

Dubuque is a Current City

The Mississippi River city celebrates its heritage in modern ways

BY KATIE VAUGHN

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium.
See more photos of Dubuque in the slideshow below.

The phrase “Mississippi River town”

brings to mind steamboats, gambling and other examples of rough-and-tumble, early-nineteenth-century life. But visit Dubuque today and you’ll see the Iowa city mixes the historic with the modern, its river heritage with an eye to the future.

Built in 1915 and frequented—and perhaps owned at one point—by notorious Chicago gangster Al Capone, the **Hotel Julien Dubuque** underwent a \$30 million renovation to restore its grandeur. It now boasts 133 elegant rooms and suites, an upscale restaurant, ballroom, terrace and indoor pool. Historic photos and original mahogany doors capture the hotel’s past, while a geothermal heating and cooling system is a modern touch. The **Potosa Spa** offers services inspired by Native American traditions; don’t leave without experiencing the Four Elements Massage, featuring a warm footbath and a hot-stone massage in a candle-lit room.

If you’re hungry, you needn’t leave the hotel: **Caroline’s Restaurant** serves satisfying American fare. Or cross Main Street to **Crust**, an Italian eatery serving delicious pizzas and an urban vibe. By the river in the Port of Dubuque, within the restored Star Brewery building, you’ll find the sleek **Star Restaurant**. Also inside is **Stone Cliff Winery**; cozy up at the bar for a wine taste.

While in the port, stroll the **Riverwalk** for up-close views of the river and the contemporary **Grand River Center**, as well as ten pieces of public art. Stop by the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium**, two buildings with exhibits exploring the history and wildlife of the incredibly diverse river. And just steps away, you can catch a cruise: **Dubuque River Rides** offers a variety of rides on Spirit of Dubuque, a replica paddle wheeler, and Miss Dubuque, an eighty-foot motor yacht. Of all the ways to experience the city, drifting down the river feels the most timeless.

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