

Missouri State Capitol Tour Frequently Asked Questions

When are tours available?

The tour schedule changes seasonally to accommodate the high volume of requests in the spring and fall. The schedule is as follows:

February through May, and September through October (spring and fall school tour seasons):

- Tours are available Monday through Thursday at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 1:30 p.m., 2 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Tours are available on Friday at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
- Tours are available on Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- **Note:** Fall tour season dates may be adjusted in the future based on teacher/school feedback.

June through August, and November through January:

- Tours are available Monday through Thursday at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Tours are available on Friday at 9 a.m., 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Tours are available on Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Are reservations required?

Yes, reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance of the desired tour date.

When can I make a reservation?

Reservations can be made online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at www.mocapitoltours.com. Museum team members can assist with making tour reservations; call 573-751-2854, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If the phone is not immediately answered, please leave a message with group size, preferred time and date, and contact information. We will return your call as soon as possible.

The reservation system opens on a rotating schedule with 11 months of tours available for reservation at any given time. For example, if a school would like to reserve a tour in April 2023, they can make a reservation as early as May 1, 2022.

Schools or groups wanting tours during the spring school tour season (February-May) should plan their tours well in advance. April and May fill up quickly.

How many people can go on a tour?

To provide the best possible tour for all visitors, tour size is limited to 30.

What if my group is larger than 30?

Groups that are larger than 30 should plan to break their group into two or more smaller groups and reserve multiple tour times.

Are tours available on state and federal holidays?

The Capitol and the State Museum are closed on some federal holidays. These include: New Year's Day (actual and observed), Easter, Christmas Day (actual and observed), and Thanksgiving Day (and Friday if declared a holiday by the governor). Tours and hours may vary slightly on some other holidays, when the Capitol closes at 4 p.m. Call the museum at 573-751-2854, or check the reservation system (www.mocapitoltours.com) to see what is available.

Are guided "walk-in" tours available?

Reservations are required for guided tours. However, walk-in visitors *may be* added to pre-scheduled/reserved tours if the tour size does not exceed 30 total attendees. Inquire at the museum guest services desk near the rotunda to discuss options.

How long are the tours?

The Missouri state Capitol is a busy center of state government, and tour routes and lengths vary depending on activities in the building. In general, plan on 45 minutes per tour. Tours may be shorter if certain areas of the building, such as the House Lounge (the location of the Benton mural), are in use for meetings, or if construction or annual maintenance is underway. Tours may go longer, depending on questions or special areas of interest expressed by visitors on the tour.

What should I expect to see on tour?

All tours cover parts of the first through fourth floors of the Capitol, primarily in the building's center and west wing. Museum educators will highlight the history of the building, its architecture and its artworks using the rotunda, second-floor lunettes and the third-floor rotunda. When not in use by the House or undergoing maintenance, the tour also includes Thomas Hart Benton's famous mural "A Social History of the State of Missouri," located in the House Lounge.

During the session of the Missouri General Assembly (January through May), tours will end in the House visitors gallery, where students and visitors can be seated by the door attendant to watch the Missouri House of Representatives in action. When the General Assembly is not in session, museum educators lead a short discussion of Missouri's government structure and the chamber's artworks from the visitors gallery.

When is the best time of year to visit the Capitol?

The best time of year to visit depends on the wants and needs of the visitor. If you would like to see Missouri's General Assembly in full swing, visit Tuesdays through Thursdays during session, which runs from early January through mid-May. This is the busiest time of year for school field trips, rallies and other activities. With more temperate weather, the pace picks up in March, April and May. Reserve a tour very early if you want to secure a time and date during these months.

If you want a quieter exploration of the building, visit on weekends or during the summer. With the exception of some holiday events, November and December are also slower-paced.

Will the museum ever cancel a reserved tour?

Museum team members make every effort to accommodate all reserved tours. However, weather conditions or unforeseen events may make travel to and around the Capitol treacherous. If road conditions are unsuitable for travel, the museum team will call all visitors or groups with reservations to reschedule tours.

Please call the museum as soon as possible if circumstances require you to cancel a reserved tour (573-751-2854). Tours are in demand. If we know in advance, we can open those tour slots for other visitors or groups.

Can I explore the Capitol on my own?

The Missouri Capitol is a public building and worth exploring on your own. There is much to see that is not on a standard tour. The building is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends. These are also the hours of the Missouri State Museum, located on the first floor of the Capitol. Visitors are welcome to explore the public hallways, rotunda and museum at their own pace. Please be respectful of offices or activities occurring in hearing rooms or public assembly spaces. Check in at the museum's visitor services desk near the Capitol's entrance for interior and exterior self-guided tour brochures. Museum team members are also happy to suggest areas to explore based on visitor time constraints and interests.

Coming soon: In 2023, the Missouri State Museum will introduce self-guided audio tours. Tour wands will be available for checkout at the visitor services desk. Visitors can follow a suggested tour route or "choose their own adventure" based on time and interest.

Is the Capitol ADA accessible?

The Capitol's main entrance, public hallways, meeting spaces and restrooms are ADA accessible. Elevators located in both wings and in the center of the building are available to take visitors from the basement level to the fourth floor. A chair lift, which must be operated by Capitol staff, allows access to the House visitors gallery. Some offices and the Legislative Library are only accessible via stairs. Additionally, the north hallway on the fourth floor has steps between the east and west building wings. To access each side, take an elevator to the third floor, cross over to the opposite wing, and take a second elevator back to the fourth floor.

For more information on Capitol access, visit the State of Missouri Disability Portal at: <https://disability.mo.gov/capitol-access.htm>.

Can I visit with my legislator when I visit the Capitol?

Schedules of representatives and senators vary greatly throughout the year. We suggest calling your representative's or senator's office to schedule an appointment. To find your state legislative official and their contact information, visit: <https://house.mo.gov/>. Type your address and city into the "Find Your Representative" boxes. This will pull up a list of state legislative, statewide elected and federal elected officials with links to their contact information.

Are whispering gallery and dome tours available?

The whispering gallery is a unique feature of the building, and the view from the top of the Capitol is beautiful. However, these areas are not publically accessible. They are also not ADA accessible, as they require climbing a narrow staircase with more than 180 steps. State legislative officials or their staff occasionally guide tours of the whispering gallery and dome, and arrangements can be made through their offices well in advance of a planned visit to the Capitol.

Are virtual tours available?

The museum has produced six short videos focused on the history of Missouri as told through the Capitol and its artworks. These can be accessed through links on our Educational Resources webpage (<https://mostateparks.com/page/85051/educational-resources>). School groups interested in the history of the Capitol can also request a virtual question-and-answer session with the museum team. To plan a session, please contact the museum's education specialist at education.statemuseum@dnr.mo.gov.