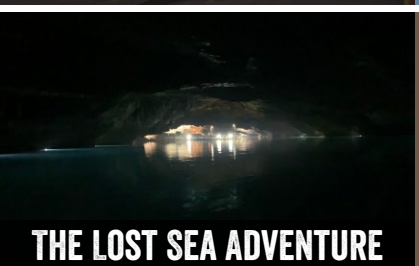




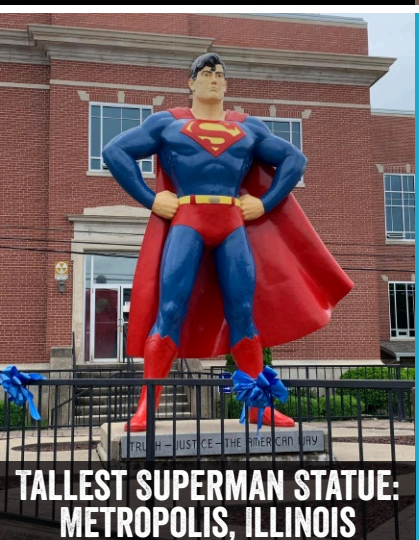
GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER/BUFFALO BILL RANCH



JACK SISEMORE RV MUSEUM



THE LOST SEA ADVENTURE



**TALLEST SUPERMAN STATUE:
METROPOLIS, ILLINOIS**



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE GREAT LAKES

As we travel around the country, we've come upon exciting museums and attractions that we have to share. Some are moving, some are educational, and some are downright fun.

10 You get a twofer for this one. North Platte, Nebraska, is home to the Golden Spike Tower Rail Yard and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. Golden Spike Tower is eight stories tall and looks out over the Union Pacific's Bailey Yard. This massive 8-mile-long rail yard is vital for the north-south and east-west routes and covers 2,850 acres. From the top of the tower, you can look out over the yard and watch as they move cars from one train to another. After visiting the rail yard, head north to Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and the home of former Army scout and showman Buffalo Bill Cody. You can tour his home, barns and property. You may even see buffalo while you're there.

9 Located on Highway 27 in Amarillo, Texas, this museum is dedicated to open road and vehicle travel. If you're looking for a one-of-a-kind 1935 Airstream Torpedo, the first Itasca and Fleetwood motorhomes ever built or our favorite—the 1948 Fxible Bus that Jeff Daniels drove in the movie *RV*, this museum is the place to go. Most RVs on display are open for you to walk in and explore. There are also plenty of collections of camping equipment throughout the museum that will bring back memories of camping with your family when you were a child.

8 Someone at our campground in Townsend, Tennessee, told us about this place, saying it was worth the drive to Sweetwater to check it out. He wasn't wrong! The Lost Sea is an underwater cave tour with a boat ride. The tour begins with a cavern walking tour to America's largest underground lake. The caverns are beautiful, and the guide points out historical carvings and fascinating facts. Then it's time to board a small boat for a trip in the underground lake. Although stocked with the largest fish we've ever seen, fishing isn't allowed. After the tour, check out the shops and trails on the property.

7 Travel from Paducah, Kentucky, across the Ohio River on Highway 45, and you'll start seeing signs for the "Tallest Superman Statue." The City of Metropolis embraced Superman in 1972, but this 15-foot-tall and 4,000-pound bronze statue was installed in June 1993. Of course, what's a Superman statue without Lois Lane? Two blocks from the Superman statue, on the corner of Market and 8th, is a 6-foot bronze statue honoring the "First Lady of Metropolis." While you're in town, check out the Super Museum, which boasts one of the world's largest collections of Superman memorabilia.

6 Located in Toledo, Ohio, this museum has three attractions. Along with the museum that showcases more than 300 artifacts and 40 exhibits telling the history of living and working on the Great Lakes, you can also tour the Tug Ohio and Col. James M. Schoonmaker ships. If you've ever wondered what the inside of a large cargo ship looks like, now's your chance. We could go down into the belly of the cargo hold on this floating museum. The most moving display, though, is the lifeboat from the SS Edmund Fitzgerald.



MOBILE CARNIVAL MUSEUM



LEWIS & CLARK BOATHOUSE AND MUSEUM



STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND & AEROSPACE MUSEUM



THE WORLD-FAMOUS HORSESHOE CURVE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA



THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL

5

While most people head to New Orleans for Mardi Gras, Mobile, Alabama, is the birthplace of Mardi Gras. In 1703, French Pioneers celebrated Mardi Gras for the first time in the New World at Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff, the first settlement of Mobile. In 1711, residents partied with song, food and dance.

A Papier-mâché bull was pulled down Dauphin Street in the first carnival "parade" in North America. Fourteen gallery rooms are home to displays of the ornate royal robes, crowns and scepters worn by the royal Mardi Gras courts through the years. The detail and craftsmanship are incredible. New Orleans may have the floats, but Mobile has the costumes.

4

St. Charles, Missouri, was the launching point for the Lewis & Clark expedition and is home to a must-see destination. While the outside doesn't look like much, the inside tells the story of their famed journey west and their hardships and includes replicas of the dugout canoes they used. The surrounding town of St. Charles is also steeped in history and has some great shops and restaurants so that you can make a day of it.

3

Located off I-80 in Ashland, Nebraska, is the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum. You'll see military aircraft and rockets lining the driveway as you drive up. Walk inside, and you're at eye level with an SR-71. All around it are exhibits from the various wars, with an emphasis on soldiers who were from this area. However, this museum isn't just about the military. On the lower level are exhibits from the NASA space program, including tributes to local astronauts and a very moving tribute to 9/11.

2

In the early 1850s, trains began running from the east, and one massive problem stood in the way—the front of the Allegheny Mountains. The solution was the creation of the Horseshoe Curve. Taking three years and countless hours to complete, the result of the Curve became known as one of the eight engineering marvels of the world and opened on February 15, 1854. It was such an essential endeavor for the railroad that it was even a target of Nazi spies. The Horseshoe Curve was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. If you time it right, you'll be able to see a train going around the Curve.

1

Bedford, Virginia, has the dubious distinction of having possibly the most extensive loss of men per capita on June 6, 1944, for any community in America. Of the nearly 7,000 residents, 19 were lost that day, along with four others lost elsewhere during the war. These men became known as the "Bedford Boys." When discussions began for a memorial, Bedford was the logical choice. Located on a hill overlooking the valley and the town below, this is a moving tribute to all those lost on D-Day. Be sure to take the guided tour because, as we found out, there is symbolism throughout the property, which is completely handicap-accessible.

As you can see, so many fascinating places in America are worth a stop. We can't wait to travel and add to our list of unique things to do.