

# Nebraska Geographic

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**Feb. 21, 2024**

## **Nebraska's Apple Capital Adds Flavor to Winter Adventures**

Nebraska City is known for its apple orchards, hayrack rides, pick-your-own pumpkin patches, and the AppleJack Festival each fall. But the southeast Nebraska community is also a winter destination.

Arbor Day Farm lures homebodies out into the cold with its Bloody Mary Sunday events at Apple House Market. The Bloody Mary mix, and the cornucopia of flavorful garnishes adorning each glass, are all created in the Cornhusker State. Visitors longing for other flavors will find hard cider and wine tastings all day long at the market that also features draft beer, locally produced food items, and a large variety of souvenir and gift items. Bloody Mary Sunday takes place on Sundays January through March.

If those savory libations aren't enough to inspire you to leave your warm living room, there is a Nebraska City event that can help winter visitors work up a little body heat. The Winter Scavenger Hunt at Tree Adventure is a nature-themed event where visitors grab a checklist and then head out onto the destination's trails. Animal tracks – check. A seed pod – check. Checking items of the list while hoofing it around the forest is a great way to get some exercise while also working up an appetite.

Nebraska City offers an exciting variety of restaurants for visitors with a taste for new experiences and fine cuisine. Timbers, which is located inside of Lied Lodge, offers an ever-changing menu of seasonal fare with local flair. I like to try new things at Timbers, but usually opt for the Garden Hash with Eggs and an extra serving of salsa verde if I'm there at breakfast time. For supper I go with the Steak Knife Burger and beer battered onion rings. Timbers offers a huge menu for every taste, including a brunch menu and special holiday options.

The Library Lounge, also at Lied Lodge, serves food, too. But I recommend going there after your evening meal to end the day's activities with a drink or two with friends, old or new. They whip up some gorgeous looking cocktails. I usually order a Nebraska craft beer.

That reminds me. I found something in downtown Nebraska City not long ago that I'd never experienced before. At City Taphouse, you swipe your card, then jerk the tap handle and serve your own beers. You can take an ounce or two or a full pour, which makes it easy to sample a variety of brews if you want to. The high-tech electronic display keeps track of your tab, and you see it climb each time you

go back for more. On top of that, the place is owned by Air Force retiree Kenny Campbell and his wife, Christine. When I was there, Kenny saw my Army cap, thanked me for my service, then gave me the grand behind the scenes tour of his historic downtown building. When you go, ask to see some of the ancient Nebraska City memorabilia they've found.

There are so many cool attractions in Nebraska City that I could fill a year's worth of columns with all there is to see and do – I mean – the town has 10 museums! Let's save those for another day and end this adventure with one of my favorite Nebraska City stops – Kimmel Orchard & Vineyard.

This attraction is just outside of city limits on the northwest side of Nebraska City, and it will celebrate 100 years in 2025. The store here overflows with apples, apple donuts, and they make their own apple cider from their own fruit grown right here. The store includes a wine tasting room, but during my recent visit in December, I went shelf to shelf picking a peck of pickled pleasure. OK, I don't know how much a peck really is, but I walked out carrying a box of clinking jars full of peppers, pickles, beans, and other pickled and spicy goodies.

This time of year people are saying, "think spring," but honestly, thinking about my winter visit to Nebraska City makes my mouth water.