



Minnesota Zoo Field Trip

2026-2027 School Year



MINNESOTA ZOO

Welcome!

We are excited for your
visit to the Zoo!

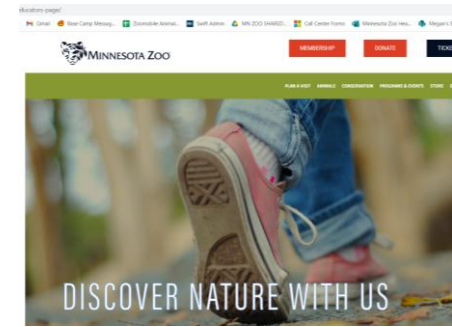


Minnesota Zoo Field Trip

Our mission: To connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife.

Your team has decided a Minnesota Zoo field trip fits into your school year and has selected a few dates.

What's next?



- First, visit the Zoo's website at mnzoo.org/educators-page/ to view the fees and consider adding an in-person or virtual program.
- Download a copy of our Teacher Field Guide to learn about programs and resources.
- Register your field trip online. Read through the confirmation email.
- Schedule the bus transportation as per your school procedures. Visit mnzoo.org/busfund/ to see if your school qualifies to apply for our Bus Fund Scholarship. Applications are open from August 3 to September 11, 2026.

Cost and Payment

- School and youth groups receive discounted rates when they have 8 or more youth (ages 3+) on a field trip and book a minimum of 2 weeks in advance
 - See mnzoo.org/plan-a-field-trip/ for more details
- Field trips must be paid for at least two weeks in advance by one of the following methods. A credit card will be needed to get through the online registration, but that card will not be charged if you choose the payment plan option during checkout.
 - Credit card (preferred method)
 - Single check (received by the Zoo more than two weeks before trip)



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Add a program to your trip!

In-person Zoo Classes (offered through May 14, 2027)

60 minutes in duration

\$150/class (max 30 students)

- What's a Wetland? (grades K-2, 3-5)
- Animal Classifieds (grades K-2, 3-5)
- Biomimicry (grades K-2, 3-5)
- Animal Enrichment Challenge (grades 3-5, 6-12)
- Zoo Exhibit Design (grades 3-5, 6-12)
- Adaptations in Action (grades K-12)
- NEW! Conservation Quest (grades 6-8, 9-12)
- NEW! Critter Connection (all ages) – 30 minutes



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Can I do a program before we visit?

Add a VIRTUAL program before or after your visit!

Virtual Tours/Programs (30 minutes)

All ages

- Ocean Tour – Discovery Bay
- Tropics Tour – Tropics Trail
- Penguin Tour – 3M Penguins of the African Coast (June-August only)

Virtual Classes (30-45 minutes)

- Penguin Palooza (grades K-2)
- Animal Enrichment (grades 3-5)
- Advanced Animal Enrichment (grades 6-12)
- Creature Feature (all ages)



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Now, what to do at the Zoo?

Visit our animal habitats. Home to more than 4,500 animals, you'll tour along the Tropics Trail, Minnesota Trail, Northern Trail, including Russia's Grizzly Coast, Discovery Bay, Treetop Trail, and the Family Farm (open seasonally). Don't forget to visit the new Red Panda Forest!

*Note there will be construction around the waterfront area of the Zoo, and snow monkeys will be off habitat at the beginning of the 26-27 school year while improvements are finishing up.

Add some self-guided at-the-Zoo activities.

We have at-the-Zoo activities available on our website. Visit our Field Trip and classroom resources at the Learning Corner.



In-class preparation

- Visit the Learning Corner and go to the “Field Trip and Classroom Resources” Section of the Minnesota Zoo web site to download free curriculum and in-class activities.
- Have students visit the Minnesota Zoo’s Animal webpage to learn more about the animals before your visit.
- Use social media sites like the MNZoo Facebook and Instagram pages for current news stories.
- In class, use the zoo animals in spelling words, English projects, math problems, artwork, and science studies.
- Have students select an animal to do more in-depth study and plan to visit that animal when at the Zoo.
- Plan discussions about what students saw and learned at the Zoo when you return to the classroom.



