

# A WEEKEND AWAY

Plan a road trip and head to parts north, south, and even more south. These three cities offer up three very different weekend excursions. Take your pick and hit the road.

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The Children's Museum  
of Indianapolis



## INDIANAPOLIS

Considered one of America's next "it" cities, Indianapolis easily gives towns like our beloved Music City a run for their money, and for good reason. Often a yearly pilgrimage for NASCAR fans, Indianapolis exceeds its racing legend by far. From its diverse arts and culture community, to a culinary landscape of vast proportions, you can get your motor running and head up the highway for a personal champagne finish any time of year.

Hotels in the city range in price and pomp. An Industrial Age-inspired boutique hotel, Ironworks Indy's "work hard, play hard" attitude features nine restaurants, a nail spa and hair salon, and several gyms all within walking distance of nightlife and area attractions.

Le Méridien, a downtown Marriott Bonvoy property, connects to City Centre Mall and the Indianapolis Convention Center. The 100-room,



vintage space is accentuated by modern aesthetics and luxury amenities, like the craft cocktail bar, Spoke & Steele.

Often a locale's note of swank, JW Marriott Indianapolis is no exception. You can't miss the soaring 33-story posh digs with a skywalk connecting the hotel to Lucas Oil Stadium (home of the Indianapolis Colts NFL team). Specifically built to host the 2012 Super Bowl, this landmark hotel is the world's largest JW Marriott.

The city also plays host to a wide range of activities and must-see destinations. The Indianapolis 500, known around the world as the largest single-day sporting event, calls Indianapolis Motor Speedway home. Feel like a true champion during the VIP Full Grounds Tour offered by the speedway's onsite museum, where you can kiss the bricks and even ride a lap on the daily tours offered March through October.

Think again if you think you're too old to enjoy The Children's Museum of Indianapolis with your kids, or even solo, if you choose. The largest children's museum on earth features myriad exhibits with a five-story Dale Chihuly masterpiece front and center. But, if historical oddities are more your jam, the Medical History Museum follows the beginning of psychiatric research with a nod to why mental health should be revered. Included in the exhibitions are expired patient brain specimens preserved at America's oldest surviving pathology facility.

After such a hair-raising experience, explore the grounds and art galleries on the campus at another Indy gem, Newfields—a place for nature and the arts. You could easily make a day of it here. But don't miss American pop artist Robert Indiana's original LOVE sculpture constructed in 1970—a sculpture now reproduced in other cities around the world.

Whether you explore the city on foot or by bike, the highly acclaimed 8-mile Indianapolis Cultural Trail connects all six of Indy's cultural



districts. Peruse the numerous shops and boutiques along Mass Avenue. Take a swing dance lesson at the historic Fountain Square Theatre to the tune of live orchestra music. Or, sample local fare guilt-free on one of numerous walking and biking food tours along the trail.

For a truly Indy dining experience, get your bearings by starting at the Indianapolis City Market, a prized gourmand destination. In operation since 1866, the not-for-profit food hall hosts more than 35 year-round merchants, as well as the seasonal Original Farmers' Market. You can sip some of the finest in Hoosier brews at the market's Tomlinson Tap Room. To explore more of Indy's modern era craft roots, head over to Sun King Brewing, the city's first commercial craft brewery in over 30 years, which also happens to be the town's largest brewery. Not only do these folks brew top-notch beers, their spirits are of note as well.

Menu items like lamb tamales and mushroom empanadas can be paired with tequilas for even the most curious palate at Livery, where the rooftop bar is a local favorite. A proprietary, barrel-aged cocktail program rules Spoke & Steele's drinks menu, while local farm-fresh fare is what's for brunch and dinner at the downtown anchor restaurant serving New American cuisine.

"Farm-to-table" may be a loose term for some, but not at Traders Point Creamery, Indiana's first USDA-certified organic dairy farm where cheese, ice cream, and other pasture-based, 100-percent grass-fed dairy products are aplenty. The restaurant and farm store are situated on the 130-acre farm, where visitors are encouraged to watch evening milking, or take a stroll on the gorgeous property. —M.C.

### Getting There

*A straight shot up I-65 N is only a 4.5 hour drive.*

