

Offbeat Sites and Quirky Museums in the Americas

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What's not to love about quirky museums and offbeat sites? While some are truly weird, others are unusual only in their singular focuses. No matter, these funky places introduce us to new ideas and expand our preconceived notions of the world.

So we asked our contributors to share some of their favorites from the Americas. They replied with their finds in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Iceland (let's not argue about whether this nation near Greenland is European or American; the truth is, it's both). Some are popular tourist destinations and others are under-the-radar spots best known by locals.

As always, check the respective websites or call to confirm accessibility, hours, and health and safety protocols.

Offbeat sites & unusual museums in the United States

Arizona

Tune into The Musical Instrument Museum, Phoenix



A display at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix (credit: Doreen Pendgracs)

The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) of Phoenix, Arizona, gets top billing as a must-see city attraction. And it receives a nod as being one of the top 15 museums in the United States. But don't think of boring museum exhibits when you think of the MIM. This contemporary urban facility hosts up to 300 live concerts each year featuring a wide variety of global music. It also exhibits approximately 8,000 musical instruments from around the world.

This Smithsonian affiliate features creatively curated, multi-media exhibits in five distinct galleries. These include the Artists, Experience, and Geographic galleries, which showcase the impact musical artists and their instruments have made on world culture. Visitors are offered the opportunity to play various musical instruments in the Experience gallery, and they can learn fascinating trivia about their favourite musicians in the Artists gallery.

Here's more info about the [Musical Instrument Museum](#).

— Doreen Pendgracs

California

Old books make new art in L.A.'s quirky Last Bookstore



The Last Bookstore (credit: Laura Kelly)

Bibliophile travelers shouldn't miss the Last Bookstore, a funky Los Angeles temple to books. Housed in the former grand atrium of a 100-year-old downtown bank, it comes complete with a vault filled with books and rumored ghosts. Yes, this is a working indie bookshop selling new, used, and collectible books (as well as vinyl records and graphic novels). But this cavernous bi-level space is also a museum of books, with photo-worthy book sculptures and nooks of whimsical installation art extolling writing and literature around every corner.

My wandering through the collection's labyrinthine paths, tiny rooms, book tunnels, and art nooks filled a blissful half-day. In addition, there are local artists' ateliers on the second floor to check out as well.

Visit [The Last Bookstore's About Page](#) to see the media stories about Josh Spencer, the young book lover who created this memorably quirky paean to books in 2011.

—Laura Kelly

Quirky and offbeat sites around the Salton Sea



Offbeat sites around California's Salton Sea (credit: Susan Manlin Katzman)

Talk about quirky! Several communities edging Southern California's Salton Sea house some of the most unusual, unique, and curious collection of outdoor exhibits in the history of art. Although not officially designated museums, these communities exhibit a variety of artistic endeavors that go way beyond the word quirky.

First is Bombay Beach, located on the east shore of the Salton Sea. Artists have reclaimed the almost-abandoned town, and they're turning neglected housing and vacant lots into art projects. Bombay Beach's yearly tongue-in-cheek Beach Biennale serves as a playdate for renegade artists, their friends, and the ultra-hip art community from Los Angeles and beyond. Some of the work at the Biennale is temporary. But much is left behind, adding to the "museum" character of the town.

Other intriguing art sites sit in an area just south of Bombay Beach. Salvation Mountain draws an international crowd eager to see the wildly painted, religiously themed, man-made mounds. And the off-the-grid, artist-and-squatter settlements of Slab City and East Jesus

house collections of sculpture and other constructions made from thrown-away, reclaimed and otherwise found material.

Read more about the [Salton Sea](#).

—Susan Manlin Katzman

A sculpture zoo in Galena Meadows, Borrego Springs



Galena Meadows (credit: Susan Manlin Katzman)

Galleta Meadows Estates, privately owned desert land, lies about a two-hour drive east of San Diego, in the heart of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. One might call the 10-square-mile desert “Estate” a “drive-by museum,” as sculptor Ricardo Breceda’s heavy metal creatures populate wide-open spaces.

Prehistoric animals, giant scorpions, undulating dragons and wild horses are just a few of the beasts that seem to wander at will, popping up here and there throughout the desert landscape. Some pieces are easy to spot from a car; others require desert hikes.

Those on a quest to find all 138 sculptures may purchase a map from various places in Borrego Spring that pinpoints precise locations.

Read more about [Galena Meadows](#)

—Susan Manlin Katzman

Weird and wonderful Watts Tower, Los Angeles



Watts Towers (credit: Susan Manlin Katzman)

Once upon a time—in 1921 to be exact—Simon Rodia, an Italian immigrant construction worker and tile mason, took some glass and pottery fragments and cast-off steel pieces and began building a tower in the backyard of his Watts home. Over 33 years, he constructed a wonderland of 17 majestic towers interwoven with colorful mosaics and unusual sculptural features.