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Before your field trip

- ❑ Establish how many students are coming, collect payment, and pay by check or credit card at least two weeks in advance. Plan to invite at least one adult chaperone for every eight students.
- ❑ Check the Zoo's website for any updates mnzoo.org. Reread the paperwork received from the Zoo.
- ❑ Prepare any student and chaperone materials. Some suggestions are; create a timeline schedule for the chaperone, have a student list for each leader, share cell phone numbers for emergencies and note your departure meeting location. Use mnzoo.org/plan-a-visit to learn more about our daily scheduled programs and plan a schedule for the students.
- ❑ If you're visiting during our STEM Stations, be sure to stop by! Visit mnzoo.org/plan-a-field-trip/ to learn more about our free activity opportunities.
- ❑ Prepare boxes or brown paper grocery bags to hold lunches to be transported in. Remember to label them with your school's name.
- ❑ Check the weather and send a reminder home for students to dress for being outside and to bring their bag lunch.
- ❑ Gather paperwork for the final head count and emergency contact information.
- ❑ Remind yourself to bring your water bottle and comfortable walking shoes.



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At school the day of your field trip

- ☐ Greet students and parents.
- ☐ Pair chaperones with student group and hand out student/chaperone information.
- ☐ Remind students about expectations at the Zoo (as needed). Pack lunches in bags or boxes to transport them.
- ☐ Give last minute instructions, plan where to meet at the end of the field trip.
- ☐ Take attendance count of students from your classroom and all attending classrooms. Take final count of all adults, including teachers. [You will need these numbers to check-in at the Zoo.](#)
- ☐ Load buses, give any last-minute instructions to your bus driver. **Away you go....**



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Arrival at the Zoo

-Watch for and follow the signs for School Group Bus Drop-off/Entry.

-Lower South (Main Entrance) from September-April and East from May 1-June 5. There will be a Zoo staff and Volunteers to help answer your questions.

-Lead teacher can go to the Zoo entry to begin check in.

-Teacher/chaperones begins to unload bus. Students and chaperones group and enter the Zoo when ready.

-Maps are currently online only. Have chaperones scan the QR code at Guest Services when they arrive.

Drop lunches off for storage

Second teacher can lead group to lunch storage area. Jackets can be left there during the winter months. An eating area is available in Discovery Bay. Here you will find shelves, bins, and see the lunch tables. More storage is also available in the Tropics.



Remember you can eat anytime you need to, the Zoo has no scheduled lunch times required for bag lunches. If the weather is nice, we suggest eating outside at our picnic tables!



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Ready to explore?

Start with the map. Choose a trail or follow the schedule from your lead teacher.



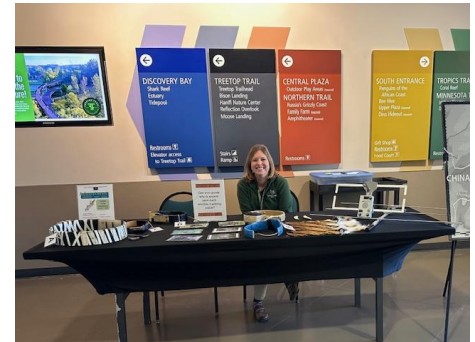
New in 2025! Red Panda Forest!



