

# MINNEAPOLIS WILL SURPRISE YOU



Photo by Joe Bielawa

N A L C  
68TH BIENNIAL  
CONVENTION

JULY 23 - 27  
2012  
MINNEAPOLIS

**D**elegates to the 68th Biennial Convention can look forward to a vibrant city with good food, shopping, entertainment and friendly people when they gather at the Minneapolis Convention Center in July. Delegates will get a chance to enjoy some of the recreational and historical attractions in the area. Listed here are some highlights within walking distance, or a short drive, from downtown. Look for attractions in the greater Minneapolis area in the May issue of *The Postal Record*.

## AQUATENNIAL

Parades! Fireworks! Block parties and beach bashes! The week before the convention, Minneapolis stages its 73rd annual Aquatennial, a celebration of city life along the Mississippi River. The week of celebrations and events culminates in a fireworks display at the 3rd Avenue Bridge Saturday night, July 21. See [aquatennial.com](http://aquatennial.com) for more information.

## MILL CITY MUSEUM

Explore the ruins of what was once the world's largest flour mill, grinding enough flour for 12 million loaves of bread each day. "Mill City" was a nickname for Minneapolis when it was the world's capital of milling. Grain brought by railroad from throughout the Midwest went through the mills, powered at first by the mighty Mississippi's water power, and then shipped to markets in U.S. cities and ports for export.

The first mill on the site, built in 1874, was destroyed by an explosion—flour dust

floating in the air is as explosive as gunpowder—and caused a fire that cut the city's mill capacity in half. *704 South 2nd St. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.*

## RIVERBOAT RIDES

Take in the sights and sounds of the Mississippi River on a river excursion. Cruise for a few hours or a day on the *Minneapolis Queen*, an old-fashioned paddle-wheel riverboat, or on the luxurious modern yacht *Paradise Lady*. Sight-seeing, dinner and Sunday brunch cruises are offered, along with a happy hour cruise on Wednesdays and Thursdays. *Boom Island Park, 700 Sibley St., NE. Reservations are recommended (952-474-8058, [twincitiescruises.com](http://twincitiescruises.com)).*

## KAYAKING AND CANOEING

Want to try a smaller boat? You don't need to travel far—you can rent a kayak or canoe in downtown Minneapolis and explore the Mississippi with your own paddle.

Above the Falls Sports offers rentals and instruction from its location at 120 3rd Ave. North. You can paddle with a guide or on your own. Explore the gorges and waterfalls within easy paddling distance of the city, or check out the nesting sites of great blue herons a few miles upstream, where chicks will be abundant in July. For a more urban experience, enjoy a twilight supper cruise with great views of the city skyline followed by dinner at a waterfront restaurant. *Make reservations for boat*

Photo by Paul Weimer



**Opposite page (from top):** The Aquatennial fireworks and the Mill City Museum

**Below:** You can use binoculars to see the art at the Walker Art Center.

**Right (from top):** A NiceRide bike station; the Mary Tyler Moore statue; and the Midtown Global Market

rental and tours at 612-825-8983 or [abovethefallssports.com](http://abovethefallssports.com).

## RIDE A BIKE

Minneapolis is bicycle-friendly—the city recently was named the best bike city by *Bicycling* magazine. You can find out why firsthand by trying the city’s network of downtown routes and trails, highlighted by the 5.7-mile Minneapolis Greenway, that connect to beautiful riverfront and lakeside routes and parks.

Didn’t pack your bicycle in your luggage? No problem. The city’s bikeshare program, NiceRide, lets you instantly rent a bike by the hour at one of many stations around town, including one right outside the Minneapolis Convention Center and several more in the downtown area and beyond. Rental is self-serve with a credit card. You can drop the bike at any station with an open dock—you need not return it to the station where you rented it. *For a longer ride, rent a bike for a day at FreeWheel Bike stores at 1812 S. 6th St. or 2834 10th Ave. South (on the Greenway).*

## SHOPPING AND DINING

As the city that gave birth to Target stores—the flagship store and headquarters is on Nicollet Mall, an outdoor pedestrian shopping area that runs the length of downtown—Minneapolis offers a variety of stores and sales-tax-free shopping on apparel and shoes. Macy’s and Neiman Marcus are nearby, along with a statue of actress Mary Tyler Moore at the spot of her famous hat toss in the opening credits of her television show, which was set in Minneapolis. Look for

great restaurants in that area too, or check out the city’s latest hotspot for dining by heading south on Nicollet Avenue to the aptly named “Eat Street” area.

## MIDTOWN GLOBAL MARKET

Enjoy freshly made treats for lunch or dinner, or browse for specialty groceries, crafts and gifts at the Midtown Global Market at 920 E. Lake St. Drawing from the ethnic tastes of local neighborhoods, the market is located in the huge, historic Midtown Exchange building. Sample Mexican, Vietnamese, African, Italian, Middle Eastern, and even Swedish food and crafts. The market features frequent musical performances and child-friendly events. *For a schedule, visit [midtownglobalmarket.org](http://midtownglobalmarket.org).*

## THEATER AND ARTS

Among the many theaters and musical venues in the Hennepin Avenue area is First Avenue, which hosts both nationally known and emerging musical acts and dance events. First Avenue was the testing ground for new music by homegrown musician Prince, and was featured in his film “Purple Rain.” *See [first-avenue.com](http://first-avenue.com) for a calendar of events.*

To sample the city’s visual and performing art offerings, try Walker Art Center, a short walk from downtown past the beautiful Loring Park. *Walkerart.org has information on upcoming exhibits.* Next door is the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, one of the nation’s largest, and the Cowles Conservatory, a huge glass greenhouse nurturing native, tropical and exotic plants, orchids, palms and other fragrant and beautiful plants. ✉



Photo by Sharyn Morrow



Photo by J. Pellgen



Photo by Melissa Mongiat



Photo by Erica M.