

Ann Arbor Historic Walking Tour

Introduction

Hi. Welcome to iziTRAVEL's Historic Ann Arbor, Michigan Walking Tour, presented by ListenUp Audio. We're so glad you'll be joining us today! I'm _____ and I'll be your guide. A few notes before we get started. This tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete. You can stop at any time and start again at the same spot later. If you'd like, you can put your phone in your pocket and just listen from here. I'll be giving you clear directions and the audio will automatically start playing when you get close to the next point of interest. If a site is closed or your path is blocked, don't worry. Just go around it. The tour will pick up at the next location. And this is important: PLEASE make sure you stay aware of your surroundings at *all* times and obey *all* traffic signals.

(pause)

Welcome to historic Ann Arbor, Michigan! Founded in 1824, this riverside city is packed to the brim with history and local legend. On our tour through its winding downtown, we'll travel to some of its most historic landmarks, stopping to admire a collection of historic buildings, parks, and even portions of the famous University of Michigan campus.

Whenever you're ready to begin, please do so by making your way to the corner of E Kingsley St. and N 4th Avenue. Our tour begins here at Ann Arbor's famous Kerrytown Concert House.

Kerrytown Concert House

We begin our Ann Arbor tour with a visit to the Kerrytown Concert House. Built sometime before the 1860s, the house was originally purchased as a grand home for a number of Ann Arbor's wealthier families. Having served this purpose for a number of years, the home was repurchased several times over, beginning the bulk of its transformation in the mid-1980s. During this time, the home's current owner was none other than businessman Carl Brauer, owner of Brauer Investments, Inc. and one of Ann Arbor's more significant community leaders. Sensing a wonderful business opportunity, Brauer first sought to renovate the house completely. Its interior was gutted, and the empty rooms were soon put up for rent.

As fate would have it, Brauer's ads caught the attention of one of Ann Arbor's more fervent music teachers. Deanna Relyea had been looking for an adequate space for her master classes for some time, and the Kerrytown property seemed the perfect fit. Signing the

deal not too long after, the house was converted into the glorious music hall it is today, and history was written once more. Today, the house plays host to some of Ann Arbor's hottest music acts. Hundreds of performances echo across the city each year, with classical, jazz, and cabaret being the key favorites. In addition to the house's own history, its resident piano shares a rich history as well. Prized the world over by several of the world's hottest musicians, it first found its way to the Kerrytown Concert House in the late 1980s. Since then, it's been used in several of Michigan's most famous recordings, including one which earned the prestigious Hot Club of Paris Award. With weekly events and several annual concerts, the Kerrytown Concert House is a one-of-a-kind experience in Ann Arbor, and one not to be missed.

Whenever you're ready to continue, travel south down N 4th Avenue toward Braun Court. Take a left onto E Ann Street. The vibrantly colored building on your right marks our next destination.

Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum

Adding another unique experience to our tour, we take time to visit the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum. Officially opened in the early 1980s, the museum has since gone on to become the city's cornerstone for informal science education. Here science, technology, engineering, art, and math reign supreme, and a constant vigil is held to provide an imaginative and interactive learning experience. Spanning 20,000 square feet of exhibit space, the museum's name comes from the fact that over 250 of its exhibits are interactive. Designed to promote scientific literacy and discovery, the exhibits act much like scientific playgrounds, teaching children as young as preschool age to find joy and love in the world around them.

Beginning with its *World Around You* exhibit, guests are treated to the chance to experience a bubble capsule, climbing wall, and even a special demonstration on the power of magnets. Likewise, the museum's *Legacy Gallery* works much like an everyday classroom, teaching guests how traffic lights and the internet work to better their everyday lives. Adding to this, many find joy in the museum's *MediaWorks* exhibit, one that breaks down the scientific barrier of how televisions and telecommunications function. If that weren't enough, the Michigan Nature exhibit provides a closer glimpse of home for many of the museum's visitors, with a soundscape, nature wall, and even native fish and geology samples to excite curious minds. Though these exhibits are only a few of the museum's vast collection, they continue to inspire new scientific thinkers each day. With flexible hours and complementary pricing for families of all incomes, the Hands-On Museum continues to remain one of the Ann Arbor's hottest attractions.

Whenever you're ready to continue, take a left, and continue south down N 4th Avenue. Cross over East Washington Street, and turn right. The large, ornate building on your left across from the Chase Bank building marks our next destination.

