



the places behind the story

The Modern American Home Adventure

When electricity, industry, and new ideas changed the way America lived.

Explore electric home life, a factory-built future, and modern houses made personal.

Dearborn and Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Two-day core · Optional Detroit day

explore the experience

A Familiar Switch, a Different World

This Experience is inspired by master builder Brent Hull's [The War That Changed the American Home Forever | Part II](#). His three-part video series explores how technology reshaped American homebuilding, from hand craftsmanship to industrial production, new materials and household conveniences. This guide was developed independently by AHA. It is not affiliated with or endorsed by Brent Hull.

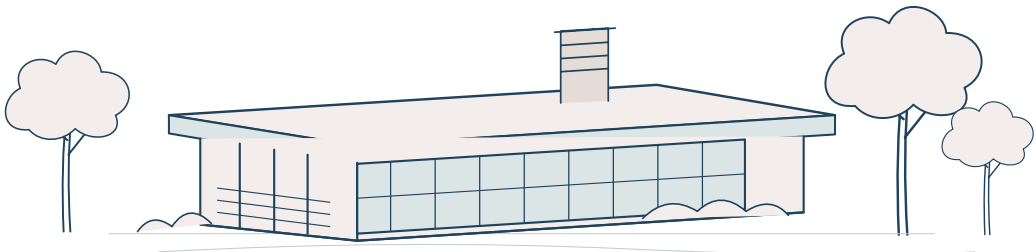
You reach for a light switch without thinking about it. You expect the room to brighten, the kitchen to work, and the house to make a little space for your day.

Around Dearborn and Bloomfield Hills, those familiar expectations become the beginning of an adventure. Visit the household setting behind an early experiment in electric lighting. Step inside the story of an aluminum house conceived for factory production. Then explore two homes where modern design took deeply personal forms.

The question travels with you: as technology made homes more convenient and opened new ways to build, what did people gain—and what changed along the way?

You don't need to choose a favorite era. Notice what makes a room feel useful or welcoming. Consider whose work made that comfort possible. The places ahead offer different answers, and sometimes surprisingly compatible ones.

By the time you return home, a window, a chair, or that ordinary light switch may feel a little less ordinary.



plan your journey

The Adventure at a Glance

Spend the first day in Dearborn, following the story from electric light to a factory-built housing experiment. Stay nearby. On the second day, move north to Bloomfield Hills for the Smith and Saarinen houses. The core finishes at Cranbrook; Detroit is a separate, optional extension.

Day	Recommended journey	Allowance and finish
One · Light and possibility	Greenfield Village → museum lunch → Dymaxion and selected design exhibits → Dearborn Inn and dinner	About seven hours at The Henry Ford; about ten hours from campus arrival through dinner, including transfer and rest
Two · Modern homes made personal	Dearborn checkout → Cranbrook lunch pause → Smith House → Saarinen House	About seven hours from the Dearborn base to the Cranbrook finish; personal onward travel is additional
Optional Three · The city around the home	A relaxed Midtown lunch → Detroit Historical Museum	About four to five hours from a Midtown base to the museum exit; onward travel is additional

Independent car travel is assumed for the core. Friday–Saturday is a useful pattern to test, with Sunday for Detroit, but the exact journey depends on shared operating days and tickets. The house tours are seasonal. A museum-led visit remains possible when they are closed, with a different experience.

before you go

Adventurer Responsibilities

This guide is provided by the American Homeowners Association (AHA) for informational and entertainment purposes only.

All locations, routes, recommendations, and visitor information in this guide are based on publicly available information and are subject to change. While AHA has made reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy, AHA does not guarantee the completeness, accuracy, or current status of any location, business, access condition, operating hour, admission policy, parking situation, or travel detail referenced in this guide.

Before visiting, independently verify current access, hours, parking and local conditions, and assess whether each stop is suitable for your trip. Planning allowances are not a promise of travel time or access.

Some locations featured in this guide are private property or have limited access. Inclusion in this guide does not grant permission to enter, use, or photograph from any property beyond what is lawfully permitted. Travelers are solely responsible for respecting posted restrictions, property boundaries, business policies, access rules, and all applicable local laws and regulations.

