

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Nickname of Minnesota:

North Star State, Gopher State, Land of 10,000 lakes

Geography of Minnesota:

Minnesota is the most northerly of all the states (reaching lat. 49°23'55"N), except for Alaska.

Saint Paul, the capital, and its larger twin, Minneapolis, are the two largest cities.

Winter locks the land in snow, spring is beautiful but brief, summers are warm and autumn brings brilliant colors to our trees and hillsides. Prehistoric glaciers left marshes, boulder-strewn hills, and rich, gray drift soil stretching from the northern pine wilderness to the broad southern prairies.

In the vast pine forest of northern Minnesota, is the beginning of the great river known to the world as the Mighty Mississippi. The state has more than 11,000 lakes and numerous streams and rivers.

The beauty of Minnesota's lakes and dense green forests, as seen in Voyageurs National Park, has long attracted vacationers, and there is excellent fishing in the state's many rivers, lakes, and streams. Also of interest to tourists are the Grand Portage and Pipestone National monuments, Itasca State Park (at the headwaters of the Mississippi), and the world's largest open-pit iron mine at Hibbing.

The Host City, Minneapolis:

Minneapolis is a world-class city, with fabulous shopping, dining and entertainment.

The music and theater scene is top-notch, with everything from Broadway shows to local and national bands. Tony Award-winners Theatre de la Jeune Lune, The Children's Theatre Company and the Guthrie Theater all call Minneapolis home, as well as three historic theatres that make up the Hennepin Theatre District. Orchestra and opera groups perform throughout the year.

The [Twin Cities](#) are also the entertainment and cultural center of the upper Midwest and offer [theaters](#), [orchestras](#), [museums](#) (including the [Minnesota Children's Museum](#), [The Science Museum of Minnesota](#), and the [Minneapolis Institute of Arts](#)), as well as professional sports.

Art, science and history are on display at over 57 museums in the city and well-known places such as Walker Art Center and Weisman Art Museum that have made their mark nationally.

Diverse ethnic options line Nicollet Avenue's "Eat Street" and the Warehouse District is the center of downtown's nightlife, bursting with restaurants and nightclubs.

Visit the historic Riverfront District, where Minneapolis got its start in the flour milling industry. Experience the City of Lakes at its best and walk or bike on over 50 miles of trails along the Grand Round Scenic Byway or enjoy paths winding through the city along the Mississippi River.

When it comes to shopping, Minneapolis is tough to beat. *Travel + Leisure* called Minneapolis the 4th best shopping destination in the country behind only New York, San Francisco and Chicago. [Read up on the scene](#) in the latest issue of *Shops*.

The city boasts the largest mall in the country, incredible downtown shopping and neighborhoods packed with quaint shops and boutiques. The Mall of America is one of the most visited tourist destinations in the country. Bring the kids - the mall comes complete with a full-sized, fully-enclosed theme park.

Weather and Dress:

The climate in Minnesota ranges from hot in the summer to very cold in the winter. The summers are warm, and we usually get several days in July and August when it's hotter than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Typically, though, our summer temperatures are in the 70s or 80s.

Dress: Along with heat, humidity is high, so bring comfortable, breathable clothes. Shorts and sandals are standard – especially near the lakes and the river. Area beaches offer swimming and sunbathing, so don't forget the swimsuit, beach towel and shades.

And bring your running shoes. Minneapolis was named the second best city for running by *Runner's World*, and one of the most walkable cities in the nation by PBS.

The Dress for the Conference will be 'Business Casual'.

Banks:

Banks in Minneapolis are normally open from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday to Friday, and 9:00 AM to Noon on Saturdays. Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's) are widespread and are normally accessible 24 hours a day.

Time:

Minnesota Time is in the Central Time Zone in the United States of America (USA). US Central Standard Time (CST) is 6 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT-6).

Taxes:

The sales tax in Minnesota for most items is 6.5 percent. There is no sales tax on clothing.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue currently administers and collects special local taxes in Minneapolis, as shown below.

To figure the tax, combine the sales tax rate and the local rate.

Sales Tax and Use Tax	+ 0.50%
Downtown Liquor Tax	+ 3.00%
Lodging Tax	+ 3.00%
Downtown Restaurant Tax	+ 3.00%
Entertainment Tax	+ 3.00%

Getting Around:

Navigating your way through Minneapolis is easy, thanks to the variety of transportation options available. Minneapolis is compact and easy to get around no matter what mode of transportation you choose.

Downtown hotels are linked to an extensive above-ground [skyway system](#) that eliminates dealing with street-level traffic while visiting attractions, restaurants and more.

[Airport Taxi](#) is a fleet of approximately 200 vehicles providing transportation to and from the airport or any other Twin Cities location including popular destinations like downtown Minneapolis, downtown St. Paul, the Mall of America, and Mystic Lake Casino. Please go to [Fare Information](#) for a price estimate.

Cab services are available anywhere in the metro area. Catch a taxi at the hotel, or call ahead for service.

The Hiawatha Line offers fast, quiet light-rail service to 17 stations between downtown Minneapolis and Mall of America.

The Nicollet Mall station is about 8 blocks from the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

<http://www.metrotransit.org/rail/index.asp>

http://www.minneapolis.org/travelinfo/public_rental_trans.asp