First National Building

Moving from science to architecture, we find ourselves at Ann Arbor's First National Building. Built in the early 1920s, this monumental structure was once Ann Arbor's tallest and most lavish piece of architecture. Designed by two of Ann Arbor's leading architects, its opening ceremony was attended by well over 5,000 people, making it one of the city's highlights during a time of great prosperity. The 1920s were a golden age for Michigan, and business across the state was booming. Anxious to tap into this new age of luxury, owners and investors in First National spared no expense. Plans were laid out for a building worthy of their vision, and its granite base, bronze doors, and steel casement windows soon followed.

In the following years, the First National Building has seen countless businesses among its many floors. Doctors, dentists, and lawyers held some of the first offices inside. Likewise, real estate and insurance agents utilized the space for their own practices, securing the building's reputation as one of downtown Ann Arbor's premiere business locations. Though the building suffered like many others from the economic drought of the Great Depression, it's been lovingly restored in recent decades. Still rising high above the corner of East Washington and South Main St., it serves as a reminder of Ann Arbor's timeless opulence.

Whenever you're ready to continue, Cross and take a left onto S Main St. Cross East Liberty Street, then look to your right. You should see the WSG Gallery just a little ways down, marking our next destination.

WSG Gallery

Celebrating Ann Arbor's cultural legacy, the WSG Gallery on South Main Street has made quite a name for itself in its short existence. Established just shy of 20 years ago, the gallery gets its name from its former location on Washington St, aptly named the Washington Street Gallery during that time. Now in its new location, it has since established itself as one of Ann Arbor's finest collections of artistry. Featuring original, contemporary pieces from city artists and those around the state, the gallery is truly a sight to behold. Paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures grace its walls, while additional ceramics and art glass help to provide diversity. Always seeking to liven up their displays, operators of the WSG Gallery have long held a strict set of guidelines for these exhibits. Pieces are rotated regularly on a six-week schedule, thereby ensuring each and every artist is given proper treatment with regards to their work. Adding further benefit, this schedule helps to keep each gallery experience fresh. With so many pieces to see and discuss,

visitors are rarely, if ever dissatisfied. Creative minds get pulled in all directions, and the experience becomes as unforgettable the first time as it does the fifth. With a truly diverse collection and flexible hours throughout the week, the WSG Gallery is must-see for art lovers in the city, both young and old.

Whenever you're ready to continue, head east along E Liberty St., towards South Division St. Turn right on South Division St. The Kempf House just on your right marks our next destination.

Kempf House

Marking one of Ann Arbor's earliest landmarks, the Kempf House provides a unique look into the city's 19th century past. Built in the early 1850s, the house was originally constructed for the Bennett family, local employees of the nearby University of Michigan. As an extraordinary example of Victorian architecture, the house was completed in such a way that it pays homage to ancient, Greek temples. Its layout is perfectly symmetrical, accentuated by its triangular pediment above magnificent, square columns. Likewise, delicate cast iron grilles highlight the frieze of the house, while its resident garden provides beautiful glimpses of roses and a signature Saucer Magnolia.

Converted into a museum in recent years, the Kempf House has long held to its mission to preserve Ann Arbor's earliest history. Having formally adopted the name of the home's final owners, the house is a dedication to the work of Robert and Pauline Kempf; musicians who emigrated from Germany to build a new life in Ann Arbor. As their work elevated the city to new, musical heights, the Kempfs secured their legacy one music lesson at a time, often on the piano or organ. Just as well, the family hosted numerous concerts and events within the home, events which served to attract the attention of other regarded musicians from around the globe. Officially dubbed the Kempf House Center for Local History in the late 1960s, the home remains a staple of Ann Arbor's cultural community to this day.

Whenever you're ready to continue, continue south down S Division St. The small park at the corner of Packard and South Division St. marks our next destination.

Hanover Square Park

Having seen a few of Ann Arbor's oldest buildings, we now find ourselves at its oldest park. Known as Hanover Square Park, this beautiful green space at the intersection of Packard and South Division St. appears almost insignificant at a glance. In truth, it holds a

lot more history that meets the eye, starting with its establishment during the 19th century. As early as 1900, Hanover Square was one of two parks total within the growing city, owing much of its legacy to the work of Ann Arbor's City Park Commission. Outdoor recreation was all the rage during this time of wide, economic change, and many of the city's workers needed outlets away from their busy day jobs at the factories, shops, and offices.