This guide was developed independently by AHA. Inclusion of a location, business, or person does not imply affiliation with or endorsement of this guide.

Travel and participation are undertaken at your own risk. AHA is not responsible for any injury, loss, damage, delay, inconvenience, denied access, closure, or other issue that may occur while using or following this itinerary. By using this guide, you acknowledge and accept these terms.

before you go

Using This Guide

Start with **The Adventure at a Glance**, then read the arrangements and access pages. Choose the Smith House and Saarinen House tours first and build the trip around confirmed tickets. The core takes two days; Detroit is a separate optional third day. Arrange your own tickets, meals and stays.

Follow the day outlines and numbered entries in their recommended order. Each entry combines the place's story, details to notice and practical visit notes. **Look Closer** invites observation, not an inspection or a test of architectural knowledge.

Allowances leave room for selected experiences, not everything at The Henry Ford or Cranbrook. Read each day's start, finish and return notes to see what is included. Specific tour departures are planning targets until you hold tickets; other allowances are flexible estimates. Leave room for queues, travel and rest.

Read arrival and access notes before using an address. Check the official links for current programs, entry instructions and your group's mobility or family needs before booking. Follow venue boundaries and photography rules. Photos show the identified places on earlier dates, not a guarantee of today's displays or conditions.

Save this guide, tickets and arrival instructions before leaving. Download navigation maps separately, then open your saved files without a connection to check that they work. Booking, directions and current visitor checks need connectivity unless separately saved.

Keep personal booking details in **Your Reservation Details**. Reference pages identify the sources behind the guide. Recheck important arrangements before departure and use the optional choices to adjust the day to your pace.

 Places  Meals  Stays  Movement  Look Closer

plan your journey

Make These Arrangements First

Reserve the house visits

Begin with Cranbrook. Find a date with a **1 p.m. Smith House tour** and **3 p.m. Saarinen House tour**. The published season runs from the first weekend in May through the last weekend in November, with Thursday–Sunday public tours. Extra departures vary. Purchase both in advance; do not rely on a walk-up ticket or a last-minute sales deadline.

Match the Village day

Next, check that Greenfield Village is operating on the previous day. Its calendar changes through the season, including shorter autumn days. Confirm any particular interior you especially want to see; the first day's boarding-house encounter does not depend on a specific room being open.

Arrange your stay

Arrange the Dearborn overnight and dinner, then decide whether to add a Detroit night. Check mobility and family needs before making nonrefundable purchases. The next page explains the most consequential limits.

Official booking links

[Smith House calendar](#) · [Saarinen House calendar](#) · [The Henry Ford hours](#) · [Venue tickets](#)

plan your journey

Check Mobility and Family Needs

The two Cranbrook house interiors are not wheelchair accessible.

Smith has narrow passages; Saarinen adds multiple stairs, outdoor walking, and prolonged standing with no seating inside. Children younger than eight, including infants and toddlers, are discouraged on both tours. Discuss individual needs with the operator before booking.

The Dymaxion interior cannot accommodate wheelchairs or strollers. The Henry Ford describes viewing from its ramp-top deck and a special exterior presentation on request. That offers another way to explore the design, with different access from the interior tour.

At Greenfield Village, expect an outdoor visit and movement between buildings. Ask about the specific house approaches and assistance you need. Accessible museum galleries do not establish accessible historic interiors or connecting paths.

For a trip centered on accessible galleries, consider the Henry Ford Museum, Cranbrook Art Museum, and Detroit Historical Museum, with virtual material for the houses. That is a different route and needs its own planning.

[Smith access and logistics](#) · [Saarinen access and logistics](#) · [The Henry Ford accessibility](#)

day one / light and possibility

Day One · Light and Possibility

Your Day at a Glance

1	 Greenfield Village: Menlo Park and Sarah Jordan Boarding House	About two hours; a focused selection.
2	 Transfer and lunch in the museum	Allow 30 minutes between venues, then 45 minutes to eat.
3	 Dymaxion and selected home/design exhibits	About three hours, with time to choose what interests you.
4	 Dearborn Inn and dinner	Allow 20 minutes for the drive and arrival, then a proper rest and 90-minute dinner.