Today, Watts Towers (also called Towers of Simon Rodia and Nuestro Pueblo) has been designated a National Historic Landmark, a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, and an important folk-art site listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Los Angeles.

Whatever experts call it—outsider art, naïve art or folk art—Watts Towers is a must-see example of one man’s miraculous artistic achievement.

The towers of this offbeat site can be toured inside the gates with a purchased admission ticket or partially seen from the street.

Read more about [Watts Tower](#).

—Susan Manlin Katzman



Musée Mécanique (credit: Hilary Nangle)

It’s game on at Musée Mechanique, San Francisco

A cacophony of games sounds—dings, buzzes, cackling laughter, and music— attracts passersby into Musée Mécanique, located in a warehouse building on San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf.

Edward Galland Zelinsky began collecting antique arcade games and coin-operated musical instruments as a child. And, by the time of his 2004 death, he had bought and traded his way to the world’s largest collection. It comprises more than 300 penny-arcade machines, video

and pinball games, slot machines, automatons, mechanized musical instruments, and even a steam-powered motorcycle. These range from the traditional to the truly bizarre and the just plain weird. But all are in original working order.

Zelinsky's descendants now operate this hands-on, interactive museum. A change machine on the premises makes it easy to have the right amount of quarters for each game. Among the options: Watch macabre executions, operate a working farm with more than 150 moving objects, listen to Laughing Sal (*shudder*), have a fortune teller predict the future, attend a carnival, test your strength, enjoy dancing and singing marionettes, play World Series baseball, or even watch a peep show.

Do note that some options do not meet contemporary diversity, equality, accessibility, and inclusion cultural standards. Admission is free, so even if you don't indulge your inner child, you can still take in the show.

—Hilary Nangle

Florida

Shell out for this focused Sanibel museum



Delicate shell art in the style of a sailor's valentine created by a local artist (credit: Debra Smith)

When winter storms scour the seafloor near [Sanibel](#), shelling enthusiasts head for the beach with nets in hand. They want to be the first to reach the mounds of shells rolling up from the seafloor. Conchologists (yes, there's a [society](#) of them) search for rare and often valuable treasures like Junonia, the honorary shell of Sanibel.

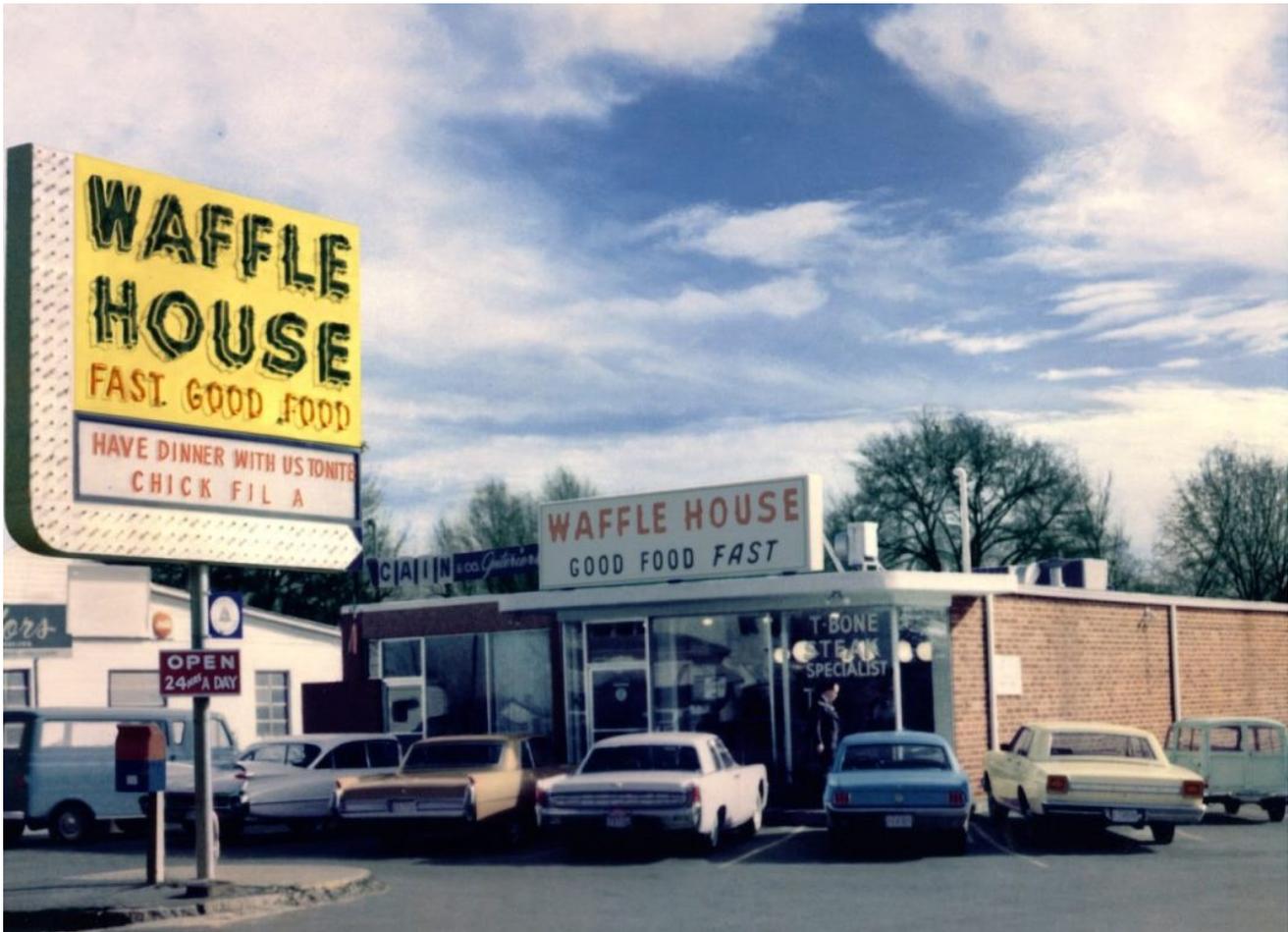
Get schooled about the magic of mollusks at the [Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum](#). It reopened in 2020 after a six-million-dollar renovation with new touch pools, two Giant Pacific Octopuses and the world's only live deep-sea dwelling Junonia. But the real stars at this 25-year-old museum are the multi-coloured specimens of over 542,000 shells from around the world.

