



## The Papillon Club of America, Inc.'s 2020 National Specialty Tourist Attractions

(updated as of 2019JUN23)

Blank Park Zoo (1.7 Miles)  
7401 SW 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, Iowa

A 49-acre zoological park on the south side of Des Moines, near historic Fort Des Moines. It is a member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and is the only accredited zoo in Iowa. The mission of the Blank Park Zoo is to inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, and recreation. The Zoo features an Aquarium, African Boardwalk, an Australia Adventure, a Kids' Kingdom, a Big Cat Complex, a Harbor Pinniped Pavilion, as well as other miscellaneous and educational exhibits.

State Capitol (6.3 Miles)  
1007 E Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa

The gold dome of the State Capitol can be clearly seen from many vantage points across Des Moines, and while it's a postcard worthy image from the outside, exploring the history inside is a great way to spend an Iowa day. Home to the governor's office and many sectors of the Iowa government, including the Iowa Senate and the Iowa House of Representatives, the interior of the State Capitol is also adorned with large works of art and a hand-carved design that radiates the prestige of the history made within its walls. Free guided tours are available throughout the week for groups of ten or more, and every visitor can roam the halls and tour the open rooms on their own, including standing atop the glass floor that gives a great view of the gold dome interior or the regal Law Library on the second floor.

## PCA National Specialty 2020



### [Science Center of Iowa](#) (4.8 Miles)

401 W Martin Luther King Jr Parkway, Des Moines, Iowa

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### [John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park](#) (4.4 Miles)

1330 Grand Ave, Des Moines, Iowa

Centrally located in downtown Des Moines within Gateway Park, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a 4.4-acre landscaped space featuring more than 20 works of sculptured art. The park has been entertaining Des Moines urbanites with wonderful sculptures since 2009 and is a great place for families, tourists, and anyone on their lunch break to catch a quick glance at the artworks. The Sculpture Garden and surrounding Gateway Park are fun places to visit at any time of year.

### [Salisbury House & Gardens](#) (6.2 Miles)

4025 Tonawanda Drive, Des Moines, Iowa

The Salisbury House and Gardens sits quietly in the neighborhoods south of Grand Avenue, and while no one has officially occupied this 42-room estate in more than six decades, there is still plenty of life and culture to explore. Whether you consider yourself a history buff or antique admirer, even just a casual explorer, the Salisbury House and Gardens and the history it holds can interest every member of your family. For a small admission fee that goes towards the Salisbury House Foundation, every visitor to the house is encouraged to explore the preserved parts of the home and gardens on a self-guided tour. However, it is well worth your time to take part in a guided tour, which allows patrons to visit areas that are otherwise off limits, including a decadent library and study, and provides much of the story of how this house, resembling a royal manor, came to be in Des Moines.

### [Des Moines Art Center \(6.1 Miles\)](#)

4700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa

Since 1948, the Des Moines Art Center has been exhibiting fine arts, and through its tenure, this critical cultural attraction has seen some expansion in floor space, exhibits, and the community that surrounds it. Featuring constantly rotating exhibits from local and nationally renowned artists, plus permanent pieces from artists like Matisse, Monet, and O'Keeffe (just to name a few), the Des Moines Arts Center offers plenty to see. For an enriched experience of all the center has to offer, taking part in one of the many educational programs or guided tours offered by the facility can shed a little light on the artists behind the work you're looking at, and the Chef's Palette café can leave you completely satisfied.

### [Principal Park \(5.2 Miles\)](#)

1 Line Drive, Des Moines, Iowa

Once known as Sec Taylor Stadium, Principal Park is located at the scenic confluence of the Iowa and Racoon River in downtown Des Moines. Home to Iowa's own Triple-A minor league baseball team, the Iowa Cubs, Principal Park was remodeled in 1992 and has since been noted as one of the best minor league stadiums in the nation. It's not just the scenic stadium that fills the bleachers at Principal Park though, it's something less tangible that attracts all the attention.