Begin near the Village's published opening on an operating day. Across both venues, the plan protects another 45 minutes for arrival, queues, sitting, and exit, for about seven hours on campus. The 30-minute venue change is separate from that margin.

A museum departure around 4:30 p.m. leaves room for hotel arrival and a rest before dinner. From campus arrival through dinner, think of this as roughly a ten-hour day. Travel into the region is additional.

If the Village is closed, spend a slower day in the museum and keep the electricity chapter as historical context. You will miss the early household setting; don't rush in another distant attraction to compensate.

day one / stop 01 / electric home life

Sarah Jordan Boarding House · Behind the Bright Idea

Arrive: Start at Greenfield Village's signed visitor entrance at The Henry Ford, **20900 Oakwood Boulevard, Dearborn, MI 48124**. Follow the day's official map to the Edison at Work district. Confirm building access with staff; enter only where the public program permits it.



Sarah Jordan provided room and board for unmarried men working at Edison's Menlo Park complex. Her house also took part in the experimental electric-lighting system installed in December 1879. A technological breakthrough had a household behind it: people needed meals and somewhere to sleep while they worked.

The building came from New Jersey. The museum documents its dismantling for relocation in 1928. You're encountering a preserved, relocated setting, rather than standing on the original Menlo Park street.

Look Closer: Compare the boarding house with the laboratory setting nearby. What kinds of work does each place make visible? If an interior is open, use the room interpretation to learn its purpose and which fittings or furnishings date from 1879.

Continue: Carry the household into the larger invention story. Electric light belongs to a network of work and infrastructure, not just the person whose name appears on the bulb.

[Edison at Work](#) · [Relocation evidence](#) · [Village map](#)

day one / stop 01 / household context

When the Evening Changed

An electric lamp could change the use of a room after sunset. More light might mean reading, another household task, or time spent together. Ask what you would have done with that change, rather than assuming it gave every family the same kind of freedom.

Smithsonian's history connects electric lighting with the networks that later supported domestic appliances. A wire into the home created possibilities beyond illumination. But a new possibility was not immediately a universal household reality.

Plumbing tells a parallel story. Census historical records describe about one-third of American homes as lacking complete plumbing in 1950. That measure included hot and cold piped water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet. The modern comforts visible in exceptional homes should not stand in for every family's experience.

Look Closer: Choose a routine you take for granted—washing, cleaning, making coffee, or reading before bed. Which part depends on a network outside the house? Which part still takes someone's attention and time?

[Smithsonian: the consequences of electric light](#) • [Census: historical plumbing facilities](#)



day one / stop 02 / lunch

Lunch · Let the Morning Settle

Leave the Village while you still have time to enjoy lunch. Use the signed public route to the museum entrance, keeping the full 30-minute allowance for walking, admission, and orientation. Ask staff about the best connection for your access needs; the campus address is not a substitute for its visitor map.

Plum Market Kitchen, inside the Henry Ford Museum, is the recommended lunch stop. Its published lunch service is 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Allow 45 minutes. Check dietary choices before relying on a particular meal.

If you would enjoy a different setting, **Lamy's Diner** also lists lunch during that window. Choose one rather than treating the two restaurants as additional stops. The afternoon is deliberately selective, so a small queue needn't turn lunch into a race.

After eating, orient yourself to Dymaxion. Keep the remaining museum hours for that house and a few related exhibits; the aircraft, locomotives, and cars can be tempting, but this visit follows the experience of home.

[Museum dining](#) · [Official museum and Village maps](#)

day one / stop 03 / dymaxion

Dymaxion · A House from the Factory

Access first: The interior does not accommodate wheelchairs or strollers. Ask about deck viewing and the exterior presentation if that suits your needs.



The aluminum dwelling in front of you proposed a striking answer to housing: rethink the house through industrial production. Buckminster Fuller's 1946 prototype drew on aircraft-industry materials and manufacturing. Its shape, suspension, and domestic arrangements make that ambition visible.

Arrive: Find Dymaxion inside the Henry Ford Museum using the current floor map. The operator lists guided visits during museum hours; confirm the day's arrangement and wait. Give the house roughly an hour within your three-hour museum selection, adjusting for the queue.

