



# *Bloomington*

INDIANA

**MEDIA KIT**





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# AT A GLANCE

Inclusive, affordable, academic, and unpretentious, Bloomington is a progressive small-town gem in the heart of the rolling hills of southern Indiana. Centered around Indiana University, it's a place to nurture your intellect and get back to nature. That's why the destination draws industrious thinkers, creators, and adventurers from around the world who make their home and memories amid its limestone cliffs, lush forests, and pristine lakes.

Lake life is a way of life here (we have the state's largest), but Bloomington's nationally recognized music industry, comedy scene, and food culture make it easy to forget the serene natural beauty just minutes outside of town. It's an ideal destination for day hikes and rides, late-night shows, great coffee and craft spirits, unique hotels, inns, and cabins.

Just an hour south of Indianapolis and within three hours of most major Midwest cities, Bloomington is an entrancing Heartland favorite that keeps visitors coming back, year after year.



# OVER THE YEARS

Bloomington and Indiana University were born just two years apart and the two have had a strong bond ever since.

**1818**

City of Bloomington and Monroe County are founded

**1820**

Indiana University (IU) is founded

**1867**

IU becomes one of the first state universities to admit women

**1927**

Bloomington's oldest restaurant, Nick's English Hut, opens

**1940**

The IU Hoosier basketball team wins first NCAA Championship

**1947**

Alfred Kinsey founds the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University

**1950**

Lake Lemon is created

**1951**

First running of the Little 500

**1953**

Café Pizzaria begins serving pizza in Bloomington

**1954**

World's first color television is manufactured at RCA in Bloomington

**1960**

The Indiana Memorial Union Biddle Hotel opens

**1963**

Salt Creek dammed, creating Monroe Reservoir/Lake, Indiana's largest lake

**1971**

Assembly Hall opens at a cost of \$26.6 million

**1972**

Oliver Winery opens

**1973**

The Bluebird nightclub opens its doors

**1974**

Will Shortz, editor of the New York Times crossword puzzle, graduates from IU

**1977**

The Grateful Dead perform at IU

**1979**

Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center is established

**1979**

"Breaking Away" is released and wins an Academy Award

**1984**

The Olympic Trials and six Olympic exhibition games take place at Assembly Hall

**1987**

IU's first Gay and Lesbian People's Union, OUT at IU, is founded

**1994**

First Lotus World Music Fest is held

**1996**

Record label Secretly Canadian is founded

**2003**

PRIDE Film Festival founded in Bloomington

**2011**

B-Line Trail opens

**2018**

Graduate Bloomington hotel opens

**2020**

IU's Bicentennial



# BY THE NUMBERS

**83,000** residents

**48,500** students

**203,000** acres in the  
Hoosier National Forest

**25,000** fans annually  
at the Little 500 race

**1,100** free shows at the IU  
Jacobs School of Music each year

**140+** locally owned restaurants

**42** annual events and festivals

**13** pet-friendly hotels

**38** city and county parks

**20+** places to get pizza

**3.1** mile B-Line Trail

**5** NCAA basketball  
national championships

**8** campground areas

**35,000** square feet  
of public murals

**5,220,000** bottles of wine  
produced annually at Oliver Winery

**450,000** rare books at  
the Lilly Library

**60** hotels, cabins, bed  
and breakfasts, and yurts

**10,750** acres of water  
at Monroe Lake

**4** distinct seasons

**45,000** objects on display in  
the Eskenazi Museum of Art  
at Indiana University

**50%** of the U.S. population  
is located within a 1-day drive

**10** breweries, wineries,  
distilleries, and cideries

**12 million** fans have watched IU  
play basketball at Simon Skjodt  
Assembly Hall

**80** international restaurants

**14** independent record labels

**#19** in Livability's 2019 Top 100  
Best Places to Live



# BEYOND THE BASICS

The stories that shape Bloomington, put it on the map, and keep people coming back. Here's where to begin exploring.







## NATURE CALLS.

**M**ore than an idyllic college town, Bloomington has long been a destination for outdoor enthusiasts from adrenaline junkies to serene naturalists. Mountain bikers flock to the nearly 50-acre Wapehani Mountain Bike Park, while hikers and trail runners lose themselves in the 202,000-acre Hoosier National Forest—crisscrossed with trails for all experience levels, both deep woods and along Monroe Lake. Both forest and lake are dotted with campgrounds and park cabins which can be reserved online in advance.

Griffy Lake, Lake Lemon, and Monroe Lake are three popular water sports destinations located within minutes of Bloomington—Monroe Lake being the largest in the state, which is visited by more than 1.5 million people every year. Rent a speedboat or pontoon for tubing and water skiing, spike your adrenaline on a jet ski, or perfect your windsurfing form. Kayaks and paddleboards are available to rent for a more peaceful excursion, or go the complete opposite route and get a double-decker party boat, water slide included.







## LIVE TO BIKE. BIKE TO LIVE.

Biking is ingrained in the culture of Bloomington. Rated a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community by League of American Bicyclists, it is the only gold level BFC in Indiana.

At any time of day, the 3.1-mile, multi-use B-Line Trail is abuzz with bicycles—rented, dockless bike shares, and fully custom marvels too—all sharing the trail with scooters, strollers, joggers, and brunch crawlers short-cutting around town and taking in the public art. Take the B-Line Trail to the opening of the 62-acre Switchyard Park or visit for the annual Hilly Hundred Weekend for a more demanding ride. Drawing more than 5,500 cyclists every October, The Hilly is a scenic trek through the challenging hills of southern Indiana.







## KIDS STUFF.

Rain, snow, or shine, there's plenty to keep curious little ones happy in Bloomington. Explore one of the top 25 science centers in the country, WonderLab Museum, for hands-on exhibits, immersive experiences (think buildings and bubbles), and live animals. Families can then burn off some energy at Hoosier Heights climbing gym (housed in a beautifully repurposed church), Urban Air trampoline park, or Griffy Lake (for kayaking and bird watching) before calling it a day. Perfect for a crew, rooms at the new Home2 Suites by Hilton feature sleeper sofas, kitchen areas, free breakfast, and Wi-Fi. Try Graduate Bloomington and ask for a room with racecar beds, or get a room at Hyatt Place right off the B-Line Trail—kids will love the pool and parents will love the sleeper sofas in every room.







## SURPRISING FERMENTATIONS.

Far beyond your basic breweries, Bloomington is home to some highly specialized fermenters with innovative offerings in the sour beer, cider, and fruit-forward wine sectors. Cider purveyors Friendly Beasts Cider Company bring an artistic whimsy with their rotating selection of unexpected cider flavors, while hometown hero Upland Brewing Company serves up wood-aged, specialty sour beers open for exploration at The Wood Shop. Adventurous drinkers can sample moonshine cocktails at the newly opened, Memphis-style SmokeWorks barbecue. And wine lovers can visit Butler Winery for weekend cellar tours and wine tastings or Oliver Winery (just north of town) to sample their award-winning, inventive fruit wines in their newly remodeled tasting room and vineyard gardens.







## MELLOW MORNINGS.

Charming, Instagram-worthy coffee and brunch spots abound in Bloomington where the leisurely pace of cafe culture appeals to down-to-earth business travelers, students, and visitors alike. People-watch over huevos rancheros and Mezcal Marys at Social Cantina on the Courthouse Square, cozy up in the dreamy new OONA eatery for surprising takes on familiar comfort food with local and house-made ingredients, or indulge in the divine baked goods at La Vie en Rose, Rainbow Bakery (all vegan), or Two Sticks Bakery before they sell out for the day.

Top off your morning with a trip to the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market, one of the area's most beloved traditions. Held every Saturday, from April through November, visit over 100 local vendors selling a variety of foods and goods that are grown and or made in Indiana.





## CULTURE VULTURES.

The stunning Eskenazi Museum of Art at IU, designed by Louvre Pyramid architect I.M. Pei, opens its doors in the fall of 2019 after a two-year, \$40 million renovation to modernize the space. Visitors will still find works by Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, and Jackson Pollock, alongside updates that include: the renovated Angles Art Shop and Café (easily one of the best places to buy gifts in town), more open gallery spaces, a center for education, and a new video and VR gallery. Stay another day and be sure to check out the impressive collection of 450,000 rare books at nearby Lilly Library.

For an after-hours viewing experience, enjoy our Gallery Walk on the first Friday of every month. Fourteen downtown art galleries stay open late to showcase special exhibits featuring local, regional, and international artists.





## LITTLE 500 & BREAKING AWAY.

**L**ittle Five, as it's affectionately known, is the largest collegiate bike race in the U.S. and became a national draw after being featured in the 1979 cult favorite and Academy Award winning film, *Breaking Away*. Since the film's release, the 50-mile, relay-style race attracts 25,000+ people to Bill Armstrong Stadium and many more for the weekend-long festivities. Join the hoopla annually in April or delve into the film's history anytime of the year with a guided *Breaking Away* tour from Indiana Jim's Bicycling Adventures.