This led to an immediate movement by park commissioners to improve the scenic boulevards, and Ann Arbor's park system soon blossomed into what it is today. Beginning with this small patch of green, citizens of Ann Arbor were finally given a collective spot to stop and rest with their families. Small picnics became the norm around the park, and as the city grew around it, it soon became clear that some form of monument needed to be placed here. Through generous funding via the Michigan Council for the Arts, Hanover Square Park was crowned with its resident sculpture. Dubbed *Arbor Sapientiae*, the sculpture translates to mean "Tree of Knowledge," resembling a cascading set of open books in the form of a tree. Resting comfortably here since the late 1970s, it's become an icon of the city, helping to remind residents and passersby of Ann Arbor's small, but significant roots.

Whenever you're ready to continue, make your way SE down Packard St. to the corner of Thompson St. and Packard. Cross over, then take a left onto the small sidewalk pathway along Monroe St. Cross at the corner of Monroe and S State St. Our next destination is the large, mansion-like building on your right.

Hutchins Hall

Moving beyond Hanover Square Park, we further our adventures into Ann Arbor's history with a visit to Hutchins Hall. Established in the early 1930s, the hall was named for a Mr. Harry Burns Hutchins, two-time president of the nearby University of Michigan and former Dean of Law for its law department. Spanning four stories with class and seminar rooms spread throughout the first two, the hall is truly an architectural wonder. Its classrooms were constructed with sound-proof plaster, and rubber tile floors ensured no student ever had reason to complain of outside distraction. Likewise, the desktops were arranged in continuity, giving each classroom the feel of an amphitheater.

Adding to the hall's overall splendor, its original layout once included a grand study room, one capable of seating up to 224 people. As the university changed in one form or another, this room went through its own transformation, becoming an interviewing space, a lab room, and ultimately a spacious student lounge. Accentuated by various inscriptions and stained-glass windows, Hutchins Hall is

emblazoned with one particular inscription at the intersection of its main corridors. Reading “The life of the law has not been logic. It has been experience,” the inscription serves to inspire current and future law students to this day.

Whenever you're ready to continue, continue north up South State St. As you near the University of Michigan's Angel Hall on your right, look to your left. Our next destination is the Kelsey Museum just across S State Street.

Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

Delving deeper into Ann Arbor's historic relationship with the University of Michigan, we arrive at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. Adopting its namesake from noted Professor of Latin, Francis W. Kelsey, the museum serves as a repository for many of the artifacts acquired by Kelsey himself. Kelsey had long held a passion for archaeological studies, and spent much of his time between the 1890s and the 1920s touring the globe and collecting his specimens. By the late 1920s, these specimens were in dire need of a proper home, and plans were made to house them at the turreted, stone building you see before you today.

With a mission to “create knowledge, explore the past, and educate for the future,” the Kelsey Museum continues to act as a pillar of Ann Arbor's scientific community. Exhibitions ranging from Greek pottery, to Roman sculptures excite scientific minds both young and old. Likewise, colorfully painted Egyptian mummy coffins and “magical” amulets from ancient Mesopotamia offer a fascinating glimpse into our storied past. With weekly hours and free admission year-round, the Kelsey Museum is easily one of the most welcoming experiences in all of Ann Arbor.

Whenever you're ready to continue, continue north along S State Street. Cross over East Liberty Street, and look to your left. The large, indoor shopping gallery just ahead marks our next destination, so go ahead and walk through.

Nickels Arcade

Linking State Street on the east with Maynard Street on the west, we now come to Ann Arbor's most treasured shopping gallery. Known as Nickels Arcade, the gallery has been a cornerstone of Ann Arbor since its establishment in the early 1900s. Built to the cost of roughly \$2,000,000 in today's currency, the mosaic-tiled corridor currently houses a number of Ann Arbor's most upscale shops. Having been introduced to breathe a sense of luxury into the growing city, the arcade has quickly become one of its trendiest locations. Its Beaux-Arts style of architecture catches the eye almost immediately. Likewise, its large glass roof is a spectacle all its own, providing clear views of the gorgeous Ann Arbor sky as patrons walk between the various shops.

Officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places in the late 1980s, Nickels Arcade continues to provide one-of-a-kind access to some of the city's most prestigious brands. It's been the home to Van Bovens, a high-end male clothing store, for over 90 years. Likewise, its specialty shop The Caravan has grown alongside the arcade since the late 1920s, continuing to provide the city's most unique and eclectic blend of merchandise. With these options and plenty more to choose from, Nickels Arcade looks to remain an important part of Ann Arbor's legacy for many years to come.

Whenever you're ready to continue, you should be at the Maynard Street Entrance to Nickels Arcade. Travel north up Maynard St. Cross at the corner of East Liberty St. The large theater just in front of you marks our next destination.

