



## Sensory Friendly Visitor Guide

### Welcome to the Science Museum of Minnesota!

The Science Museum strives to make visits successful for guests of all ages, backgrounds, and perspectives. Knowing that some of our visitors have unique sensory processing needs, we've pulled together some tips to answer your questions and help you plan your day.

We are looking forward to your visit!

#### **Getting here**

The Science Museum is located in downtown Saint Paul at 120 W. Kellogg Boulevard. [Visit our website to find specific directions](#). The museum is located just a few blocks from the Green Line and is near several bus routes. Use the [Metro Transit Trip Planner](#) to find the best route for you.

#### **Where do I park?**

Parking is available in the Science Museum's own parking ramp. There is also metered street parking nearby, as well as street parking in the nearby neighborhood.

#### **How long does a visit take?**

There is no standard length of time for a Science Museum visit – you can spend an hour or a whole day!

#### **Can I leave and re-enter the museum on the same day?**

Yes! If you want to leave and re-enter the museum on the same day, make sure to keep a copy of your tickets with you to present at the exhibit entrance.

#### **Our exhibits**

The Science Museum is committed to making our exhibits, Omnitheater movies, programs, and services accessible to everyone. Exhibits are designed with families in mind; you'll find components in each gallery for kids and adults. Read on to learn more about what you can expect to find in each area. We've assigned a "loudness rating" to describe the ambient sound of each area during a typical visit (1 is quiet and 5 is loud).

#### **Lobby, level five**

Loudness rating: 3

Welcome to the Science Museum! Store your belongings, pick up your tickets, explore some hands-on exhibits, visit the Explore Store, and enjoy a beverage or snack at our food vendor on level five. You are also welcome to bring food and drink to enjoy on level six.

- The popular Ping Pong Ball Launcher makes sudden noise when a ball is launched. It is a kinetic activity that requires visitors to pump the levers to "charge up" the launcher.
- The *Tyrannosaurus rex* specimen is a highlight for many visitors. The adjacent *T. rex* skull

exhibit has an associated kinetic activity, where visitors pump a lever to manipulate the skull's jaws.

### **Mississippi River Gallery, level five**

Loudness rating: 2

Explore the fascinating history and environment of America's longest river, which happens to run right outside our windows!

- This gallery includes one kinetic activity, where visitors can pull ropes to see if they can lift heavy river fish.
- The Collectors' Corner has many rocks, fossils, shells, and skulls to see and touch.

### **Human Body Gallery, level four**

Loudness rating: 3

We humans are pretty amazing. Find out what makes us tick, what makes us sick, and the incredible ways the human body works.

- The Sneezer component operates on the element of surprise, spraying a fine mist of water when visitors open the small door.
- The Egyptian mummy is a real person from 2,000 years ago. A portion of its wrappings have been removed to reveal one side of the body. The mummy is tucked behind a wall to prevent visitors from stumbling upon it unaware.
- The Bloodstream Superhighway runs overhead through the gallery, making a continuous pumping sound.
- The bridge that connects this gallery with the *RACE* exhibit holds a series of automata that operate with the push of a button.

### ***RACE: Are We So Different?*, level four**

Loudness rating: 2

Take a cultural look at race and racism in America throughout our history. Discover what race is – and what it *isn't*.

- This exhibit relies heavily on its powerful multimedia components. This means that many videos are playing at the same time, offering a lot of auditory input.
- The Star Quilt interactive in the neighboring *We Move and We Stay* exhibit are fun, hands-on activities.
- Also in the *We Move and We Stay* exhibit, visitors will find a real bison hide and a bison skeleton.

### **Dinosaurs and Fossils Gallery, level three**

Loudness rating: 2

Millions of years of history are on display, creating millions of oohs and aahs for visitors of all ages.

- This gallery features many static displays of fossils.
- The Dino Cam gives a *Diplodocus*-eye view of the surrounding area.
- The *Diplodocus* "stomach" is a large barrel that several people can sit in at a time.
- The Seismofon (the xylophone-like sculpture hanging from the ceiling in Chomp) plays chimes intermittently and at varying volume levels.

### **Experiment Gallery, level three**

Loudness rating: 4

The hands-on displays in this area of the museum let visitors become the scientists. Conduct your own experiments and see what happens!

- The Gyro Platform is a good whole-body experience.
- The Musical Ratios exhibit features a keyboard that can be loud and/or high-pitched.
- The Waves on a String component features a cello, but the noise tends to be relatively unobtrusive.
- The tornado, wind tubes, and wind turbine use fans.

### **Math Moves, level three**

Loudness rating: 4

Explore ratio, proportion, fractions, geometry, and more with activities that use your brain, your senses, and your hands and feet!

- When in use, the Comparing Frequencies component makes a loud, metallic clicking sound.
- Motion Math uses a ticking sound (like a clock) to help count the time between steps.
- Sensing Ratios features knobs that can be loud and/or high pitched when moved.

### **Sportsology, level three**

Loudness rating: 4

In this interactive exhibit, every field, court, track, and gym becomes a full-body, high-energy science lab!

