

“The Bridges of Madison County” Itinerary in Winterset, Iowa

Start your day at the **Madison County Chamber of Commerce’s Welcome Center** (73 Jefferson Street), where you can pick up maps and directions to the covered bridges, find public restrooms, souvenirs, and locally-made products, as well as *Bridges of Madison County* movie memorabilia. Check www.madisoncounty.com for seasonal hours and contact information. You can also schedule a personal guided tour of the bridges through the Chamber.



Start your tour at the **Roseman Covered Bridge**, which figured prominently in the movie. (It’s the bridge Robert is looking for when he first stops at the Johnson’s farmhouse, where Francesca pins a note inviting Robert to dinner, and where she requests that her ashes be scattered.) On the way back from the Roseman, stop out

at the water ford at **Pammel State Park**, where Michael and Carolyn read their mother’s diaries in the movie.

Arrive at **City Park** (corner of 9th and South street). Just past the **Cutler-Donahoe Covered Bridge** is the stone bridge that Robert and Francesca cross to have a picnic in the grass.

A few miles away is the **Holliwell Covered Bridge**, which Francesca and Robert visit after spending some time in town.

Return to Winterset’s town square, where many of the movie’s exterior shots were filmed. The intersection of Green Street and 1st Street/John Wayne Drive is where the “truck scene” was filmed. **Frostee’s** is still here, but the general store and Texaco gas station are gone. The **Pheasant Run Pub** was used as the interior of the Blue Note Lounge where they go dancing.

Fuel up for the day with a true Midwestern meal at the **Northside Café** (61 E. Jefferson, Winterset). Recently named one of “99 Restaurants to Try” in the state of Iowa, and voted 2nd Best Tenderloin in the state, the Northside Café has become a bit of an institution. (The scene in the cafe with Lucy Redfield was filmed here. Sit on the 4th stool from the window at the counter if you want to channel your inner Clint Eastwood.)

While you’re in town, you may want to tour the only museum in the world dedicated to Hollywood legend John Wayne. The **John Wayne Birthplace & Museum** (205 S. John Wayne Drive) honors Winterset’s own in grand style and features the largest private collection of John Wayne memorabilia in existence. Be

sure to pose with the full-size bronze statue out front. Open daily excluding major holidays from 10 am to 5 pm. www.johnwaynebirthplace.com.

Drive north on Cumming Highway and turn east on 130th Street in order to drive past the site of **Francesca’s House** (it’s the first house on the left). The 1870 Victorian home was used as the Johnsons’ farmhouse in the movie. The house was closed to the public and tours in 2003 after an arson destroyed the back of the house. The property is privately owned and fenced off now, so you can only view the house from the road.

If you stay into the evening, take in a movie at the newly renovated **The Iowa Theater** on Winterset’s town square. The local premiere of *The Bridges of Madison County* took place here in 1995. Catch either a new movie or a classic picture during their Way Back Wednesday series. Enjoy freshly popped Iowa popcorn with real butter, and locally-made wine, hard cider or coffee. For a schedule, visit www.the-iowa.com.

