ITINERARY FOR INCOMING RFE TEAM 2026

ROTARY FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE SCHEDULE

RFE CROATIA DISTRICT 1913

VISIT TO DISTRICT 5580 CANADA & THE U.S.A.

THE ROTARY CLUBS OF THUNDER BAY

(FORT WILLIAM, PORT ARTHUR & LAKEHEAD) AND NIPIGON

ONTARIO CANADA

WELCOME YOU!

The City of Thunder Bay is strategically located near the geographical center of Canada on the shores of Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world. It is the 10th largest city in Ontario and the largest metropolitan center in Northwestern Ontario. The population of Thunder Bay is approximately 130,000 and is made up of a diverse multi-cultural base. The economic foundation includes a unique combination of forestry, education, tourism, medical and technology services.

Thunder Bay offers the splendor of northern wilderness mingled with sophisticated urban pleasures that give every visitor endless opportunities for entertainment, adventure, and relaxation. Natural attractions include the distinctive Sleeping Giant rock formation and the thundering Kakabeka Falls, as well as Fort William Historical Park, a re-creation of the world’s largest fur trading post and one of Canada's Top 10 Visitor Sites.

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Day 1 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st

Croatia team arrives in Thunder Bay, Ontario Canada at \* PM to Thunder Bay Airport

Greeted by Rotary dignitaries & host families

Team members to return home with host families ~ rest, relax and acclimatize

Day 2 WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2nd

Breakfast with host families

Visit to Kakabeka Falls – Thunder Bay’s Niagara of the North

Host families to drive guests to Kakabeka (meet in parking lot at 10 a.m.)

Depart Kakabeka Falls for Vanderwees Greenhouse.

Tour of Greenhouse

Lunch at the Tulip Café Vanderwees

Old Fort William Tour (recreation of a fur trading post hundreds of years ago)

Introduction to Aboriginal Culture – Native Elder

Dinner with the Rotary Club of Thunder Bay Fort William Fuse/Daytonas

Evening stroll at the Marina

Day 3 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3rd

Breakfast with host families

Meet at Hillcrest Park for Terry Fox Monument (Terry Fox attempted to walk across Canada with only one leg)

Outdoor Picnic lunch at Eagle Canyon Suspension Bridge (joined by Nipigon Rotarians)

After lunch, we will traverse the longest suspension bridge in Canada!

Visit to Ouimet Canyon ~ a rock gorge carved in the Ice Age that sustains a unique ecosystem. A one kilometer walk with two spectacular viewing platforms.

Dinner ~ Marina Park Bight Restaurant

Pack and prepare for morning departure.

Day 4 FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4th

Breakfast with host families

Depart at 9:00 am for the Pigeon River Border and the USA

Stop in Grand Marais

Meet Duluth Rotarians for lunch and group transfer at Naniboujou Restaurant

Stop at Minnesota State Parks on the North Shore of Lake Superior

Evening with Duluth host families

Day 5 September 5 Saturday

Breakfast with host families

Activities with host families

Depending on the weather and the interests of the visitors, the following are possibilities for host families to do with their guests:

* Lake Walk stroll, browse shops in canal park, visit Lief Ericsson Park and the Rose Garden
* Drive Skyline Drive, spend time in Enger Park, climb tower, photos, Peace Garden, Rotary emblem
* Scenic Railroad
* Vista Star boat tour of harbor and Lake Superior
* Irwin Iron Ore Boat tour
* Lake Superior Aquariuman
* Tweed Museum
* Bong Museum (This is a military museum named for Ira Bong, an aviator who was famous for shooting down the most enemy planes in combat during World War II).
* Karpeles Manuscript Museum
* Railroad Museum and St Louis County Historical Society Exhibits
* Spirit Mountain Adventure Park
* Park Point Beaches (six miles of sandy beaches along Lake Superior)
* Hike portion of Lake Superior Hiking Trail or one of the trails in the Duluth City Parks.
* Boat, kayak or canoe on the St. Louis River estuary
* Trip to Bayfield and Apostle Island boat ride

