

FALL FASHION / ARTS PREVIEW

# Minnesota

Monthly

*Idyllic*

# AUTUMN

**5 TRIPS**

with all the scenic drives, fall color, & apple pie you'll need to make the most of the season

**PLUS:**

WHY A HUNKY L.A. STAR MOVED TO MN

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ROAD TRIP-WORTHY RESTAURANTS

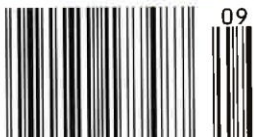
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YOUR TWIN CITIES PLAY LIST, REMIXED

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# Drifting Along

BIKING AMONG THE SOARING BLUFFS OF THE ROOT RIVER TRAIL

**T**he corn waves at me as I pedal through the random swatch of farmland tucked into the bluffs and valleys of southeastern Minnesota. I think about waving back—acknowledging my sole companions on the Root River Trail this crisp, bright morning—but practicality overrules whimsy, and instead I pedal on toward Preston, leaning into the curves, powering up the hills, and coasting across the bridges.

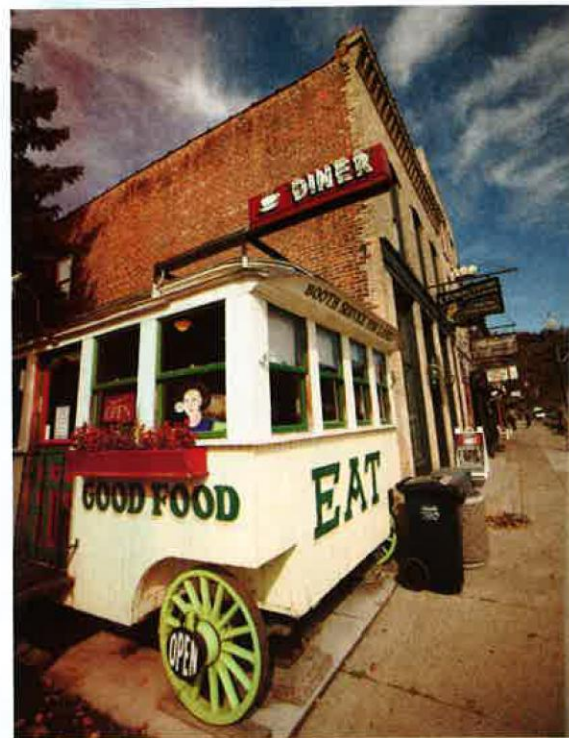
The Root River and Harmony-Preston Valley trails sit deep in the heart of the Driftless Area: the steep valleys and limestone bluffs bordering the Mississippi River in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa that escaped the wrath of the glaciers tens of thousands of years ago. The paved 60-

mile system snakes its way through this rolling, craggy landscape and links the towns of Houston, Fountain, and Harmony. For hard-core bikers, it's an obstacle-free path on which to crank out the miles. For everyone else, it's the ticket to a peaceful afternoon filled with beauty.

The trail's most popular entry point is picturesque Lanesboro, where the main street ends at the river and a good chunk of the population shares a narrative of having come for vacation and stayed for good. Besides Lanesboro's abundance of bed-and-breakfasts (it's been dubbed the B&B Capital of Minnesota), the main tourist draw here is biking, hence the little town's two rental-shop options: Little River General Store and Root River Outfitters.

Rides ranging from 4.6 to 40 miles branch out from Lanesboro. I've chosen the trail ending in Preston: a 10.2-mile trek that's doable yet respectable for me, an admittedly inexperienced biker with a competitive streak. It takes me a while to get into a rhythm, but eventually I settle into eavesdropping on the

**ABOVE:** Spud Boy Lunch diner in downtown Lanesboro is chock-full of historic charm. **BELOW:** The paved 60-mile Root River Trail is the perfect way to enjoy fall's splendor, on foot or bike.



## THAT'S AGRO-TAINMENT

### TWEITE'S PUMPKIN PATCH

Every autumn since 1988, this fifth-generation family farm transforms into a child's paradise, complete with a 12-acre corn maze, mock Western mining town, and enchanted forest. • 1821 SW Frontier Rd., Byron, 507-365-8035, [tweitesfamilyfarm.com](http://tweitesfamilyfarm.com)

### SEVER'S CORN MAZE & FALL FESTIVAL

Live music, camel rides, a corn pit filled with 10,000 bushels of kernels, and—just when you think it can't get any better—pig races! Not to mention one of the most family-friendly mazes in the area, made to accommodate strollers, wagons, and wheelchairs. • 1100 Canterbury Rd. S., Shakopee, 952-239-8501, [severscornmaze.com](http://severscornmaze.com)