Exhibits showcase the many facets of mollusks through the ages, shells as the world's first currency, shells as religious symbols, and shells in art and architecture, like the shell-shaped Guggenheim in New York. Displays of shell carvings, inlays and "sailors' valentines," from the miniature to the majestic, inspire modern-day shell artists and collectors. Visit in March when the 85th Sanibel Shell Festival celebrates shell culture with displays and workshops.

– Debra Smith

Georgia

Waffle House Museum



The first Waffle House opened in Avondale Estates, Georgia, in 1955 and now houses the Waffle House Museum (credit: courtesy of Waffle House)

Anthony Bourdain called the Waffle House the place “where everybody, regardless of race, creed, color, or degree of inebriation, is welcomed.” Founded in Avondale Estates by neighbors Joe Rogers Sr. and Tom Forkner in 1955, nearly 2,000 Waffle Houses pepper the United States, with 263 in the metro Atlanta area alone.

Waffle House is an iconic institution: It’s open 24 hours a day. The staff greets you with a cheery hello. You can order your hashed browns approximately 758 ways. The restaurant chain is so reliable that FEMA uses an informal metric for how bad a disaster is based on whether the local Waffle Houses are open with full power.

The original Waffle House now houses the [Waffle House Museum](#). Here you can learn more about its history and view 60 years of memorabilia. And afterward: Go get your waffle fix – there are two Waffle Houses within a mile.

—Jan Schroder

Massachusetts

Dive into the Nantucket Shipwreck and Lifesaving Museum



Left: Nantucket's Shipwreck and Lifesaving Museum. Right: Interactive map of shipwrecks off the coastline of Nantucket. (credit: Alison Abbot)

While the beaches are certainly the main event on the beautiful island of Nantucket, visitors will find an abundance of history around every corner. When you need a change of pace from sun and surf, head to the [Nantucket Shipwreck and Lifesaving Museum](#). This affiliate of the Egan Maritime Institute is housed in a renovated lifesaving station. More than 5,000 whimsical, unusual and historical items relating to the theme of the sea fill the interior. Visitors will experience a glimpse of life when the island was the Whaling Capital of the World.

Shoals and reefs surround Nantucket, which once was known as a Graveyard of the Atlantic. The original, lifesaving, breeches-buoy device was a precursor to modern-day ziplining. Passengers from a sinking ship used this system: a pair of shorts attached to a foam float attached to a pulley system for rescue. No doubt here about the origination of Charms candy Lifesavers.

Several interactive displays highlight the many shipwrecks of the area, including this map of the Grey Lady, 30 miles off the coast of Cape Cod.

—Alison Abbott

New York

See the world in New York City



Gulliver's Gate (credit: Laura Kelly)

Visit the mind-boggling Gulliver's Gate exhibit if you find yourself in New York's Times Square with some time to kill before a Broadway show. I spent about 90 minutes *oohing* and *ahhing* over this unique, miniature-worlds museum and plan to return when I have more time.

