

BRADY STREET AND THE EAST SIDE

Brady is still weird.

In 2005, barely out of the closet, I opened Babylon, a Thursday gay night at the old Trocadero on Brady. We hit capacity on the first night.

Twenty years later, I sit on the board of Brady's business district and I'm still queering up the street. It's been Milwaukee's Little Italy, its hippie strip and its late-night hangout, and you can feel all three on one walk. That's the point.

THE WALK

Six stops. Wear real shoes.

01

WHERE	Brady Street and the Lower East Side
PACE	On foot, one long weekend
BEST FOR	May to October
	Solo, a couple, or your crew

OPEN THE WALK ON A MAP

STOP 01

Walk Brady end to end.

Start at Prospect and drift west toward the river. Italian grocers, head-shop-era storefronts and corner bars, all in a few blocks. Look up: the second floors tell the story.

STOP 02

Black Cat Alley.

A back alley off Ivanhoe Place turned outdoor gallery. Five minutes to walk through, an hour if you take photos.

STOP 03

A film at the Oriental.

A 1920s movie palace on Farwell, still showing films. Buy a ticket for the lobby alone.

STOP 04

Lake Park.

Olmsted's firm designed it: stone bridges over wooded ravines, the North Point Lighthouse up top. Downtown in the morning, trailhead by lunch.

STOP 05

Down the bluff.

Take the stairs to Bradford Beach and the Oak Leaf Trail. Walk Lake Michigan, then climb back up for dinner.

STOP 06

Landmark Lanes.

Old-school bowling under the Oriental's block, with a bar and an arcade. The rainy-night plan everyone ends up loving.

EAT AND DRINK LIKE YOU LIVE HERE

GLORIOSO'S

The Little Italy anchor. Deli sandwich plus the olive bar, carried to Lake Park.

NESSUN DORMA

Sidewalk tables, good sandwiches, a deep drink list. My solo dinner at the bar.

SCIORTINO'S

An old-school Italian bakery. Cannoli filled to order, eaten on the sidewalk.

ROCHAMBO

Coffee and tea with big windows. Take a window seat and watch Brady wake up.

ZAFFIRO'S

Cracker-thin Milwaukee pizza in a room that hasn't changed. Get the sausage.

VON TRIER

A German beer hall on Farwell. Order a liter and stay longer than you planned.

After last call: Ma Fischer's, the East Side diner. A Milwaukee rite of passage.

[PLAN MY WEEKEND](#)

NEED TO KNOW

TRAIN

Skip the car. Hiawatha from Chicago, then The Hop to Burns Commons and walk the last stretch. Intermodal until everyone else throws a fit.

TIMING

Brady keeps late hours. Weekend nights run loud, Sunday mornings are quiet.

LAYER

The lake sets the weather. It's often cooler by the water, so bring a layer in July.

SUMMER

Summer brings the Brady Street Festival. Plan your trip around it.

PRO TIP

Tell your AI assistant what corner you're on and let it walk with you. Best tour guide I've had.

STAY AT THE PFISTER. WALK EVERYWHERE ELSE.

WANT A WEEKEND LIKE THIS?

I'll build yours, down to where you sit for dinner.

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