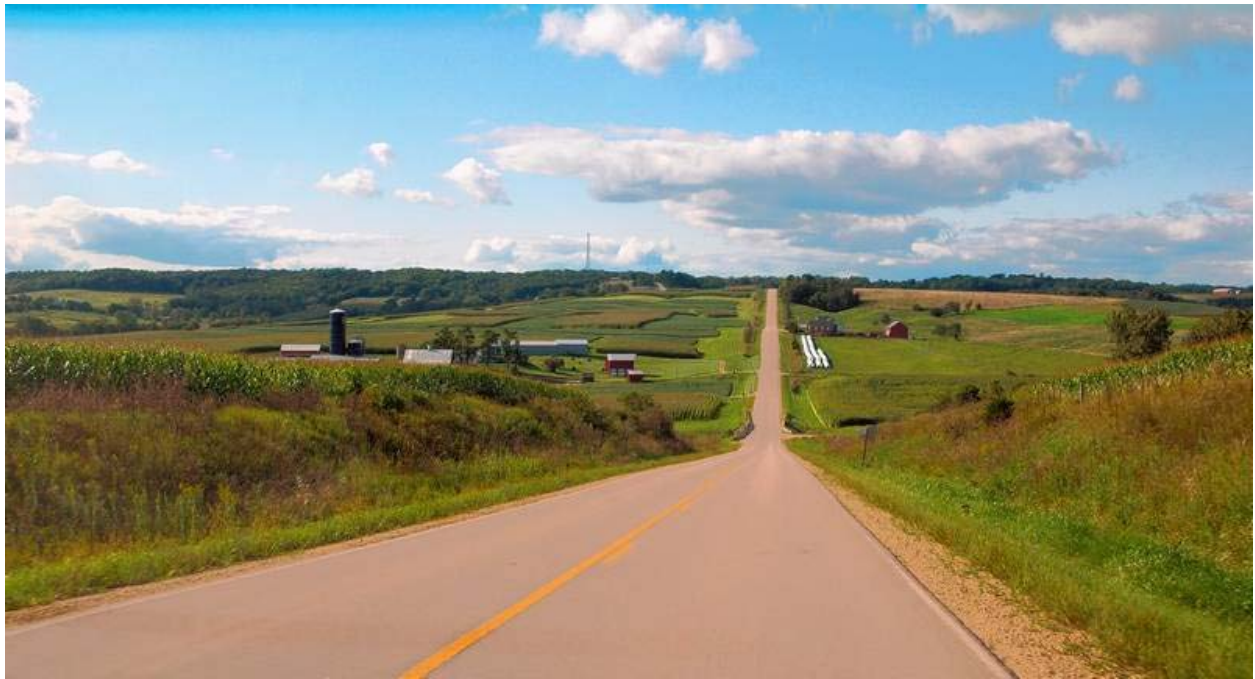


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Seeking active and passive pastimes in Galena and Jo Daviess County



The rolling hills of farmland in Illinois' Jo Daviess County were bypassed by Ice Age glaciers.

Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier



In 1865, General Ulysses S. Grant was given an Italianate home to honor his service in the Civil War. Now a state historic site, the home is open for tours in Galena, Ill.

Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier



Sightseeing trolleys navigate Main Street in downtown Galena, Ill., noted for more than 100 shops and restaurants.

Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

**By Katherine Rodeghier
Daily Herald Correspondent**

The northwest corner of Illinois curls up like a leaf that refuses to lie flat, a patchwork quilt of rolling hills dotted with small towns where antiques shops and boutiques beckon. An old stagecoach trail winds past farm fields and wineries, lovingly preserved 19th-century buildings -- some open as shops and museums, others welcoming bed-and-breakfasts.

A few miles before the road reaches the bluffs of the Mississippi River where the borders of Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois meet, it descends into [Galena](#), largest city in Jo Daviess County and a magnet for visitors.

Galena gets most of the attention, with 100-plus shops and restaurants and trolley tours of historic sites, but you also can venture into the countryside for active pursuits. Zip line through trees on canopy tours, float over lakes and links in a hot-air balloon, slide down the face of a bluff on wheeled sleds, and hike along river-carved canyons and past ancient burial mounds.

Bigger than Chicago

Can you believe tiny Galena, population about 3,500, once exceeded the size of Chicago? Lead mining made it a boomtown and largest steamboat port north of St. Louis. Production of Galena-area mines peaked in 1845 accounting for about 85 percent of the lead in the U.S. The wealthy built elegant homes in the styles of the day: Italianate, Second Empire, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne, many on the National Register of Historic Places.



More than three-quarters of Galena's buildings, including The Belvedere, are on the national register thanks to the work of preservationists. -
Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

A tour of historic homes happens Sept. 29 and 30 this year, but all year visitors can pick up a brochure for a self-guided walking tour at the Galena Welcome Center inside the Old Market House State Historic Site. Two trolley companies offer seasonal tours and on Saturdays from May through October an actor portraying Gen. Ulysses S. Grant leads a guided walking tour.