This \$40 million permanent attraction, opened in spring 2017, features 300 miniature scenes from 50 nations in a 49,000-square-foot space. Besides iconic cities and towns, the meticulous models include dozens of UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Angkor Wat, the Taj Mahal, Mecca, and the Kremlin. The Panama Canal model shows the locks system with freighters going through it.

Classical music and a repeating light show accompany your self-guided tour. The "sun" sets during your visit, and the site's twinkling evening lights come on.

Gulliver's Gate Miniature Worlds is located in a reconfigured office building on tourist-thronged 44th Street.

—*Laura Kelly*

N.B. We sadly just learned that Gulliver's Gate closed permanently during the pandemic after failure to pay its \$5.7 million yearly rent.

North Carolina

Cat man do in Sylva



A few of the thousands of objects of the extensive collection at The American Museum of the House Cat. (credit: Garret K. Woodward, courtesy of The Smoky Mountain News)

As these types of museums usually do, it all started with one man's collection. Now a retired college biology professor, Dr. Harold Sims gathered items related to the house cat for more than 30 years, some dating back to the 1800s. The American Museum of the House Cat now houses the collection in Sylva, about an hour from Asheville.

Visitors take a self-guided tour and can see items that include a 300-30 B.C. Egyptian cat mummy, glass cats, cat poster art, vintage cat toys, folk art and vintage advertising. It bills the items as "a sampling of American history and culture as seen through the eyes of the

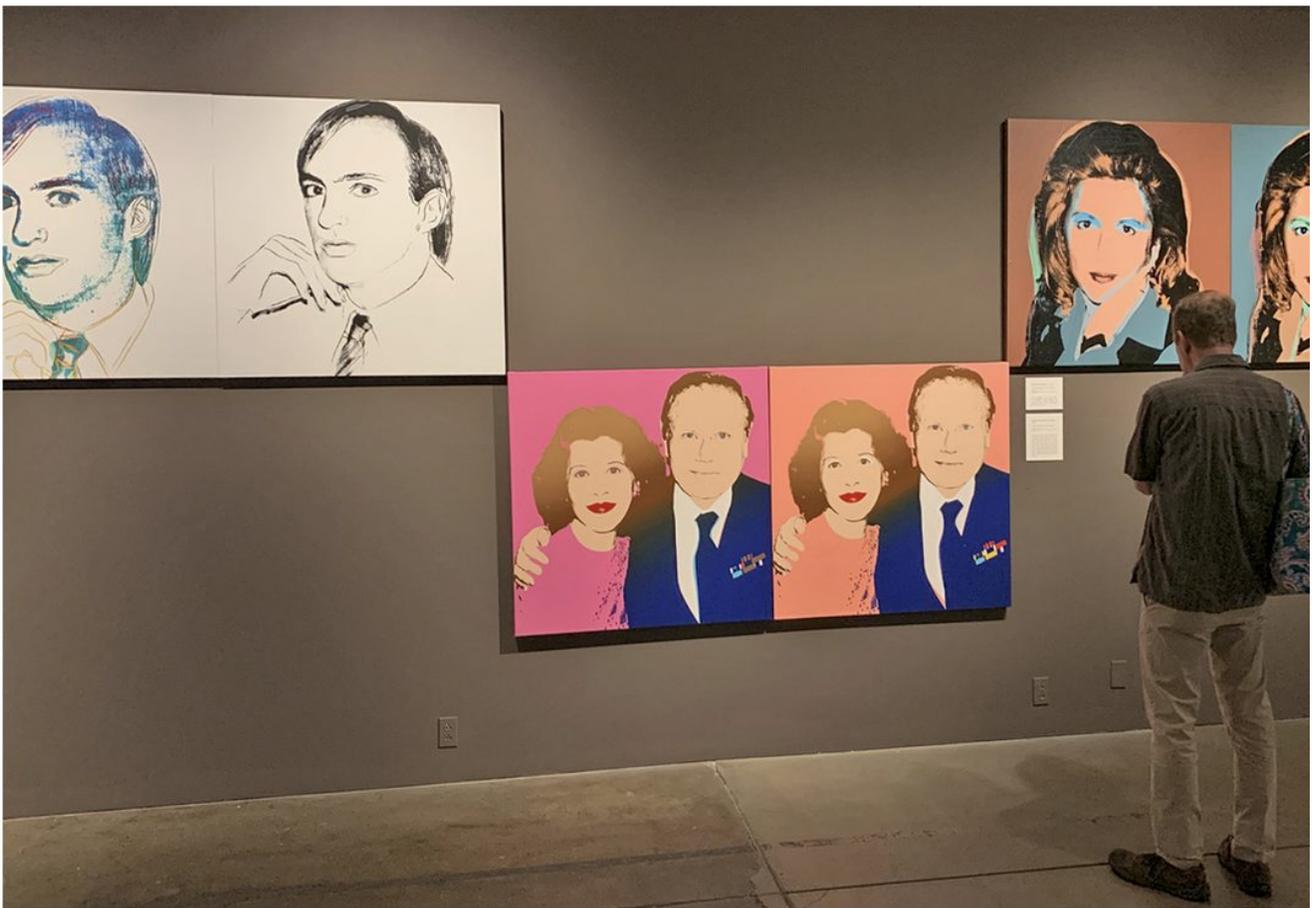
cat.”

