

Buffalo

As I-90 sweeps down into the state's second largest city,
BUFFALO

, downtown looms up in a cluster of Art Deco spires and glass-box skyscrapers - Manhattan in miniature on Lake Erie. The city's early twentieth-century prosperity is reflected in such architecturally significant structures as the towering 1928 City Hall (the tallest in the country, and with a free observation deck on the top floor), the deep red terra-cotta relief of Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building on Church Street, as well as major buildings by H.H. Richardson, Eliel Saarinen and Frank Lloyd Wright. However, the dereliction of the immediate environs suggests that the Rust Belt of rotting industrial towns may now have reached Buffalo. The city has only distant memories of the boom years, when the massive grain elevators along the Erie waterfront were busy 24 hours a day.

That Buffalo's wealthy merchants were a cultured lot is also apparent in the excellent Albright-Knox Art Gallery

, 1285 Elmwood Ave (Tues-Sat 11am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm; \$4; tel 716/882-8700), two miles north of downtown amid the green spaces of the F.L. Olmsted-designed Delaware Park. One of the top modern collections in the world, it's especially strong on recent American and European art: the Color Field painters, Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Op and Kinetic Art, with Pollock, Rothko, Warhol and Rauschenberg among the names. Other highlights include thirty large paintings by Clyfford Still, and a fine selection of pieces by earlier artists such as Matisse, Picasso and Monet. There's also a tasty, chic restaurant open daily for lunch from noon-3pm.

The area around Delaware Park is Buffalo's choicest neighborhood, featuring several homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright (call 716/884-0095 for guided architectural tour information). Between here and downtown is Allentown, Buffalo's most bohemian quarter, its leafy streets lined by lovely Victorian homes as well as numerous good cafés, bars and restaurants. Allen Street between Main Street and Elmwood Avenue holds some of the best examples of nineteenth-century architecture; some of the area around Theatre Place downtown is also good.

Being a staunchly blue-collar city, Buffalo loves its professional sports

teams: football's Bills (tel 716/649-0015), ice hockey's Sabres (tel 716/855-4100) and baseball's Bisons (tel 716/846-2003 or 1-888/223-6000) who, as the top farm team for the Cleveland Indians, attract over a million fans per season to downtown's modern and very pleasant ballpark.

The

Lake Erie shoreline

west of Buffalo is lined by numerous beaches where windsurfers

skim across the water and do flips in the waves, while the Miss Buffalo boat tours (tel 716/856-6696; \$12 and up), which leave from 79 Marine Drive next to the Naval and Servicemen's Park, provide a good view of

the city skyline. To the south, in the town of Orchard Park, the Burgwardt Bicycle Museum (Mon-Sat 11am-5pm, Sun 1.30-5pm; \$4.50; tel 716/662-3853) holds over two hundred antique bikes and engaging displays of cycling memorabilia.

ARRIVAL, INFORMATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Greyhound, Empire Trailways (tel 716/852-1750), Metro Bus and Metro Rail, the city's new tramway (both tel 716/855-7211), all operate from the downtown depot at Ellicott and Church streets. To get to Niagara Falls, take bus #40 (1hr; hourly 7am-10pm; \$1.85) or in high season, you can also take the Tourist Express (\$5). Amtrak trains to and from Niagara Falls and Toronto stop some six blocks away at Exchange and Washington streets; Chicago-bound trains only stop in the eastern suburb of Depew, eight miles from town but close to the airport (tel 716/632-3115). There's a helpful visitor center at 617 Main St (tel 716/852-0511 or 1-800/BUFFALO,).

The Adam's Mark
120 Church St tel 716/845-5100, . Recently renovated, this hotel has comfortable, upscale rooms, plus an indoor pool and free use of the health club. \$130-160

Hampton Inn & Suites
220 Delaware Ave tel 716/855-2223. A safe bet in the heart of the nightlife district downtown, with free breakfast. \$75-100

HI-Buffalo Hostel
667 Main St tel 716/852-5222. Very central hostel with beds for \$15. Nothing special, but the cheapest option by far.

Hotel Lenox
140 North St tel 716/884-1700 or 1-800/82-LENOX. The one moderately priced place to stay (besides the hostel) near downtown, with a \$10 discount for students. \$50-75

Roycroft Inn 40 S Grove St, East Aurora tel 716/652-5552 or 1-877/652-5552. Immaculately refurbished inn located a half-hour drive east of Buffalo, formerly the centerpiece of the Roycroft Arts and Crafts Community. The on-site restaurant serves tasty meals. \$100-130

EATING, DRINKING AND NIGHTLIFE

The heart of blue-collar Buffalo's downtown centers on Chippewa and

Main streets: plenty of restaurants are within easy reach and there's ample parking. For a quick snack, the cheap food stalls and tiny Polish cafés of ancient Broadway Market, 999 Broadway, are well worth perusing, too. The main nightlife drag, along Chippewa from Delaware Avenue to Main Street, has plenty of sports bars and nightclubs. The majority of theaters and venues that house the city's burgeoning arts scene are handily grouped nearby along Main Street between Chippewa and Tupper streets. For further information, pick up the free weeklies Blue Dog Press or Art Voice.

Anchor Bar
1047 Main St tel 716/886-8920. The city's specialty of buffalo (spicy chicken) wings with blue cheese and celery dressing is said to have been invented here. Lunch costs around \$7, and there's occasionally live jazz at night.

Calumet Arts Café
56 W Chippewa St tel 716/855-2220. A good late-night bar and restaurant, with jazz, blues, folk and world music.

Colter Bay
561-565 Delaware Ave, Allentown tel 716/882-1330. Lively sports bar, with a good selection of dark beers and scotch.

Hemingway's
492 Pearl St tel 716/852-1937. Serves big portions of hearty if standard American food.

Nietzsche's
248 Allen St tel 716/886-8539. A neighborhood institution, with friendly staff, hosting a wide variety of live acts seven days a week; there's room for dancing in the back.

Osake
235 Delaware Ave tel 716/842-6261. This casual café serves cheap sushi and noodles; not a place to linger, but good value.

Spot Coffee
227 Delaware Ave tel 716/856-2739. A local joint serving basic food and good drinks; it's open 24hrs on weekends and hosts regular live music performances.

