

Meet Indianapolis

BY JOHN WALKER

Most casual visitors to Indianapolis arrive familiar with the city's long-time moniker as the "Crossroads of America."

And indeed, the Indiana capital is well-grounded in its history as a hub of easy accessibility. Because so many major interstates link to the nation's 13th-largest city, fully half of the nation's population is within a single day's drive.

Just a block south of Monument Circle in the heart of downtown, two major roads intersect — U.S. 40 stretching from east to west, and U.S. 31 from northern Michigan to Alabama. Interstates 65, 69, 70, and 74 also link up near downtown.

But easy accessibility alone doesn't account for Indy's diverse "Crossroads" appeal. Big-city amenities, a cosmopolitan culture, an avid sports scene (Indy 500!), and a commitment to emerging industries attract residents

... and check out our



ways to enjoy the Crossroads of America.

and visitors alike — along with a thread of good old-fashioned Hoosier hospitality tying it all together.

And let's not forget the local arts scene, a colorful blend of galleries, public-art installations, and award-winning groups such as the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

John Domont, an Indianapolis native and painter, has lived and worked in cities throughout the world. Fifteen years ago, he opened the downtown Domont Studio Gallery. "As the city has grown, the cultural presence has grown," Domont says. "I think you see integ-

riety, honesty, individuality, and community in the [art] work in Indianapolis."

From sports to arts, it's easy to get overwhelmed with what to do during your stay. In homage to Indianapolis native David Letterman, we've created a Top 10 list of ways to enjoy the city.—*Julie Cope Saetre*

1 Eat fresh-from-the-farm.

Surrounded by rich farmlands, it's no surprise Indianapolis is a leader in the culinary trend of offering farm-to-table, seasonal fare. Two stand-outs: **Café Patachou** and **R Bistro**.

After 20 years and seven locations, Café Patachou ("PAT-uh-shoo") is an Indy institution for lunch and especially for breakfast. Think omelettes made from fresh, local free-range eggs in groovy combinations like

"The Hippie with a Benz": spinach, tomato, mushroom, and feta. cafepatachou.com

R Bistro has served its fresh lamb, duck, and other specialties since 2001. The menu changes weekly at the 17-table restaurant, but the passion of chef Regina Mehallick never does. "Potatoes picked in the morning are used that afternoon," she says, and fall brings seasonal delights like fried green tomatoes, apples, squash, and pears. rbistro.com



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2 Follow the Cultural Trail.

By next year, an already-underway biking/pedestrian path called the **Cultural Trail** will link up Indy's six cultural districts: Broad Ripple Village, Fountain Square, Indiana Avenue, Mass Ave (named for Massachusetts Avenue, its main street), the Wholesale District, and The Canal & White River State Park—making it even easier for you to check out the myriad ways to play Indy-style. indyculturaltrail.org

Catch a Colts or Pacers game in the Wholesale District or a jazz performance at the Madame Walker Theatre Center on Indiana Avenue. Stroll through historic Fountain Square, or take the kids to the Indianapolis Zoo in White River State Park. College-friendly Broad Ripple Village oozes art from the galleries to the graffiti murals, and Mass Ave's motto "45 degrees from ordinary" means eclectic shops and night spots. discoverculturaldistricts.com



3 Go back to Old Indiana.

Want to know how to build a Kentucky Long Rifle? Or play baseball by 19th-century rules? Visitors can do that and more at **Conner Prairie**, a 200-acre interactive history park built around the estate of William Conner, one of the state's earliest settlers. Guests join costumed interpreters to learn about life in the 1800s. Must-do exhibit: the 1859 Balloon Voyage that takes you 350 feet in the air. It commemorates the nation's first successful air-mail delivery, which occurred by balloon, in Lafayette, Indiana, in 1859. connerprairie.org

4 Break out the pom-poms.

Whether you root for UCLA, Florida, or Oregon State; whether you follow the Big Ten, the Pac-10, or the ACC; and whether you're fan-atical about lacrosse, track and field, or soccer, the **NCAA Hall of Champions** has something for all college sports fans. Newly renovated, this two-story, 30,000-square-foot museum and exhibit hall showcases the



5 Come full Circle.

The heart of downtown Indy is a circle — **Monument Circle** — home to the spectacular 1902 State Soldiers and Sailors Monument, the largest Civil War memorial in the United States. A bronze figure of Victory crowns the nearly 300-foot-tall structure made from Indiana limestone. Visitors can start in the basement, the Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum, and then walk or ride to the top of the tower for one of the best views of “Circle City.” Benches around the monument and its fountains are a good spot to eat lunch and people-watch. in.gov/iwm



6 Enjoy the art of shopping.

Spend the day at **Circle Centre Mall** and you can score a Coach bag, Johnston & Murphy loafers, and a box of Godiva chocolates. Then take in a free lunchtime concert in the adjoining **Artsgarden**. It's an experience that's uniquely Indy.