This was a prototype, not the model that filled American suburbs. The production scheme did not become a mass-market housing system. Its value here is the opportunity to encounter a different proposal for home—and to ask why technical ingenuity alone might not settle what people want.

Look Closer: Notice how the house's form shapes the rooms and their relationship to the central structure. What seems appealing to you? What would take getting used to?

[Current Dymaxion exhibit and access](#) · [Museum restoration history](#)

day one / stop 03 / inside the experiment

Inside the Experiment



Pay attention to the small domestic decisions after taking in the unusual exterior. The kitchen, storage, and compact arrangements bring the factory-built ambition down to the scale of getting dressed or preparing a meal.

The museum describes revolving storage and built-in kitchen equipment among the design's features. Look for the features included in your visit, following the guide's instructions around historic mechanisms.

The displayed house is also a preservation project. Its restoration brought together components from two completed prototypes, trial systems, and newly fabricated replacements. A convincing room can make those layers easy to overlook.

Look Closer: Start with the revolving storage or built-in kitchen equipment described by the museum. Picture putting away your own belongings or preparing a meal. Would the arrangement suit your routines?

Continue: Keep this distinction for tomorrow: an ambitious design is one stage in the story. The habits, possessions, compromises, and care of a household give a home another kind of life.

[Dymaxion features](#) · [What was restored](#)

day one / stop 03 / materials and making

New Materials, Different Work

Aluminum makes the industrial connection unusually clear at Dymaxion. Much of the change in an ordinary house is less visible after construction: panels disappear behind finishes, and a completed room reveals little about the tools used to make it.

Plywood's commercial industry was already established before World War II. APA's history follows its expansion through wartime demands and new applications—a story of changing uses and standardization as well as invention.

Gypsum boards changed the work of finishing a wall. USG's history traces a progression from boards used as a base for plaster to panels that could be joined and finished without the same plaster application. The change came through several forms rather than one sudden replacement.

As materials changed, so did builders' tasks and the organization of work. Speed, skill, and the quality of a finished home could take different forms. The next gallery brings that question down to an object you might use every day: a chair.

Look Closer: Look at the visible materials and finishes, then ask the guide what is known about their making. Much of a wall's construction remains hidden; the rooms alone cannot tell the whole story of the work behind them.

[APA: plywood history](#) · [USG: the development of wallboard](#)

day one / stop 03 / furniture

Furniture for a Different Room

Move from the house-sized experiment to an object you might live with every day.

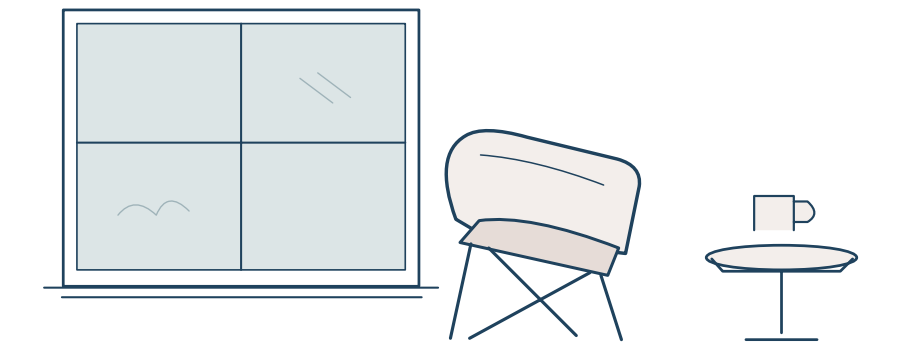
The museum's **Fully Furnished** exhibition brings together American furniture from different periods. Its listed highlights include a circa-1949 Eames fiberglass chair prototype. Charles and Ray Eames pursued affordable, high-quality furniture; the object offers another way to consider the relationship between industrial processes and thoughtful design.

Choose a small selection rather than trying to cover the gallery. If a particular object isn't on view, follow the labels to another useful comparison. Materials can suggest an approach, but the label should establish the date, maker, and construction.

Look Closer: Imagine a chair from the gallery at your own table or beside a window. Think about who would use it and how long they might sit there. Comfort, taste, and daily use give the design a household's scale.