## BOUTIQUE HOTELS TO WOODLAND YURTS.

Bloomington accommodations run the gamut from the newly opened, collegiate-themed, boutique hotel Graduate Bloomington, to peaceful, minimalist yurts run by Buddhist proprietors. The Fourwinds Lakeside Inn & Marina offers a one-of-a-kind stay nestled along Monroe Lake with boat and wave runner rentals, a private beach, and more fun accommodations the family will love, while the homey Grant Street Inn offers 40 rooms in a modernized late-1800s building. Visitors can stay in the heart of IU's campus at the Biddle Hotel or get away from it all with a vast selection of private cabin rentals throughout the area and spectacular camping at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area in the Hoosier National Forest.







## VISITATION.

Families touring college campuses have shifted their focus from quantity to quality, preferring to linger in town to absorb the local scene. Those planning Bloomington “visitations” will find affordable rates at Graduate Bloomington and fully immersive accommodations at IU’s Biddle Hotel located inside the student union. Plan trips around one of Bloomington’s annual festivals, like Limestone Comedy Festival or Lotus World Music & Arts Festival.

Be sure to join in on a few B-Town traditions and head over to the iconic Nick’s English Hut, celebrating more than 90 years in business, or split a pie at campus classic Mother Bear’s Pizza. Afterwards, venture out of town for hiking, rental boats, kayaks, and paddle boards on any one of Monroe County’s three lakes: Monroe Lake (the largest in IN), Griffy Lake, and Lake Lemon.







## DESTINATION MUSIC.

Home to popular underground music hangouts the Blockhouse, The Bluebird, and The Bishop (a mecca for bands before they make it big), Bloomington is a hotbed for musical innovation. It's home to nationally lauded record labels Secretly Canadian, Dead Oceans, and Jagjaguwar, which took three of the top spots in Paste Magazine's 10 Best Record Labels of 2018. Music lovers can be found elbow-deep in vinyl at Landlocked Music's new location in the historic Baker Building, or enjoying live music over a pint at underground pinball bar, Orbit Room. And for a more classical take on the music scene, check out one of the 1,100 free shows at the Jacobs School of Music.





## BUDDHIST TRADITIONS.

An unexpected spiritual haven, Bloomington has long attracted followers of Buddhism, beginning most prominently in 1979 with the founding of the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's eldest brother. Sitting on 108 peaceful acres, it offers prayer ceremonies at the Kumbum Chamtse Ling Temple, four-foot-tall butter sculptures, two Tibetan Chortens (Buddhist monuments), a permanent sand mandala, meditation and yoga classes, as well as several yurts available for short stays.

The Gaden Khachoe Shing Buddhist monastery also calls Bloomington home. Encircled by a wide stream, the 128-acre monastery features a gilded 32-foot-tall Buddha statue (one of the largest anywhere outside of Tibet) and offers classes on Buddhism and meditation for kids.

And for a true taste of Tibet, make your way to local restaurant Anyetsang's Little Tibet—regarded by Bon Appetit magazine as having the most comforting dumplings around.





## HAVE DOGS, WILL TRAVEL.

**M**ake no bones about it, Bloomington is a dog town. You'll find tails wagging under every patio table from quintessential college-town pub Irish Lion (with complimentary homemade, shamrock-shaped dog treats) to the new Switchyard Brewing, where dogs are even welcome in the taproom while you sample locally-inspired beers, kombucha, and live music. Dog-friendly accommodations are readily available: from cozy cabin rentals to downtown hotels, like the newly opened Graduate Bloomington (where you receive a complimentary BarkBox) or Hyatt Place near the B-Line Trail for easy walks. There's also miles of trails and lakes to explore, protected by Sycamore Land Trust, for you and your furry companions to roam freely.







## HAVE A GAY OLD TIME.

Ranked the fourth-gayest city in the country by The Advocate, Bloomington's long history of acceptance and appreciation of diversity are well-documented. It has earned perfect scores on the Municipal Equality Index, hosts an annual PRIDE Film Festival every January as well as PRIDE Fest every August (attracting more than 6,000 attendees). The destination has become a hotspot for same-sex weddings, with local seamstress Liby Ball and tailor Andrew Davis specializing in attire for brides and grooms of all body types, plenty of LGBTQ owned businesses, and the Quarryland Men's Chorus for gay and allied male-identified singers.

