

# Western Mass

## GETTING C-C-COLD OUTSIDE? EXPLORE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS' GREAT INDOORS!

With the holidays come and gone, real Yankee-style winter typically gets a grip on this part of New England. And for the hardy outdoor types, we've got plenty of chill-weather sports and activities to offer. But for those who prefer snuggling in to bundling up, there's still lots to see and do, in places where you won't need mittens and boots.

If knowledge and fun warm your hearts (and minds!) rejoice in the fact that our region is truly rich in excellent museums, and best of all, they're not the stuffy keep-quiet-don't-touch type. Virtually all feature hands-on experiences for all ages, and participation is encouraged.

One of the coolest "exploratoriums" we offer isn't even in Western Massachusetts, though it's just minutes over the Connecticut state line. That's the fabulous [New England Air Museum](#), located in Windsor Locks. Their collection contains over 100 aircraft ranging from early flying machines to supersonic jets.

Located in the heart of downtown Springfield, Massachusetts, the Springfield Museums offers access to four world-class museums and (in warmer weather, of course) the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden, all under a single admission. At the [Springfield Science Museum](#) the dinosaur exhibit spans two galleries and includes real dinosaur tracks and fossils, a life-sized Tyrannosaurus rex model, a replica of a stegosaurus skeleton, a surround-sound Jurassic Theater experience, and more. The [Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History](#) is known for its local history research facilities, its comprehensive program of changing exhibitions, its diverse educational offerings, and its wide ranging collections illuminating the history of the Connecticut River Valley. The Indian Motorcycle Collection is the largest collection of Indian cycles and memorabilia in the world and the Firearms Collection includes more than 1600 firearms, with the largest collection of Smith & Wesson guns in the world. Add in the Micehel and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts and the George Walter Vincent Smith Museum, and you've got a day's worth of exploring on your hands.

Also right in Springfield, [The Springfield Armory Historic Site](#) recalls its days as a powerhouse of military firearms manufacture. This was America's first armory, established by George Washington in 1794 to produce firearms for the US Army, and it operated for 174 years until 1968. And, the world's greatest museum dedicated to the game of basketball is here, too! The [Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame](#), "where the game never ends," is home to more than three hundred inductees and more than 40,000 s.f. of basketball history.

The [Museums10](#) group features ten outstanding museums, with seven in college town Amherst (about a half-hour from Springfield). Start with the [Emily Dickinson Museum](#), including the homestead where the

poet lived for most of her life. Eric Carle, illustrator and writer of beloved children's books, including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, lived in Northampton for 30 years; the [Eric Carle Museum](#) in Amherst celebrates his picture book art. The [Yiddish Book Center](#), virtually next door to the Carle, preserves countless works in Yiddish and keeps the language alive. Rounding out the group are [Historic Deerfield](#), the [Smith College Museum of Art](#) and the [Mount Holyoke College Art Museum](#).

The [Museum of Our Industrial Heritage](#) located in Greenfield preserves and celebrates Franklin County's industrial heritage and its critical role in regional and national history. Just minutes away in Turners Falls, the fascinating exhibits of the [Great Falls Discovery Center](#) depict the natural, cultural, and industrial history of the Connecticut River watershed.

And don't forget dance, theater, films, musical performances and much, much more. Western Massachusetts is filled with fun and culture, and the depths of winter are the perfect time to seek out the fun and diversity within four walls. Having fun while staying cozy couldn't be easier, right? To learn more about what's happening or to book your own visit, surf your way to the [Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau's](#) warmly welcoming website.