

Grand Rapids Pre Tour

Grand Rapids: A Perfect Palate of Art, Fall, and Flavor

Experience the vibrant energy of Grand Rapids, Michigan's second-largest city and one of CNN's Top 10 Best American Towns (2024). This 2-night/3-day pre-tour (Sept 8–10) is a curated celebration of art, design, fall color, and unforgettable flavors.

Stay at the elegant four-star Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Curio Collection by Hilton, explore the internationally acclaimed Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, and enjoy the simple pleasures of a local apple orchard. Wander through downtown on a guided mural tour, step into the iconic Meyer May House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and ride the whimsical 1928 Spillman Carousel at the Grand Rapids Public Museum.

Savor locally inspired cuisine and toast the evening in the city crowned *Best Beer City* by USA Today—five years in a row.

Whether you're seeking inspiration, connection, or just a beautiful escape, Grand Rapids offers a perfect blend of culture, color, and craft.

Story Ideas:

- **A Romantic Escape** – A couple's getaway to indulge in bold fall colors, world-class art, and cozy moments in a walkable, vibrant mid-size city. Think of sculpture garden strolls, cider sips, and evenings lit by city lights.
- **The Ultimate Girls' Getaway** – Grab your best friends and fill your camera roll with art, laughter, and vibrant backdrops. From selfie-worthy murals to boutique bites and craft beverage tastings, this trip is all about fun, friendship, and fabulous memories.
- **A Cultural Deep Dive** – For the art lover or lifelong learner, this itinerary offers an immersive journey through modern art history, an architectural icon by Frank Lloyd Wright, and a city that treats creativity as a way of life.

Tour Details

Length of tour: 2 nights, 3 days

Minimum: 2, Maximum 5

Activity level: 2 – 3, This tour does encourage walking and self-exploration. To fully enjoy the trip, it is best to consider walking at a normal pace.

Transportation: Guests are encouraged to arrive at Grand Rapids by early afternoon on September 8, for afternoon activities. Guests arriving in the morning will be provided with

suggested morning self-guided activities. We can add a Sunday evening hotel if requested, without activities and meals.

- **Arrival:** Guests arriving by air are encouraged to fly to GRR (Gerald R Ford Intl Airport). Guests who drive will be offered complimentary parking at the hotel. **Departure:** Guests needing transportation will be transported to Detroit for the conference at 9:30 am September 10.
- Grand Rapids is only a 2.5-hour drive from Downtown Detroit.

Accessibility & Travel Arrangements

Experience Grand Rapids will do all they can to accommodate individuals with mobility challenges, however guests requiring transportation in a wheelchair will need to rent and provide a driver for all their transportation needs, including on the tour and to/from Detroit. We suggest working with Creative Mobility Group.

Unfortunately, the historic The Meyer May house is not able to accommodate guests in wheelchairs and a substitute museum will be suggested. In addition, the visit to the apple orchard will have limited accessibility based on individual's wheelchair needs.

Grand Rapids Pre Tour Itinerary

The organizers will cover admission to attractions and all gratuities during planned meals and provide two drinks per person during planned social events and meals. Participants will be responsible for any additional alcoholic beverages beyond the two drinks provided and any personal expenses not specified above.

Monday, September 8th

8:00 – 3:00 PM: Arrival

- Attendees are responsible for their own arrival to Grand Rapids, whether driving or flying.

3:00 – 5:00 PM: Explore the [Grand Rapids Public Museum](#).

- Activity level: 3
- This world-class public museum features exhibits on history, nature, cultural heritage, and more. Guests can ride the 1928 Spillman carousel, catch a show in the planetarium, or dine in the café overlooking the Grand River.

5:00 – 6:00 PM: Check-in at the [Amway Grand Plaza Hotel](#).

- Activity level: 2

- Check into the hotel and settle into your accommodation.

6:00 – 7:30 PM: Dinner at [Founders Brewing Co.](#)

- Activity level: 2
- Savor locally inspired cuisine and toast the evening at Founders Brewing Co, located in the city crowned *Best Beer City*. Enjoy a delightful dining experience paired with exceptional craft beers.

Tuesday, September 9th

8:00 – 9:00 AM: Breakfast at Morning Belle. Meet in hotel lobby at 7:45 for transportation to breakfast.

- Activity level: 2

9:15 AM – 12:30 PM: Explore [Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park](#)

- Activity level: 2/3
- Discover 158 acres of horticultural beauty at one of the world's top 45 most-visited art museums. Marvel at over 200 stunning sculptures that seamlessly merge art and nature while enjoying a tram tour through the gardens. Recognized as the Best Sculpture Park in the United States by USA Today readers in 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- 11:30 -12:30 PM: Enjoy lunch at the James & Shirley Balk Café, located within the Frederik Meijer Gardens.

1:00 – 2:30 PM: Tour the [Meyer May House](#)

- Activity level: 4
- Begin your visit with a 35-minute film, "The Renewing of a Vision," detailing the history of the Meyer May House. Following the film, enjoy a 50-minute docent-led tour of this beautifully restored Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home, showcasing its architectural brilliance and historical significance.

3:00 – 4:30 PM: Visit [Ed Dunneback & Girls Farm.](#)

- Activity level: 4
- Discover Ed Dunneback and Girls Farm, located on The Fruit Ridge, one of the world's prime fruit growing regions. This fifth-generation family-owned farm near downtown Grand Rapids offers homemade delicacies and locally produced beer, wine, and hard cider.

5:00 – 5:30 PM: Hotel Break

- Activity level: 2
- Take a relaxing one-hour break at the hotel to unwind and recharge before continuing with the day's activities.

5:45 PM – 7:00 PM: Downtown Mural Tour

- Activity level: 4
- Explore Grand Rapids' vibrant art scene with a guided mural tour through downtown. Discover stunning murals and learn the stories behind each masterpiece.

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM: Dinner

- Activity level: 2
- Enjoy a delightful farm-to-table dinner at one of the city's finest restaurants, savoring fresh, locally sourced cuisine in a welcoming atmosphere.

Wednesday, September 10th

8:00 – 9:00 AM: Start the day with breakfast at a downtown restaurant.

- Activity level: 2

9:30 AM: Transportation to Detroit

- At 9:30 AM, guests will be picked up at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and transported to Detroit.