Before leaving, sit for a while. Tomorrow's houses ask a related question at the scale of an entire household.

[Fully Furnished: current exhibition information](#)



day one / stop 04 / your evening

A Dearborn Evening

Dearborn Inn, 20301 Oakwood Boulevard, Dearborn, MI 48124, is the suggested core base. Its location keeps this evening near the museum and allows a single northbound move tomorrow after checkout. Allow 20 minutes from the museum for driving, parking, and arrival, then at least 40 minutes to settle in before dinner.

Clara's Table, at the inn, gives the day an easy finish. The operator currently lists dinner from 5–10 p.m. Reserve a suitable table and allow about 90 minutes. Check the menu, dietary arrangements, room rate, parking charges, and cancellation terms directly; no room or table availability is implied.

For a different Dearborn meal, **Al Ameer, 12710 W. Warren Avenue, Dearborn, MI 48126**, offers dine-in service. It requires a separate drive and a fresh evening timing check. Choose it instead of the inn dinner, not in addition to it.

Choose tomorrow's meal tonight and keep time for breakfast and checkout; don't head straight from the hotel to a house tour.

For rain, book an early indoor meal at **Beau's, 4108 West Maple Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301**, which lists an 11 a.m. opening Monday–Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday, with lunch/brunch menus. Confirm your day's menu and table. Aim to eat at 11 and leave by 11:45; reserve the next full hour for your checked drive, the Art Museum restroom stop and Smith parking by 12:45. That is a planning reserve, not measured travel time. If a wait would erode it, use a meal arranged before departure instead.

[Dearborn Inn](#) · [Clara's Table](#) · [Al Ameer, Dearborn](#) · [Beau's hours, menu and reservations](#)



day two / modern homes made personal

Day Two · Modern Homes Made Personal

Your Day at a Glance

5	☪ Cranbrook arrival and lunch pause	11 a.m. · 45 minutes: Art Museum picnic or Beau’s rain option.
6	📍 Smith House	Target the 1 p.m. tour; allow about one hour.
7	📍 Return to the Art Museum	Allow 20 minutes for driving and parking, then rest and use the facilities.
8	📍 Saarinen House	Target the 3 p.m. tour; about 75 minutes, including the guided campus approach.

From a Dearborn base, leave room for a 90-minute transfer and arrival allowance after checkout. A current map estimate was about 47 minutes driving; the larger allowance protects against traffic and parking. Finish at the Art Museum departure point around 4:30 p.m., about seven hours after a 9:30 a.m. departure. Check your actual route before travel.

Pack lunch for suitable weather; outside food is permitted on the grounds. FIKA offers seasonal coffee/snacks. For rain, use the preceding Beau’s plan and protect tour-arrival margins.

The museum → Smith → museum retrace serves the restroom and lunch stop and the two distinct meeting points. Protect 20 minutes for each local drive/parking movement and a 15-minute early-arrival margin for each tour, subject to your ticket's instructions. Onward travel and dinner are additional to the core finish.

[Cranbrook visitor information](#) · [Food on the grounds](#)

day two / stop 06 / smith house

Smith House · A Modern Home Made Personal

Access first: The interior is not wheelchair accessible. Narrow rooms and passages require walking and standing. Under-eights are discouraged; the house has no air conditioning.



Arrive: Meet at **5045 Ponvalley Road, Bloomfield Township, MI 48302**. The operator directs visitors to the limited gravel driveway, not the road. Use the Art Museum's restroom before driving over; there is no public restroom at Smith House. Do not arrive outside your booked program.

Detroit public school teachers Sara Stein Smith and Melvyn Maxwell Smith commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design their home. Designed in 1946 and completed in 1950, it brings modern design into the Smiths' daily lives through an L-shaped plan, brick, cypress, glass, and concrete.

Look Closer: Follow the view from a room into the landscape. Notice where the glass draws your eye and where brick or cypress holds your attention inside. Ask the guide which details belong to the original design and which changed later.

Continue: Pay equal attention to what the Smiths brought to their home. Architecture set the stage; their interests and work kept shaping the place.

