

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 St. 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, located on Chestnut Street. 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! Just make sure you keep your ticket with you.

Our exhibits

The Science Museum is committed to making our exhibits, Omnitheater movies, programs, and services accessible to everyone. Exhibits are designed with all ages 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 5

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 at the cafe. There is also a cafe located on Level 6.

- 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 5

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 4

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 give visitors the option to view the mummy or not.
- 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. Many visitors really enjoy this area.

RACE: Are We So Different? and We Move and We Stay, Level 4

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 and the People's Loom in the neighboring Native American exhibit, *We Move and We Stay*, are fun hands-on activities.

Dinosaurs and Fossils Gallery, Level 3

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.
- There is an interactive activity where visitors can arrange plastic bone replicas into a *Champosaurus* skeleton.
- The Seismofon (the xylophone-like sculpture hanging from the ceiling) plays chimes intermittently and at varying volume levels.

Experiment Gallery, Level 3

Loudness rating: 4

The hands-on displays in this area of the museum let visitors become 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 3

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 3

Loudness rating: 4

In this new 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?

The back hallway of the *RACE* exhibit on Level 4 (near the all gender and family restrooms) is quieter and away from the gallery floor. Restrooms and drinking fountains are located nearby. The Wellness Room is a calm place to sit. It is located in the back of the *We Move and We Stay* exhibit on Level 4 (to the right of the bison skeleton). There is also a quiet area on level 3 in the hallway at the back of the Experiment Gallery (past the dermestid beetles).

Is there a place to store our stuff?

Yes. Lockers are located in the lobby on either side of the Explore Store. They are available for rent for \$2-3 at nearby kiosks. The kiosks accept card payments only.

Can we bring a stroller?

Yes. Our exhibits and theaters are stroller and wheelchair accessible. Strollers and wheelchairs are also available for free. Please speak to a staff member about borrowing one.

What are the restrooms like?

All restrooms are equipped with automatic soap dispensers, faucets, paper towel dispensers, and handle-flush toilets (Lobby restrooms have sensor-flush toilets). All gender and family restrooms are located on Level 4 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 in the Wellness Room on Level 4 at the back of the *We Move and We Stay* exhibit.

Do you offer noise-dampening headphones?

The Science Museum has noise-dampening headphones to offer visitors on a first-come, first-served basis. Please speak to a staff member about borrowing a pair for your visit.

Is there a space for breastfeeding?

Guests are welcome to nurse throughout the museum. If you would like a private space, the family restrooms on Level 4 near the *RACE* exhibit are equipped with chairs for nursing.

Where can we eat?

The Science Museum has two food service locations located on Level 6 and in the lobby on Level 5.

You are also welcome to bring your own food to enjoy in any of our dining areas.

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

The Omnitheater has one entrance on Level 5 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 5 know that you would prefer the sixth floor entrance so that they can alert the Level 6 staff, and wait to enter the theater until you hear the announcement that seating has begun.

Does the Omnitheater offer closed captioning?

The Omnitheater has rear view captioning available for all movies. Please ask the staff at the ticketing station if you would like equipment for rear view captioning.

Please note that shows featuring live performers, like *Stellar Tours*, do not have captions available.

How do we get tickets?

Tickets are available online at smm.org, at the desk in the lobby, or at (651) 221-9444.

Are there discounts available?

The Science Museum offers an income based discount called Great Tix for visitors who receive public assistance. Individuals or heads of household who are at least age 18 and enrolled in one or more of the following are eligible for the Great Tix rate:

- TANF
- MFIP
- WIC
- General Assistance
- Medical Assistance
- MinnesotaCare
- Supplemental Security Income
- Social Security Disability Benefits
- Food Stamps
- Section 8

- Free/Reduced Price School Meals

The Indigenous Museum Access Program allows free exhibit gallery and Omnitheater admission, along with free parking, to visitors who identify as Indigenous.

A \$2 discount is available for veterans, active-duty military personnel, and their families, including National Guard and Reserve.

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

Visit smm.org/access to explore these and other ticket discounts before your visit.

Are there less busy times of day?

Weekend daytime hours are often the busiest at the Science Museum. Weekday afternoons are often quiet when schools are in session. Most field trip groups leave by approximately 2 p.m.

Is photography permitted?

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

Feedback about this guide is welcome! Please contact accessibility@smm.org with suggestions, comments, or questions. Thanks for visiting!