Michigan Theater

Exploring other avenues of Ann Arbor entertainment, we take time to visit the famous Michigan Theater. Built as a "Shrine to Art," the theater was the vision of Ann Arbor community members, carefully nurtured and brought to life through generous local support. Officially opened in the late 1920s, it was constructed in the hope that it would remain a permanent fixture of the city, always serving to remind future moviegoers of Ann Arbor's rich, historical legacy.

Designed from the ground up with elegance in mind, the theater's original layout included a fully-functional stage, a large orchestra pit, an elaborate Barton theater organ, and over 1,700 seats. Its core purpose was to be a theater for film exhibition, but theater owners knew it could also serve to host touring theater and performing arts attractions. Doing just that and more for the next several decades, the theater sadly began to fall into decline, and community members were worried for its future by the late 1970s.

Hope was not lost however, and the theater began to bounce back not too long after. Renovations and restorations were made throughout the 1980s and 90s, with the bulk of the theater's restorations completing by the early 2000s. Today, it boasts a brand new interior, attracting some 230,000 people each year. With cinema formats ranging from 16mm, to 70mm, and even modern HD, the Michigan Theater continues to be a cultural anchor to the city as whole.

Whenever you're ready to continue, continue east along East Liberty St. At the next crossing, you should see the State Theater. This theater marks our next destination.

State Theater

Moving from one historic theater to another, we arrive at nearby State Theater. Sharing its own legacy with the city of Ann Arbor,

State Theater first established its roots in the early 1940s. As another of the city's movie palaces, it quickly gained a cult following, one which still extends well into the present day. Similar in appearance to the Michigan Theater, the State Theater continues to call back to the time of Ann Arbor's storied past. Its grand marquee still bears the look and feel of 1940s and 50s movie palaces. Likewise, its carpet serves as a relic of its own, bearing the aged logo of its second owner.

Despite its aged look, the State Theater has slowly but surely transitioned into 21st century. It remains a local favorite for students of the nearby University of Michigan, and its propensity to showcase cult classics on 35mm screens makes it a favorite among aspiring critics. Likewise, the theater's famed midnight screenings continue to draw in a hefty crowd, with theater owners suggesting early arrival in order to secure the best seats. With further renovations planned for late-summer 2016, and a grand re-opening planned for the following year, all signs point to the theater continuing its storied legacy.

Whenever you're ready to continue, travel north up S State Street. Turn right onto East Washington St. Cross over South Thayer St, and you should see a large courtyard on your right, with a tower peeking over the trees. Enter the courtyard toward the large tower. This large clock tower marks our next destination.

Burton Memorial Tower

Towering high above the central campus of the University of Michigan, Burton Memorial Tower is easily one of Ann Arbor's most recognizable features. Serving primarily as a memorial for former University President Marion Leroy Burton, the tower is the world's fourth heaviest, containing no less than 53 bells and weighing a whopping 43 tons. Having been constructed in the mid-1930s, it sports a mixture of Art-deco and art-moderne styles, spanning ten floors and providing excellent views of the surrounding landscape and city.

Along with the views, Burton Memorial Tower acts as the university's resident clock tower and facility for its School of Music. Its bells sit comfortably on the top floor, while the lower portions house classrooms and offices dedicated to department of musicology and ethnomusicology. Considered one of the city's finest architectural achievements, the tower continues to serve as a cultural beacon for students, residents, and all visitors who pass by.

Whenever you're ready to continue, turn left onto N University Ave. Bear right at the bend, where it becomes Geddes Ave. The large museum on your left marks our next destination.

University of Michigan Museum of Natural History

Furthering our explorations into all things science, we come now to the University of Michigan Museum of Natural History. Built and established in the late 1920s, the museum's collection, much like that of earlier collections seen previously, dates all the way back to the late 19th century. Spanning four floors, the museum is equally distributed amongst four primary exhibitions.

Its *Hall of Evolution* on the second floor currently houses the world's largest display of pre-historic life. Dinosaurs, mastodons, and even pre-historic whales comprise the exhibit, and it remains a favorite of those with a keen taste for the extinct. Just one floor above, the *Michigan Wildlife Gallery* showcases its own large collection of animals, the bulk of which are native to Michigan's Great Lakes. Birds, mammals, reptiles and more can be seen in vivid display, and the exhibit is crowned by the world's largest mastodon trackway.

Moving up to the fourth floor, the museum's *Anthropology Galleries* showcase artifacts from humans around the globe, doubling as a highlight to the benefits of research by university archaeologists. Just beyond that, the museum's *Geology Displays* teach us all about the earth's rocks and minerals, highlighting their often unseen, yet beautiful characteristics. With flexible hours, pricing, and a mission to "promote understanding and appreciation of the natural world," the UM Museum of Natural History continues to be one of Ann Arbor's most engaging experiences.

