

NORTH OF NORMAL  
**FARGO**

MOORHEAD | WEST FARGO

**DIGITAL MEDIA KIT**





You know it the moment you hit the ground. You sense it in the air, feel it on the prairie wind. This place is different. Not like anywhere you've been before. It's unfamiliar ground, but it's ground you want to spend time on.

Welcome to Fargo, a place that sets the bar far above the norm.

# HISTORY

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

Fargo's original name was Centralia, but was renamed after the Northern Pacific Railway director and Wells Fargo Express Company founder William G. Fargo.

Moorhead also garnered its name from a bigwig guy with the name William G. -- in this case, William G. Moorhead, an executive of the Northern Pacific Railway.

During construction of the railway over the Red River, eager land speculators wanted to buy up the land and charge the railroad to use it. So, sneaky railroad officials marked a false route a few miles north of Moorhead to throw them off. This area, now Oakport Township, was known for years as "Bogusville."

## REALLY GOOD AT DIVORCES

In the 1880s, Fargo became known for its "10-Minute Divorce" as lax local laws allowed for quick and easy splits. Famous (and un-famous) people flocked to the city to get divorced.

## WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE

On the afternoon of June 7, 1893, the worst fire in Fargo's history -- duly named the 'Great Fire of 1893' -- destroyed the city. City hall, the business district, and the homes of most of Fargo's 6,000 residents went up in flames, spreading from Front Street (now Main Avenue) to the north.

160 acres, 31 blocks, 219 businesses, and 140 residences were left in ashes. We've since learned not to build our entire city out of wood; you'll notice most downtown businesses are now brick (and still standing!)

## HANG YOUR HAT

Scandinavian and European immigrants settled the area and when Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1871, Fargo-Moorhead became a boomtown.

The Homestead Act furthered this boom as settlers were given 160 acres of land in exchange for living and farming it for at least five years. Hopeful refugees from the overcrowded east swarmed to the area, arriving in a constant stream on the railroad and looking for fresh starts on America's newest frontier.

## A CITY DIVIDED

The Red River of the North separates Fargo from Moorhead, also serving as the border between North Dakota and Minnesota -- a visit here is an easy way to knock two states off your list.

# INDUSTRY

## SILICON PRAIRIE

While agriculture is still the main economic industry, professions like education, medicine, government and manufacturing play a large role in the city's modern-day economy.

Surprisingly to some, Fargo also has a booming technology start-up industry that harnesses the spirit of the early pioneers. Fortune.com calls it 'the most undervalued tech hub' in America.

Major players like Myriad Mobile, CoSchedule, and Botlink dominate in the tech field, alongside niche market leaders like Weather Modification Inc. and Appareo Systems.

Giants in the area include Microsoft (which houses its second largest campus in the world in Fargo), Bobcat, Cass-Clay, and Titan Machinery.

A city of big ideas, Fargo is quickly becoming one of the top places to flock for young entrepreneurs according to Forbes, Fortune.com, and CNN Money (just to name a few). With an unemployment rate of 2.5%, we don't blame them.

## FACT

**Over 70% of the local population are of German and Norwegian descent... so you're going to see a lot of blonde-haired folks and have the chance to eat some strange Scandinavian foods like lutefisk, knoephla soup, and krumkake.**



## LIKE ATLANTIS... SORT OF

Less than 10,000 years ago, the area that is now Fargo-Moorhead was 200 feet below the surface of Lake Agassiz, a huge inland sea formed at the end of the last Ice Age.

Over centuries the waters receded, leaving six feet of rich, black soil that today make the Red River Valley one of the world's most fertile farmlands, with Fargo-Moorhead at its center.

## RED RIVER OF THE NORTH

Where the Bois de Sioux and Otter Tail rivers meet, the Red River of the North begins, winding upward for 550 miles before joining the Nelson River in Canada and ultimately spilling into Hudson Bay.

Flow direction: North

Average slope: ~½ ft per mile

Depth: 10-30 ft

Width: 100-500 ft

Color: brown due to the rich soils of the valley

## WEATHER

Hot and breezy summers, arctic and snowy winters, about a month of fall, and two weeks of spring.

### AVERAGES:

Summer high: 83°F in July  
Winter high: 18°F in January  
Snow: 52 inches/year  
Rain: 24 inches/year  
Wind speed: Fast

### RECORDS:

In 1988, the record high reached 106°F.  
In 1982, the record low reached -38°F.