It could be the summertime smells of fresh-cut grass and hot dogs, or the sound of a stadium cheering on their home team, perhaps even the sharp crack of a bat from a well-timed swing, whatever it is, Principal Park has all the right ingredients for America's favorite pastime. Add in the extra-inning and special events found at Principal Park, including fireworks on the Fourth of July and community events like car shows throughout the season, and you don't even have to be a fan of baseball to see why Principal Park is a premiere Des Moines attraction.

### [East Village](#) (6.3 Miles)

Over the last few decades, Des Moines has been growing into a cultural hub and capital of new tastes and styles. No better example of this cultural emergence can be found than in the streets of the commercial and residential neighborhood of East Village. Located east of the Des Moines river, East Village features unique eateries like Tacopocalypse, with one of the best burritos you'll find in Iowa; fashion influencers like the always trending Raygun; and plenty of galleries and specialty shops to explore. Every day, the buzz of excitement for the Des Moines East Village seems to grow, and whether it's food, fashion, or entertainment, you'll find something fun to explore here.

### [Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden](#) (5.8 Miles)

909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa

With plants ranging from temperate to tropical, the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden takes you indoors and out while you tour the carefully planted collections. Something is always in bloom here, and whether your visit is part of an adult-education class on gardening, or you're attending a tastefully decorated event in the rentable venue space, or you just find yourself getting lost in the gardens on a self-guided tour, you'll see some of the beauty found in the dirt beneath your feet. If you happen to be visiting the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden during the lunch hour, the Trellis Café located within the gardens can make your visit here extra special.

### [Water Works Park](#) (2.9 Miles)

2201 Georg Flagg Parkway, Des Moines, Iowa

Water Works Park contains nearly 15,000 acres of green space close to the streets of downtown Des Moines, which allow plenty of room for running, biking, bird-watching, fishing, intramural athletics, and special events throughout the year. There are many ways to enjoy everything Water Works Park has to offer, and simply setting down a blanket to relax in the sunshine counts as one. To extend your adventure from the park, a bike trail leads the way beneath Fleur Drive to connect with the waters of Gray's Lake and its scenic pedestrian pathway. During the winter months, you can drive through the dazzling display of Jolly Holidays Lights in the park between holiday festivities, making this a year-round attraction.

### [Iowa State Fair \(9.5 Miles\)](#)

E University Ave & E 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, Iowa

A tribute to the agricultural spirit that supports the state of Iowa, the Iowa State Fair is a nearly two-week celebration that happens every August at the fairgrounds in Des Moines. It provides community members and tourists alike the opportunity to experience the many facets of the industry that defines the state. You don't have to be a farmer or active in the agricultural industry to enjoy the Iowa State Fair, though. Some of the many different ways to experience it include trade shows, exhibits, art galleries, amusement rides, live music, and more food stands than one can shake a stick at. The eleven days of the Iowa State Fair is packed with entertainment and things to do, and the summer days leading up to it go by fast, making it a Des Moines attraction worth planning ahead for.

### [Hoyt Sherman Place \(4.5 Miles\)](#)

1501 Woodland Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa

Originally constructed in 1877, Hoyt Sherman Place has remained a cultural icon for well over a century in Iowa. It's not just a sense of nostalgia that has kept this once family home an important aspect of the Des Moines community for so long. Rather, it's the stunning auditorium and first-class talent found on the stage that keeps the seats packed and tickets sold out quickly. Hoyt Sherman Place has had its share of renovations and upkeep over the last century, including a notable upgrade in 2003 that restored the space to its original grandeur. Nowadays, you can expect a long list of shows, performances, and special events to choose from when visiting this historic venue.

### [Robert D. Ray Asian Gardens \(5.5 Miles\)](#)

Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa

On the east bank of the Des Moines River, only a few blocks from the Greater Des Moines Botanical Center, the Robert D. Ray Asian Gardens provides a uniquely landscaped outdoor space to explore and take in the rich diversity that helps shape the city of Des Moines. Featuring an eye-catching Asian pavilion atop a cascading stream and decorative garden, the 1.4 acres here are punctuated by stone pagodas and sculptural rock formations. The Robert D. Ray Asian Gardens is just a small attraction, but with its eye-pleasing atmosphere and excellent view of the city in the background, don't be surprised to find yourself taking a moment to check it out each time you visit Des Moines.