**Day 6 September 6 Sunday**

**There will be a group dinner on Sunday in addition to the host led activities listed above.**

**Day 7 September 7 Monday (Labor Day)**

TRANSFER FROM DULUTH CLUBS TO BEMIDJI CLUBS

Lunch and transfer in Grand Rapids

WELCOME RECEPTION

* Hosted by Bemidji Rotarians
* Meet host families
* DINNER & EVENING WITH HOST FAMILIES

**Day 8 September 8 Tuesday**

BREAKFAST WITH HOST FAMILIES

**GROUP ACTIVITIES DAY**

ITASCA STATE PARK

* + - Bemidji is the First City on the Mississippi River, so no visit is complete without a trip to the river’s beautiful headwaters at Itasca State Park.
    - Visit may include a tour, walking, hiking, and/or biking
    - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/park.html?id=spk00181>

CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

* + - Located just north of Bemidji, Concordia Language Villages is a unique language and culture immersion facility. At architecturally and culturally authentic “villages” spread around Turtle River Lake, students learn Norwegian, Korean, German, Finnish, French, Russian, Spanish and Swedish.
    - <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org>

DINNER & EVENING WITH HOST FAMILIES

**Day 9 September 9 Wednesday**

**DAY WITH HOST FAMILIES**

* + POSSIBLE AREA ACTIVITIES
    - Biking
    - Hiking
    - Get out on Lake Bemidji or one of the many other area lakes and rivers
      * Boating, canoeing, pontooning, kayaking, fishing, jet ski
    - Lake Bemidji State Park
      * Beach, hiking, biking, bog walk
      * <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/park.html?id=spk00205>
    - Visit historic downtown
      * Shops, bars, eateries, gallery, museum, visitor center
      * Photos with Bemidji’s famous Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox Statues
    - Tour Bemidji State University

<https://www.bemidjistate.edu>

* + - Cocktails at the historic Ruttger’s Birchmont Lodge deck bar.
      * <https://ruttgersbemidji.com>
    - Dine at one of many great local restaurants including
      * Tutto Bene – voted one of Minnesota’s finest Italian restaurants
      * <https://tuttobene.us>
  + MORE AREA INFORMATION
    - <https://www.visitbemidji.com>
    - <https://www.bemidji.org>

**TRANSFER DAY**

* Breakfast with host families
* Transfer from Bemidji Clubs to Detroit Lakes Club

Day 10 September 10 Thursday

Detroit Lakes is in a lovely area with many Lakes, forests and farms.

Croatian RFE team arrives in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

RFE team attends Detroit Lakes Noon Rotary meeting

Host families pick up their RFE guest and give a driving tour of the city of Detroit Lakes and surrounding area (host choose route).

RFE guests arrive at hosts home, settle in and have time to relax

Host provide meal and entertainment for the evening

Day 11 September 11 Friday

Breakfast at host’s home

‘Thomas Dambo Trolls’ hunting in Detroit Lakes Area

Lunch at The Bridge

More Troll hunting or tour Shears Food in Perham

Visit Bucks Mill Brewery or Disgruntled Brewing in Perham

Return to the host home to rest and relax

Group Dinner (location to be determined)

Host home for the evening

Day 12 September 12 Saturday

Breakfast at host’s home

Prepare for transfer to Fargo North Dakota

Arrive in Fargo

Tour the natural playground, a large community project funded by Rotary and others

Tour the Fargo Air Museum or one of the college campuses

Group dinner for the Croatian RFE team and their host families and other Rotarians

Host families take their guests home

Day 13 September 13 Sunday

Brunch/Early Lunch in downtown Fargo

Photo Opportunity at the Fargo Theater

Visit the Stave Church at the Hjemkomst Center which is devoted to the Scandinavian heritage of Fargo North Dakota and neighboring Moorhead Minnesota. This is part of the Historical and Cultural Society of Moorhead.

Tour Brewhalla, which is a complex of shops and restaurants with a craft brewery as the centerpiece. Or alternatively tour one of the college campuses in either Fargo or Moorhead.

Evening activity could be a Red Hawks minor league baseball game (depending on the Red Hawks schedule) or a BBQ dinner at the Rotary Shelter in Lindenwood.

Day 14 September 14 Monday

RFE concludes

The Croatian team will be brought to the Fargo airport to fly home or elsewhere to continue their travels. If some team members prefer to rent a car or take a bus or train to continue their travels, then they will be brought to the appropriate place for that.