

TOP 10 HANDS-ON Experiences

By Amy L Charles



CRIME MUSEUM

Photo © Crime Museum

The multistation interactive Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Lab allows visitors to step into the shoes of the forensic scientist and the detective. Learn how bloodstains could help investigators determine the weapon that created them, and how to lift a latent fingerprint, compare fibers microscopically, and decipher DNA profiles or handwriting. You'll also learn how detectives follow up on suspect statements and check alibis, using witness statements and phone records. Put the evidence together, and figure out what it means to solve a case!

www.crimemuseum.org

FORD'S THEATRE



Take a walking tour that brings history to life. Join Detective James McDevitt for a firsthand look at the investigation into the Abraham Lincoln assassination conspiracy. On the night of April 14, 1865, Det. McDevitt was on duty at the Washington Metropolitan Police headquarters, half a block from Ford's Theatre. Just before 10:30, frantic witnesses rushed in with horrifying news: President Lincoln had been shot at the theater. With Det. McDevitt, groups revisit the sites and re-examine the clues from his investigation.

www.fords.org

LEWIS & CLARK INTERPRETIVE TRAIL & VISITOR CENTER

Interact with Lewis and Clark re-enactors. Help them build a fort. Shoot a black powder gun. Learn to throw a tomahawk. Climb aboard the keelboat. Walk in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark on two and a half miles of trails through woods and prairie. Work in an Indian garden. Build a fire in an Indian earth lodge. Explore interactive exhibits in the center's three-story building.

www.mrb-lewisandclarkcenter.org



Photo © Fox Haven Learning Center

FOX HAVEN LEARNING CENTER

Join clinical herbalist and licensed nutritionist Susan Hirsch on an Edible Herb Walking Tour, and learn about the pantry available right under your feet! As you walk the land, learn how to identify, harvest, and use edible wild weeds in nourishing food dishes. Explore uses of dandelion, milk thistle, nettles, plantain, and burdock, and make teas, soups, condiments, salads, and pestos to nourish the body and reinforce your connection to the earth around you.

www.foxhavenlearningcenter.org

NEW ENGLAND CULINARY INSTITUTE

"Play with Your Food" is an exclusive hands-on culinary experience with Vermont's own New England Culinary Institute, offered by Custom Tours. Groups have the opportunity to work alongside NECI chefs and instructors to prepare a multicourse lunch, learning tips of the trade and experiencing what's behind the scenes at the culinary institute. Participants sit together to enjoy their delicious creations, share what they learned, and mingle with the chefs. Each recipe created will be available for groups to take with them.

www.customtoursinc.com

It's more fun when you can get your hands dirty ... or busy!

Rolling along the open road, seeing the sights, enjoying local flavor—they help make travel interesting. But what do you do for travelers that really want to get their hands on something? You might look into these *Groups Today* reader suggestions.

MARYLAND SCIENCE CENTER



Looking for exciting science experiences for your groups? Located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, the Maryland Science Center entertains, educates, and inspires hundreds of thousands of visitors yearly with dozens of hands-on activities, entertaining shows, and fascinating exhibits. Children love the interactive activities, such as digging for fossil bones, lying on a bed of nails, tinkering with the dozens of gadgets and gizmos in Newtown's Alley, and building contraptions in The Shed. Adults love the world-famous Davis Planetarium, the five-story IMAX Theater, and the rooftop observatory with the powerful Clark Telescope, capable of 300x zoom.

www.marylandsciencecenter.org

GOGGLEWORKS CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Bring groups here to try their hands at drawing, painting, and mixed media, ceramics, glass, jewelry, metals, photography, wood, and other artistic pursuits at the country's largest, most comprehensive interactive arts center. Visit GoggleWorks Center for the Arts on Second Sunday (held monthly), the facility's open house for workshops, demos, music, and more.

www.goggleworks.org

NEWSEUM



"Be Your Own TV Reporter," an experience within the *NBC News Interactive Newsroom* exhibit, gives visitors the opportunity to see what it's like to be a TV newscaster. Visitors step in front of the camera and go on-the-scene to report several different types of news. Behind the reporting guests are green screens, but the television above shows the "reporters" live on the scene of a basketball game, or with a map of the United States marked with different temperatures and weather climates. One could even report breaking news from in front of the White House! This is one of many hands-on exhibits at the Newseum.

www.newseum.org


SAUDER VILLAGE

The Sauder Village mission: to provide guests with experiences rich in history, hospitality, creativity, and fun! Depending on group size, interest, and travel date, available hands-on experiences could include basket making, cooking, glassblowing, knitting, quilting, rug hooking, soap making, and use of herbs. The opportunity to gather in the Village Church and sing hymns is also a popular activity.

www.saudervillage.org

PAPETERIE SAINT-GILLES



This small shop in the heart of Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive produces various kinds of fine handcrafted paper, using seventeenth-century techniques. Visitors get a hands-on demonstration of the process, and groups have the option of creating their own crafts using handmade paper. Papeterie Saint-Gilles is one of the Economuseum (www.economusees.com) network sites in Quebec—all with hands-on opportunities. 

www.papeteriesaintgilles.com