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CLASSIC WISCONSIN ACTIVITIES INSPIRE NEW TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

MADISON, Wis. (July 31, 2012) – This summer, reclaim your youth (or share it with your kids and grandkids) with a trip to Wisconsin, where beloved attractions and activities have stood the test of time. Whether it's taking a Duck boat ride in the Dells or watching a movie under the stars at a drive-in theater, Wisconsin is home to all the same destinations, events and attractions you loved from your own childhood vacations. Plus many have a modern-day spin to attract the newest generations to make their own vacation memories. Here are some of our favorite "classic Wisconsin" getaways.

NOT JUST THE WATERPARK CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Chances are you've been to the Wisconsin Dells once or twice. The Dells is the ultimate destination when it comes to combining nostalgia with the most modern and cutting edge innovation in waterparks, resorts, destination spas and golf. But whether your visit was last year or last decade, a few things in the Dells remain the same.

A **Wisconsin Dells Duck Boat** ride is a classic. The novelty of a half-boat, half-car amphibious vehicle that tears through scenic wooded terrain only to plunge into a lake, will never wear off. The [Original Wisconsin Ducks](#) has been operating for more than 65 years and is the largest fleet of tour ducks in the nation. There's also the [Wisconsin Dells Army Ducks](#).

Another Dells favorite is the [Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show](#), which has dazzled visitors on Lake Delton for six decades. This year marks the show's 60th anniversary but one thing hasn't changed, these are high-energy shows that pack a lot of action into 90-minutes. With a mix of trick skiing, barefooting, jumps, flips, and even a hang-glider stunt, jaw dropping doesn't even begin to describe each performance. The shows run in the summer, seven days a week at 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. through Labor Day.



*1960s Tommy Bartlett Water Skiers
photo courtesy of Tommy Bartlett Show, Wisconsin Dells*

After all the action-packed fun, visitors to the Wisconsin Dells know that a stroll down Broadway is a great way to unwind. The souvenir shops, fudge stores and candy shops in the Dells have a timelessness to them that can't be copied. In fact, [Wisconsin Dairyland Fudge](#) is celebrating 50 years of serving up the creamiest fudge known to man.

At the end of the day, we have H. H. Bennett to thank for his famous late 1800s and early 1900s photographs of the area, which virtually put the Dells on the map as a tourist destination. Visit the [H. H. Bennett Studio and museum](#), a now historic site and the oldest operating business in the Wisconsin Dells. Walk through Bennett's studio to view a collection of his best and most famous photos.

THE TRADITIONAL NORTHWOODS VACATION

Nothing says Wisconsin vacation like a quintessential trip "Up North." Travelers have been making their way to Northern Wisconsin for decades. Perhaps you remember the following activities from when you were a kid. And likely you'll still enjoy them now.

Camping is a Wisconsin institution. Whether you bring a camper or pitch a tent, the state has more than 68,000 campsites located in private, state and national campgrounds to choose from. Chances are you've been going to the same campsite for generations. But if you're looking for a new one, consider the experience you want to have first.

Hate the idea of "roughing it?" [Merry Mac's](#) campground in Merrimac is the ultimate playground for kids complete with swimming pool, miniature golf, dunk tank and bicycle rentals. For adults, think pure relaxation in a cabin, yurt or even a deluxe cottage.

For those looking to pitch a tent and enjoy Mother Nature at her finest, there are plenty of options. [Beaver Lake Campground](#) is one of the many camping spots in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, which covers more than 1.5 million acres in Wisconsin's Northwoods. The campground is located near the Morgan Falls St. Peters Dome Trail, which boasts the Morgan Falls waterfalls, a view of the Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior and the Apostle Islands.

What goes with the tradition of camping? Fishing, of course. Wisconsin is home to 15,000 inland lakes, two magnificent great lakes, more than 42,000 miles of streams and rivers that are teeming with a variety of species. The Department of Natural Resources offers [kids' programs](#) and even [loaner equipment](#), so everyone can get in on the action. Plus, fishing just got easier. The state offers a [one-day fishing license](#) to those anglers who just want to give it a try. So grab your fishing pole and a friend. There's musky, bass, walleye and crappie waiting for you.

For those interested in the history of fishing, a visit to the [Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum](#) in Hayward is a must. If anything, you've got to get your family's holiday photo taken in the mouth of the famous giant musky statue.



*Fishing in Eagle River
photo courtesy of Brian Malloy*

And finally, end your trip up north with a lumberjack show. Wisconsin's Northwoods is well known for its logging heritage, however, today's Jack and Jills have taken it to a level of

competitive sport with such amazing feats as logrolling, power sawing, pole climbing and axe throwing. [Fred Sheers](#) puts on a classic show in Hayward and Minocqua.

CLASSIC ATTRACTIONS THAT HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME

There are places throughout the state that have remained popular for a reason. The following events and attractions won't be leaving anytime soon.

Continually drawing vacationers to Green Bay's shores even today, [Bay Beach Amusement Park](#) is everything an amusement park should be. Built in the early 1900s, some of the park's first distinguishing features were roller coasters, log rides, and the recreational beach. And today, it still costs next to nothing to have fun. Ride tickets are just 25 cents apiece. The headlining ride is the [Zippin Pippin](#), a complete replica of Elvis's favorite wood roller coaster in Memphis, and it's perfect for the retro-activity seeker.

