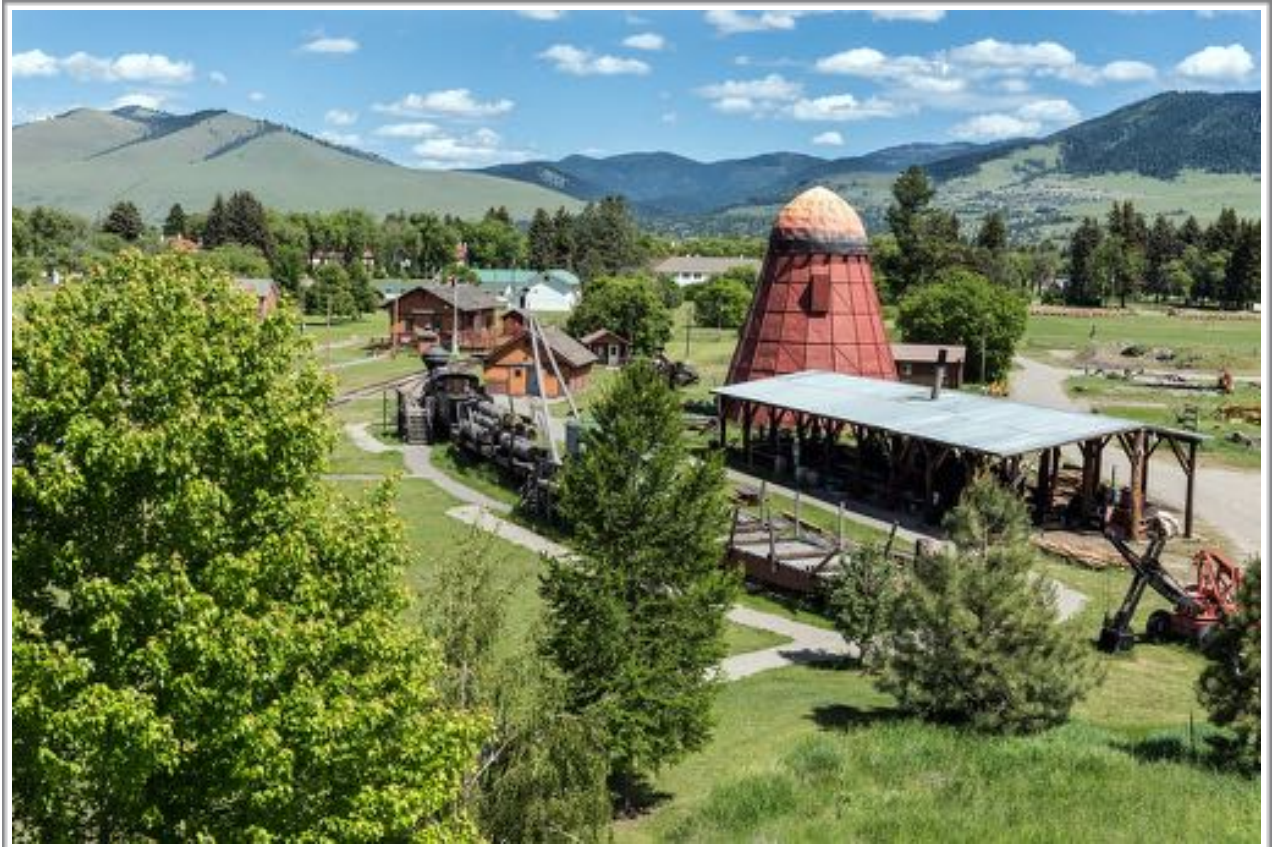
Located on the University of Montana campus, this museum now has 11,000 pieces including works by Rocky Mountain artists, historic European works, along with collections from Southeast Asia, American Impressionists, contemporary Native American artists, ceramics, and public art sites across the campus. European masters include Rembrandt, Delacroix, Boucher, Piranesi, and Daumier, along with 20th century artists, Miro, Toulouse-Lautrec, Chagall, Dali, Picasso, Remington, Merritt Chase, and Andy Warhol.

Across from the Adams Center off East 6th Street. University of Montana Campus. 406-243-2019. Tu-Sat Noon-6PM. Free, donations accepted.

Historical Museum at Fort Missoula

Fort Missoula was established by the US Army in 1877 to protect settlers in the region. Nearly 100 years later, the Historical Museum encompasses 32 acres with over 20 historic structures and a collection of nearly 50,000 artifacts.

3400 Captain Rawn Way, Missoula, MT 59804, 406-728-3476 M-Sat 10AM-5PM, Sun Noon-5PM



Riverfront Walking Trail

The riverfront walking trail along the Clark Fork River takes you past McCormick Park, the Old Milwaukee Depot, John H. Toole Park, and other scenic and historic treasures in Missoula.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Blue Mountain Bed and Breakfast 6980 Deadman Gulch Road, Missoula, MT 59804, 406-203-3187 The gardens here frame breathtaking views of the Bitterroot River. Elegant breakfasts go along with the Inn's lovely décor. Guest rooms have private baths with jetted tubs, air conditioning and amenities, plus Wifi.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Catalyst Café 111 North Higgins Avenue, Missoula, MT, 59802, 406-542-1337
American cuisine café.

Scotty's Table 131 South Higgins Avenue, Unit P3, Missoula, MT 59802, 406-549-2790 Fine dining in Missoula.

Tamarack Brewing Company 231 Front Street West, Missoula, MT 59802, 406-830-3113
American pub and bar, vegetarian and vegan options.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Missoula Art Galleries

The Artists' Shop 127 North Higgins, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-543-6393
Missoula's premiere co-op fine craft gallery. M-F 10AM-6PM, Sat-Sun 10AM-5PM

Dana Gallery 246 North Higgins Avenue, **Murphy-Jubb Fine Art** 210 North Higgins Avenue, Suite 300, **Radius Gallery** 114 East Main Street and **The Art Hang-up** 839 South Higgins Avenue

Lake Missoula Tea Company 136 East Broadway, Missoula, MT, 59801, 406-926-1038 Teas from around the world, including blends made in small batches.

Hometana 312 North Higgins Avenue, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-224-4166

Ducrey Chocolate Maker 311 East Front Street, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-218-7396