



## Welcome Park Visitors!

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Whether you are visiting in the spring, summer, fall, or winter, Itasca State Park offers many enjoyable attractions and activities for you and your family. Please feel free to use this guide for planning your next outdoor adventure at Itasca—Minnesota’s oldest state park.

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Besides all of the great sites to visit at the park, another great option is taking in a nature program or event. Programs are available year-round. Check at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center or [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us) for currently schedule programs and events. If you are interested in having a naturalist present a program for you group, let us know. We are excited to help your group explore and learn more about the outdoors.

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If you would like to make a reservation for camping or lodging, please contact the number(s) below:

### Park Contact:

To make camping or lodging reservations, call the reservation line at:

1-866-85PARKS (1-866-857-2757)

International: 1-317-249-9327

TDD/Telecommunications Device for Deaf: 1-866-672-8213

Or go online at: [www.stayatmnparks.com](http://www.stayatmnparks.com)

*Itasca State Park  
36750 Main Park Drive  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
Tel: (218) 699-7251  
[Itasca.statepark@state.mn.us](mailto:Itasca.statepark@state.mn.us)*

For general questions and information about Itasca State Park, contact one of the following numbers:

General Park Information: Front Desk—218-699-7251

Camping: Campground Registration—218-699-7214 (seasonal)

Lodging/dining: Douglas Lodge Front Desk—218-699-7217 (seasonal)

Park Programs: Naturalists— 218-699-7259 or 218-699-7252

The beautiful pines, sparkling lakes and the Headwaters of the Mississippi River at Itasca State Park await your visit!



# Explore Itasca!



## The ABC's of Touring Itasca State Park (by Auto, Boot, Bike, Boat or Canoe)



### *Park Permits*

A Minnesota State Parks permit is required for each vehicle. A day permit or annual permit may be purchased at the entrance contact station or the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center.

Cost: Daily - \$5 Annual - \$25

### *Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center*

Visit Time: 20-60 minutes



Enter Itasca State Park from the south or east entrance and follow the signs to the Visitor Center. Parking is available near the Visitor Center with a short walk to the entrance. If you arrive in a bus, passengers may step off the bus at the loading/unloading zone directly in front of the Visitor Center with bus parking in the overflow/large vehicle parking lot.

Explore the Visitor Center interpretive exhibits, 5-minute Itasca video, gift shop, and restrooms. The Visitor Center provides an excellent overview of Itasca's rich natural and cultural history, as well as offering maps, brochures, and a staffed information desk for the park visitor.

### *Road Conditions*

Check out the Minnesota Department of Transportation website at [www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us) for up to date reports on road conditions and road construction.

*"Big detour to get here.  
Looks as if it will be worth it!"*

*-Park Visitor from the United Kingdom, 2009*

### *Explore By Boot...*

Set your own pace for a leisurely stroll or a strenuous hiking challenge. Itasca State Park has over 30 miles of hiking trails, with several self-guided interpretive trails. Maps are available at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center year round, and seasonally at Forest Inn, Douglas Lodge, Campground Registration, Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center and Itasca Sports Rental.

# Explore Itasca!



## Explore Along Main Park Drive...



### *Preacher's Grove*

Visit Time: 15 minutes

Leave your vehicle and walk the short trail through this magnificent stand of fire-scarred, old growth red pines to the shore of Lake Itasca. Imagine the echoes of the preacher's convention held there in the 1920's. An interpretive sign reveals the natural history of the site.

### *Peace Pipe Vista*

Visit Time: 5- 15 minutes

This favorite scenic overlook offers a grand view and beautiful sunsets. Interpretive signs reveal a glimpse into Itasca's glacial history and the homestead site of Itasca's first white settlers, Peter and Mary Turnbull.

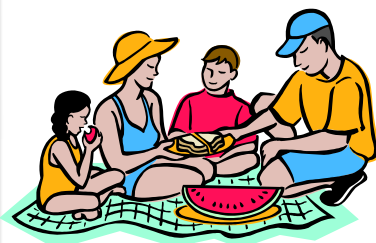
### *Pioneer Cemetery*

Visit Time: 10 minutes

Visit Itasca's Pioneer Cemetery along with an interpretive sign that shares interesting stories of Itasca's early settlers buried there.

### *Picnic Area—Including Swim Beach, Playground, Museum, Wegmann Store Ruins, Old Logging Sled, Indian Mounds Cemetery*

Visit Time: Variable



Bring lunch and plan your day accordingly. Spend time at your leisure exploring the opportunities in the Picnic Area. Reserve the Picnic Shelter for your group or picnic under the shade at any of the picnic tables throughout the area. Within walking distance are the swim beach and changing house, playground, museum with interpretive exhibits, old logging sled, Wegmann Store Ruins, Indian Mounds Cemetery, and the Headwaters of the Mississippi River.

