



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! Just make sure you keep your wristband on.

Our exhibits

The Science Museum is committed to making our exhibits, Omnitheater films, 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 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 Java Lab.

- 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 Cell Lab is a hands-on biology lab that uses real chemicals, glassware, and cells. The experiences take up to 30 minutes and are guided by a computer lab assistant, with some staff assistance.
- 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. Many visitors really enjoy this area.

***RACE: Are We So Different?*, 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 are fun, hands-on activities.
- Also in the Native American exhibit, visitors will find a real bison hide that they can touch and compare with a bison skeleton.

Dinosaurs and Fossils Gallery

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 resource area has comfortable seating, toys, puzzles, and books about dinosaurs.

- The Seismofon (the xylophone-like sculpture hanging from the ceiling in Chomp) 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 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 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) 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 3 in the hallway in back of the Experiment Gallery (past the dermestid beetles).

Is there a place to store our stuff?

Yes. Lockers are located on in the lobby on either side of the Explore Store. They are available for rent for \$1.25 (coins only).

Can we bring a stroller?

Yes. Our exhibits and theaters are stroller and wheelchair accessible. Strollers (\$2) and wheelchairs (no cost) are also available for use at the Box Office.

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 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 on level 2 upon request, ask a staff member for assistance.

Do you offer noise-dampening headphones?

The Science Museum has two pairs of noise-dampening headphones to offer visitors on a first-come, first-served basis. The Omnitheater has seven pairs of noise-dampening headphones, again available 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?

Mothers 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 three food service locations. Chomp (level 3, opens 10:30 a.m., closing times vary) features pizza, panini sandwiches, salads, and ice cream. Java Lab (lobby, opens 9:30 a.m., closes one hour prior to museum closing) features espresso drinks, baked goods, and house-made gelato. Elements Café (level 6, open 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.) features entrees, salads, pizza, and beverages, plus patio seating. [Learn more and view menus.](#)

You are welcome to bring your own food, as well, 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 6th 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 6th floor entrance so they that they can alert the level 6 staff.

Does the Omnitheater offer closed captioning?

Yes, the Omnitheater has rear view captioning for all movies. Please ask the staff at the box office if you would like equipment for rear view captioning.

How do we get tickets?

Tickets are available at the Box Office, online at smm.org, 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. [Check current ticket prices.](#)

Are there discounts available?

To receive a [limited income discount](#), present your photo ID at the Box Office, along with one of the following documents:

- EBT card
- Medical assistance care (includes Minnesota Care)
- Section 8 document
- WIC folder
- Supplemental security income verification
- Social Security disability benefits verification
- Free/reduced school meal approval
- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) card
- General Assistance verification

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 9 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. These evening hours, especially Thursdays, 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 Ana Kaveh at akaveh@smm.org with suggestions, comments, or questions. Thanks for visiting!