

the place to be

# A Midwinter's Dream

Immerse yourself in the magic of winter amid the luminescent blue of thousands of hand-sculpted, twinkle-lit icicles in **Ice Castles at Excelsior**. Tunnels, slides and carved thrones are incorporated throughout the frozen magnificence, unfolding over an acre on the shores of Lake Minnetonka, at the Excelsior Commons and Port of Excelsior. "My kids love the slides, but my favorite part is watching their amazement as they explore," says Justin O'Keefe of Bayport, whose family enjoyed the castle when it visited Stillwater in past years. "It's a great way to get outside and enjoy winter." Tip: Bring a sled for the kiddos, since the snowy paths make pushing a stroller difficult. The castle will stay open as long as weather permits.

**Visit [icecastles.com/excelsior](http://icecastles.com/excelsior) to buy tickets before you go (a must to ensure entry) and find out about special events.**



BERNIE FRIEL/IG/GETTY IMAGES

## community news

### Identification Station

Minnesotans lined up at driver's license offices starting in October to get a REAL ID. This type of driver's license requires additional documentation, and the Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services (DPS-DVS) started offering them last fall. Anyone traveling by

air will need a REAL ID (or other TSA-acceptable identification) by Oct. 1, 2020. As part of the new system by the DPS-DVS, residents can pre-apply for the REAL ID online to save time in driver's license offices.

A REAL ID costs the same as a standard driver's license (\$25.25)

or ID card (\$19.25). There could be additional fees—if you get the REAL ID before your current driver's license expires, you'll pay more depending on the expiration date.

**Need more info?** Visit [REALID.dps.mn.gov](http://REALID.dps.mn.gov).

The International Wolf Center's resident wolf Axel.



## road trip

# Ely

**Breakfast: Gator's Grilled Cheese Emporium**  
The crumbled smoked bacon and other grilled cheese add-ons dress up the cheesy fried potatoes nicely, too.

**Do: Dogsledding**  
This is *the* place to finally cross that adventure off your Minnesota bucket list.

**Lunch: Insula Restaurant** (◆◆◆)  
The locally sourced menu features grass-fed bison burgers alongside vegetarian burgers made with sweet potatoes and mushrooms.

**Do: International Wolf Center**  
Learn about arctic wolves' adaptations and maybe score a glimpse of the center's resident brothers, Axel and Grayson, who turn 3 in May.

**Dinner: The Dining Room at Burntside Lodge** (◆◆◆◆)  
Nab a lake-facing seat here amid the cozy knotty pine at sunset for Northwoods fine-dining perfection.

**Stay: Motel Ely-Budget Host** (◆)  
Clean, quiet rooms in a vintage motor lodge that welcomes your dog, too.

INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER; ILLUSTRATION: DAVE STEVENSON

have you seen it?

# Waterfall on Ice

**High Falls in Grand Portage State Park**—among the state's tallest—are a sight to behold in winter. Instead of simply plummeting those 120 breathtaking feet, the Pigeon River's waters often freeze, thaw, then refreeze, creating a 12-story ice sculpture-in-progress, at the end of a half-mile trail. The trail may not be cleared of snow, so watch the weather and bring traction cleats or snowshoes, on top of your winter boots and layers, if necessary.  
[dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks](http://dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks)





Omnifest film *Ring of Fire*.

the big to-do

## Movies on a Giant Scale

**Omnifest** takes over the Science Museum of Minnesota's nine-story domed screen Jan. 4-Feb 28. Catch your favorite film—or try to take in all five! (Pssst: Museum membership nets you one free film per member, per day.) This year's lineup:

### Journey to Space

Get a taste of life on the Hubble Space Telescope and grand views of Earth from afar while learning about explorations past, current and future.

### Tornado Alley

Follow *Storm Chasers* star Sean Casey and the researchers of VORTEX2 on a fascinating science adventure through the "severe weather capital of the world."

### The Greatest Places

Journey to seven of the most dynamic landscapes on Earth, including South America's Amazon River and the enormous icebergs of Greenland.

