

Jordan Gile

The thing I love most about living in Wisconsin is the wide variety of activities to participate in no matter the weather, and the natural beauty of our state. I love how the seasons change and the connections made living in a small town, but there are great places like Madison and Milwaukee to experience big city life also.

Wisconsin has over 45 state parks, a dozen state forests and 15,000 lakes along with over 80,000 miles of river so no matter what time of the year you visit Wisconsin, you can find activities to enjoy outdoors. In the summer heat, you can go boating, water skiing, kayaking, camping or fishing. During the winter, you can go downhill skiing, snowboarding, sledding, snowmobiling and ice fishing. In the milder seasons of spring and fall, you can go golfing, hiking, biking, fishing or hunting.

Door County and the Apostle Islands are two of the most beautiful areas to enjoy nature in Wisconsin. Door County alone has five state parks and over 300 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. The Apostle Islands are a collection of 21 islands off the Bayfield peninsula in Lake Superior. There are three other national parks in Wisconsin to enjoy - the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. A few of the best state parks to visit include Devil's Lake State Park, Blue Mound

State Park, and the Black River State Forest. Devil's Lake State Park is Wisconsin's most popular state park with stunning 500-foot bluffs and a beautiful 360-acre lake.

I also love that there are big cities like Milwaukee and Madison in Wisconsin that are very diverse and have many cultural activities to participate in. In Madison, you can go to the Overture Center for a show, visit the State Capital building, walk through the Olbrich Botanical Gardens or visit a museum like the Chazen Art Museum or Madison Museum of Contemporary Art.

In Milwaukee, you can visit the Riverwalk area for the Milwaukee Public Market, the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, the Broadway Theatre and the many other great theaters and restaurants. You can also visit the Milwaukee County Zoo, the Manfred Olson Planetarium, Discovery World and the Betty Brinn Children's Museum.

In both cities, you can catch your favorite team in action, such as the Milwaukee Brewers, Milwaukee Bucks and the Wisconsin Badgers. Wisconsinites love their hometown teams, which also includes the Green Bay Packers. There are also many annual festivals to enjoy, such as Summer Fest, the Wisconsin State Fair, Beer and Cheese Fest, and Brat Fest. All of these include lots of music, loads of food and making memories with friends and neighbors.

Wisconsinites also have a great tradition with food. This includes a love of cheese, brats, deep-fried fish and sausage. It is famous for its cheese as well as other dairy products, such as cheese curds and frozen custard. In fact, Wisconsin's nickname is "America's Dairyland." They love anything that's bad for you but tastes amazing.

Another great thing about Wisconsin is the culture of taking care of our neighbors. Every person you run into has a story about how their entire community helped raise a barn after a natural disaster or helped build a house for a family who lost theirs in a tragic fire. People are super friendly and just take the time to enjoy each other and help lift each other when they are down.

Culver's Frozen Custard is a great example of Wisconsin's tradition of enjoying great food and helping our neighbors. Culver's headquarters is in the small town of Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. There are many farmers in Wisconsin's small towns like this who grow the amazing food that we eat and need to live. Being surrounded by farmland, most Wisconsinites have an appreciation of how important this work is. Culver's supports farmers in the daily work that they do. They are very aware of protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and agriculture, both things that make our state outstanding.

Culver's takes pride in creating opportunities for neighbors to help each other with their Culver's Foundation, Culver's Cares program and their Scoops of Thanks Day. Since 2013, the

company has donated over \$6.8 million to over 4,300 students who work for them or for employee's children. They have also given \$4 million in agriculture education to support the next generation of farmers. They have also awarded 3,000 scholarships to Future Farmers of America students to help prepare for their futures. These programs are targeted at educating students in the areas of climate-smart agriculture and leadership in the science of agriculture. This is a great example of helping your neighbor. Culver's restaurants in many communities have donated money to hurricane and flood relief, school organizations, firefighters, Boys and Girls Scouts, children's hospitals and even serving Christmas dinners to the less fortunate.

Sources

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