The real Grant was one of nine Civil War generals who hailed from that booming town of Galena. To honor his service, Grant's fellow citizens gave him a stately Italianate mansion where he resided until he became the 18th president of the United States. Now a museum, the home contains original furnishings. Galena's other historic buildings include Dowling House, an 1826 trading post and residence that is the city's oldest building, and The Belvedere, an 1857 mansion filled with Victorian furnishings.

In addition to touring historic buildings, shopping ranks among the top visitor activities in Galena with its plethora of galleries, gift and specialty stores. Take a break at the Galena Brewing Company on Main Street for a brewery tour, a drink or a bite to eat. For something more substantial, try One Eleven Main, just down the street, emphasizing regionally sourced meats, cheese and produce.



Galena Cellars has a shop and tasting room on Main Street in Galena, Ill., as well as a winery open for tours in the countryside. - Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

You'll find fine dining a short drive into the country at the Goldmoor Inn where beef Wellington ranks as a favorite. You can overnight here, too, in one of 18 luxury guest suites, including two log cabins and three cottages.

Outdoor adventures

Two resorts in the countryside not only offer food and lodging, but also plenty of warm-weather activities.

You'll find 63 holes of golf at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in the 6,800-acre Galena Territory. The resort provides the setting for the annual Great Galena Balloon Race, June 15-17 this year. Visitors who want a ride another time can book sunrise and sunset launches in summer and fall through Galena On The Fly Inc. for a bird's-eye view of three states.

Chestnut Mountain Resort, known for skiing in winter, packs plenty of fun into warm weather months. Ride its Alpine Slide on wheeled sleds down a curvy hard-surface track to the banks of the Mississippi River. Or rent a mountain bike, take a guided Segway tour or fly on the Soaring Eagle zip line.

You'll experience a longer zip line adventure at Long Hollow Canopy Tours in woodlands outside the village of Elizabeth. Thrill-seekers can take a 2.5-hour journey across six zip lines -- the longest 1,230 feet -- reaching heights of 75 feet and speeds of 40 mph. Your tour begins with a 15-foot ascent to the first platform, crosses a 140-foot Sky Bridge and ends with a 40-foot rappel to the ground.



A lovely view of the eastern gateway to Galena can be had at Horseshoe Mound Preserve. - Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

If you'd rather keep your feet firmly planted on the ground, head to Apple River Canyon State Park for hiking on five trails. Because Jo Daviess County lies within the Driftless Area of the upper Midwest, it was spared the last advance of Ice Age glaciers that flattened the surrounding land. The landscape comprises high bluffs, rolling hills and canyons carved in rock along the Galena and Apple Rivers. Mosses and lichens cover cliffs and canyons of limestone, dolomite and shale.

A scenic overlook under the care of the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation is the Stonehenge-like Horseshoe Mound Preserve with viewing scopes for taking in panoramic vistas. Hiking trails wind through the 40-acre property and its butterfly garden. The foundation also manages Casper Bluff Land & Water Reserve where trails lead through its 85 acres, past burial mounds of people living here between A.D. 700 and A.D. 1000. If you have sharp eyes, you might identify 20 mounds as you stroll bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River and its backwater sloughs.



An old schoolhouse now serves as a mall for antiques hunters in Elizabeth, Ill. The Elizabeth Grand Antique Co. contains more than 250 vendor booths. - Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

Vintage on shelves and in bottles

If you love antiques, head out to the agricultural communities in Jo Daviess County that brim with small-town charm and hold a trove of treasures.

Shoppers wander through room after room in an old farmhouse open for business as Antiques Etcetera just outside Stockton. You might recognize goods from grandma's kitchen gracing the shelves along with antique toys and furnishings. An old schoolhouse in Elizabeth houses an antiques mall, the Elizabeth Grand Antique Co., with more than 250 antiques vendor booths laden with racks of vintage clothing, shelves of collectibles, and displays of jewelry and furniture.



Antiques and collectibles shoppers browse through the merchandise displayed at Antiques Etcetera in a farmhouse near Stockton, Ill. -
Courtesy of Katherine Rodeghier

If your idea of vintage goods leans more to something you can sip, know that the Upper Mississippi Valley wine region encompasses Jo Daviess County. Family-run vineyards dot the hills and four wineries invite visitors for tastings of their vintages. Stop by Rocky Waters Vineyard/Winery and Fergedaboutit Vineyard and Winery near Hanover and Massbach Ridge Winery outside Elizabeth. Galena Cellars Vineyard and Winery in Galena has been going strong since the 1970s. Both Massbach Ridge and Galena Cellars also operate tasting rooms right on Galena's Main Street, convenient if you want to mix a little sipping with your shopping.

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Galena, Ill.

Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau: (800) 747-9377

Visit Galena: (815) 776-9200 or visitgalena.org/

<http://www.dailyherald.com/entlife/20180406/seeking-active-and-passive-pastimes-in-galena-and-jo-daviess-county>