

Saturday, August 21 Optional Tour

Twin Cities Highlights Tour with Riverboat Cruise & Gangster Caves Tour

11:00AM:



Depart the Minneapolis Hilton via deluxe motorcoach with tour guide

In this tour, you will experience a sampling of just what it is that makes the Twin Cities so “fantastic.”

The tour of the area includes both downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Upon departing Minneapolis, your tour guide will provide commentary on Minneapolis as you drive toward St. Paul. As you enter St. Paul, you will travel along Summit Avenue and hear commentary on the various homes and mansions.

Noon – 1:30 PM:



Mississippi Riverboat Cruise

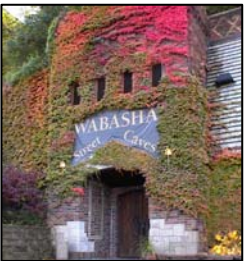
As part of this tour you will board an authentic paddlewheel sternwheeler with box lunches (12:00pm – 1:30pm). Departing from Harriet Island in St. Paul you will head down the same river used by Native Americans, settlers and travelers to Fort Snelling State Park, located at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.

At the end of the cruise a costumed gangster guide will hi-jack the bus and take us on a gangster riding tour. Our guide is the embodiment of the “untouchables” that busted kegs and hustled thugs off to the hoosegow during the days of prohibition. This was an era when things were not always what they seemed...St. Paul was more than a quiet, picturesque river town. You will drive by the place where one local gangster blew up a rival, see where Dillinger had a shoot-out with St. Paul police and pass the former most-exclusive speakeasy in the area!



Next you will drive by the Landmark Center. Once the site of famous gangster trials (J. Edgar Hoover personally escorted public enemy #1, Al Karpis, through the doors for his trial), the restored federal courts building still commands respect.

2:15PM – 3:00PM:



Next on the tour is a stop at the Wabasha Street Caves. The “Caves” were dug in the early 1800s out of a layer of rock known as St. Peter Sandstone. The sand which forms this rock was once the beach of a warm inland sea, over 400 million years ago. During our cold Minnesota winters, it is reassuring to see this remnant of a tropical Minnesota. In the 1800s, a mushroom-growing business was established in the Caves, then a nightclub and restaurant was opened in the 1930s; if you listen carefully, you can still hear bands such as the Dorsey Brothers and Cab Calloway playing in the stage area with the adjoining dance floor. In addition to these two areas, there is a fireplace area with bullet holes from the 1930’s gangsters in the mantle to remind us of a rowdier era. St. Paul served as a cooling-off area for gangsters, and you’ll even see a “Gangster Gallery” to show off some of the Caves’ more notorious past visitors.

3:00PM – 5:00PM:

The tour will then continue with a brief visit to Minnehaha Falls, the Minneapolis Lakes, Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens, and more of downtown Minneapolis before you return to the Hilton.

Price:

\$85.00 per person
30 person minimum