With more than 100 stores, Circle Centre is a case of new (interior) meets old (store facades): Though the building's exterior dates to the 1800s, the inside is brand spanking-new. Connected to the mall by a covered skywalk and suspended over busy streets, the seven-story, glass-enclosed Artsgarden hosts concerts and arts exhibitions (more than 300 a year—all free!). circlecentre.com or indyarts.org/artsgarden.aspx



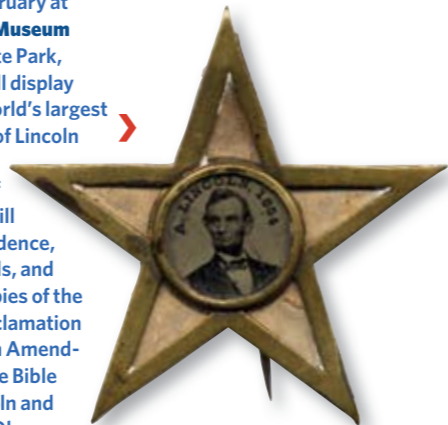
7 Spend the night in style.

In the 1850s, guests arrived at what's now the **Canterbury Hotel** in horse-drawn carriages. Today they use a different kind of horsepower, but the 99-room boutique hotel's tradition of stylish service continues. Expect a complimentary hot breakfast buffet to start your day, just a sky walk away from the RCA Dome, conven-

tion center, and Circle Centre Mall (with a private entrance for hotel guests). Try dinner at the hotel's Danielli restaurant before a show at the Indiana Repertory Theater just a couple blocks away. Evenings end on a sweet note with turndown service and chocolate truffles on your pillow. Rooms start at \$189. canterburyhotel.com

8 Get to know Honest Abe.

Illinois calls itself the Land of Lincoln, but Indiana claims the 16th president as well: Abraham Lincoln spent his boyhood in the southern part of the state. In February at the **Indiana State Museum** in White River State Park, two exhibitions will display pieces from the world's largest private collection of Lincoln memorabilia and from the Library of Congress. Items will include correspondence, campaign materials, and original signed copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment, as well as the Bible used by both Lincoln and President Barack Obama at their swearing-in ceremonies. in.gov/ism



Children's Museum of Indianapolis

9 Museum-hop 'til you drop.

Bright objects spark young minds at the **Children's Museum of Indianapolis**, where kids can get up close with dinosaur bones (even *dracorex hogwartsia*, named after the Harry Potter series) or learn about Tutankhamun, the Egyptian boy king (through Oct. 25). childrensmuseum.org

Part of the **Indianapolis Museum of Art**, “100 Acres: the Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park” will commission special pieces to sprinkle around its woodlands, wetlands, meadows, and 35-acre lake. Until the park opens in June, visitors can enjoy the museum's more than 50,000 diverse works from “African art” to “Textiles + fashion arts.” imamuseum.org

If the old — and new — West is more your style, check out the **Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art**, the only museum of its kind in the Midwest and a quick walk from downtown Indianapolis. eiteljorg.org

10 Start your engines.

See your reflection alongside the names of all Indy 500 winners in the polished silver of the Borg-Warner Trophy, on display at the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway's Hall of Fame Museum**. Some 75 cars are also on display: Check out the rare auto collection featuring one of just three 1935 Duesenberg JN 4-door convertibles ever made, built in Auburn, Indiana. It's a reminder that the 2.5-mile oval track, opened a century ago this year, was originally intended as a test facility for the state's fledgling auto industry. Today, in addition to the legendary 500, it hosts NASCAR's Brickyard 400 and the Red Bull Indianapolis GP, a motocross event. indianapolismotorspeedway.com (For more on Indy's sports scene, see p.94.)



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