

Iowa State Fair

2025 Senior Stops

Fair Learning Destinations

Welcome to the Iowa State Fair! Here, older Iowans can enjoy 14 exciting destinations. Here is a guide to what each destination entails to make the most out of your trip to the Fair!

1. Elwell Family Food Center

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Elwell Family Food Center is a climate-controlled space and hub for many food activities at the Fair. Here, Fairgoers can find food exhibits, competitions and people from all over Iowa showcasing their culinary talents. The Elwell Family Food Center is located just west of the Varied Industries Building.

2. Richard L. Easter Museum Complex

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Richard L. Easter Museum Complex at the Iowa State Fair is a must-see destination that brings Fair history to life through engaging exhibits and preserved artifacts. Located just northeast of Pioneer Hall, the complex includes the Ralph H. Deets Historical Museum, filled with vintage memorabilia, and the Richard O. Jacobson Hall, a modern, interactive space where visitors can explore hands-on displays like livestock judging, Fair fashion through the decades, and even a simulated train crash. Together, these museums offer a fascinating journey through Iowa's agricultural roots, Fair traditions, and timeless charm—all in one cool, educational stop.

3. Iowa Craft Beer Tent

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Iowa Craft Beer Tent, located west of the Richard O. Jacobsen Exhibition Center, boasts a wide selection of drinks from breweries across Iowa. While enjoying your beverage of choice, delight in live music and explore pop-up merchandise stands.

4. William C. Knapp Varied Industries Building

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The VI Building is a diverse hub where Fairgoers can explore commercial vendors. In the VI, anything can be found from hot tubs and gutters to hand-carved spoons and local honey. It's a shopper's paradise packed with demonstrations, deals and discoveries. You won't want to miss out on this! The VI is located directly across from the Grandstand and Barksdale's State Fair Cookies.



5. Shopper's Mart

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Between the VI and Shopper's Mart, there are over 400 commercial vendors to explore! The Shopper's Mart, located on the west side of the Grandstand, is the perfect place for Fairgoers to find gifts, gadgets and merchandise galore. You won't leave here empty-handed!



6. Bruce L. Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The 4-H Exhibit Building houses thousands of winning projects crafted by hundreds of Iowa 4-H'ers. Watch talented 4-H'ers in Share the Fun skits, take part in working exhibits and educational presentations. This is the place to learn all about the world of 4-H!



7. CIRC Model Railroad

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Cost: \$3


Be awed in this ever-changing model railroad display. View more than 3,000 square feet of display that is 1/87th of actual size. With 10 to 15 trains going on this several mile track, you will see everything from a drive-in theater to Superman!



8. John Deere Agriculture Building

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Butter Cow



The iconic Butter Cow begins with a sturdy frame of wood, metal, wire, and steel mesh, then gets sculpted with around 600 pounds of low-moisture, pure cream Iowa butter. Inside a 40-degree cooler, layers of butter are carefully added until the life-sized cow—standing about 5 ½ feet tall and 8 feet long—comes to life. Though smaller than a real dairy cow, the butter version could cover 19,200 slices of toast and would take an average person two lifetimes to eat, much of the butter is reused for up to 10 years, and each year, a new themed companion sculpture joins the Butter Cow in the Agriculture Building cooler.

Giant Pumpkin Display

This contest is for big squash type pumpkins. The Iowa State Fair record is 1323 pounds and was set in 2010. This contest is open to entrants from all states; so be sure to note where all the pumpkins come from!



9. Ye Old Mill


Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Cost: \$3


First constructed in 1921, Ye Old Mill has since been a favorite ride for couples at the Fair. Located next to Thrill Ville on Grand Avenue, its 1,500-foot-long canal offers riders the chance to relax on a smooth boat ride after a long day at the Fair. As the oldest ride at the Fair, the Ye Old Mill is fun for everyone.

10. Richard O. Jacobson Exhibition Center

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.



The Richard O. Jacobson Exhibition Center is a place of culture, livestock and competition. Lining the side of the building are quilted tile blocks that represent each one of Iowa's counties, combining Iowa's heritage and tradition of barn quilts. Can you find your county quilt? During the Fair, the Exhibition Center plays host to some of the Fair's most popular events, including the Cowgirl Queen Contest and the six-horse draft horse hitches. The Exhibition Center is located south of the Varied Industries building.



11. The Garden

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Garden features fruits, vegetables and farm crops grown in Iowa. Smell, touch and feel your way through pizza and salsa gardens while learning about each ingredient. A must-see is the corn and soybean room.

12. Free Stage Entertainment

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

With four stages of free entertainment, there is so much to do and see! For Fairgoers looking into music options, consider the Susan Knapp Amphitheater, the MidAmerican Energy Stage or the Anne and Bill Riley Stage. Fairgoers can listen to country, Christian, rock, pop and more! On the Anne and Bill Riley Stage, don't miss out on the Iowa State Fair Queen Coronation. On The Fun Forest Stage, Fairgoers can find family-friendly acts featuring comedy and magic.

13. Pioneer Hall

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Pioneer Hall was built in 1886 for the first Iowa State Fair at its permanent location. Of the 67 buildings constructed for that Fair, only Pioneer Hall remains. It was originally a poultry building, then an employees' dormitory and a storage facility. Located North of Grandfather's Barn and the Cultural Center, you won't want to miss out on this historical building!

14. Iowa Wine Growers

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Cost: \$15

The Iowa State Fair Wine Experience, located at Grandfather's Barn east of the Cultural Center, is an event that features Iowa wine tasting, competitions and educational displays. Fairgoers can hear from industry experts and featured wineries and winemakers every day of the Fair!