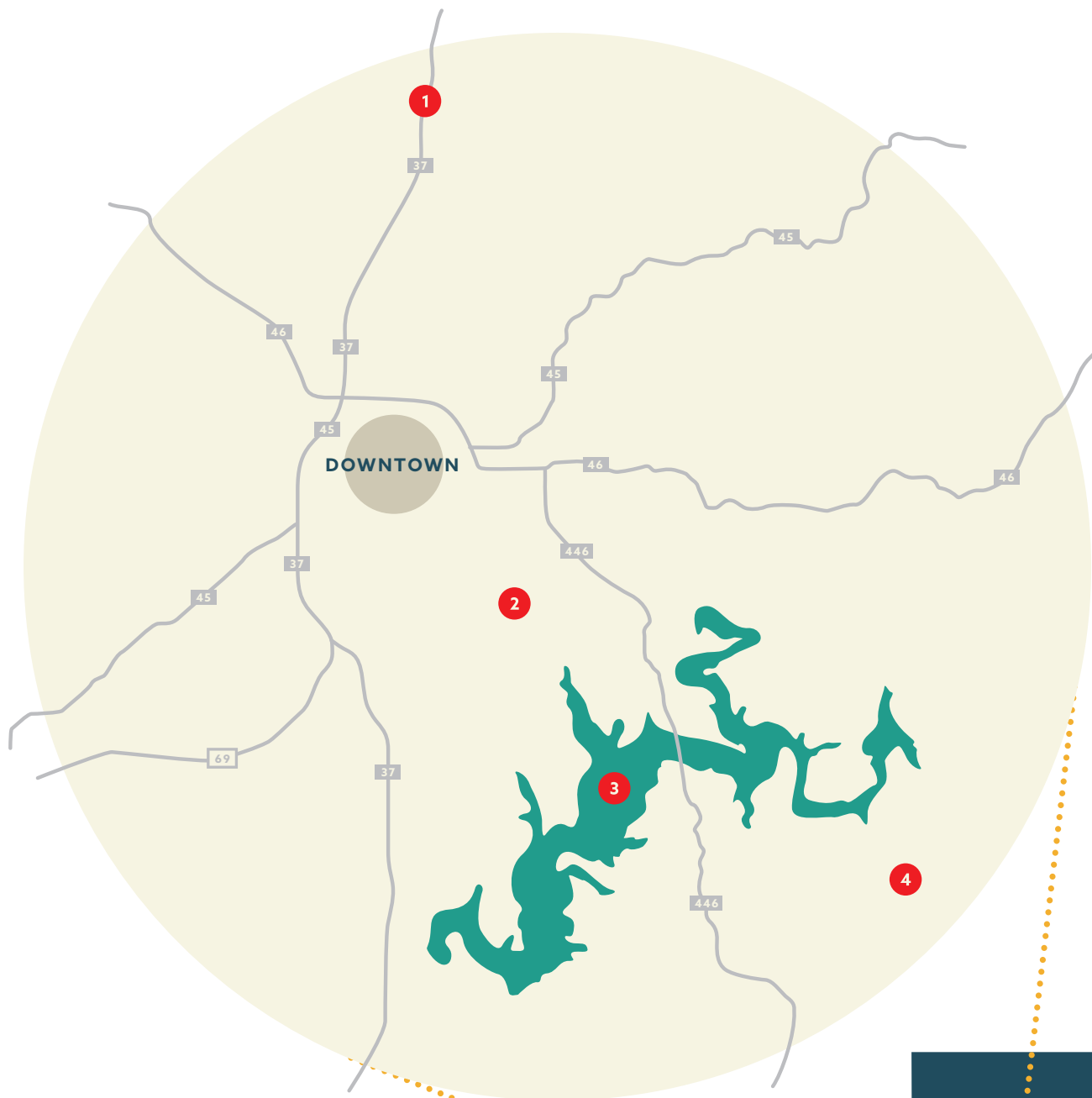




## A WORLD OF FLAVOR.

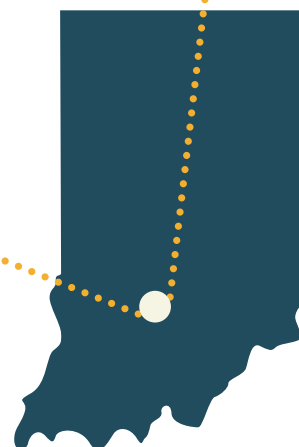
**M**ost Bloomington visitors are surprised to find that a town of only 80,000 residents boasts more than 75 international restaurants, representing 18 countries. A direct result of the many international students and families who make their homes here, these entrepreneurs make Bloomington a destination for those with adventurous palates. For authentic Asian noodle dishes and Chinese pop music, head to The Boiling Noodle, or get lost on Fourth Street for the ultimate international smorgasbord.