# Explore Itasca!



## Explore at the Headwaters and Along Wilderness Drive...

### *Headwaters of the Mississippi River/ Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center*

Visit Time: 30- 60 minutes



Park in the Headwaters parking lot or walk from the Picnic Area. Travel a short distance to the beginning of this great river. Walk across the infant Mississippi or cross on the foot-bridge. Explore the short trails and interpretive signs and follow the boardwalk along the river. Make sure you stop at the Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center with year round outdoor interpretive displays. The Center also has a large gift shop, rest-rooms, and restaurant, which are open seasonally.

## *Explore Along Wilderness Drive...*

This scenic 11 mile **one way** loop winds through remote and undeveloped areas with sparkling lakes and towering pines. This drive begins at the Headwaters parking lot and ends near the Douglas Lodge Area. Speed limit is 20 mph. Allow 45-60 minutes of non-stop driving or allow up to a half-day to explore various sites and trails.

The following provides approximate time allowances for stops along the way:

### *Landmark Trail*

Visit Time: 25 minutes

Located at the Wilderness Sanctuary parking area, this 1/3 mile self-guiding trail will introduce you to the wilderness character of the original Itasca landscape.

### *Blowdown Interpretive Trail*

Visit Time: 30 minutes

Located across from the Wilderness Sanctuary parking area, here you can learn about management alternatives used for handling damaged trees from the 1995 windstorm. This rustic, self-guiding trail is 1/2 mile in length.

# Explore Itasca!



## Explore Along Wilderness Drive...

### *Civilian Conservation Corps Plantation*

Visit Time: 20 minutes

Planted between 1937 and 1940 by the CCC, today visitors can follow a self-guiding trail to learn about forestry practices that were once applied for timber production.

### *Itasca's Big White Pine*

Visit Time: 15 minutes

Take your picture by one of Minnesota's largest white pines found at the end of this very short trail.

### *Bison Kill Site*

Visit Time: 10 minutes

In this low wetland along Nicollet Creek, ancient bison bones, spear points and scraping tools were discovered. Scientific excavation revealed that ancient bison hunters camped here about 8,000 years ago. An interpretive sign shares this story.



### *Minnesota's Former Record Red Pine*

Visit Time: 30 minutes

Walk the ¼ mile trail to the site of the former record red pine. Due to a windstorm, this red pine (also called Norway Pine) lost its top and thus its record holding title. Enjoy the other near-record holding red pines found at the end of the trail.

### *Nicollet Cabin*

Visit Time: 1 hour

Restored in 1995, Nicollet Cabin is about one mile down the Nicollet Trail from Wilderness Drive. This historic cabin, built in 1918, was used as a forestry cabin and manned during the spring and fall fire seasons until 1965.



# Explore Itasca!



## Along Wilderness Drive...

### *Aiton Heights Fire Tower*

Visit Time: 1 hour



Walk ½ mile from the parking lot to this 100 ft. fire tower. Climb the fire tower and experience a panoramic view of the park and the Lake Itasca watershed. Tower is limited to six people at a time.

## Explore the Douglas Lodge Area...

### *Douglas Lodge, Forest Inn and Old Timer's Cabin*

Visit Time: 5 minutes – 2 hours. Allow from 5 minutes for a “drive thru” up to 2 hours for lunch and leisurely stroll.

Explore the north woods cuisine by having a delicious meal in the historic Douglas Lodge. Walk down the stone stairway to the shore of Lake Itasca. Stroll the ¼ mile Dr. Roberts Boardwalk through the beautiful bog to the Old Timer's Cabin- built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), an impressive four logs tall! Visit Forest Inn, a premier structure in beautiful log, stone, and iron built by the Veterans Conservation Corp between 1938-1940. Browse the Forest Inn Gift Shop. (Forest Inn Gift Shop and Douglas Lodge Restaurant are open seasonally.)

Pick up a free brochure at Douglas Lodge or at the Visitor Center and learn the history of several log structures in the Douglas Lodge area.

Douglas Lodge is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner from Memorial Weekend (late May) into early October.

### *Dr. Roberts Trail*

Visit Time: 25 minutes—2 hours

Borrow a copy of the self-guiding Dr. Roberts Trail Guide from Douglas Lodge, Forest Inn or the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center and follow the numbered posts along this 2 mile nature trail. Learn about uses of forest plants by the Ojibwe, as you hike all or part of the trail. An excellent trail for wildflower photography and plant identification. Copies of the guide are available for sale in park gift shops. Trail begins below Douglas Lodge near the tour boat.

# Explore Itasca!



## *Explore By Bike...*

### ***Bike Trail***

Visit Time: Variable

This scenic 5-1/2 mile paved bike trail meanders from Douglas Lodge, past the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center and along the east shore of Lake Itasca to the Mississippi Headwaters. Bike rentals are available from Itasca Sports Rental located along the bike trail near the Itasca Boat Landing. For more information, call 218-266-2150 (off season, 218-657-2420) or [www.itascasports.com](http://www.itascasports.com). Privately operated.

