



Small Wonders

Four more towns worth a visit.

1 Red Wing POP. 16,459

Trails of various levels reward hikers with a stunning Mississippi River Valley view atop 340-foot Barn Bluff, which presides over Red Wing, a pretty hour's drive southeast of the Twin Cities. Consider joining the thousands of people who come to the Fall Festival of the Arts, a juried art fair that fills downtown's streets, Oct. 10–11. The AAA Three Diamond-rated **St. James Hotel** (💎💎💎), downtown on the river, offers a comfortable step back in time. redwing.org

2 Grand Marais POP. 1,351

Named "America's Coolest Small Town" by *Budget Travel* this year, Grand Marais serves as the perfect home base for fall color junkies exploring the Lake Superior shoreline. With its cluster of art galleries, coffee shops and foodie-approved restaurants—AAA Two Diamond-rated **Gun Flint Tavern** (💎💎) among them—the town sits just 40 miles south of Canada. For an inspiring view, walk the easy half-mile to the lighthouse on Artist's Point (*pictured*), in the town harbor. visitcookcounty.com

3 Lanesboro POP. 754

Sweet little Lanesboro is the darling of Minnesota's Bluff Country, the hilly southeastern corner of the state where ancient bulldozing glaciers stopped short. The Root River, the popular 60-mile Root River State Trail and the Historic Bluff Country Scenic Byway all converge here, where plentiful art galleries and attractions, a thriving Amish culture, and myriad bed-and-breakfasts mingle. Taste of the Trail, a multi-weekend celebration of the flavors along the bike trail, unfolds in Lanesboro on Sept. 12. lanesboro.com

4 New Ulm POP. 13,522

Its name, plus the 45-foot working Glockenspiel in the town square, are your first two clues that New Ulm is all about its German roots. Further evidence: Oktoberfest (*pictured*), a celebration of German food, music and more, on the first two weekends in October. Situated along the Minnesota River in the southwestern part of the state, the town also attracts visitors to its 1860 August Schell Brewing Co. for weekend tours and a peek at the formal garden in its unique showy glory. newulm.com

THE LITTLEST TOWN

Funkley, 30 miles northeast of Bemidji on Highway 71, reported just five residents in the last census, making it the state's least populated incorporated town. The mayor owns the sole town attraction, the Funkley Bar & Lounge, which doubles as a city hall of sorts and is popular with motorcyclists and hunters in the fall.