### EMMA KRUMBEE'S

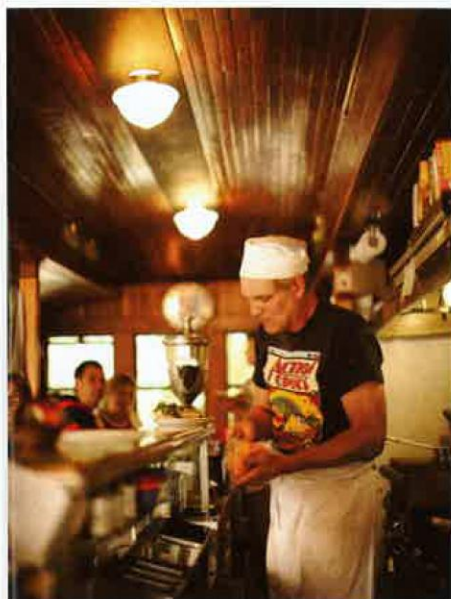
Come for pumpkin-picking, stay to play. Includes a restaurant and bakery (the caramel rolls and pies are killer), greenhouse, general store, and lodging at the onsite Fairbridge Inn and Suites. • 311 Enterprise Dr. E., Belle Plaine, 952-873-3006, [emmakrumbes.com](http://emmakrumbes.com)

### TOM'S PUMPKIN FARM

A family favorite, and for good reason: 15 acres of 20 varieties of pumpkins and 32 years of experience. • 15281 Panola Dr., Lindstrom, 651-433-2905, [tomspumpkinfarm.com](http://tomspumpkinfarm.com)







conversation between the wind and my pedals, their whooshing and shushing mingling with the gurgles of the river.

As the miles tick by, my thoughts become less and less structured until they are no more than a collage of observations. Here, in the toe of Minnesota, the Driftless Area's rocks create towering bluffs, its trees thick forests, and bright blossoms a blooming prairie. These represent a geology lesson, to be sure, but also, perhaps, the embodiment of each wandering soul that has ever passed through, drifting along toward whatever the future may hold. — ELLEN BURKHARDT

**WHERE TO STAY**

The Scandinavian Inn is a favorite among Lanesboro's many B&Bs for its focus on eco-friendliness, lovely rooftop gazebo, and generous from-scratch breakfasts (701 Kenilworth Ave. S., 507-467-4500, [scandinavianinn.com](http://scandinavianinn.com)).

**WHERE TO EAT**

Pedal Pushers Café pairs retro décor with locally sourced, house-made eats (121 Parkway Ave. N., [pedalpusherscafe.com](http://pedalpusherscafe.com)). Get cozy in a booth or on one of the stools at the Spud Boy Lunch diner (105 3/4 Parkway Ave. N., [spud.nydinners.com](http://spud.nydinners.com)). Sip a cocktail to the sounds of the river at Riverside on the Root (109 Parkway Ave. S., [riversideontheroot.com](http://riversideontheroot.com)).

**WHAT TO DO**

Rent a bike at either Little River General Store (105 Coffee St. E., [lrgeneralstore.net](http://lrgeneralstore.net)) or Root River Outfitters (109 Parkway Ave. S., [rootriveroutfitters.com](http://rootriveroutfitters.com)), and take in the beauty that is the Driftless Area.



📷 JOSH KOHANEK

**TWIN CITIES HARVEST FESTIVAL AND MAZE**

Choose your path wisely: 19.5 acres in size, it's easy to get lost in the state's largest corn maze. Stay for the live music and petting zoo. • 8001 109th Ave. N., Brooklyn Park, 952-992-9326, [twincitiesmaze.com](http://twincitiesmaze.com)

**SHAFER CORN MAZE**

This 12-acre labyrinth will challenge even the most seasoned maze-goer. Use your map to find six checkpoints throughout the maze, each outfitted with a clue to help you solve a mystery—and get back to your car. • Highway 8, Shafer, 651-353-0675, [shafercornmaze.com](http://shafercornmaze.com)

**101 MARKET**

Each fall, this garden center and nursery transforms into a seasonal celebration/family-fun destination, including a corn maze, the exotic animal Cock-a-Doodle Zoo, and (plastic) duck races. • 8980 Quantrelle Ave. NE, Otsego, 763-441-4487, [nathes101market.com](http://nathes101market.com)

**SCREAMTOWN**

Tired of the traditional corn-maze experience? Give this haunted one a try. With hidden actors and creepy attractions that change every year, you might want to bring an extra pair of pants—just in case. • 7410 Hwy. 212, Chaska, 612-562-6409, [screamtown.com](http://screamtown.com)