Proceeds go to the cleverly named Catman 2 Shelter, located near Sim’s home in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Should you be looking for a feline friend. This shelter typically has 30-50 cats available for adoption.

—Jan Schroder

Pennsylvania

Andy Warhol won’t you please come home to Pittsburgh



Andy Warhol museum (credit: Laura Kelly)

Who knew there was so much to learn about Andy Warhol? Located in the city where he was born, The Andy Warhol Museum holds the most extensive collection of Warhol’s works. These include iconic paintings, drawings, commercial illustrations, sculptures, prints, photographs, wallpapers, sketchbooks, and books. The whole makes it one of the world’s most comprehensive single-artist museums. (Yep, Marie Kondo would disapprove of Andy Warhol-the-packrat.)

Some of this stuff is truly weird, including Warhol's 1960s movies and videos, but in aggregate, it is illuminating. This is especially true about the artist's early days, heavily influenced by his artistic Slovakian mother, Julia.

The museum's 17 galleries in this seven-floor converted warehouse (a bridge walk away from downtown Pittsburgh) are engaging and interactive. When you press buttons, archival drawers open. And in one dark room, you may bat around Andy's silver "cloud" balloons.

—Laura Kelly

Texas

When you're dying to see Houston ...



Money casket (credit: courtesy National Museum of Funeral History)

It sounds creepy, but the exhibits at the National Museum of Funeral History provide a fascinating combination of history, science, art, and death. The museum's motto offers words to live by: "Any Day Above Ground is a Good One."

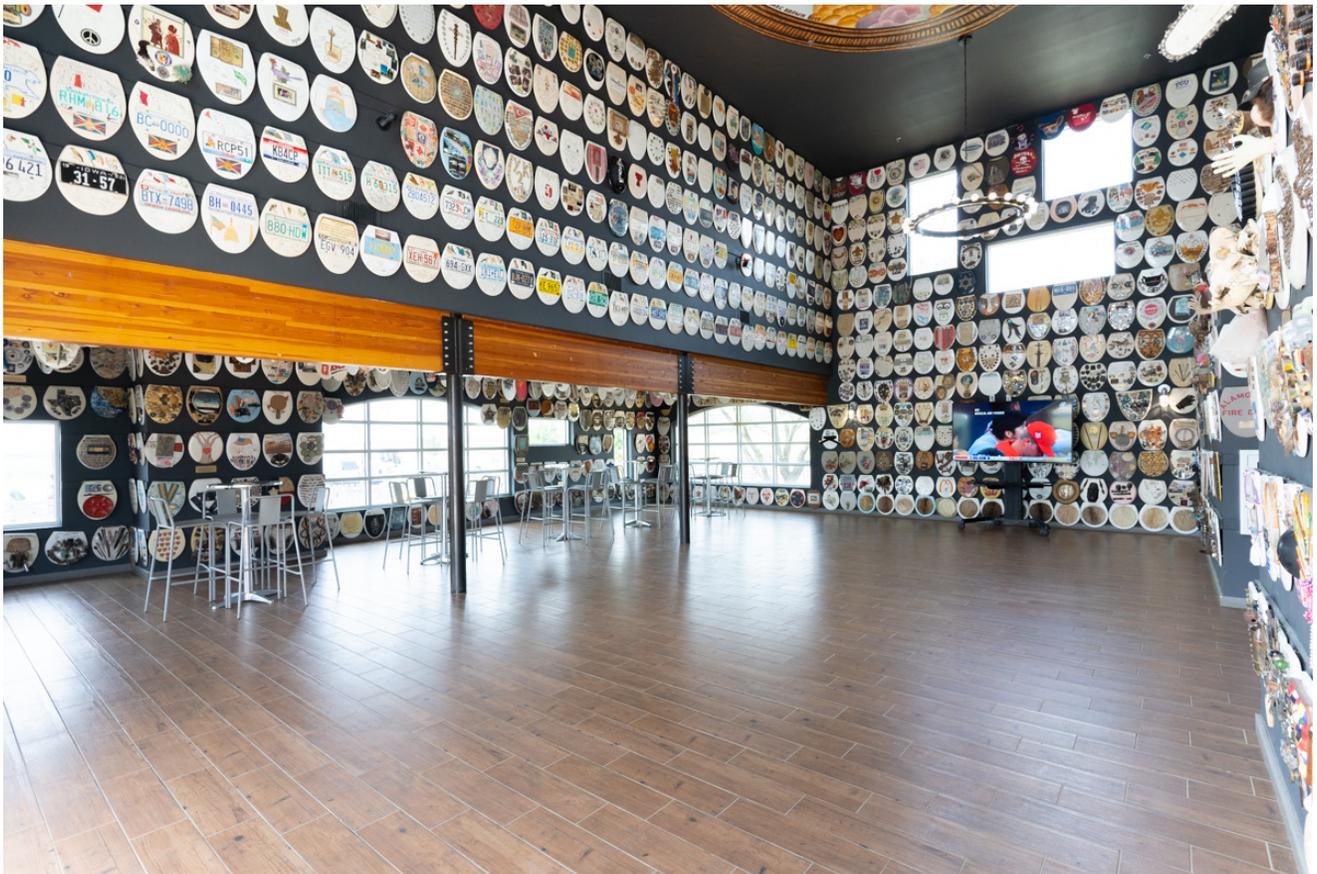
The 16 permanent exhibits include *The History of Cremation*, *Thanks for the Memories*, and *Jazz Funerals of New Orleans*. And the museum shows an impressive collection of vintage hearses, including those that carried the bodies of Grace Kelly,

