

Why Bloomington? What is it about this unassuming Indiana college town that makes the brewers brew and the Kinseys kink? What makes the cyclists obsess? And academics think?

Bloomington is, quite literally, a “haven of blooms,” but it’s also a haven for the different, the dreamers and the devil-may-cares. In the middle of the Middle, sure, but a welcome departure from the ordinary, thanks to idyllic landscapes, bohemian culture and offbeat accommodations.



BLOOMINGTON BY THE NUMBERS

450,000 rare books at the Lilly Library

83,000 residents

48,500 students

45,000 objects on display in the IU Art Museum

200 miles of hiking, biking and horseback trails

Over 140 locally owned restaurants

58 hotels, cabins, bed and breakfasts and yurts

25 places to get pizza

10 craft breweries, wineries and distilleries.

Five NCAA basketball national championships

Four distinct seasons

Within one day’s drive from over half of the U.S. population

TOWN AND GOWN

Bloomington and Indiana University were born just two years apart—in 1818 and 1820 respectively—and the two have enjoyed a strong relationship ever since. The university brings museums, concerts and recitals, academic talks, Big Ten sports and progressive politics to the town. In return, Bloomington provides students, staff and visitors with a bold and creative community, scenic surroundings and an easygoing, accepting way of life.

LAY OF THE LAND

Just an hour south of Indianapolis and two hours north of Louisville, Bloomington centers on Indiana University. West of campus, the famed Sample Gates lead into downtown. There, 4th Street’s Restaurant Row houses ethnic eateries in remodeled bungalows, and the Bloomington Entertainment & Arts District (BEAD) invites visitors to galleries, theaters, and music venues.

On Bloomington’s north side, Griffy Lake offers more than 100 acres of water fully stocked for fishing, and just 15 minutes south of town, Monroe Lake’s 10,000 acres of sparkling water provide the perfect setting for boating, fishing, skiing, kayaking and camping. Southeast of this, Hoosier National Forest has activities for hikers and campers of all skill levels.

When you're ready to escape the Midwest without leaving the Midwest, visit Bloomington.

EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS

B-Line Trail — 3.1-mile rail trail dotted with breweries, restaurants and coffee shops

Hoosier National Forest — 203,000 acres of rolling hills and hiking trails

Monroe Lake — a favorite spot for boating, kayaking, fishing and waterskiing

Little 500 — mid-April // bicycle race drawing more than 25,000 fans every year

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

Oliver Winery — Indiana's largest, oldest winery // open for daily tastings and weekend tours

Farmer's Market — April through November // Saturday morning market with array of local goods

Local spirits — eight local breweries and distilleries, including Bloomington Brewing Co. and Cardinal Spirits

EXPAND YOUR MIND

WonderLab — hands-on science museum perfect for kids in preschool and early elementary

IU Art Museum — I.M. Pei-designed museum featuring pieces spanning 40 centuries

Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center — spiritual destination that nurtures and preserves the cultures of Mongolia and Tibet.

Lilly Library — rich repository of rare books, manuscripts, puzzles and sheet music

TAKE IN A SHOW

Lotus World Music & Arts Festival — mid-September // four days of diverse global music

Limestone Comedy Festival — early June // three days of standup from major headliners

Pride Film Festival — late January // three days of films exploring a wide variety of issues

4th Street Festival of the Arts & Crafts — September // two-day showcase of nationally and regionally recognized artists

Middle Coast Film Festival — late July // features, short films and music videos at four venues

Jacobs School of Music — world-famous conservatory with over 1,100 free shows a year

The Bluebird — cornerstone venue of Bloomington's thriving music scene

Buskirk-Chumley Theater — performing arts center hosting community events year-round

GET A ROOM

Bloomington offers a wide range of accommodations— from full-service hotels like Biddle Hotel and Conference Center and charming B&Bs like Grant Street Inn to Tibetan yurts and quaint cottages. And if you're hosting a crowd, the Bloomington Monroe County Convention Center can accommodate groups of up to 800 with its prime downtown location and in-house catering and A/V services.

IN THE HEADLINES

Indiana University Art Museum is one of the "Best University Art Museums in America."

Architectural Digest

No. 1 Best City for Work-Life Balance

Forbes

"Whether you're gay, straight or somewhere in between, Bloomington offers something rarely found in this country: a small town with a bold history of openness and acceptance."

Out Traveler

"Bloomington has long been a hotbed for the seemingly disparate worlds of college sports and indie music. How better to unite these warring factions than kegs upon kegs of frothy, feel-good alcohol?"

Thrillist, "10 Untapped Beer Cities Poised to Blow Up"