

# The Awe-Inspiring Art of America's Byways

Have you ever thought of art as an adventure? If not, a journey on America's Byways will soon change your mind! See walls of glass bottles, take family art classes, and explore expansive collections of fine art, from ancient to cutting-edge contemporary. Any way you picture it, the art of America's Byways will take you and your family on an inspiring visual journey.

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Glass Bottle Walls at Tinkertown Museum (NM) [1]

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Captivated by Contemporary Sculpture at the BMA (MD) [2]

For captivating art and family fun, visit some of the many museums on [Historic Charles Street](#) in Baltimore, Maryland. Start your adventure at the outdoor Sculpture Gardens of the [Baltimore Museum of Art](#) (BMA): three acres of lush, green landscape filled with striking modern sculptures. Peer through the swooping, bright-red angles of the giant *100 Yard Dash*, and marvel at the imposing, black steel triangular sculpture named *Spitball*. Inside the museum, keep an eye out for "Raoudi" (pronounced "rowdy") from the famous *Interior with Dog* painting by Henri Matisse. Let this spunky Schnauzer guide you and your family on tours and fun activities throughout the museum, which houses the largest collection of works by Henri Matisse in the world. Stop at the Family FunStop in the lobby and pick up family-friendly tips for exploring the museum, as well as self-guided sketching and costume kits for the kids. Come on Family Sunday, when the whole gang can enjoy sketching tours, workshops, and gallery tours.

Take a short drive west of the BMA and visit the [Station North Arts District](#), the area's hub of art celebration. Spanning several communities, the district is home to several artist live-work studios, galleries, business, and more.

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Approaching the Walters Art Museum (MD) [4]

Travel two miles south from the Station North Arts District on Historic Charles Street and visit the [Walters Art Museum](#), home to a vast array of artistic treasures, including Greek sculpture, Roman sarcophagi, Art Deco jewelry, and 19th-century European and American masterpieces. Listen to live storytelling in the galleries, relax in the Family Art Center, and participate in drop-in art activities on Saturdays and Sundays. For more art-filled fun, head next door to the [Contemporary Museum](#), which seeks to present fresh ideas and innovative art in its fascinating exhibitions.

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Enjoying Sidewalk Dining Along Charles Street in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District (MD) [3]

Make your final Charles Street museum stop at the [American Visionary Arts Museum](#), located near the southern

end of the byway. Wend your way through this architectural wonder and peruse unconventional, extraordinary art in six galleries. Marvel at the metal stairway and garden gates, then take a walk through the Sculpture Plaza and see the 55-foot-tall Giant Whirligig-- it's sure to be a high point on your artistic adventure!

A few miles north along the [Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway](#), visit the [Delaware Art Museum](#) in Wilmington. Peruse British pre-Raphaelite art, American art, and much more while the kids explore Kids' Corner, a special area where they can touch the art on the walls, create their own artwork, and learn more about the fascinating world of art. Complete your visit with a walk around the Copeland Sculpture Garden, where you'll see the *Crying Giant*, a whimsical 13-foot-tall bronze statue that's sure to be a family favorite. Peruse more marvelous outdoor sculptures, wander through a labyrinth that was once a reservoir, and even hear your own voice in a sound sculpture that manipulates nearby voices.

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The Delaware Art Museum (DE) [5]

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Marveling at a Museum Mural (MI) [6]

Head west to [Woodward Avenue](#) in Detroit, Michigan, where a magnificent graffiti-style mural will greet you outside the [Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit](#). Step inside to see what is on display, as the museum does not have a permanent collection. Their mission is to make contemporary art accessible to all, so go on in and get a hands-on experience! Participate in workshops, special programs and tours for all ages, interests, and backgrounds. Plan to bring the kids to Family Day, held the third Sunday of each month, for free workshops and art activities for kids of all ages.

