



## A POCKET OF HISTORY

Tucked between the Mississippi River and towering bluffs, McGregor, Iowa, gives **Tracy Beard** a glimpse into America's past.

**THE ROUTE TO MCGREGOR, IOWA**, follows the Great River Road along the Mississippi River. On the way I see spectacular panoramic vistas, stunning limestone bluffs and ancient effigy mounds.

With steep bluffs on its north, south and west sides, and the river to the east, McGregor is affectionately referred to as the Pocket City. Because of the town's position on the river, its history is boom and bust.

Entering town is like stepping back into the 1800s, when McGregor was a bustling stop on the river.

Historic buildings dating back to those days line historic Main Street.

Today McGregor is quiet, until summer when it comes alive with tourists, road trippers, hikers and water enthusiasts. The natural beauty (it's located in Iowa's Driftless region) encourages outdoor activities, and downtown is home to quirky pubs, museums, restaurants, and artisan and antique shops waiting to be explored. Head to McGregor for the perfect weekend getaway. ●

MAP BY ANNA SIMMONS

### THE TOWN MUSEUM

After exploring the historic downtown, head to the **McGregor Historical Museum** and peruse its collection of antiques, handmade tools, photos and other memorabilia. The museum preserves the rich history of frontier life in northeast Iowa. [mcgregormuseum.org](http://mcgregormuseum.org)



### TASTE OF IOWA

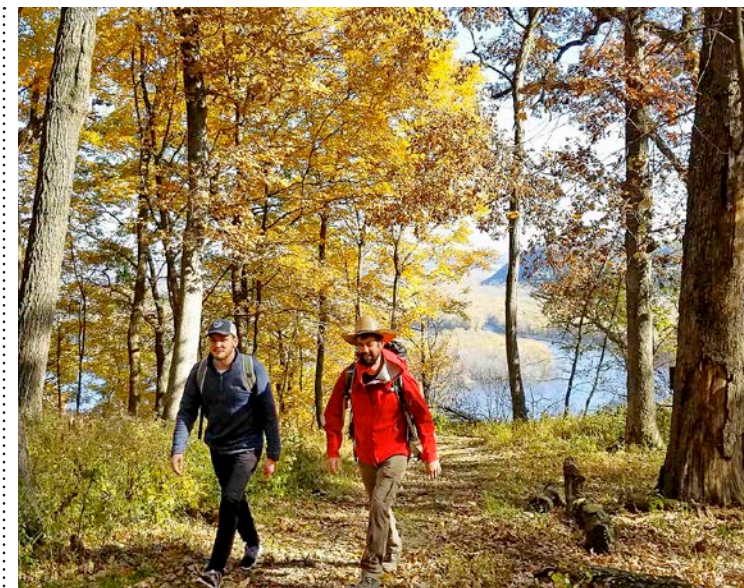
**By the Spoonful** offers homegrown goods, Iowa-made wine, craft beer, dairy treats and locally sourced meats. This one-stop shop has delicious gourmet groceries and homemade take-and-bake meals. [itsbythespoonful.com](http://itsbythespoonful.com)



DOWNTOWN: ANDRE JENNY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; PIKES PEAK: IOWA TOURISM/OFFICE; ALL OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRACY ELLEN BEARD

### LOCAL ART

Feast your eyes on paintings, pottery, jewelry and glasswork in **The Left Bank Shop & Gallery**. Pieces created by local artists fill this collaborative space, and there are workshops awaiting all aspiring artists. [mmcenterforthearts.weebly.com](http://mmcenterforthearts.weebly.com)



### PERFECT STOP

One of Iowa's premier nature destinations is just outside McGregor. Trails in **Pikes Peak State Park** lead to a 500-foot bluff with a spectacular view of the spot where the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers meet. With picnic tables and restrooms, it's an ideal destination for an afternoon adventure. [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov)

**“Life in McGregor is slower. We enjoy migratory birds and eagles galore. We hike the state park trails and drive the scenic Great River Road on Sunday afternoons.”**

—Diane Malcom, McGregor Historical Museum

### INDIE BOOKSTORE

Rare and out-of-print books fill the shelves at **Rivertown Fine Books**. Find first editions, author-signed books or unique titles along with scarce maps and artwork.



### THE OLD SALOON

Dine on delicious pizza and house-smoked barbecue at **Backwoods Bar and Grill**. Stay in one of the six upstairs motel rooms, all with private bathrooms, and sit on the wraparound porch overlooking historic downtown. [backwoodsbarandgrill.com](http://backwoodsbarandgrill.com)