- In the Motion Lab, visitors can film themselves throwing a football, turning a cartwheel, kicking a soccer ball, and more. Then, they can watch themselves in slow motion and compare their form to a professional athlete's. This is a multi-step activity, with guidance provided along the way via signage and audio.
- In the Run component, visitors of all ages can race against local athletes, TC Bear, or a *T. rex!*
- The Throw interactive invites visitors to throw a ball through both stationary and moving circles.
- At the Jump exhibit, visitors can practice their high jumps, then measure them against soccer goals, volleyball nets, basketball hoops, and more.

### **During Your Visit**

#### **Is there a place to escape the crowds and noise?**

Yes. The back hallway of the *RACE* exhibit on level four (near the all-gender and family restrooms) has seating and is quieter and away from the gallery floor. Restrooms and drinking fountains are located nearby. There is also quiet seating on level three in the hallway behind the Experiment Gallery (past the brown bear), or in the Wellness Room on level four near the *RACE* exhibit. The Wellness Room is available on a first-come, first-served basis. This room is equipped with a baby changing station. An adult changing facility is also available. Please speak to staff for assistance.

#### **Is there a place to store our stuff?**

Yes. Lockers are located in our lobby and vary in cost from \$3 to \$2. Lockers are electronic and accept a code for access—payment by credit card only at a nearby kiosk.

**Can we bring a stroller?**

Yes. Strollers are available at the lobby desk in the lobby for all visitors. Bringing your own stroller is also allowed, and the exhibits are stroller accessible.

**What are restrooms like?**

All restrooms are equipped with automatic soap dispensers, faucets, and paper towel dispensers, and handle-flush toilets (lobby restrooms have sensor-flush toilets). All gender and family restrooms are located on level four near the *RACE* exhibit. Infant changing stations are located in the restrooms near the Exhibit Elevators on each floor. An adult changing station is also available on level two upon request, ask a staff member for assistance.

**Do you offer noise-dampening headphones?**

We have a variety of tools available to help our visitors with sensory issues have a fun and fulfilling visit. At the exhibit entrance, ask our staff for sound-dampening headphones, a timer, or a kit containing headphones, fidgets, gloves, and sunglasses.

**Is there a space for breastfeeding?**

Those who need to are welcome to nurse throughout the museum, or in the Wellness Room on level four near the *RACE* exhibit. The Wellness Room is available on a first-come, first-served basis. This room is equipped with a baby changing station. An adult changing facility is also available. Please speak to staff for assistance.

**Where can we eat?**

Beverages and snacks are available at GINKGO Coffee Bar & Deli on level five. Inside the museum, we ask that all food and beverages be enjoyed up on level six. There are tables, chairs, and free water to enjoy. You are welcome to bring your own food, as well, to enjoy on level six.

**Do we need to stand in line to wait for entrance to the Omnitheater?**

The Omnitheater has one entrance on level five where visitors line up to enter the theater. There is also a wheelchair accessible entrance on the sixth floor that can be used if you need to avoid a long line. Please let the Omnitheater staff on level five know that you would prefer the sixth floor entrance so that they can alert the level six staff.

**Does the Omnitheater offer closed captioning?**

Yes. Amplified Audio Units and written scripts are available for the Omnitheater. Audio Description or DVS Theatrical® is available for most Omnitheater movies; ask a staff person at the lobby desk or call (651) 221-9444 to confirm it is available for the movie you wish to get tickets for.

Wheelchair and companion seating are available in the Omnitheater. If your group is bringing your own sign language interpreter, special lighting is available with one week notice—please call (651) 221-9444 for more information.

**How do we get tickets?**

Tickets are online at [smm.org/tickets](http://smm.org/tickets), or at (651) 221-9444. We recommend advance reservations for Omnitheater films so that you are guaranteed a seat in the showing that works best with your schedule.

**Are there discounts available?**

To ensure accessibility for everyone, the Science Museum offers an income-based access rate on admission and Memberships through our [Great Tix program](#). To use Great Tix, you must be at least 18 and enrolled in one or more of the following: TANF, MFIP, WIC, General Assistance, Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Benefits, Food Stamps, Section 8, or Free/Reduced Price School Meals.

Great Tix purchases can be made online at [smm.org/tickets](http://smm.org/tickets) or by calling our Contact Center at (651) 221-9444.

Personal care attendants (PCAs) are not charged an admittance fee.

**Are there less busy times of day?**

Weekend daytime hours are often the busiest at the Science Museum. Many visitors don't realize that the museum is open until 8 p.m. on Friday, and Saturday evenings. These evening hours are often quieter than weekend daytime hours. Weekday afternoons are often quiet, too, when schools are in session. Most field trip groups leave by approximately 2pm.

**Is photography permitted?**

Yes! Please share your photos with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@sciencemuseummn)!

*Feedback about this guide is welcome! Please contact Ronda Maurer at [rmauer@smm.org](mailto:rmauer@smm.org) with suggestions, comments, or questions. Thanks for visiting!*