Continue north on Woodward Avenue and visit the [Detroit Institute of Arts](#),

home to an amazing 60,000 works of art from ancient to modern. Marvel at the skill of ancient artisans evidenced in the glazed-brick *Dragon of Marduk* from the Ishtar Gate at Babylon (604-562 B.C.E.) Stop at the museum's Garden Court and admire the astonishing fresco-style mural, *Detroit Industry*, that graces the court's north and south walls. Stroll through the museum's vast collection, including the General Motors Center for African American Art, one of the first departments at a major museum to be devoted entirely to African American art. See historic photographs, vivid abstract paintings, and intricate sculptures that manifest a rich story from an African American perspective. Need some family time? Take a specialized family audio tour, pick up a family-oriented museum guide, and participate in drop-in workshops and drawing in the galleries. On Fridays the museum stays open late, so come to enjoy kid-friendly food, music, and art, or come on Sundays for puppet shows, live music, or storytelling.

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Admiring the Detroit Industry Mural at the Detroit Institute of Arts (MI) [7]

Want to get swept away in artistic fervor? Go to the "Windy City" on [Historic Route 66 - Illinois](#) and visit the [Art](#)

[Institute of Chicago](#). One of the largest museums in the U.S., the Art Institute is home to a breathtaking 300,000 works of art. Explore this awe-inspiring collection of everything from ancient Roman sculpture to carefully crafted prints to colorful textiles and more. Hop over to the museum's Modern Wing and be astounded by a tremendous collection of contemporary art, modern European painting and sculpture, state-of-the-art architecture and design, and luminous photography. But don't let the prestige of the Art Institute intimidate you—the museum offers fun-filled activities for you and your family. Explore the museum with family workshops, gallery walks, gallery audio guides, special family exhibitions, story times, parent workshops, teen art studios, and more.

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Spoonbridge and Cherry at the Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens (MN) [8]

Fascinated by outdoor art? Head to the [Grand Rounds Scenic Byway](#) in Minnesota, where you'll find the [Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens](#) at the Walker Art Center. Wander through the 11-acre gardens on your own, or take a guided tour. Marvel at the humorously oversized *Spoonbridge and Cherry*, an icon of the garden, or see random objects "trapped" in the futuristic mesh-steel net of *Prophecy of the Ancients*. Gaze out at the surrounding city through *Standing Frame*, a giant frame on legs made entirely out of tree scraps. After your journey in the gardens, head inside the Walker Art Center and explore the museum's collection of emotion-laden artwork, from abstract sculptures to video work and everything in between. The museum offers many rotating programs for children and families, and since children under 12 get in for free, you'll have no reason not to bring the whole family!

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A Walk Inside the Walker Art Center (MN) [9]

While you are on the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, stop at the [Minneapolis Institute of Art](#), just off the byway and two miles southeast of the Walker Art Center. Bring everyone-- daily admission is free for all! Scan the museum's vast collection, from prehistoric sculptures to paintings and prints and much more. Need a break from the excitement? Relax at one of the museum's cafés, or take a break with your little ones at the Family Center on the first floor of the museum. One Sunday every month is Family Day, when you and your family can have artistic adventures and meet local artists, musicians, dancers, and storytellers. Can't get enough of the MIA? Stop by the Museum Shop for a priceless gift or treasure for your personal collection.

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In Iowa, the [Great River Road](#) will take you to a stunning architectural wonder in the city of [Davenport](#)—a 100,000-square-foot, modern building comprised of translucent, opaque, and reflective glass panels. Step inside this amazing building, known as the [Figge Art Museum](#), and explore an impressive collection of American, Mexican, European, Asian, and Haitian art. Take the guided exhibition tour, "Making Sense of Modern Art," and learn about the history of modern art and the methods behind the masterpieces you see. But don't come alone-- bring the little ones! Stop by the Family Activity Center, a family-themed area with children's artwork, art activities,

The Figge Art Museum (IA) [10]

books, "The Refrigerator Gallery," and more. Peruse Studio 1, a family-friendly installation that teaches youngsters about the elements of art and lets them participate with hands-on activities.

