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## 10 Of The Best Things To See & Do In Northfield

Other Great Things About Northfield? Share With Us!

by Karna Bergstrom

NORTHFIELD, Minn. (WCCO) — "Cows, Colleges and Contentment." When you drive into town on Highway 19 from the north, you'll see this sign welcoming you to Northfield. Home to two liberal arts universities and surrounded by farmland fits two "C's". The final "C" is found in just about everything to see and do in this town. From one-of-a-kind shops to traveling back in time to bank-robbing gangster days, you'll be more than content enjoying your time in Northfield.

In no particular order ...



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### Historic Downtown

<http://www.visitingnorthfield.com/>

Located on Division Street, you can spend hours strolling up and down historic downtown Northfield. The brick buildings that line downtown for several blocks are spotted with shops, restaurants, coffee shops and small businesses. The shopping is ideal if you're looking for boutiques and antiques with unique names (Oolala and Sisters Ugly) and rare finds. You can take a break by grabbing a cup of joe and a bakery treat at Goodbye Blue Monday Coffeehouse or Quality Bakery and Coffee Shop. Or take in a meal at places like Rueb-N-Stein or Contented Cow Pub.



1 of 1 Click to enlarge

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### Northfield Historical Society/Museum

<http://www.northfieldhistory.org/>

Northfield's downtown is filled with history and is infamous for its connection to the demise of a well-known bank robber. Visiting the Northfield Historical Society Museum, you will step into the original bank site where the Jesse James-Cole Younger Gang was defeated on Sept. 7, 1876. The historical society has preserved the original bank site for visitors to see and experience what it looked like when the outlaws tried to rob First National Bank. The tour of the museum will bring you to a different time, complete with guides dressed in period costumes. But if you're looking for a more in-depth, walking tour, grab "The Outlaw Trail" brochure from the museum to follow the path (you'll want a vehicle) that the James-Younger gang took leading up to and following the 1876 incident.



Northfield Chamber of Commerce

#### The Defeat Of Jesse James Days

<http://www.djjd.org/>

It was the townspeople of Northfield who defeated the outlaws that tried to rob the First National Bank, responding to "Get your guns boys, they're robbing the bank." So it's the present day citizens of Northfield, and visitors, who celebrate every year with the Defeat of Jesse James Days. The festival is held the weekend after Labor Day, just around the time the actual event took place. Not only does the Defeat of Jesse James Days have similar events to other community festivals -- from a parade to tractor pull to arts and crafts -- you can also experience a live re-enactment of the bank raid with horses and pistols and angry townspeople.

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#### Cannon River Walkway/Bridge Square

<http://www.visitingnorthfield.com/>

The Cannon River splits the city of Northfield, offering beautiful scenery, specifically in downtown, where you can take a stroll on the Cannon River Walkway. You can watch the waterfall, feed the ducks or just sit and enjoy the scenic view. Bridge Square, which is on the east side of the river, is a horseshoe-shaped space in the middle of historic downtown and the place for many community events throughout the year, especially during the summer.

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Northfield Chamber of Commerce

**Riverwalk Market Fair**

<http://www.riverwalkmarketfair.org/>

New to Northfield this year is the Riverwalk Market Fair held every Saturday through October. It offers a cornucopia of art, artisan foods and local music. The market prides itself on a "family-friendly feel" while also providing "high-quality goods that reflect distinctive local talents and tastes." And if you're looking to create your own edible artwork, look to the local and organic produce also sold at the market.

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**Northfield Arts Guild**

<http://www.northfieldartsguild.org/>

Northfield might be a small city in size but it's big on arts and entertainment that the Northfield Arts Guild provides. The guild calls its home in two historic buildings. The first, located in downtown, includes an art gallery, dance studio, classrooms, recital room and gift store (did I miss anything?). And if you're looking to catch one of their year-round plays, head a few blocks to a converted church where local talent entertains. Comedies or dramas, familiar musicals or locally written plays -- the guild offers variety throughout the year.

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Waterford Warriors

#### Snowmobiling

<http://www.waterfordwarriors.org/>

Enjoy Minnesota for its winters? Head to Northfield for the start of the Waterford Trail located in Sechler Park. The trail provides more than 40 miles of picturesque Minnesota landscape for snowmobile riders that wind through forests and fields. The trails are maintained by the Waterford Warriors Snowmobile Club, which has been around since the late 1960s. And if you want to go for a longer ride, the [Waterford Trail connects](#) with the Snow-Go, Dakota, Le Sueur County and Lakeville trails to the north and west, and Kenyon-Zumbrota and Faribault trails to the east and south.

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#### Liberal Arts Colleges

**Carleton College** - <http://www.carleton.edu/>

**St. Olaf College** - <http://www.stolaf.edu/>

Here we get to the "Colleges" part of the sign that you see as you enter Northfield. The city is home to two liberal arts colleges: Carleton College and St. Olaf College -- each located on opposite sides of town. Carleton College has been called the Harvard of the Midwest and draws high-achieving students, some of whom are interested in doctorate degrees in laboratory science and mathematics. St. Olaf College is known for its outstanding music program that includes the St. Olaf Choir, St. Olaf Orchestra and St. Olaf Band, which have all won international acclaim.

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**Cowling Arboretum**<http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/arb/>

Part of the beauty of the Carleton College campus is the Cowling Arboretum, nicknamed the Arb. With more than 880 acres, spanning two miles northeast of the college campus along the Cannon River, the Arb is hard to miss, especially if you're looking for something to do outdoors. It's open to the public year-round and is a great place to run, hike and fish in the summer and cross-country ski on groomed trails in the winter. The Arb has a long history connected to Carleton College, and the caretakers continue to manage the area that includes a 150-acre prairie restoration that provides excellent bird and wildlife watching. And they continue to look to the future with more prairie restoration and removing invasive species like buckthorn.

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**Sports, Sports, Sports**<http://www.northfieldknights.com/>

Besides being home to two colleges that offer spectator sports during the school year -- football, basketball, hockey -- there's a treat in Northfield and nearby communities for you're looking for some small town ball. Check out the Northfield Knights, which is part of the Classic Cannon Valley League of Minnesota Amateur Baseball -- town ball at its finest! The Knights play at Sechler Park where there is no charge but they do "pass the hat" to help with the team's expenses. Of course, if you're at a ballgame you can also enjoy the concessions stand -- get your peanuts, popcorn and hot dogs!

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**Bonus - Malt-O-Meal**

<http://www.malt-o-meal.com>

It's a bonus, because you can't actually tour the plant but you can drive by the only location in the world where Malt-O-Meal hot cereal is produced. The company's mill stands in the same location where Northfield's founder, John North, built a grist mill in 1855. And when you drive by, you just might be able to get a whiff of the hot breakfast cereal your mom used to heat up for you!

*There are many great things to see and do in Northfield, so we picked a few of our favorites for you. If you know of some more leave a comment below and share your favorite.*

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