Whenever you're ready to continue, take a left onto Washtenaw Ave. Just past the museum, take a right onto the small pathway winding past the Central Campus Recreation Building. Take a left onto Observatory St. where the pathway ends. The large, mansion-like building at the corner of Observatory St and Washington Heights marks our next destination.

Observatory Lodge

Marking one of Ann Arbor's oldest and most luxurious apartment buildings, the Observatory Lodge adds another dose of history to our tour. Built in the early 1930s, this architectural marvel seems to have it all. Turrets, oriel windows, cooper eaves, and a slate roof accentuate its outer façade, and the building all but resembles a mansion in every sense of the word. Indeed, history shows that this isn't too far from the truth. As Ann Arbor was continuing to grow before the onset of the Great Depression, Observatory Lodge marked the last in a string of elegant, multistory apartment houses. Constructed right by the university campus, these apartment houses served the community in more ways than one. Its 34 rooms housed a number of upscale community members, ranging from doctors, to nurses, and even pharmacists on the nearby hospital staff. Likewise, it's been said that the complex once included its very own hair salon and barbershop, both easily accessible from the building's northeast side.

Often remembered as “a grand old place,” history also shows that the Observatory Lodge was once so reputable, that residency was a difficult process. Rooms were rented so far out in advance, that interested occupants often waited years at a time for an opening. In truth, most were forced to wait until the current residents physically died before space could open, and even then the list of interested parties remained long. Purchased in the late 1960s by the University of Michigan, the property has since been converted to house the university’s Division of Kinesiology.

Whenever you’re ready to continue, continue east down Washington Heights. At the corner where it bends to the left, you should see a small pathway for the University of Michigan Nichols Arboretum. The Peony Garden up this pathway marks our next destination.

Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden

Just a short walk from the Observatory Lodge, we come to the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden. Often regarded as one of the city’s most beautiful getaways, the garden dates back to the early 1920s, when regents of the nearby university appropriated \$2000 to honor the gift of one of its more famous alumnus. Officially opened to “to increase understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of peonies,” the Peony Garden takes meticulous measures to ensure the beauty of its collection, often taking time to de-bud and stake each plant to produce a single, vibrant peony on each stem.

Having operated in this fashion for nearly 100 years, the garden itself has almost become a pilgrimage of sorts for visitors and Michigan residents, with many flocking to the garden each year. Continuously stunned by the garden’s beauty, it’s been said that a lot of these visitors search in vain for some underlying “theme” to the garden’s diversity. While proprietors of the garden claim there is none, the search truly adds to the experience nonetheless. As one of Ann Arbor’s most elegant displays of “living art,” all signs point towards the garden’s continued success in the years to come. Visitors are encouraged to stroll through at their earliest convenience, and continue to do so again and again.

Whenever you’re ready to continue, turn left onto East Medical Center Dr. Turn right at Observatory Dr. The large observatory on your left marks our final destination.

Detroit Observatory

Saving the best for last, we finish our Ann Arbor tour at the Detroit Observatory. Historically known as the University of Michigan's second-oldest building, the observatory can trace its roots all the way back to the early 1850s. Since then, it has served the university and the scientific community faithfully, successfully helping to answer a number of Ann Arbor's earliest scientific questions. It began by locating new asteroids, subsequently helping to determine their orbits. Following this, the observatory helped to discover and study two comets, starting with the detailed study of the Great Comet of 1882.

Adding to its already impressive resume, the Detroit Observatory was then responsible for much of the research and discoveries regarding Mercury irregular orbit. Speculating that an unseen planet might be responsible, scientists at the observatory used the facility to search for what they later called the planet "Vulcan." Though history shows they were unsuccessful in their quest, the use of the observatory in this monumental task was of considerable note.

Continuing this legacy well into today, the Detroit Observatory continues to offer aspiring astronomers and scientists the chance to explore the night sky and beyond. Accompanied by its own museum and open to guided tours, it works in conjunction with UM's Department of Astronomy to further visitors' understanding of the universe around them.

This concludes our walking tour of historic, Ann Arbor, Michigan. We hope you've enjoyed yourself, and should you wish to travel back to where we began, you can do so via the following directions: Take a left onto E Ann St. and follow it all the way down to where it meets N 4th Ave. This is a bit of a trek, but it should put you just south of the Kerrytown Concert House.