

# TRAVEL TIPS FOR NATIONALS 2017

## *Exploring the Tri-State Area (Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin)*

**REALLY IMPORTANT TIP:** Always, always keep your parking meter fed in Dubuque (Saturdays too)!!!!

### **A Brief (Very Brief) History of Dubuque**

(see [www.encyclopediadubuque.org](http://www.encyclopediadubuque.org) for more)

In 1788, **Julien Dubuque**, a French-Canadian, was granted rights by the Mesquakie (aka Meskwaki) Indians to mine their land for lead; he settled near the mouth of Catfish Creek (now part of the State Park, Mines of Spain Recreation Area). **Dubuque**, for whom the city is named, is considered to be the first white man to settle in **Iowa**, making Dubuque the oldest City in Iowa.

For followers of the "Triple Crown Race", La Classique internationale de Canots de la Mauricie (Shawinigan) in Quebec, Canada, Julien Dubuque, was born in Trois-Rivières (his childhood cradle is located in the Mississippi River Museum). Imagine the journey he made by water to arrive here! So, it is somehow fitting that the 50th Annual USCA National Championships should be held on "the Father of Waters," the 2nd longest river in the United States, 4th longest in the world (including Missouri and Jefferson River feeds).

In 1965, after severe flooding of much of the downtown area, a flood wall was built to protect Dubuque's citizens and structures from future flooding, so much of the waterfront is rimmed in native limestone and protected by flood gates.

Chaplain Schmitt Island, (named after Father Aloysius H. Schmitt) aka City Island, is Race HQ for Nationals 2017. Formerly an airport, a city dump site and a car racing track, it is now a recreational area, with a hiking/biking trail, an indoor iceskating arena (open to the public), baseball fields, boat docks, Dubuque Water Sports Club, Miller Riverview Park Campground, casino, hotel.

From the Miller Riverview Park waterfront, start/finish line of the marathon events, you can view both Wisconsin and Illinois. A short paddle, bike ride or car drive can take you through all three states. Hence, the term "tri-state area".

This tri-state area of Dubuque, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois is also commonly referred to as "the driftless area", because the last glaciers skipped the terrain, leaving it with rolling hills and great views. Just letting you visitors know that there are no mountains in the area, but there are some BIG hills.

By car, Dubuque is 1 hr. 30 min. from Madison, Wisconsin, 2 hr. 40 min. from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 3 hr. 30 min. from downtown Chicago, Illinois, 3 hr. 30 min. from Des Moines, Iowa and 4 hr. 30 min. from Minneapolis.

As at past nationals venues, there is much to see and do in this historic area, with great venues for biking, hiking, scenic drives, historic tours, museums, golfing, etc.

Here are some of Earl Brimeyer's top picks/hints/tour suggestions, in no particular order, along with some others. **Can't find what you want? Send an e-mail to [2017nmc@uscanoe.org](mailto:2017nmc@uscanoe.org)**

### Getting Around Dubuque

Downtown Dubuque is fairly easy to travel, although parking can be a bit hard to find in the evenings. Don't forget to plug your meter!

Dubuque has buses dressed up as green electric trolleys that are great for getting around downtown Dubuque. There are also a number of hiking/biking trails/paths that may be found on the City website -[www.cityofdubuque.org/1589/Trail-Maps](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/1589/Trail-Maps). **Heritage Trail** (fee if 17+) is a 26-mil gravel, multi-use trail that runs from Dubuque to Dyersville. A popular starting point is Sageville. [www.dubuquecounty.org/conservation/heritage-trail](http://www.dubuquecounty.org/conservation/heritage-trail).

Give Parrish or Dave at **Bicycle World** a call (563) 556-6122 [www.bicycleworlddbq.com](http://www.bicycleworlddbq.com) for bike rentals, suggested bike routes and maps, or to join their Wednesday night group ride (fast-paced, hilly routes for experienced riders). There is also a similar Thursday night ride hosted by **Free Flight**.

