

Northeast Ohio is home to many museums, from ethnic heritage to politics to financial affairs

by [Laura DeMarco/Plain Dealer Reporter](#)

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The Cleveland Museum of Art. MOCA. The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. The Natural History Museum. The Children's Museum.

You've probably been to one -- or all -- of these venues. But did you know Northeast Ohio is home to many more museums, exploring everything from the city's ethnic heritage to money, money, money?

Read on for some of the Best Museums You've Probably Never Heard Of -- But Should. (Hours vary per venue; call for details.)

[The National First Ladies Library Education and Research Center](#), 205 S. Market Ave., Canton, 330-452-0876, Ext. 301, Learn about the history of America's First Ladies, including new First Lady Michelle Obama, at this lauded museum. Don't miss the great gift store with its unusual selection of First Lady-themed gifts, or the current exhibit "Caring Hearts: The Health of a Nation," about the First Ladies' efforts to raise awareness of national health-care concerns.

[International Women's Air and Space Museum](#), Burke Lakefront Airport terminal lobby, 1501 N. Marginal Road, Cleveland. 216-623-1111, Learn about the fascinating roles women have played in the history of flight with a tour of this lakefront gem, which includes a research center with original documents and a gift shop with some great girl-power selections. Upcoming events include a day of Amelia Earheart movies on Saturday, May 23.

[Cleveland Police Museum](#), Justice Center, 1300 Ontario St., 216-623-5055. "CSI" fans, take note. Hidden inside the Justice Center lives one of the most fascinating museums in town, dedicated to the history of crime, punishment and the police in Cleveland. The most fascinating items in this most fascinating place are, no doubt, the death masks of the victims in the infamous Torso Murders. Visitors can also purchase CPD and Eliot Ness wearables in the Cop Shop.

[Merry-Go-Round Museum](#), 301 Jackson St., Sandusky, 419-626-6111. Amusement park fans -- and any true-blue devotee of Americana -- should make merry at this charming venue dedicated to the history and art of the carousel. Hear the "oom-pa-pa" organ, see the "painted ponies" on display and ride a restored Allen Herschell carousel. Wheee!!!!

[Indian Museum of Lake County](#), Technical Center, Building B, 25 Public Square, Willoughby, 440-951-3813. Educate yourself about the history of Native Americans in Northeast Ohio, specifically Lake County, at this volunteer-run establishment, which features artifacts, documents, lectures and tours.

The Dunham Tavern Museum is the oldest building still standing on its original location in Cleveland. [Dunham Tavern Museum](#), 6709 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, 216-431-1060. This hidden gem, once a stagecoach stop on the Buffalo-Cleveland-Detroit road, is the oldest building still standing on its original location in Cleveland. Built in 1824, today the house and lovely grounds provide a glimpse into the lives of early Ohio settlers -- not to mention a great rental party location. The grounds also include a barn and log cabin.

[Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland Learning Center and Money Museum](#), 1455 East Sixth St., 216-579-3188. Though this venue is primarily for children, many Americans would benefit from a little remedial lesson at the Money Museum. With more than 30 hands-on exhibits, students

explore such questions as "What is money?," "Why do we have it?" and "Who's in charge of it?" And the best part? The museum is FREE!

[Croatian Heritage Museum and Library](#), 34900 Lake Shore Blvd., Eastlake, 440-946-2044. Cleveland's Croatian community is one of its strongest and most vibrant. Learn more about the local roots of the community and its homeland at this museum on the campus of the American Croatian Lodge Complex. Current exhibit: the sculpture of Croatian-Canadian artist Ante Sardelic in "Cultural Parallels: Paintings, Prints & Drawings."

[Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society](#), Galleria at Erieview, 1301 East Ninth St., 216-523-3900. Not only is this richly decorated establishment doing its best to help preserve local Hungarian culture; it's helping preserve the increasingly ghostly Galleria as well. Read books on Hungarian history, see costumes and weavings from various regions (including some awesome furry coats) and learn about holidays and customs.

[Finnish Heritage Museum](#), 301 High St., Fairport Harbor, 440-352-8301. OK, so Cleveland may not have as many Finns as Croatians or Hungarians. But Fairport Harbor does, and interested parties can learn all about the Finnish settlers of this lakeside city at the Finnish Heritage Museum, plus the country they came from. Don't miss the colorful Finnish National Costume Showcase. And, of course, the Finnish nisu cake -- just \$1 a slice.

For more on Cleveland's lesser-known museums, including weekly events, check the Friday magazine [Where to Go](#) section each week.