

recalls how the state looked when the first settlers arrived (866/302-4173; fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier).

Patoka Lake Indiana's second-largest lake offers camping and trails (812/685-2464; stateparks.in.gov).

T.C. Steele State Historic Site The 1907 hilltop home and studio of artist T.C. Steele and pretty gardens invite reflection, 9 miles west of Nashville (812/988-2785; tcsteele.org).

Where to eat The Nashville House This local standard serves favorites such as fried biscuits, hickory-smoked ham and apple butter in a homey setting (812/988-4554; browncountyinn.com).

Story Inn Feast on inventive fare in a converted tin-fronted general store in tiny Story. (And stay here if you dare: This bed and breakfast claims to be haunted. From \$119) (800/881-1183; storyinn.com).

Where to stay Abe Martin Lodge Settle into the stone-and-timber lodge or cabins at Brown County State Park. From \$72 (877/265-6343; indianainns.com).

Cornerstone Inn This newer, Victorian-style hotel in Nashville has individually decorated rooms and delicious hot breakfasts. From \$145 (888/383-0300; cornerstoneinn.com).

COLUMBUS

A few years after Eliel Saarinen designed the new First Christian Church, son Eero designed the glass Inwin Union Bank. Soon, architects and artists were coming to Columbus on their own. The result is a staggering collection in a city of about 40,000, and the architectural tours are the main draw. For information: **Columbus Area Visitors Center** (800/468-6564; columbus.in.us).

Where to eat Bistro 310 Housed street-level in a brand-new parking garage, the high-end restaurant has a French-influenced menu. Try the delicious lime-ginger crème brûlée (812/418-8212; bistro310.com).

Smith's Row From-scratch soups, sandwiches and seafood flown in twice a week from Hawaii headline the eclectic menu at this affordable lunch and dinner spot (812/373-9382; smithsrow.com).

Tre Bicchieri Italian dishes shine here, including two house-made

soups daily, fresh-baked bread and beautiful desserts (812/372-1962; trebicchieri-columbus.com).

Where to stay Hotel Indigo Midcentury-modern touches show in the furniture, artwork and color scheme at this new 85-room hotel. Rooms are gorgeous, with hardwood floors. From \$119 (812/375-9100; hotelindigo.com).

COVERED BRIDGE COUNTRY

Start your visit in Rockville (population: 2,765), the county seat and area hub, with shops and cafes. For information: **Parke County Inc.** (765/569-5226; coveredbridges.com).

What to do Covered bridge tours The self-guided, color-coded routes start from the 1883 depot-turned-visitors center in Rockville (765/569-5226; coveredbridges.com).

Festivals The communities offer guided bridge tours, crafts, foods and some events during these annual festivals: the **Covered Bridge Festival** (October 8-17 this year) showcases the maple trees' colors; the **Parke County Covered Bridge Christmas** (December 3-5 this year) includes community celebrations; the **Maple Syrup Fair** on the last weekend in February and first weekend in March includes visits to maple sugaring operations, plus pancakes and sausage at the fairgrounds (765/569-5226; coveredbridges.com).

Shades State Park Sunlight barely penetrates dense woods in this large, undeveloped park. Hiking, camping, canoeing and solitude attract adventurers (765/435-2810; stateparks.in.gov).

Turkey Run State Park Sugar Creek links ruggedly beautiful Turkey Run and Shades state parks. Paddlers float 16 miles through woods, past cliffs where turkey vultures roost (765/597-2635; stateparks.in.gov).

Where to stay Billie Creek Inn This small hotel at Billie Creek Village near Rockville has a general store. From \$89 (765/569-3430).

Turkey Run Inn Trees nearly hide the state park's handsome lodge and cabins, with a restaurant and indoor pool. From \$62 (877/500-6151; indianainns.com).

MADISON

Limestone bluffs and the Ohio River frame picturesque Madison (population: 12,900). Downtown, some buildings date to 1817. Antiques dealers and specialty shops fill the district, and a stroll through Madison's hilly streets provides glimpses of lush gardens around grand old homes, some converted to inns. For information: **Madison Area Convention and Visitors Bureau** (800/559-2956; visitmadison.org).

What to do Clifty Falls State Park Some of the area's best views are from the bluffs in this park (4 miles northwest of Madison). Cyclists tool along the park roads, and hikers take wooded trails to the seven falls

that give Clifty Falls its name (812/273-8885; stateparks.in.gov).

Where to stay Clifty Inn and the Falls Restaurant Swim in the indoor and outdoor pools, and eat at a restaurant known for homey food. From \$102 (812/265-4135; indianainns.com).

Madison Vineyards Bed and Breakfast The big patio is a perfect spot to view the vineyards and relax after taking part in winery activities. From \$120 (888/473-6500; madisonvineyards.com).

Whitehall Bed and Breakfast Southern colonial architecture and furnishings recall the town's gracious early days. The huge gardens and river views are splendid. From \$150 (812/273-3024; whitehallbb.com).



With trails through deep woods, Charles C. Deam Wilderness in Hoosier National Forest is a hiker's dream (866/302-4173; www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier).