

Cultural and Heritage Tours

Historic Spokane's Age of Elegance (Half Day Tour)

In the late 1800s, Spokane mirrored most Wild West frontier towns with slap-dash wooden buildings, creaky boardwalks, an abundance of saloons and dusty streets. The rough, the ready and the not-so-steady flocked to the bustling mining, timber and rail hub.

The Great Spokane Fire of 1889 leveled 32 square blocks and gave the city founders the perfect opportunity to ban all wooden structures, ushering in a building era that created the magnificent brick and stone buildings that still stand. By the 1919, Spokane had matured into a sophisticated city with elegant homes and stately office buildings.

Tour 100-acre Riverfront Park, site of the 1974 World's Fair and the city's crown jewel with its wide river and dramatic waterfalls (www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com). Drive up South Hill past historic mansions to stunning St. John's Cathedral, a classic Gothic style building with French influence (www.stjohns-cathedral.org), then tour 90-acre Manito Park's gardens with sections devoted to perennials, formal plantings, roses, lilacs, an authentic Japanese garden and more (www.manitopark.org). Historic Browne's Addition at the edge of city center was developed for wealthy homeowners and today their houses represent every residential style fashionable in the Pacific Northwest between 1880 and 1930. Bing Crosby, legendary crooner, actor and first winner of a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, attended Spokane's Gonzaga University. Gonzaga has established the Crosbyana Room where you'll glimpse the life of this famous songster (www.gonzaga.edu).

Options:

- Include a stop at a true "secret garden," the Corbin & Moore-Turner Heritage Garden, buried under vegetation for decades and discovered after an ice storm in the mid-1990s. www.spokaneparks.org
- Dine in a setting surrounded by giant gears, pipes and boilers at refurbished Steam Plant Grill, site of Spokane's original steam generating plant. www.steamplantgrill.com
- Grab the gold ring on the 1909 Loeff Carrousel (one of the Ten Best in the US) in Riverfront Park. www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com
- Get a bird's eye view of Spokane Falls and Riverfront Park from a lilac-colored gondola. www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com
- Swirl and sip on a tour of downtown Spokane wineries and tasting rooms.
- Tour downtown art galleries or visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, home to rotating exhibits and the largest collection of Plateau Indian artifacts in the United States. www.northwestmuseum.org
- Visit the Jundt Art Museum at Gonzaga University and see glass artist Dale Chihuly's massive Red Chandelier and bronze sculptures by Auguste Rodin. www.gonzaga.edu/jundt
- Enjoy a spot of tea in the secret garden at the Victorian Queen Anne style E.J. Roberts Mansion. www.robertsmansion.com

Historic Walking Tour of Downtown Spokane (Half Day Tour)

Downtown Spokane packs a lot of history into a walkable city. Hear the Spokane Indian legend about the creation of the river and visit the site of the 1974 World's Fair at Riverfront Park (www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com). Your guide will tell you about rough and tough early Spokane and the Great Fire that leveled the city in 1889. See bronze busts of founding fathers on the Spokesman-Review Building and stroll through the spectacular 1914 Davenport Hotel (www.davenporthotel.com), art deco Fox Theater (when available) (www.foxtheaterspokane.com) and Steam Plant Square (www.steamplantsquare.com), once the city's steam generating center, now an eclectic restaurant and brew pub.

Options:

- Historic Tour Map
- Downtown Spokane Heritage Walk

Spokane Boy Makes it Big! Early History of Bing Crosby (Half Day Tour)

Harry Lillis Crosby, the crooner whose "White Christmas" epitomizes the holiday, moved to Spokane from Tacoma with his family when he was three years old. Later nicknamed Bing, he majored in law at Gonzaga University till Hollywood lured him away in the 1920s. Learn how Bing got his nickname and see hundreds of memorabilia at Gonzaga University's Crosbyana Room. Drop by Downriver Golf Course (www.spokanegolf.org) where Bing learned to play and the Bing Crosby Theater where he performed between vaudeville acts in the early years (www.mettheater.com).