[Smith House visitor information](#) · [Parking and restrictions](#) · [Curatorial history](#)

day two / stop 06 / the smith household

The People Who Made It Home



The Smiths' home was an achievement that took sustained effort. Cranbrook describes Sara's summer work with its theater school and Melvyn's work on the house. A home admired for its design also held the results of household labor and difficult choices.

Their collecting continued the story. They bought art and functional objects, including work by Cranbrook students and alumni, forming relationships with makers. Much of that collection developed after 1950. What you see is a home lived in over decades, not a room frozen on moving day.

The curator who researched the collection also documents antisemitic discrimination the Smiths encountered while trying to establish their home. The opportunity to build was shaped by social barriers as well as design and money.

Look Closer: Choose an object whose story the guide can explain. Does it change the way you understand the room? The collection is a useful challenge to the idea that modern design necessarily erased the presence of skilled hands.

Stop 07 · Return to the Art Museum

After the tour, return to the Cranbrook Art Museum at 39221 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304. Keep the planned rest and restroom time before the Saarinen departure; the gap between the tours is part of the experience.

[Cranbrook and the Smiths](#) · [Researching their collection and experience](#)

day two / stop 08 / saarinen house

Saarinen House · Design with the Maker's Hand



Access first: This tour includes outdoor walking, stairs, narrow passages, and prolonged standing. There is no seating inside. The house is not wheelchair accessible; under-eights are discouraged.

Arrive: The tour begins at the **Cranbrook Art Museum Peristyle, 39221 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304**, not at the house's front door. Use the restroom first. Leave large bags and equipment in your vehicle as instructed; provided shoe covers protect the floors.

From 1930 to 1950, this was the home and studio of Eliel and Loja Saarinen. Restored rooms bring architecture, furnishings, and textiles into close conversation. Modernity here needn't mean the absence of carefully made things.

Loja's weaving enterprise employed other makers. Cranbrook's archives identify Elizabeth Edmark, Marie Bexell, Peggy Broberg, and Gerda Nyberg among the studio's weavers. Their work belongs beside the designers' names in the story of these interiors.

Look Closer: Let your eye move from a textile to the furniture around it. Notice how their colors, textures, and shapes work together. Ask who made them and what has been restored; the room holds the work of several people and periods.

Continue: Finish back at the Art Museum departure point. Let this house complicate the question you brought from Dymaxion: technology, design, and craftsmanship have more than one possible relationship.

[Saarinen House](#) · [Tour logistics](#) · [The studio's weavers](#)

day two / postwar housing context

Beyond the Exceptional House

The houses you've encountered offer memorable possibilities, but they don't represent the whole postwar housing story. Dymaxion was a prototype. The Smiths commissioned an architect. Saarinen House joined domestic life with a design institution. None is a typical mass-market subdivision home.

For many postwar families, the important change was the possibility of moving into a newly built house at all. The National Park Service traces the growing use of standardized components, prefabrication, and large-scale development around and after the war. These methods could alter the organization of construction as well as the building itself.

Levittown offers a historical comparison, not another stop on this Michigan route. Beginning on Long Island in 1947, the development applied repetitive building methods at a large scale. The promise of a home and garden was accompanied by exclusion: Smithsonian documents how Levittown refused Black veterans and their families, despite the GI Bill's nominal reach across race.

That matters to the central question. A new construction method cannot explain who was allowed to buy, whose work was valued, or which families could enjoy the new comforts. Gains in production and convenience need to be understood alongside access and belonging.

Look Closer: Think of the ordinary homes that form the background of your own life. What would you want to know about the people who built and lived in them? Keep that curiosity without turning today's private houses into uninvited tour stops.

[NPS: historic residential suburbs](#) · [Smithsonian: covenants, redlining, and Levittown](#)



optional detroit day

Optional Day Three · The City Around the Home



Your Day at a Glance

Keep this a relaxed Midtown extension: a late-morning meal, then **two to three hours at Detroit Historical Museum**. On Sunday, its published opening is 1 p.m. Allow about four to five hours from a Midtown base through lunch, local movement, museum visit, and departure; personal onward travel is additional.