### Ring of Fire

Marvel at the great, volatile circle of volcanoes ringing the Pacific Ocean, including the birth of a new one in southern Chile.

### National Parks Adventure

Go soaring over red rock canyons and scrambling up mountain peaks in legendary parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite, with Academy Award-winner Robert Redford narrating.

▼  
**Plan your visit.** Find the full *Omnifest* schedule and reserve tickets at [smm.org](http://smm.org).



To find the nearest AAA office and event listings, visit [AAA.com/Branches](http://AAA.com/Branches).

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## PLACES

### to Dream of Summer



#### Minneapolis Boat Show

While you're there, dust off those boating skills behind a real steering wheel and throttle on the America's Boating Club's virtual trainer. Jan. 24-27. [minneapolisboatshow.com](http://minneapolisboatshow.com)



#### St. Cloud Sportsmen's Boat, Camping and Vacation Show

Stay for outdoorsy (and free) seminars and to admire Steve Porter's Live Trophy Whitetail Buck Display. Feb. 8-10. [stcloudsportshow.com](http://stcloudsportshow.com)



#### Duluth Boat, Sports, Travel & RV Show

Fans of Discovery Channel's *Deadliest Catch*, take a break from browsing and meet *Time Bandit* Captain Johnathan Hillstrand. Feb. 13-17. [minnesotasportshow.com](http://minnesotasportshow.com)

# Do Dates



Trekking across Lake Superior.

## JANUARY

11–Feb. 24

### Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical

The beloved children's book comes to life in this Tony Award-winning hit during Milwaukee's Broadway at the Marcus Center series. [marcuscenter.org](http://marcuscenter.org)

### 12 KVR Winter Festival

Outdoor sledding, skiing, archery, ice cave hikes, horse-drawn bobsleds, a chili cook-off and more in La Farge! [kvr.state.wi.us](http://kvr.state.wi.us)

### 18–19 Bald Eagle Watching Days

Spot and celebrate the majestic birds as they fish the open waters of the Wisconsin River in Prairie Du Sac. [saukprairieriverway.com](http://saukprairieriverway.com)

### 19 Candlelight Snowshoe Hike

Enjoy an illuminated hike through the Heckrodt Wetland Reserve in Menasha. Afterward, cozy up with steaming cocoa and a bonfire. [heckrodtnaturecenter.org](http://heckrodtnaturecenter.org)

### 26 Barnyard Bargain Bonanza

Peruse vendors, antiques, collectibles, treasures and treats at this indoor (and cozy) flea market in Elkhorn. [walworthcountyfair.com](http://walworthcountyfair.com)

## FEBRUARY

### 1–3 Hudson Hot Air Affair

The Midwest's premier winter ballooning event lights up the winter sky in Hudson. [hudsonhotairaffair.com](http://hudsonhotairaffair.com)

### 4–9 The World Ice and Snow Sailing Championships

This international competition brings the sport of windsurfing to the icy surface of Lake Winnebago in Fond du Lac. [wissa.org](http://wissa.org)

### 7–24 Disney's The Lion King

The hit Broadway musical returns to the Fox Valley at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in Appleton. [foxcitiespac.com](http://foxcitiespac.com)

### 8–10 In Celebration of Chocolate

Chocolate lovers descend upon the American Club for a weekend celebration in Kohler. [americanclubresort.com](http://americanclubresort.com)

### 8–10 Wisconsin Garden & Landscape Expo

Join fellow gardening enthusiasts in Madison to learn about trends, watch demonstrations, and pick up seeds and tools before growing season. [wigardenexpo.com](http://wigardenexpo.com)

### 15–16 Door County Short Film Festival

See more than 20 short films from around the world—and enjoy free popcorn! [cometosisterbay.com](http://cometosisterbay.com)

### 16 Book Across the Bay

Participants trek across the frozen surface of Lake Superior by moonlight in this 10k cross-country ski race. [batb.org](http://batb.org)

### 16 Sturgeon Bay Fire and Ice Festival

Watch sculptors turn chunks of ice and snow into super-cool figures. [sturgeonbay.net](http://sturgeonbay.net)