The Silver Valley and Historic Wallace (Day Tour)

The world's richest silver mining district, nestled in the North Idaho Panhandle between Eastern Washington and Western Montana, packs a history of tall tales and larger-than-life personalities along the ribbon of Interstate 90. Visit Cataldo Mission, Idaho's oldest building, constructed in the 1850s by Jesuit missionaries and the Coeur d'Alene Indians (<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/oldmission.aspx>). Walkabout tiny Wallace, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and tour museums devoted to mining, railroads and prostitution (www.wallace-id.com). Ride the trolley, don a hard hat and enter the chilly depths of the Sierra Silver Mine (www.silverminetour.org). Enjoy lunch in the historic Jameson Hotel dining room where it's easy to imagine scruffy miners and ladies of the night mingling over whiskey and beer (www.wallace-id.com).

The Historic Silver Valley and Crystal Gold Mine (Day Tour)

Head east from Spokane and within minutes you cross the border into Idaho. Skirt past beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene and head into deep, heavily wooded Silver Valley. Stop at the Cataldo Mission, Idaho's oldest building, constructed in the 1850s by Jesuit missionaries and the Coeur d'Alene Indians

(<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/oldmission.aspx>). Lunch is an only-in-North-Idaho treat at the Enaville Resort, known as the Snake Pit in the 1880s when it served as a mining supply depot and house of prostitution. Today mining tools, farm implements, oddball posters and prints, even a four-foot wide sombrero adorn the ceiling and walls (www.enavilleresort.com). Then learn about early mining methods, pan for gold and precious gem stones at the authentic Crystal Gold Mine (www.goldmine-iaho.com).

Lunch at F. Lewis Clark House on Hayden Lake (Half Day Tour)

Wealth, power, love and mystery surround the Clark House. Built in 1910 by powerful F. Lewis Clark and his wife Winifred, the 15,000 square-foot mansion was elaborately furnished and the 12-acre grounds held a private zoo. In 1914, Lewis disappeared, never to be heard from again. Enjoy an elaborate lunch at the refurbished country inn, hear Lewis' story and learn Winifred's eventual fate (www.clarkhouse.com).

Kirtland Cutter Architectural Tour (Day Tour)

Classically trained and worldly wise, Kirtland Cutter was the perfect architect for Spokane when the region hit its economic zenith as wealth from mining, railroads and timber poured in. Newly rich citizens wanted lavish, unique homes and the city needed bridges, civic structures and office buildings. Cutter was hired for dozens of projects and his creative genius was given free rein to design mansions and buildings that still stand today. Tour the Campbell House, the Glover Mansion and drive past numerous Cutter homes. Visit world class Davenport Hotel, the Chronicle Building, Steam Plant Square and check out the unusual art on the Monroe Street Bridge. Have lunch or dinner at an historic home or the Steam Plant Grill.

<http://www.spokaneoutdoors.com/cutter.htm> www.davenporthotel.com
<http://www.talismanservices.com/chronicle.htm> <http://www.steamplantsquare.com/>
<http://www.steamplantgrill.com/>

Birthplace of Father's Day (Half Day Tour)

In 1910, Sonora Smart Dodd, a young Spokane woman, started a campaign to create a national holiday honoring fathers. Her own dad, William Jackson Smart, had single-handedly raised Sonora and her five younger brothers on a remote Eastern Washington farm after the children's mother died. Sonora lobbied to make Father's Day a permanent national holiday, but it took 60 years before President Richard M. Nixon finally signed the holiday into law in 1972. See the churches where Sonora was inspired to launch Father's Day, the YMCA where she gained the Spokane Ministerial Alliance's endorsement, visit Manito Park's rose garden, tour the Spokane house where Sonora lived in later years and Greenwood Memorial Terrace where she, her father and husband are buried. You can even sip Papa's Pale Ale, a local microbrew created in 2010 for the 100th Centennial of the founding of Father's Day.

www.fathersdaybirthplace.com

(Rev. 6/23/10)