President Ford, and President Reagan.

Unusual coffins shown include one created for a family of three. When their three-year-old died, the parents decided to take their own lives and be buried with their child. But after the casket was built, they changed their minds. Another unusual coffin, “The Money Casket,” produced for a coin collector and covered with \$643 worth of coins and bills, proves you can take it with you.

—John and Sandra Nowlan

It’s lids down at Barney Smith’s Toilet Seat Art Museum, The Colony



Barney Smith's Toilet Seat Museum

This ode to the commode was founded by the late Barney Smith, a lifelong Texas resident, plumber, and artist. Over an 80-year career, he rescued thousands of throwaway thrones from his garage in San Antonio. Smith turned them into homages to places, people, and famous art and objects, capturing the cultural zeitgeist in a, *well*, cheeky way. To wit: seats honoring craft beverages, technology, celebrities, the *Wizard of Oz*, and the failed *Challenger* mission.

Just before he died in 2019, Smith’s collection of 1,400 decorated seats was moved to the Truck Yard at The Colony, an “adult playground” north of Dallas. Now Barney Smith’s collection of toilet seat art sits beneath a Michelangelo-esque ceiling painted with a hand helpfully passing a roll of toilet paper.

—Robin Catalano

Wisconsin

Bob-, bob-, bobbing along at the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum, Milwaukee



The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum is the only museum devoted exclusively to bobbleheads. These 11,000 head-bobbing figures comprise historical pieces, sports icons, team mascots, celebrities and politicians, including U.S. presidents who receive equal billing with Looney Tunes characters. Most valuable in the collection is a 1960s set of The Beatles.

The first head-nodding figures originated in China in the 1760s. But it wasn’t until the 1990s, when cheaper plastic models replaced ceramic ones, that they became popular. The San Francisco Giants gave away 35,000 Willie Mays bobbleheads on May 9, 1999, prompting other baseball teams to give away bobbleheads of their star players.

The museum sells merchandise (a nodding Pope Francis, anyone?) and manufactures bobbleheads in-house. So you may custom-order one with your head (or a friend’s) bobbling atop anything from a basketball player to a dominatrix.

—Beth Reiber



A Roy Lichtenstein mustard parody (courtesy Mustard Museum)

Home to the world's largest collection of mustards, the [National Mustard Museum](#) is more than a museum. It's a lively place where visitors (entrance is free) can learn about mustard, sample exotic mustards like cranberry chardonnay, and buy one of the 6,000 jars from some 80 countries. And they can also learn fascinating facts like the largest producer of mustard seed are the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The museum shows an extensive collection of mustard containers, ads and other paraphernalia. And some displays are for children.

Once a year, the museum hosts a worldwide mustard competition. Food writers, chefs and other food professionals chose mustards from 17 categories. And every August, a mustard festival takes place in Madison.