As far as events go, there are dozens in Wisconsin that have stood the test of time. One of our favorites: the [Wisconsin State Fair](#) (Aug. 2-12, 2012). Cream puffs, racing pigs, live music from national recording artists and everything-you-can-imagine-on-a-stick have been keeping generations of families visiting for decades. What's more, the fair keeps upping the ante. Each year, the food vendors keep coming up with new ways to put food on a stick. Can you say deluxe deep fried bacon wrapped cheddar hot dog on-a-stick? The Fair's cream puffs are a long-standing favorite and haven't changed since they were introduced in 1924.

And, to all you travelers heading to and from Wisconsin from Illinois, this one's for you – [Mars Cheese Castle](#). The original castle was built in 1957 and its recent facelift about a year ago makes it look more like a palace than ever before. But more importantly, there's more room for cheese! Meander through the new building and find Wisconsin cheese, wine and specialty gift items. Grab lunch at the café and a beer at the tavern. Don't forget to stock up on cheese curds and foam cheddar hats.

We couldn't get nostalgic without mentioning the [drive-in movie theater](#). Wisconsin has many classic drive-ins including [Skyway Drive-in Theater](#) in Door County's Fish Creek. Family owned and 50's in nature, you'll enjoy the decades-old cartoon advertisements that play before the film starts. Jefferson's [Highway 18 Outdoor Theater](#) holds 600 cars and is open seven days a week.

WISCONSIN'S BEST FOOD TRADITIONS

Supper clubs, ice cream parlors and long-standing popular restaurants capture the state's past as well as the 21st century.

The old-fashioned neon sign in front of [Leon's](#) in Milwaukee reads "Home of the World's Finest Frozen Custard," and at the counter you'll find just that. A Milwaukee landmark and the believed but never confirmed inspiration for Arnold's Diner on "Happy Days," Leon's has been family owned and operated since 1942. Though it's been around for years, little has changed at Leon's. Serving up daily flavors like chocolate, vanilla and butter pecan plus a few rotating flavors each day, Leon's has become a staple. Back in the 40s and 50s, entertainers traveling through Milwaukee started the trend. Leon's has served up frozen custard to the Rolling Stones, Neil Diamond, and



Leon's Custard, photo courtesy of TravelWisconsin.com

Wisconsin legend Bart Starr to name a few.

Head a little bit south, and you'll find [Franks Diner](#) in Kenosha. In business since 1926, Franks is the longest continually operating lunch car diner in the U.S. The diner seats only 55 and 22 of those seats are in its authentic lunch diner car. The TV show "Diner's Drive-ins and Dives" showcased Franks signature garbage plate in its breakfast episode that aired in 2007. It scrambles together three to five eggs with hashbrowns, peppers, onions, and the diner's choice of cheese and meats. Franks also makes more than 125 loaves of its famous bread a week (the bread just so happens to make awesome French toast).

You can't visit Wisconsin without experiencing a traditional fish boil, and Door County, with its location on Lake Michigan, offers some of the best. It works like this: fresh caught fish is thrown into a cast-iron kettle over an open fire pit. When the fish oils rise to the top of the pot, the master boiler tosses a small amount of kerosene under the pot. The kettle bursts into flames and the oils spill over the side, leaving the perfectly cooked fish ready to eat. [White Gull Inn](#) has been perfecting the fish boil since the 1950s. Consider it dinner and a show, Door County-style.

Also in Door County is [Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant](#), a family-owned restaurant cooking up traditional Swedish food from pancakes with lingonberries to Swedish meatballs, served by waitresses wearing authentic Scandinavian attire. But it's not just the food that brings visitors to Al Johnson's; it's also the goats. In 1973, the restaurant added a sod roof for the goats to graze on and Al Johnson's has been as much of a tourist attraction as fantastic restaurant ever since.

While in Door County, a stop at the 106-year-old [Wilson's Ice Cream Parlor](#) in Ephraim is a must. Serving up tasty ice cream treats topped with a trademark jellybean, this is an old-fashioned soda jerk fountain and jukebox straight from the past.

And finally, we can't talk about Wisconsin food traditions without mentioning **supper clubs**. What constitutes a supper club? It's a combination of things from the relish tray, the bread basket, the Old Fashioned and a menu of steak, chops, chicken or Friday fish fry. Wisconsin is home to dozens of [supper clubs](#). A few noteworthy ones to explore include [Marty's Place North](#) in Minocqua [or Al-Gen's Dinner Club](#) in Rhineland, which was recently featured in the *New York Times*.

Travelers looking for year-round Wisconsin getaway ideas, travel planning, events and free guides can discover their own fun at [TravelWisconsin.com](#). Use our [Summer Playlist](#) to find a different event to experience each day all summer long. Visit us [Facebook.com/TravelWisconsin](#) or follow along on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TravelWI](#). And don't forget to bring all the fun Wisconsin has to offer right to your fingertips by downloading the free [Travel Wisconsin™ iPhone or Android app](#).

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