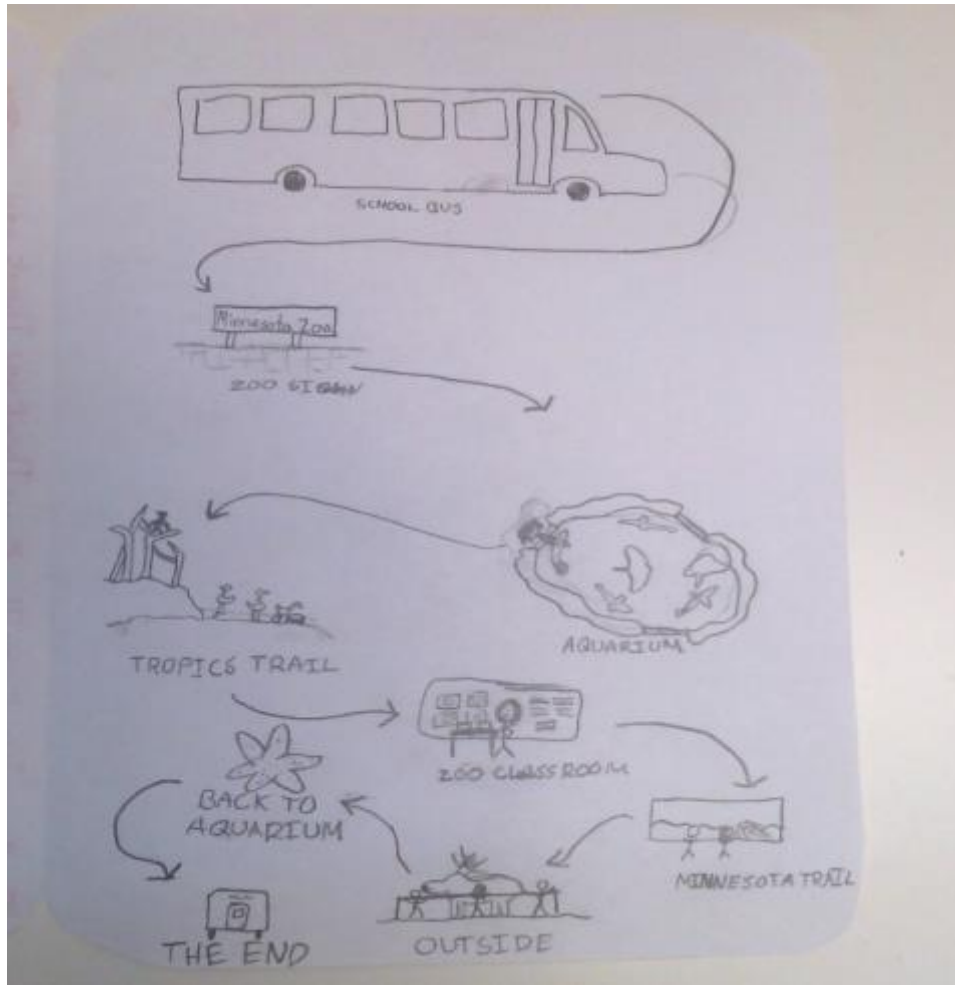
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To make your visit more enjoyable remind students to:

- Take time viewing the animals. They might not have time to see everything, enjoy the trails they choose.
- Stop and watch at each exhibit for a while, students will be surprised by what they see. Remember animals will be moving, eating or could be sleeping, we all make small movements even when sleeping.
- Take time to read the signs along the pathways. They will give students a lot of information about the animals they are seeing.
- Ask questions of volunteers and staff, we love to answer them! Visit the volunteer stations along each trail with artifacts and more details on the animals.



Here's our favorite step-by-step guide as designed by a 5th grade student.



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And don't forget to snap a few photos.



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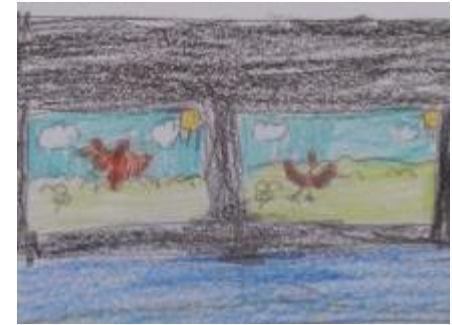
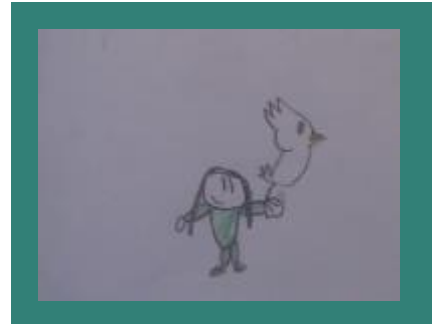
Wow, the day will go quickly. Time to head back to school.

- ☐ Meet at your preselected meeting location at the end of the day.
- ☐ Load buses where you were dropped off.
- ☐ Why not snap a great classroom photo before you leave!
- ☐ Have a safe trip back to school.



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Talk about your field trip.
Use information you learned at the Zoo in
your classroom or at home.
Write thank you notes to your
parents and chaperones .
Post student Zoo artwork around
your school.



Back at school

Congratulate yourselves
on preparing for a
fantastic environmental
field trip!



Thank you for your support and help in supporting the
Minnesota Zoo's mission to connect people, animals and
the natural world to save wildlife.



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