—Jacqueline Swartz

Quirky Canadian museums

Alberta

Take a spin around the Windmill Museum and Canadian Historic Interpretive Center, Etzikom



Windmill Museum (credit: Jennifer Bain)

Etzikom may only have 54-odd people, but it's home to a two-for-one museum experience: the Canadian Historic Windmill Interpretive Centre and the Etzikom Museum. An outdoor collection of antique windmills dates back to 1995 and revolves around the fact that "it wasn't the gun that settled the west — it was the windmill."

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, windmills that pumped water on the windswept plains could be found on almost every farm. And the power to run them — the wind — was free. European, American and Canadian-style windmills are splayed out on the land alongside a small, preserved church and gas station.

The Etzikom Museum is an indoor experience celebrating the community. The highlight is a slightly spooky exhibit of dolls that belonged to the late Veronica Agnes Muza (nee Brittner) who collected porcelain dolls, Barbies and recycled dolls.

—Jennifer Bain

The weird, wacky, and quirky Gopher Hole Museum, Torrington



Gopher Hole Museum (credit: Jennifer Bain)

Taxidermy aficionados will make the 75-minute drive from Calgary to Torrington just to say they've been to the World Famous Gopher Hole Museum. In a single, darkened room of this quirky Canadian Museum, you will find 77-odd taxidermied gophers mounted in 47 lit dioramas. You'll see gophers celebrating small-time life and doing things like playing hockey, camping, hunting, attending church, stealing a moonlight kiss, waiting for a train, shopping at a general store and welcoming tourists.

Purists will note that these aren't actually "gophers" but the smaller and equally pesky Richardson's ground squirrels and 13-lined ground squirrels. Area farmers hate these squirrels because they dig treacherous burrows in fields. Open since 1996, this seasonal, volunteer-run museum has an excellent gift shop. Admission is by cash donation. Don't miss a dozen fire hydrants painted to look like gophers and scattered throughout the hamlet of 180.

—Jennifer Bain

British Columbia

Find heart and soul at the Hand of Man Museum, Maple Bay



Canada's quirky Hand of Man Museum (credit: Jennifer Bain)

Television star Jim Shockey is a big deal in global hunter/naturalist circles. But the Canadian who has been collecting since he was 10 years old, and who has travelled extensively for more than five decades, opened the Hand of Man Museum in 2018 to share his private collections with his fans. The one-of-a-kind museum of “natural history, cultural arts and conservation” is in Maple Bay on Vancouver Island, about an hour north of Victoria. It's also open 365 days of the year.

Expect to see everything from Siberian wedding blankets and woolly mammoth skeletons to fishing lures, beaded leather gloves, vintage snowshoes, rare exploration books and camel bags. The name Hand of Man acknowledges that almost everything on display was, as Shockey explains, “hand-made, touched by man or caused by man, even the taxidermy” in a world that has become “so automated, so heartless, so soulless.”

—Jennifer Bain

Prince Edward Island

This spud's for you: the Canadian Potato Museum, O'Leary



Canadian Potato Museum outside (credit: Jennifer Bain)

One Big Potato, 14 tiny potato coffins and a potato-themed café. There's plenty to love at the Canadian Potato Museum. The Big Potato is one of those "roadside attractions" people love to photograph themselves with, only this faceless, genderless spud of the Russet Burbank variety stands outside the front door of the seasonal museum.



Canadian Potato Museum (credit:Jennifer Bain)

The hand-sized coffins cleverly show potatoes gripped with some of the 260 viruses, bacteria and fungi that inflect them — like blackheart, white grub and ring rot. Don't let this gruesome exhibit turn you off a stop at the museum's PEI Potato Country Kitchen for a feed of fries, poutine, potato soup, potato skins, loaded baked potatoes and lobster rolls with potato salad. PEI potato farmers grow about 100 kinds of spuds. Check out the agricultural equipment area and ask about the farm tours.

—Jennifer Bain

Quebec

Go under, on, and over water in Rimouski



Canadian sub Onondaga, Pointe-au-Père Maritime Museum (credit: hilary Nangle)

Discover what it's *really* like to be in a submarine at the Pointe-au-Père Maritime Museum. Retired by the Canadian Navy in 2000, the Cold War-era Canadian sub *Onondaga* now rests on the St. Lawrence River shoreline on the city's eastern side. Visitors make their way through the entire sub on a self-guided, nose-to-tail audio tour. It covers everything from the engines and crew quarters to the galley and torpedo room. It's tight and cramped, so not a good choice for those with claustrophobia.



Climb the Point-au-Pic Lighthouse tower and visit the Empress of Ireland exhibits (credit: Hilary Nangle)

And while here, the museum's other two sights are worth viewing, too. One shares the history of the *Empress of Ireland*, constructed in 1906 for the Canadian Pacific Steamship Co. It cruised between Quebec City and Liverpool, England, for eight years before meeting colliding with another boat off Point-au-Pic in 1914. Water equal to that filling nine Olympic pools flooded the engine room, sinking the ship in 15 minutes and taking 1,012 of the 1,477 people aboard to a watery grave.