Have you ever seen a wall made of glass bottles? Journey to the [Turquoise Trail](#) in New Mexico and enter the [Tinkertown Museum](#), where 50,000 glass bottles comprise the walls that encompass the museum. Crowded within these astounding walls, you'll see an eccentric assortment of folk art. Smile at funny wedding cake couples, hand-carved wooden figurines, and eclectic doll houses and street scenes, in addition to a 35-foot antique wooden sailboat that survived a 10-year journey. The kids will love Otto the one-man-band and Esmeralda the Fortune Teller, who will play a tune or predict their future for a quarter. See all the glorious, mesmerizing details of Tinkertown, and you won't be surprised to learn that it took founder Ross Ward 40 years to construct the entire museum. Don't miss the eclectic gift shop, where you can pick up a kitschy, charming souvenir. Get a special grab bag for the kids, a mood ring, or a wacky trinket to remind you of the most whimsical art museum you've ever seen!

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Musicians Ready to Play at Tinkertown (NM) [11]

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Colors of the Tucson Museum of Art (AZ) [12]

Venture further west and visit the [Tucson Museum of Art](#), eight miles from southern end of the [Sky Island Scenic Byway](#) in Arizona. Get a taste of the West with the museum's "Art of the American West" collection, filled with works by notable western artists, as well as art of the Americas, contemporary art, and fascinating temporary exhibits. Bring the whole family on the first Sunday of the month, the museum's family day and free

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Path to Imagination at the Tucson Museum of Art (AZ) [13]

admission day. The museum offers many family programs throughout the year, so check the museum's schedule and come take classes, create family artwork, attend special programs and more.

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Thought Las Vegas was only a haven for gamblers? Turns out it is an art-lover's paradise too! Don't miss the Arts Factory Las Vegas, located in the famous [18b Las Vegas Arts District](#) along the [Las Vegas Strip](#). Home to a collection of galleries and workspaces for artists, the Arts Factory will capture your family's interest. They will love the the big cartoon faces and bright colors painted on the walls of FaceUp Studio, a gallery that's bursting with quirky art. Visit the Arts District on the first Friday of each month for the aptly named First Friday festival, where you can see all kinds of art by local artists

Fun at First Friday in the Las Vegas 18b Arts District (NV) [14] and even take a piece of the fun home with you!

While you're in Las Vegas, head over to the [City of Las Vegas, Las Vegas Boulevard State Scenic Byway](#), where you'll find a museum that exhibits the city's shining glory-- neon sign art. The [Neon Museum and Boneyard](#) showcases more than 150 fascinating retired neon signs, each with their own unique history. Be sure to call ahead, though, as tours through this one-of-a-kind museum are only available through appointment.

Journey further west to the [Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway - Route 110](#) near Los Angeles, California, and pay a visit to the [Norton Simon Museum](#), home to one of the most remarkable collections of artwork in the world. Be amazed by Asian sculptures, fine European paintings from the 14th to the 19th centuries, outstanding contemporary art, and painstakingly crafted prints and photos. Along with an impressive art collection, the museum has plenty of family activities for you to enjoy. Come on the first Friday of every month for a free public tour, and visit on the third Saturday for Saturday Family Days, where your kids can learn about the Museum's art and create an art project to take home. Stop by the information desk and pick up a free family guide, which includes activities just for children, and an audio tour, which will introduce your children to 35 works of art with fun, lively commentary.



Historic Holiday Motel (NV) [15]

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Vintage Neon at the Historic Holiday Motel (CA) [16]

Complete your art adventure on the Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway with a visit to the [Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Gardens](#), where you can admire one of the most comprehensive collections of 18th- and 19th-century British and French art. Peruse remarkable paintings, prints, and drawings, such as *Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough or *View on the Stour near Dedham* by John Constable. When you're done inside, head outside to the Huntington Botanical Gardens, and tour a breathtaking array of themed gardens, all lush and bursting with beautiful botanicals year-round. Children under 5 get in for free, so take your young ones to the Children's Garden, where they can learn about scientific principles related to earth, fire, air, and water through hands-on experiences. Venture into the Garden's Rainbow Room to view an amazing prism of light and feel sound waves moving

through water in a sonic pool.

Whether you're an arts aficionado or simply appreciate the aesthetic, you'll have the adventure of a lifetime when you explore some of the finest art museums on America's Byways. With amazing art, whimsy, and enchanting activities, these museums will leave a lasting impression on every member of your family, from the young to the young-at-heart.

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