

# Visiting Iowa City

## Iowa City at a Glance

- With its immediate neighbors of Coralville and University Heights, Iowa City's metro population is 171,491 (as of the 2017 census population estimate). Iowa City was once the territorial capitol of Iowa, and the Old Capitol building in the middle of the University of Iowa campus was built in 1842.
- Iowa City leads the country as the U.S. city with the highest percentage of adults holding bachelor's degrees at 59.8%
- University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics is a major teaching hospital and level-1 trauma center with over 800 beds.
- Iowa City was named a UNESCO City of Literature in 2008. Since 1955, graduates and faculty of the University of Iowa have won 40 Pulitzer Prizes, including 27 prizes to writers affiliated with the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

## Transportation to Iowa City from the Eastern Iowa Airport

- [Anaman Concierge Services Airport Shuttle Service](#): (319) 471-2347

## Hotels

- [Hotel Vetro](#), 201 South Linn St.
- [The Graduate Hotel](#), 210 South Dubuque St.
- [Hampton Inn Iowa City/University Area](#), 4 Sturgis Corner Dr.
- [Iowa House Hotel and Iowa Memorial Union](#), 125 North Madison St. 52242

## Restaurant Recommendations

**Downtown** (the center of Iowa City):

*If you're hungry for...*

- *Burgers*: Short's Burger and Shine (18 S. Clinton St.) has you covered, with beef, chicken, and black bean offerings, all fresh and made to order.
- *Casual Italian food*: Basta Pizzeria Ristorante (121 Iowa Ave.) offers pizza, pasta, and other made-from-scratch dishes using fresh, local ingredients in an energetic and contemporary setting, with an outdoor patio for nice weather.
- *Creative cocktails & bites*: Clinton Street Social Club (18 ½ S. Clinton St.) can be hard to find, with a tucked-away entry, but the second- and third-floor retro bar and dining areas promise craft cocktails, New American plates, and not-to-be-missed happy hour specials every day.

- *Coffee and books*: Prairie Lights Books & Café (15 S. Dubuque St.) Open since 1978, this famous store is a destination in itself, but its second-story café offers a quiet, naturally lit haven for writers.
- *Cupcakes*: The Chicago sister restaurant of Molly's Cupcakes (14 S. Clinton St.) made its television debut on Cupcake Wars; the Iowa City location is a little more low-key, although it still promises an extensive sweets menu.
- *Espresso & pastries*: [Cortado Coffee & Café](#) (26 S. Clinton St.) dishes up decadent croissants, espresso drinks, and a lunch menu with abundant sandwiches and salads. Don't miss the gooey chocolate chip cookies.
- *Fancier Italian food*: Baroncini Ristorante Italiano (104 S. Linn St.) features modern Italian dishes in an upscale dining room. They offer a two-course \$10 lunch special, as well as a dinner menu of fresh pastas + other entrees.
- *Frozen yogurt*: There are many shops to choose from, but we like woman-owned and locally responsible Yotopia (132 S. Clinton St.).
- *Indian cuisine*: Masala Indian Cuisine (9 S. Dubuque St.) uses local farmers' market finds to prepare vegan, vegetarian, & meat dishes, for the lunch buffet and à la carte dinner menu.
- *Irish pub*: Mickey's Irish Pub (11 S. Dubuque St.) serves rotating craft beers, a vast selection of whiskeys and scotches, and an expansive food menu all day.
- *New American fare*: Pullman Bar & Diner (17 S. Dubuque St.) packs a lot into this small upscale diner space; their weekend brunch is not to be missed.
- *Sandwiches*: Nodo (5 S. Dubuque St.) If you don't like any of their 24 sandwich options, you can build your own! Good rotating soups and salads, too. Just make sure to top it off with a fresh-baked cookie.
- *Steak & seafood*: Joseph's Steakhouse (212 S. Clinton St.) This white-tablecloth restaurant, a quiet oasis amidst the downtown hustle and bustle, is only open for dinner, when it offers lobster, filet mignon, and luscious sides.
- *Taco pizza (or just, you know, pizza)*: The Airliner (22 S. Clinton St.) might have gained media attention thanks to a viral video, in which a student on a quest for Ranch dressing pushed past a candidate in the midst of a political speech. However, the Airliner is a well-established college-student haunt serving all varieties of pizza: deep dish, taco, and otherwise.
- *Vegan food*: Trumpet Blossom Café (310 E. Prentiss St.) is not technically "downtown," but the organic vegan restaurant offers such exceptional cuisine and drinks (think tempeh reubens and house favorite beverages), it's worth the extra few minutes spent walking there.

**Northside** (closer to the Obermann Center):

*If you're hungry for...*

- *All-day breakfast*: Bluebird Diner (330 E. Market St.) has a substantial menu with breakfast staples, as well as an impressive lunch and dinner menu.
- *Coffee & pastries*: Tru Coffee (287 N. Linn St.) While the array of coffee beverages is nice, the natural light makes it an ideal work spot. Tru has oat and nut milk options galore!

