



# Iowa Valley

## SCENIC BYWAY

Group Travel Itinerary



Iowa, Benton and Tama Counties in Eastern Iowa

Trek through the gorgeous Iowa River Valley whose identity is closely linked to two unique cultural groups







## IVSB Group Travel Itinerary

The 77-mile Iowa Valley Scenic Byway takes you through rural agricultural land, Iowa River wetlands and a rich cultural patchwork. Discover the two cultural groups who called this area their home and absorb yourself in the the diverse traditions still maintained here.

### Unique Adventures

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway is a great place to consider places off the beaten path. For example, **Gladbrook's Matchstick Marvels Museum**, is the home of Iowa artist Patrick Acton who has glued over seven-million ordinary wooden matchsticks into 70 incredibly detailed scale models of life-like sculptures, complex machines and world renown architecture.

Love kitschy, quirky collections? There are over 16,000 sets of salt and pepper shakers at **Traer's Salt & Pepper Shaker Gallery**. (That means over 32,000 individual salt and/or pepper shakers!)

Stop and make music at the new **Larry Schlue Memorial Sound Park** in Downtown Belle Plaine. This pocket park overlooks the main railroad line and is home to several large metal sculptures and instruments.

The **Riparian Diorama at Otter Creek Nature Center** will impress even the most discerning travelers. An inspiring wrap around diorama of riparian habitat, the wetland area adjacent to rivers and streams, is complemented by wildlife sounds, beautiful murals and interactive displays.

### Scenic Spots

The Iowa River Corridor is a focus area for conservation and preservation. Spend your day fishing, paddling, bird watching or hiking. Check out the **observation deck northwest of Chelsea** that is shaped like an eagle in flight. Visit **Lily Lake near Amana** in July to see thousands of blooming American lotus.

The scenic Czech Trail towns of Clutier, Vining, Elberon and Chelsea

are nestled in what locals call the **"Bohemian Alps"** and are great to explore leisurely. Be sure to stop at **Clutier's Historic Town Jail** for a quick picture behind bars.

### Points of Discovery

The western end of the byway skirts Iowa's only resident Native American community, the Meskwaki Settlement. Though most of the settlement is private, you can learn about the history of the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi from the exhibit space at the Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel or by visiting the **Meskwaki Cultural Center & Museum**. Interactive kiosks show original documents, treaties and letters. Learn more about the eight Meskwaki Code Talkers called to serve in WWII because of their native language skills. See rare artifacts and clothing on display.

At the eastern end of the byway are the **Amana Colonies** which were settled in 1855 by Germans fleeing religious persecution. Start at the Amana Heritage Museum to learn about the 300-year history and get directions to a communal kitchen, the Amana church and blacksmith shop. See the first microwave prototype developed by the Amana Refrigeration's founder George Foerstner.

Did you know **Ladora** was the childhood home of Mildred Wirt Benson, better known by her pen name Carolyn Keene, author of the first books in the Nancy Drew series?

### Local Flavors

Need to refuel? Enjoy the local eats at one of Amana's family-style restaurants including the **Ox Yoke Inn** or try the **Millstream Brau Haus**, an authentic German Bierhalle serving signatures brews from the neighboring **Millstream Brewery**. These special brews are complimented by delicious German-style pub food! Afterwards take a load off in Iowa's Largest Walnut Rocking Chair at the **Broom & Basket Shop** in West Amana.

Looking for another unique Iowa Valley location? Peruse the delectable menu at the **Caucus Bistro** in Ladora. This former bank is a wine bar/bistro that celebrates Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucus, a nationally important event.

### Lodging Locales **Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel (Tama)**



## For More Group Tour Options

### Contact

Byway Coordinator: Jessica Rilling  
 Iowa Valley RC&D  
 920 48th Avenue  
 Amana, Iowa 52203  
 Phone: 319-622-3264  
 Website: [www.ivrcd.org](http://www.ivrcd.org)