## PHYSICAL DATA

Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo  
metropopulation: 238,124

Area: 48.82 square miles

Terrain: Flat as a pancake

Wind: Oh yeah, you betcha

Located on the border of  
North Dakota and Minnesota.

A two hour drive from the Canadian border  
and 3 1/2 hours from Winnipeg, Manitoba.



### FACT

None of the movie *Fargo*  
was actually filmed in  
Fargo -- go figure

> Frostival

# WINTER

Locals embrace the cool of winter and still get active, though most own several pairs of long johns, which we'll admit helps.

Some winter activities Fargo has to offer include:

- Curling - four sheet facility
- Snowmobiling - 196.5 miles on the East Central Valley Trail
- Ice skating - 32 outdoor rinks and 7 indoor rinks
- Cross country skiing - 10 sites throughout the FMWF area.
- Fat tire biking
- Sledding
- Snowman building
- Drinking a lot of coffee

Along with building up a fat layer to protect yourself against the cold.

# FUN ALL YEAR LONG

**FACT**  
 The summer months are packed with food and cultural festivals, fairs, live entertainment, indoor and outdoor concerts, farmers markets, craft beer fests... need we keep going?

In Fargo, 50°F is shorts weather, and summer adventures include:

- Bicycle riding on 200+ miles of trails
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Walking and running trails
- Golfing on one of 7 public courses
- Swimming
- Fishing
- Exploring one of FMWF's nearly 200 public parks
- Accidentally getting a farmer's tan after an hour in the sun.

My mother's hotdish is better!

# SUMMER



> Scandinavian Viking Festival

# SHOP TILL YOU DROP

From boutiques to antiques to mall-tiques, Fargo has literally hundreds of places to shop. Find unique one-of-a-kind creations at the shops along Broadway, or splurge on big-store shopping sprees at the West Acres Mall.



## CRAFTY BUNCH

Fargo has more craft breweries than any city within 400 miles (not including Minneapolis, but including St. Paul).

With 7 (and an 8th on the way), it's not surprising to learn that North Dakota drinks the 3rd most beer in the nation. For Fargo, the craftier the beer, the better.

## FOOD

If Fargoans know how to do one thing, it's eat... and not just meat and potatoes.

400+ eateries (200 of them local to Fargo) help you stuff your face.

From decadent sushi to German bier hall grub to Mexican street food, your tastebuds will thank you for coming to Fargo.



# VISIT FARGO-MOORHEAD NORTH OF NORMAL

Make the Fargo-Moorhead Visitors Center your first stop to learn about what three cities (Fargo, West Fargo, and Moorhead) and two states (North Dakota and Minnesota) have on the menu.

We like to think of ourselves as quirky, off-center, eccentric -- like your favorite aunt that collects porcelain cats (though we prefer bison statues).

The Visitors Center is anything but normal. Housed in a grain elevator to pay homage to our agricultural roots, it's located at Exit 348 just off Interstate 94.

Once inside, maps, brochures, a gift shop, and friendly locals await to give you the lowdown on everything you can do during your visit.

Outside, a Celebrity Walk of Fame showcases the handprints of the likes of Jesse Ventura, Bill Gates, Neil Diamond, Metallica, and more.

Back inside, the iconic Woodchipper, from the classic Coen brothers movie bearing the city's name, stands patiently awaiting eager photographers. You can even wear a fur hat as you pretend to shove a stunt leg into this original movie set piece.

## LODGING & VISITORS INFORMATION

- 5,599 rooms in 62 hotels
- 1.16 million room nights per year
- In 2017, over 30,000 people stopped by the Visitors Center alone!
- Average daily visits to the Visitors Center:  
2013 – 60 people/day  
2014 – 63 people/day  
2015 – 67 people/day  
2016 – 73 people/day  
2017 – 85 people/day

## TRANSPORTATION

### PLANES

Hector International Airport has several direct flights and budget airlines that fly into and out of Fargo, making entry a breeze.

### TRAINS

The passenger AmTrak trains have a stop right in Downtown Fargo, just a minute's walk from many major sites like the Fargo Theatre.

### AUTOMOBILES

At the intersection of two major interstates (I-29 and I-94), a stop in Fargo makes a great interlude to long journeys.

## FACT

Over 20 painted bison statues are dotted throughout the city -- we have a scavenger hunt to help you catch 'em all.



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**Fargo-Moorhead  
Convention & Visitors Bureau**

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