### Chaplain Schmitt Island Tour (race site)

There is a skateboard park and public ice skating arena located on the island. Also a Veteran's Memorial. A hiking/biking trail starts at the north end of the island and travels under the bridge to follow Peosta channel out to the the Lock and Dam.

**Lock and Damn No. 11** is located just north of the Island (there are 29 working locks on the river). This working lock has a viewing pavilion for watching the river boats lock through. In 2001, at age 79, Verlen Kruger and paddling partner, Bob Bradford, 58, locked through in their canoe, to place first in the longest nonstop canoe/kayak race in history—an epic marathon of 2,348 miles down the flood-ravaged Mississippi River, taking only 24 consecutive days. On a previous trip, Verlon “shot the dam” (strongly discouraged).

**Sutton Pool** is located near the dam on Hawthorne St. A mall user fee allows visitor access. [www.cityofdubuque.org](http://www.cityofdubuque.org)

### Eagle Point Park and Ham House Tour (13 min (3.6 mi) via Rhomberg Ave from race site) (Fee)

The Friday nite pasta dinner will be held at this beautiful park with scenic views of the river valley. Include a tour of the **Mathias Ham House**, located on the corner of Romberg Ave. and Eagle Point Dr. for a bit of history.

### Port of Dubuque / Ice Harbor Tour (10 min from City Island)

Located at the south end turnaround for the marathon events, in the riverfront area at the Port of Dubuque known as the “**Ice Harbor**”, the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** [www.rivermuseum.com](http://www.rivermuseum.com) (fee) is an interpretive museum of the natural, cultural, and industrial history of the Mississippi River, with interactive displays, aquariums, movies and more. This museum can take 2-4 hrs, depending on your interest and staying power.

The **Mississippi Riverwalk** (free-allow 30-40 min), starts from the **Welcome Pavilion** located inside the flood gate (**good place to view the marathon turn around**) east of the museum (there may be a paddle wheeler excursion boat docked here) and will take you to an historic **Shot Tower** (used in making lead musket balls for the civil war), the **Star Brewery** (no longer in operation, but Stone Cliff Winery has a showroom here) and to the railroad bridge that crosses from Dubuque to Illinois. Trains on the Illinois side pass through a tunnel mined into the hillside; look closely and you can see the entrance to the tunnel. If timed right, you may see the swing gate in operation as a barge passes through. There is sculpture by local area artists located along the riverwalk.

Just over the 3rd Street access bridge, between 1st and 5th on Main Street are a number of restaurants and bars, along with the historic **Julien Inn** - take a walk through this hotel for a feel of historical Dubuque.

A ride on the **Fenelon Place Elevator, (fee - allow 30 min)**, located at 4th and Bluff St., [www.fenelonplaceelevator.com](http://www.fenelonplaceelevator.com), could complete your Ice Harbor tour. This 3 ft narrow gauge funicular railway, also known as the Fourth Street Elevator, is claimed to be the shortest and steepest railroad in the world. Nice view from the top - and some historic homes.

### **Field of Dreams Tour (41 min (28.7 mi) via US-20 from race site)**

Three movies filmed in the Dubuque area include ‘Field of Dreams’, ‘Take This Job and Shove It’ and ‘F.I.S.T’. Located in Dyersville, Iowa, the ‘**Field of Dreams**’ baseball diamond and house is still a popular destination - bring baseball glove, bat and ball and you can probably join a pick-up game in progress. On Sundays at 1:00 pm a “ghost team” comes out to play. While in Dyersville, you may also want to visit the **National Farm Toy Museum**. And, the **National Motorcycle Museum** is located another 40 minutes west of Dyersville.