Babo, 15 E. Kirby Street, Suite 115, Detroit, MI 48202, is the recommended lunch choice. Its official site places the diner on the Woodward-facing side of the Park Shelton building and offers reservations. Plan around an 11 a.m. meal, check the current hours and menu, and allow an hour. Use a legal public crossing for the move toward the museum; allow 20 minutes rather than assuming an immediate door-to-door connection.

Arrive: Detroit Historical Museum is at **5401 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202**. The operator's visitor lot is on Kirby between Woodward and Cass. Follow the signed public entrance; Kirby Street is also the operator's described drop-off location. Elevators serve all floors, with the Meier Clock a stated wheelchair-access exception.

Focus on **America's Motor City** and a selection of urban-history interpretation. The industrial story gains meaning when you imagine the homes beyond the workplace. This museum visit supplies context; it is not a tour of representative postwar houses.

Look Closer: Choose an exhibit that connects work, movement, or city life. What question does it raise about the experience of making a home here?

[Babo](#) · [Museum hours, admission and parking](#) · [Museum accessibility](#)

plan your journey

Make the Journey Your Own

The core needs one local overnight; arrive the evening before if reaching the Village's opening would otherwise make the first morning difficult. Dearborn Inn is the suggested base, with its on-site dinner keeping the evening simple. Ask for the exact accessible-room and parking arrangements you need.

A One-House Day

If only one house can be booked, choose by interest. **Smith** emphasizes Wright's Usonian plan and the household's collection. Keep the lunch and Art Museum restroom stop, reach **5045 Ponvalley Road, Bloomfield Township, MI 48302 by 12:45** for the target **1–2 p.m. tour**, then depart in your own vehicle from the permitted driveway parking. No second campus stop is required.

Saaren emphasizes architecture, furnishings and textiles. Eat first, reach the **Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304, around 2:15** for parking and restrooms, and meet at its **Peristyle by 2:45** for the target **3–4:15 p.m. tour**. Allow the campus return to finish around 4:30. Your onward journey is additional in either version. These replace the paired-house day and retain its stairs/standing limits; book the actual departure and follow its arrival instructions.

For the Detroit extension, **The Inn on Ferry Street, 84 E. Ferry Street, Detroit, MI 48202**, places the second overnight in Midtown. Its operator lists check-in after 4 p.m., checkout before 11 a.m., and a mandatory nightly destination fee that includes parking. Not every house has an elevator; confirm the exact room and approach. Don't assume breakfast is included.

Allow **75 minutes** from the Cranbrook finish for driving and arrival at that Midtown base, before check-in and rest. A map-provider check suggested about 40 minutes driving; the allowance provides additional room. For the optional Midtown evening, **Chartreuse Kitchen & Cocktails, 15 E. Kirby Street, Suite D, Detroit, MI 48202**, is the suggested dinner. Reserve after check-in and rest, allow 90 minutes, and check the seasonal menu and dietary needs. Its published Friday–Saturday seating window is 5–9:30 p.m.; other days differ.

[Dearborn Inn](#) · [Inn on Ferry Street](#) · [Chartreuse dining](#) · [The Henry Ford directions](#)

before you set out

A Few Useful Habits

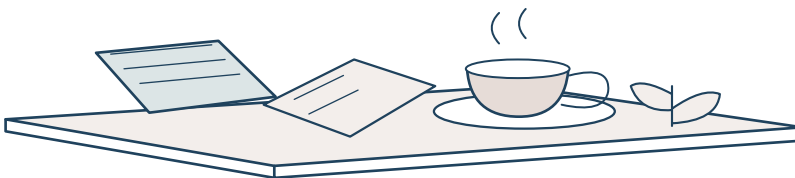
Pro Tip: Save this PDF or self-contained HTML, tickets, operator arrival instructions and the Henry Ford/Cranbrook visitor maps before leaving. Download the area map and needed directions while connected; live directions, ticket services and new notices still need a connection. Keep the meeting points distinct: Smith House driveway for Smith, Art Museum Peristyle for Saarinen. Recheck traffic and preserve the meal and rest margins.