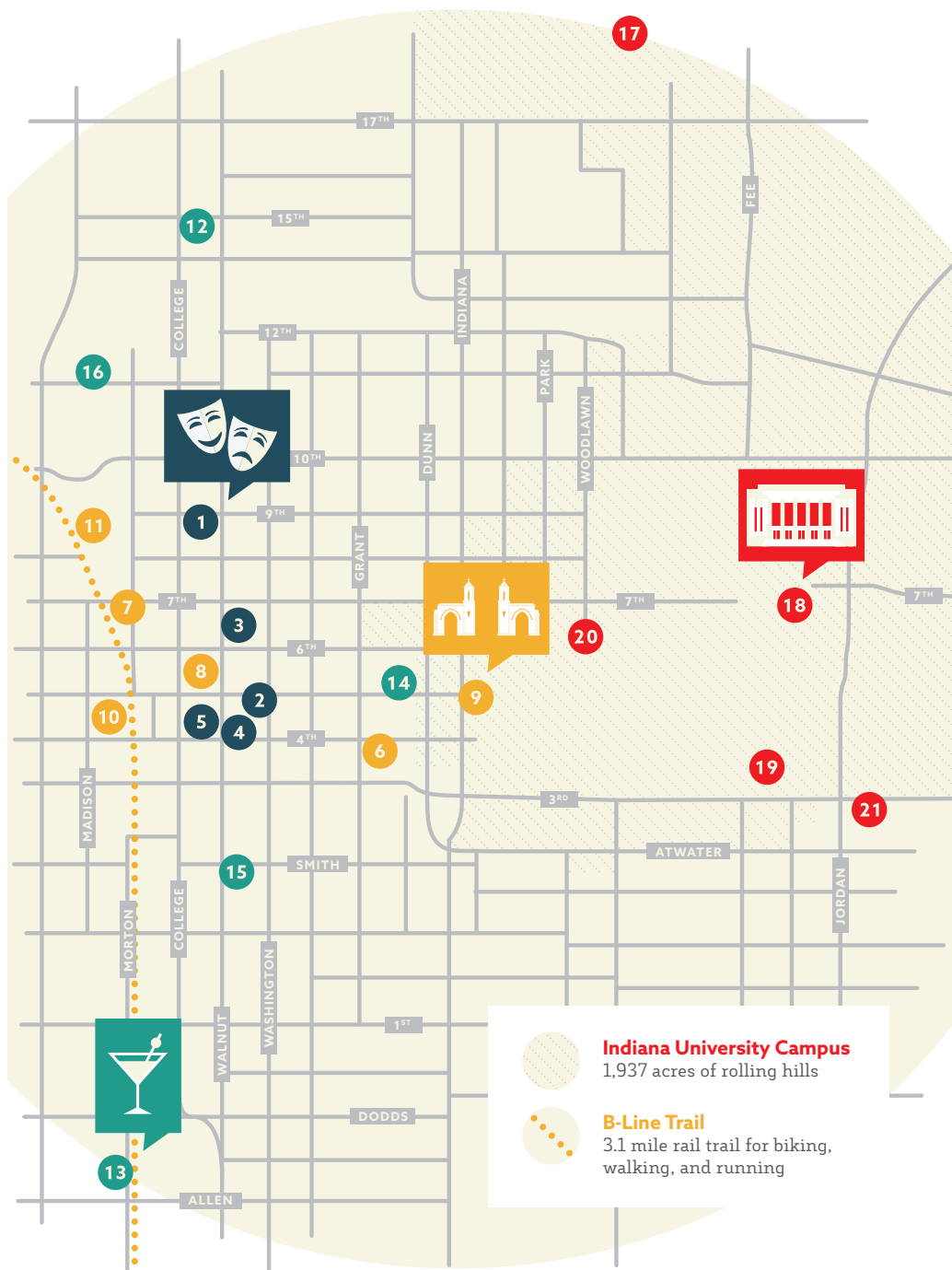


- 1 Oliver Winery**  
Indiana's largest and oldest
- 2 Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center**  
Spiritual destination

- 3 Monroe Lake**  
Reservoir & outdoor sporting
- 4 Hickory Ridge Fire Tower**  
Hoosier National Forest lookout tower







## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 1 **Bloomington Playwrights Project**  
Production theater
- 2 **Buskirk-Chumley Theater**  
Performance theater
- 3 **The Bluebird**  
Historic music venue
- 4 **The Comedy Attic**  
Comedy club
- 5 **The Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center**  
Performances, galleries, classes

## CULTURE & HERITAGE

- 6 **4th Street / International Restaurant Row**  
Authentic international cuisine
- 7 **Bloomington Antique Mall**  
Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District
- 8 **Monroe County Courthouse / Courthouse Square**  
Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District
- 9 **Sample Gates**  
Ceremonial entrance to IU
- 10 **Wonderlab Museum of Science, Health & Technology**  
Hands-on science exhibits
- 11 **Showers Plaza**  
Festival center & City Hall

## FOOD & DRINK

- 12 **Butler Winery**  
Tasting room
- 13 **Cardinal Spirits**  
Local craft distillery
- 14 **Nick's English Hut**  
World famous pub & eatery
- 15 **The Chocolate Moose**  
Homemade ice cream
- 16 **Upland Brewing Co.**  
Craft beer & brewpub

## IU CAMPUS

- 17 **Assembly Hall / Memorial Stadium**  
Arena & athletics venue
- 18 **IU Fine Arts Plaza**  
Art museum, auditorium, cinema, library
- 19 **IU Jacobs School of Music and Musical Arts Center**  
Performance hall
- 20 **Indiana Memorial Union**  
Nation's largest student union
- 21 **Mother Bear's Pizza**  
Local pizzeria



# FOR THE RECORD

## REFINERY 29

“B-town is the ideal getaway for a small group of friends because there’s something for everyone. For adrenaline junkies wanting to go kayaking or paddle boarding, there are three lakes to make a splash in. The gorgeous Indiana University campus is a lovely setting for a fall picnic or an afternoon of chitchat.”

- **35 Amazing Trips to Take with Your BFFs,**  
Venus Wong

## MEN’S JOURNAL

“It may not elicit the name recognition of Crater Lake or Lake Tahoe, but Lake Monroe is Indiana’s biggest body of water, boasting a 10,750-acre surface area and surrounded by woodsy terrain and backcountry trails in Hoosier National Forest. Set out for the day with a boat rental from Fourwinds Marina or grab a kayak or paddleboard with Lake Monroe Boat Rental.”

- **Amazing Lake Getaways for Every Adventurer,**  
Sunny Montefiore

## DAILY MEAL

“Bloomington is a surprising city for many reasons. Did you know it’s home to a Buddhist monastery and Mongolian yurts? Well, the food scene in the home of Indiana University is just as unexpected. Especially since it’s so healthy! Here you’ll find spots like Laughing Planet Café where they serve California-style burritos packed with organic and locally-produced ingredients. The Owlery offers high quality vegetarian food at affordable prices.”

- **50 Best Foodie Towns in America,**  
Jordi Lippe-McGraw

## READER’S DIGEST

“More than 75 international restaurants represent 18 countries. The city also has Indiana’s largest farmer’s market, attracting more than 10,000 people every Saturday. Confirming Bloomington’s stature as a cool college town: a Graduate Hotel is planned to open there soon.”

- **15 Most Underrated American Cities**  
Worth a Visit, Kelsey Ogletree

## FORBES

“Bloomington, Indiana is home to Indiana University, one of the most beautiful college campuses in the country and my beloved alma mater (go Hoosiers!). During the summer, budget-friendly Bloomington is bright, buzzing, green and blissfully empty. Rent a bike and pedal your way through the forests and streams of IU’s empty campus and along the B-Line trail. Spend an afternoon sipping hand-crafted sour ales at Upland Brewery or sweet, fruity wine at Oliver Winery.”

- **Cheap Summer Travel: 23 Places To**  
Go in 2018, Laura Begley Bloom

## FAMILY TRAVELER

“A blue dot in a politically red state, Bloomington is an LGBTQ oasis within the Midwest. The city boasts diversity in sexual orientation, art, culture, cuisine, and religious centers. Bloomington offers a wide range of outdoor family activities, from camping to paddleboarding. Kick back at Cardinal Spirits to sample the Pride Vodka and support the city’s LGBTQ community at the same time. Bonus: Kids can play on the neighboring B-Line Trail while adults relax on the patio.”

- **6 Surprising Cities Great for**  
LGBTQ Families, Hannah Freedman







# *Bloomington*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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