### **Mines of Spain Recreation Area (14 min (5.8 mi) via US-151 S from race site)**

Looking for miles of wooded hiking trails or a little canoe trip? This National Historic Landmark is located on 1380 acres just south of Dubuque, Iowa, [www.minesofspain.org](http://www.minesofspain.org), with a canoe put-in, prairie, bluff and woodland trails. The **Julien Dubuque Monument** and grave of his Mesquakie Indian wife, Potosa, is located on the bluff just above the mouth of Catfish Creek. There is a canoe put-in at Catfish Creek, with a hiking trail up to the monument. A favorite hike is Horseshoe Quarry - You can hike into the quarry or along the top of the quarry. From the quarry, cross the railroad tracks (look BOTH ways for trains!!!) for a walk to the river. The E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center trails allow you to view a lead mine shaft and a “pit” mine.

### **Swiss Valley Park and Campgrounds (16 min (8.8 mi) via US-151 S and Military Rd from race site)**

A scenic wooded valley, with a stocked, spring-fed trout stream (Catfish Creek before it passes through Dubuque), great hiking trails, neat bridges and a nice campground [www.cityofdubuque.org](http://www.cityofdubuque.org) for reservation information.

**John Deere Plant Tour:** Have never been on one, but understand that tours of the Dubuque John Deere Facility are given. There is a spot behind the plant and by the Little Maquoketa Bridge where you can put in a boat too.

### Galena, Illinois and Environs (24 min 16.2 mi) via US-20 E from Race Site)

This is a great little town for to wander - B&B's, historic site-seeing, antiquing, shopping, eating, viewing 1830's-1860's architecture, etc. In 1865, this historic lead-mining city was larger than Chicago, with paddle wheelers traveling to Galena from the Mississippi River. Then, the lead ran out, the Galena River (aka Fever River) silted in and the city buildings were preserved. Eight Civil War Generals served from Galena, including President Ulysses S. Grant - his home is open for tours. A bus-driven ghost tour (fee) is offered.

There is canoe/kayak put-in on the south side of town - paddle upriver through Galena or down river to the backwaters of the Mississippi. Both paddles take about 45 min one-way. Call Deb Malone at **Fever River Outfitters**, (815) 776-9425 for canoe/kayak/bike rentals and routes. Casper Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Keogh Nature Preserve (only Bear Effigy Mound in Illinois) and Blandings Landing Recreation Area are a few great areas [www.rivers2ridges.com](http://www.rivers2ridges.com). Chestnut Mountain Ski Resort offers many options. For a zip-line tour-**Long Hollow Tours** [www.longhollowcanopytours.com](http://www.longhollowcanopytours.com). Continue on U.S. Hwy 20 to Elizabeth, Illinois for more antiquing, a railroad museum, a meteorite museum (quirky) and a reproduction of an 1830's fort.

### Great River Road Tour (about 50 min (37 miles) one way)

One of Earl's favorites, since his folks grew up in Balltown. Great river views and vistas. Travel north on US Hwy 52 to **Breitbach's Country Dining** [www.breitbachscountrydining.com](http://www.breitbachscountrydining.com) for a meal at the oldest restaurant in Iowa (it has burned down a few times, so the present structure is pretty new). Then, continue north on Hwy 52 to the **Cassville Ferry** (car fee). Take the car ferry across to Wisconsin, and head downriver on HW133 to visit the **National Brewery Museum and the Potosi Brewery**. Great food available and interesting history of beer making in area. Take U.S. Hwy 61 back through Dickeyville for a stop at the **Dickeyville Grotto** (quirky). (See [www.scenicpathways.com](http://www.scenicpathways.com) - search Great River Road for more ideas.)

**Effigy Mounds National Monument** 1 hr 30 min 62.8 miles. Continue on to **Wenonah Canoe** in Winona MN - another hr north +/-.

**Wyalusing State Park** [www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/wyalusing](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/wyalusing) North of Cassville, Wisconsin at the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers. Indian mounds, views, camping, water trails, the last Passenger Pigeon was shot here.

**Also on the Museum List:** Badger Mine & Museum in Shullsburg WI and The Mining Museum and Rollo Jamison Museum in Platteville WI.