- *Drinkable desserts:* Hamburg Inn No. 2 (214 N. Linn St.) is known nationally as a stop for presidential candidates. This longtime “greasy” diner has all-day breakfast and an enormous menu that includes GF bread. And there’s that indescribably decadent pie shakes.
- *Upscale and light filled:* Goosetown Café (203 N. Linn St.) serves brunch, dinner, and drinks, with options ranging from tofu grain bowls to duck pot pie. In addition to their vast food menu, they offer a wide range of drink options. (There are 12 rotating beer taps!)
- *Kombucha* – Wild Culture Kombucha (210 N. Linn St.) has a rotating tap of homebrewed kombucha, as well as beer and snacks, with a game room in back.
- *Wine and cheese* – Brix (209 N. Linn St.) is a perfect place to sample wine and enjoy an assortment of cheese-heavy sandwiches and salads.
- *Middle Eastern* – Oasis (206 N. Linn St.) – A very friendly, local spot with falafel and all of the sides; amazing fries!
- *Mexican* – El Banditos (327 E. Market St.) – The expected and less so, including a hibiscus margarita and many vegetarian options.

### Elsewhere around town:

*If you’re hungry for...*

- *Upscale with a view* – Rapid Creek Cidery (4823 Dingleberry Rd.) is a lovely restaurant with a chic menu, located on an apple farm. Closed during the deepest part of winter.
- *A pint of beer and some wings (chicken or cauliflower):* Big Grove (1225 S. Gilbert St.) might be known as a brewery, but don’t let the name fool you. With house-made pretzels, shrimp tacos, Szechuan bowls, and more, it’s safe to say that they don’t just offer drinks.
- *Authentic Mexican Food:* La Regia Taqueria (436 Highway 1 W.) doesn’t just make cheap and delicious tacos. They make [the best](#) tacos in the state (according to *Buzzfeed*, *Insider*, and other sources)!
- *Thai Food:* Thai Spice (1210 S. Gilbert St. #200) will satisfy all of your cravings, with an extensive menu of Thai classics, including everyone’s favorite pad thai stir-fried noodle dish.

## Groceries, Yoga, Gyms, Outdoor Activities, Arts, Entertainment, Bars, & Books

*If you’re looking for...*

- **Groceries:** With its convenient downtown location (next to hotelVetro), **Bread Garden Market & Café** is your one-stop shop for grocery needs, with fresh-baked breads, non-perishables, and a hot buffet, not to mention delicious gelato and coffee drinks. A short walk from downtown, **New Pioneer Co-op** (22 S. Van Buren St.) is a larger store, offering a wide range of grocery products. Only a block away from the pedestrian mall, the **Iowa City Farmers Market** (Chauncey Swan Ramp, 400 block of Washington

Street) runs Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings each week, May through October.

- **A yoga studio:** Downtown Iowa City houses multiple yoga studios, including **Benders** (113 Iowa Ave.); **Hothouse Yoga** (224 S. Clinton St.), and **Heartland Yoga** (221 E. College St. #213).
- **Outdoor activities:** Though it requires a bit of a drive from the downtown area, **Wilson's Orchard** (4823 Dingleberry Rd. NE) is a local favorite, especially in the fall months, when you can pick your own apples before rewarding yourself with a hot apple turnover or cider donut. If you love nature, **Lake MacBride State Park** (Lake MacBride Rd. NE) is Iowa's largest state park, and it features everything from campgrounds and walking trails to swimming and boating. Similarly, **Terry Trueblood Recreational Area** (579 McCollister Blvd.) has walk-run trail routes, seasonal outdoor ice skating, and more. Closer to downtown, **Hickory Hill Park** (800 Conklin) is a scenic forested park, with walk-run trails galore and giant patches of wildflowers in the summer months.
- **Fitness:** On the corner of Burlington and Madison St., the UI's **Campus Recreation and Wellness Center** offers an Olympic lap pool, a leisure pool with a hot tub, classes, a climbing wall, indoor track, and two floors of exercise machines and equipment. Check the website for drop-in rates.
- **Arts and entertainment:** Situated on the pedestrian mall, **FilmScene** (118 E. College St.) is a nonprofit cinema that shows classics, new releases, and film series. **The Englert Theatre** (221 E. Washington St.) is a community arts space with diverse programming, highlighting local performers and artists, as well as hosting regional, national, and international touring performances. Across the river, the University of Iowa performance hall **Hancher** (141 E. Park Rd.) hosts Broadway musicals, contemporary dance, classical music, and lectures. **Riverside Theater** (213 N. Gilbert St.) offers a lineup of plays during the academic year (September-April) and a Shakespeare festival over the summer months. **Prairie Lights** (15 S. Dubuque St.) is home to "Live from Prairie Lights," an internationally known readings series, which features some of the best up-and-coming and well-established authors & poets from all over the globe.
- **Old school bars:** If you're looking for somewhere to hang out after hours, **The Sanctuary** (405 S. Gilbert) has a fireplace and live music and the biggest beer selection you can imagine. On the northside, **George's** (312 E. Market St.) and **The Foxhead** (402 E. Market St.) are standbys for both locals and, especially, the literary crowd.

## Book Resources

- [Prairie Lights Bookstore](#), 15 S Dubuque St., (319) 337-2681
- [The Haunted Bookshop](#), 219 N Gilbert St., (319) 337-2996
- [University of Iowa Special Collections](#), 125 W Washington St., (319) 335-5921
- [University of Iowa Center for the Book](#), 216 North Hall, University of Iowa, (319) 335-0447