

Spending Spring Break Broke [1]

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Illustration by Ben Alpert

After months of stressing out and working hard, the prospect of staying in Minneapolis and relaxing sounded like the perfect spring break for me. It was going to be completely stress free, nothing but watching some movies, playing a few video games, and doing some reading. Most importantly, my minimalist spring break was going to mean being able to pay rent and eat for the rest of the month. It seemed like a fantastic way to spend a week. Unfortunately, by the time I got half way through the five hour extended edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, I realized I didn't like sitting around as much as I had thought. I desperately needed something to do.

There are countless things available to while away the hours in Minneapolis. There are beautiful places to go for walks and bike rides. There are huge flower gardens, charming parks, and tranquil lakes. Of course, as anyone who stayed in Minnesota over spring break knows, it was freezing, wet, and miserable for the majority of the time. I was trapped indoors and had nothing but a thin wallet and a good deal of time.

The Library

My adventures started off in the downtown library (Pronounced lai-brair-ee).

This place lets you walk out with an armful of books, movies, and CDs for absolutely FREE! Just one of the many reasons I love friendly ol' Minnesota!

Besides checking out a couple of books, I noticed the "Museum Adventure Pass." Checking out one of the passes enables you and a few friends to gain free access to one of the many participating museums or zoos. They also have information about the already free Como Zoo. By themselves, the adventure passes had the potential to inspire a week's worth of exploration.

The Riverview Theatre

I already knew about the classic Riverview Theatre in southern Minneapolis. Located along the light rail route, the theatre's vintage style means a more classic movie-going experience. They feature newly released films in a large, classic auditorium with a beautiful screen and digital sound. What is most amazing about the Riverview, however, is the cost of attending. Regular admission is \$3 a ticket, and concessions cost roughly what they do in a grocery store. Take that AMC Theatres, with your \$5 Sour Patch Kids.

So I had gotten the easy stuff out of the way: movies and museums. To fill up the rest of my week with activity, however, I was going to need to dig deeper. I turned to the wonderful World Wide Web and started exploring the city. I managed to find at least one thing to do a day for under \$5.

The Week Days

MONDAY:

Open Mic Night @ The Acme Comedy Club

Every Monday @ 8:00 pm

Price: Free!

Local amateur comics take the stage and try and wow audiences with one or more forms of shenanigans. www.acmecomedycompany.com ^[4]

TUESDAY:

Team Improv @ The Brave New Workshop

Every Tuesday @ 7:30 pm

Price: \$1

The Brave New Workshop hosts comedy classes for interested improvisers.

Tuesday's Improv night gives the students a chance to show off what they've learned.

There will be wackiness, so be prepared. www.bravenewworkshop.com [5]

WEDNESDAY:

Konkrete Jungle presents Kontext @ First Avenue VIP Room

Every other Wednesday @ 9:00 pm

Price: \$5 (Ladies Free Before 11)

It feels pretty cool to walk into the First Avenue VIP room like its your own private party and hear some crazy DJ spinning Drum and Bass. Not bad for a Wednesday

night. www.first-avenue.com [6]

THURSDAY:

Open Mic Night Riverview Café

Every Thursday @ 7:30

Price: Free

Have an early night out at the Riverview Café, a few blocks off the light rail. Grab a coffee and relax as some local performers take the stage. Maybe even duck out early and go see a movie at the nearby Riverview Theatre. www.theriverview.net [7]

The Weekend

There's always a ton of stuff going on Friday and Saturday nights. There are dozens of concerts, dance parties, and city events. Looking online for a few minutes will provide a gigantic list of things to do. Interesting things to check out:

Dueling Pianos @ The Shout! House – The Shout! House provides audience members with an entertaining competition between two dueling pianists, just like in old cartoons! Unfortunately, the show is 21+, and I doubt the opponents

blow each other away with giant canons like in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*.

Too Much Love @ First Avenue – Free with a student IDs, First Avenue is the mainstay fallback option for Saturday nights. Go dance with your friends to the tune of DJ Soviet Panda.

Balls Cabaret – Midnight at the Southern Theatre brings an open stage to a limitless variety of performers. Expect anything from hilarious comedy to bizarre performance art. \$5 admission.

The University of Minnesota

Though there was very little happening on campus over spring break, it wasn't until the usual University events were missing that I realized how entertaining they were. It only takes one trip to a regular bowling alley to appreciate how cheap bowling at the U of M is. The Gophers After Dark events are always an option, especially the free films showing in Coffman. Even the Riverview Theatre can't beat a free showing of a new film. During the week, the University hosts a multitude of different events, including lectures, performances, galleries, and concerts. The U of M's homepage is updated with a list of the day's events, and is another great way to plan out your week.

Conclusion

While my schedule provided me with quite a bit of spring break entertainment, and saved me quite a bit of money, I know there is tons more to do every day of the week. If you're 21 or happen to have some extra money, your options are exponentially increased. When it finally gets nice outside, relying on venues for entertainment will become a thing of the past. In beautiful weather, taking a bike ride around Mill City or checking out the Walker's Sculpture Garden is a fantastic way to spend the day. You don't have to go far to experience something new and cool, it just takes an open mind and an adventurous attitude. When finals finally roll around, I know I'm going to wish finding things to do was still as challenging as in the winter as I pull my blinds on the sunshine and lock myself indoors to study.

1. <http://www.wakemag.org/sound-vision/spending-spring-break-broke/>
2. <http://www.wakemag.org/author/joetting/>
3. <http://www.wakemag.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/jerimiah.jpg>
4. <http://www.acmecomedycompany.com/>
5. <http://www.bravenewworkshop.com/>
6. <http://first-avenue.com/>
7. <http://www.theriverview.net/>