**Spring Green, Wisconsin:** (1 hr 9 min 66.5 miles) Tour Frank Lloyd Wright's Estate, **Taliesin**, take in a play with **American Players Theatre**, visit **House on the Rock** ('American Gods' by Neil Gaiman) take a paddle on the Wisconsin River. Continue north to **Wisconsin Dells** or the **Crane Foundation** in Bariboo, WI.

**Mineral Point Wisconsin:** (41 min. 40 miles) Third oldest city in Wisconsin, with shops and galleries. Noted for arts and crafts workshops held at Shake Raze Alley [www.shakeragalley.com](http://www.shakeragalley.com).

**Golf:** Bunker Hill Public Golf Course in Dubuque. Lacoma par-3 public golf course in East Dubuque, Illinois and, if you are an avid golfer, try Eagle Ridge Golf Course located in the Galena Territories in Illinois. Tee-time reservations required at all three.

**Churches and Such.** Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey and New Melleray Abbey are Trappistine Abbeys open to the public. St. Luke's Methodist Church in Dubuque has more Tiffany Stained Glass Windows than any other church in Iowa. Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters in Wisconsin.

**Other Things Too:** Dubuque Arboretum, Riverboat Rides, winery tours, Dubuque Museum of Art, etc. Take a look on-line for your special interest. American Pickers store, Antique Archeology is located in Claire, Iowa.

### **Off the Beaten Path**

**Fenley State Recreation Area:** 16 min. from Dubuque in Wisconsin - Trail runs up a ravine into a field to a bluff that overlooks the Mississippi River. The town of Sinsiniwa was located here in the early 1830's. Its founder paddled to his cabin here from Galena at night during the "Blackhawk Indian Wars." Town died out during a malaria epidemic and grave sites may be located on the top of Sinsiniwa Bluff.

**White Water Canyon Wildlife Area:** 30 min. from Dubuque, just south of Cascade, Iowa. Ice caves, Indian artifacts, bluffs and hiking.

**Manchester, Iowa Whitewater Park:** (49 min (44.7 mi) via US-20 W) Haven't paddled the course, but whitewater folks like it.

### **Miscellaneous**

**Wildlife & Woodland Tips:** Look for bald eagles, white pelicans, cormorants, Great Blue Herons, Snowy Egrets, Osprey (rare), owls, hawks, king fishers, possums, racoon, muskrat, river otter, turtles, beaver, turkey, deer, and lots of other critters big and small. **Poison ivy is common. So are deer ticks. There are NO poisonous snakes in the tri-state area (although the Northern Water Snake is frequently mistaken as one). We don't recommend swimming or wading in the Mississippi.**

**Coffee and Tea:** Not important for some, critical for others. **Jitterz Cafe** is located about 2 min from race site - sandwiches, salads and soups. In vicinity: A great bookstore, **River Lights II** across the street, quilting shop, yarn shop, art gallery, mexican restaurant, L. May local eatery with outside dining. **Inspire Cafe** in the Millwork District offers breakfast, lunch and a quiet place to hang out in a

beautifully restored warehouse - take a tour of the building. **Charlotte's Coffee House** at 1104 White St. is also minutes from race site, serving breakfast and lunch, with limited outdoor seating. **Jumble Coffee Company** has a drive-thru location on west end of Dubuque at 820 Wacker Plaza. Every HyVee Grocery Store in Dubuque has a **Starbucks Coffee** located inside the store.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

There are always lots of events going on. Check [traveldubuque.com](http://traveldubuque.com) and [dubuque365.com](http://dubuque365.com) for listings closer to August. The **Dubuque Area Farmer's Market**, held on Saturday from 7:00am-12:00 noon at 11th and Main St. (free parking in the Dubuque Bank & Trust Parking Lot at 1398 Central Ave.). Great place to eat breakfast, get coffee and buy Fencel's Sweet Corn (get there early)! (2017 marks the 172nd year for Iowa's oldest farmer's market.)

Also, Earl Brimeyer says there is a hot rod type event in the parking lot of Plaza 20 in Dubuque on Thursday night.