### ***Wilderness Drive***

Visit Time: Variable

Leaving the Headwaters parking lot, the bike route joins the auto route for the 11 mile one-way scenic beauty of Wilderness Drive, ending near the Douglas Lodge Area. See the *By Auto* section for sites and stops.



## *Explore By Boat, Canoe or other watercraft...*

### ***Itasca Sports Rental***

Visit Time: Variable

Spend a day fishing or canoeing or biking. Boat and canoe rentals are available at Itasca Sports Rental, along with bait, licenses, and fishing information. Open May through mid-October. For more information, call 218-266-2150 (off season, 218-657-2420) or [www.itascasports.com](http://www.itascasports.com). Privately operated.

### ***Lake Itasca Tours***

Visit Time: 2 -1/4 hours

Take in a naturalist narrated two-hour cruise aboard the privately operated "Chester Charles II," a 141 passenger, 2-deck boat to the Headwaters of the Mississippi. Board the boat at the Douglas Lodge pier. Summer and Fall. Purchase ticket 15 minutes before departure only at the Wheel House Office on the pier. Additional information on bulletin boards and at the visitor centers, or call: 218-266-3660 (off season, 218-573-2216) or [www.lakeitascatours.com](http://www.lakeitascatours.com) for more information. Privately operated.

# Explore Itasca!



## Making the Most of Your Time at Itasca...

Listed below and on the following page is a guide to help make the most of your time while here at the park. Whether you have an hour or all day to visit, make sure you experience all that Itasca has to offer.

### ONE HOUR OR LESS...

Headwaters of the Mississippi River/Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center  
Preacher's Grove

### ONE TO TWO HOURS

Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center  
Preacher's Grove  
Piece Pipe Vista **OR** Pioneer Cemetery **OR** Wegmann's Cabin  
Headwaters of the Mississippi River/Mary Gibbs Headwaters Center

### THREE TO FOUR HOURS

**Mix-and-Match, pick your favorites:**

Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center  
Preacher's Grove  
Piece Pipe Vista  
Pioneer Cemetery **OR** Wegmann's Cabin **OR** Indian Mounds  
Headwaters of the Mississippi River  
Exhibits at the Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center  
Wilderness Drive  
    Stop at Record White Pine  
    Stop at the Bison Kill Site

Other Options to consider:

Partake in a naturalist program **OR** stop by the Old Timer's Cabin  
Enjoy a meal at Douglas Lodge or the Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center  
Enjoy a picnic **OR** Explore the gift shops  
Take a tour onboard the Chester Charles II **OR** rent a bike



# Explore Itasca!



## Making the Most of Your Time at Itasca...

### ALL DAY...

Mix-and-Match, pick your favorites:

- Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center
- Preacher's Grove
- Piece Pipe Vista
- Pioneer Cemetery
- Wegmann's Cabin and Indian Mounds
- Headwaters of the Mississippi River/Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center
- Wilderness Drive
  - Hike Landmark Trail, Blowdown Trail or Bohall Trail
  - CCC/Forestry Demo Site
  - Record White Pine
  - Bison Kill Site/Former Record Red Pine
  - Aiton Heights Fire Tower
- Douglas Lodge/Forest Inn Area
- Old Timer's Cabin
- Partake in a naturalist program
- Enjoy a meal at Douglas Lodge or the Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center
- Explore the gift shops
- Enjoy a picnic
- Go swimming at the swim beach (*no lifeguard on duty*)
- Take a tour onboard the Chester Charles II
- Rent a bike, canoe, kayak or boat

# Explore Itasca!

Get out and explore the outdoors with one of these fun activities.

All are free to visitors!



## Go Fish

Borrow our fishing poles any day and enjoy some time at the lake. Minnesota residents do not need a fishing license.\* Available for checkout from Douglas Lodge. (15 poles). Available July 1, 2010. \*Minnesota limit regulations apply. See Fishing Regulations for other details.

## Spy on Birds

Forgot your binoculars? Check-out a bird kit filled with binoculars, field guides and bird list.

Available for checkout from the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center. (3 kits).



## Naturalist Programs

Join our naturalists and naturalist corps staff for a hike, campfire program, kids activity and more. A weekly schedule is posted on park bulletin boards with all kinds of fun programs to attend.

## Junior Naturalist

Kids, earn your Junior Naturalist patch when you complete a booklet filled with great activities that get you out looking at nature.

Booklets available at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center, Douglas Lodge, Forest Inn or Campground Registration. (For children ages 6 to 12).

## Search For Treasure

Use your GPS unit and go on a high-tech treasure hunt in the fun sport of geocaching. Can you find Itasca's Critter-cache?

Sorry, Itasca State Park does not have GPS units available for check-out. The closest demonstration park with GPS units is Lake Bemidji State Park, Bemidji, MN.