Finally, get a 360-degree, gull's-eye view by climbing the 128 steps winding up the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse Tower.

—Hilary Nangle

Ontario

Have a blast at the Diefenbunker Cold War Museum, Carp



Diefenbunker blast tunnel (credit: Jennifer Bain)

Thirty minutes west of Ottawa's Parliament Hill in the rural village of Carp is a massive, four-storey, underground bunker from the Cold War era. The Diefenbunker was secretly built from 1959 to 1961 on the orders of Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to hold 535 government and military officials for 30 days in the event of a nuclear attack. It was made from hand-poured concrete and steel to withstand a five-megaton nuclear blast from just over a mile away.

Never used for its intended purpose, after being decommissioned in 1994, it became a National Historic Site and then the [Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum](#). There's only a small building above ground, and before paying you pass through a blast tunnel designed to protect the bunker's front doors from a nuclear explosion. Get the guided tour and, if you come with a group, try the escape room.

—Jennifer Bain

Sole searching at the Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto



Elton John's High Heels at the Bata Shoe Museum (credit: John and Sandra Nowlan)

It may not be the soul of Toronto, but it's the world's largest number of soles in one place. The Bata Shoe Museum contains almost 26,000 of them in its collection of 13,000 pairs of footwear dating back more than 4500 years.

The permanent gallery features "All About Shoes: Footwear Through the Ages." It includes an exhibit on the evolution of shoe-making technology. Also on view are rare items like ancient Egyptian sandals, three-inch Chinese shoes made for women who had their feet bound and a plaster cast of the first known human-like footprint from 3.7 million years ago.

In addition to the permanent gallery, the museum has temporary exhibits. Our visit coincided with a special display called "The Curious History of Men in Heels." It included a pair of tall, red Kinky Boots from the hit New York musical. You can't walk a mile in them, but you can see shoes worn by Elton John, Queen Victoria, Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe.

—John and Sandra Nowlan

Quirky Museum in Iceland

Get your punk on in Reykjavik



Icelandic Punk Rock Museum (credit: Suzanne Stavert)

Located in a former underground public toilet, the Icelandic Punk Rock Museum is quite the adventure. This may not be your scene or at the top of your wish list, but we found its colorful historic displays clever and funky for anyone who wants to learn more about music.

This museum was started by Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols. Exhibits chronicle the rise of punk rock in the 1980s through memorabilia, video clips and photography. The small space is packed with things to see, and loud music plays constantly!

A trip to Iceland is a spectacular experience, with enormous waterfalls, black sand beaches and the Northern Lights dancing in the winter. Our walk through the [Icelandic Punk Rock Museum](#) was a delightful surprise as we explored the incredible city of Reykjavik.

—Suzanne Stavert

Offbeat site in St. Maarten

Star Wars in St. Maarten



If you're a Star Wars fan, you may not be able to resist the force luring you to the Dutch Caribbean Island of St. Maarten where Yoda himself resides. You'll find him at "[The Yoda Guy Movie Exhibit](#)," a quintessentially quirky little museum tucked away in downtown Philipsburg.

Owner Nick Maley, a.k.a. "That Yoda Guy," is one of the creators of the original Jedi Grand Master. And after two decades as a creature effects designer on more than 50 blockbuster movies, he and his wife settled in St. Maarten. They decided to share their treasured movie memorabilia with the public.

Rotating exhibits include cool holograms, videos, life casts, and rare souvenirs signed by celebrities. Maley is also a celebrated artist and author of "[Do or Do Not](#)" Outlook, an inspirational book. See his movie magic work on his [YouTube channel](#).

—Susan Campbell

Everyday objects in Mexico

Search for purpose in Mexico City



MODO Museo del Objeto del Objeto (credit: Michele Peterson)

One of the most unusual of Mexico City's many museums is the Museo del Objeto del Objeto (MODO). Located in a restored mansion in the heart of the bohemian Roma Norte neighbourhood, its name translates to “The Purpose of the Object Museum.” That captures its mandate to present the history and design of everyday objects found in Mexican daily life.

The museum's permanent collection and rotating temporary exhibitions display a vast array of unique items. These include matchboxes, postage stamps, toiletries, soda bottles and even farm implements dating back to 1810. Themes range from quirky (lucha libre masks and playing cards) to vintage (typewriters and eyeglasses). The emphasis on packaging, advertising, and graphic design makes for a fascinating look at popular culture through the years.

—Michele Peterson

All photos as credited:

Top photo (credit: Robin Catalano)

Pinterest pin: Watts Tower (credit: Susan Susan Manlin Katzman)

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