

UNIQUE HOTELS

MAKE YOUR TRIP EVEN MORE MEMORABLE BY STAYING AT ONE OF THESE FUN AND QUIRKY INNS.

BY TRACY CLOUGH

THE 1886 CRESCENT HOTEL & SPA, EUREKA SPRINGS, AK

This Historic Hotel of America is home to many ghosts, including that of a man who is rumored to have stayed there in 1886, before falling from the roof. Visitors occasionally hear pounding on the walls and see the lights mysteriously turn on and off. Families too scared to share their room with the other-worldly visitor can still take a ghost tour of the property and listen to other hair-raising tales. The hotel sits on 15 acres of gardens and has a swimming pool and

several restaurants. Rates begin at \$116 (crescent-hotel.com).

Nearby Fun: The Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge in Eureka Springs is the country's largest public wildlife sanctuary for big cats. It has more than 100 animals on the premises, including many cougars, tigers and leopards (estc.net/turpentine). After you've spent enough time with your new feline friends, take a tour of downtown Eureka Springs on foot, by trolley or via a horse-drawn carriage and be captivated by local musicians and street performers (eurekasprings.com). At night head to the Pine Mountain Jamboree (\$20 adults, kids under 12 free, pinemountainjamboree.com), where you can hear classic country hits and patriotic music. Don't miss the complimentary all-you-can-eat popcorn.

NORTHERN RAIL TRAINCAR SUITES, TWO HARBORS, MN

Get onboard at this bed and breakfast, where all rooms are former train cars.

From the outside, the hotel looks like an old train, but each room features a comfortable, well-designed interior with air-conditioning. In the morning, stop in the lobby reminiscent of a depot for a complimentary deluxe breakfast; spend downtime later in the day playing board games in front of the roaring fire. Because of its rustic setting, the hotel is perfect for wildlife viewing, with deer and moose occasionally walking through the property. It's also close to major hiking and biking trails on the Superior Hiking Trail. Packages begin at \$69 per night (northernrail.net).

Nearby Fun: To further enhance your railway experience, learn about the history of rail transport at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum, which will delight kids with its train cars dating back to 1861 (lsrm.org/Home/Home.asp). Then go to Gooseberry Falls State Park on the North Shore of Lake Superior, where you can have a picnic near a spectacular three-tier waterfall (dnr.state.mn.us). ●

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travel bonus

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