While you explore: Follow staff directions, signed public paths, photography policies, and closures. A famous house is not permission to visit outside its ticketed program. Treat residents and other visitors with care. Weather, traffic, prices, and programs can change; check again before setting out. This independent guide offers historical interpretation and travel planning, not a building-condition assessment or professional home advice.

Keep Your Reservation Details Together

Keep the two Cranbrook bookings together, then record the separate Village and museum admission arrangements. Add lodging, dinner, and transport details in your own copy. Leave space for a changed departure or an access arrangement that needs reconfirmation.

Before travel, revisit the official calendars, weather forecast, and route information. A receipt confirms what you bought; the operator's current instructions explain how to use it.



plan your journey

Your Reservation Details

Keep personal confirmations in your own copy.

Trip dates

Visits / tickets

Date / time

Confirmation number

Notes

Meals

Date / time

Confirmation number

Notes

Lodging

Date / time

Confirmation number

Notes

Rental car

Date / time

Confirmation number

Notes

Other transport

Date / time

Confirmation number

Notes

the home and place story

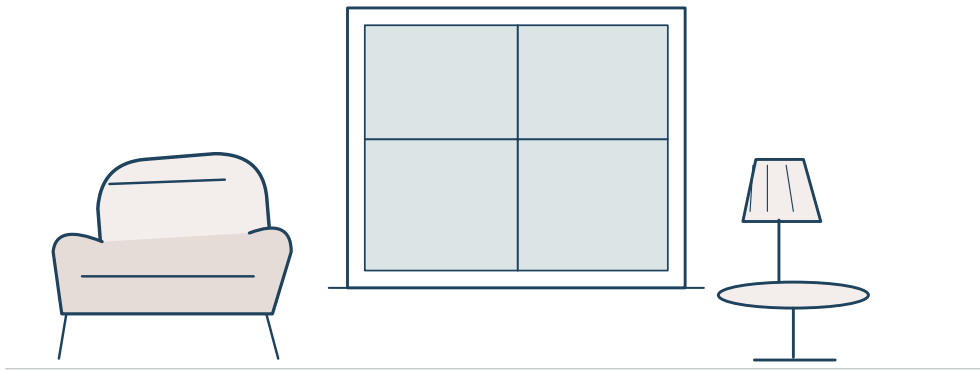
What You Bring Home

Tonight, you may turn on a light, put something away, and settle into a favorite chair. None of those gestures needs to become an assignment. They can simply be things you notice.

The journey has offered several versions of progress: an illuminated household, an industrial experiment, a modern home shaped by its occupants, and rooms where design and making worked closely together. It has also left space for the ordinary houses outside the museum, and the unequal opportunities behind them.

Perhaps the useful question is one you can keep close to home: which changes have made life easier, and which thoughtful details make that easier life feel good?

You don't need a house from a particular era to appreciate the answer.



planning reference

Museums, House Tours & Access

Visitor information checked October 20, 2026. Use these official starting points to confirm your own dates. A checked calendar is not a reservation or a promise that a program will continue unchanged.

01 The Henry Ford:

hours, tickets, accessibility, maps, dining, Edison at Work, Dymaxion, and Fully Furnished. · thehenryford.org

02 Smith House · Tours and Booking

Smith House tour calendar and advance tickets. · center.cranbrook.edu

03 Saarinen House · Tours and Booking

Saarinen House tour calendar and advance tickets. · center.cranbrook.edu

04 Cranbrook Art Museum:

parking, facilities, gallery access, and FIKA hours. · cranbrookartmuseum.org/visit

05 Detroit Historical Museum:

current exhibits, hours, admission, parking, and access. · detroithistorical.org/visit/detroit-historical-museum

planning reference

Meals, Stays & Getting Around

Stays and meals: the individual official links beside each recommendation provide the relevant property or branch.

06 Museum dining

www.thehenryford.org

07 Dearborn Inn

www.marriott.com

08 Clara's Table

www.marriott.com

09 Al Ameer, Dearborn

alameerrestaurant.com

10 Inn on Ferry Street

www.innonferrystreet.com

11 Chartreuse dining

www.chartreusekc.com

12 Babo · Midtown Lunch

www.babodetroit.com

13 The Henry Ford directions

www.thehenryford.org

image sources

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