



**The North Side** Venture onto the North Side – what locals call the three counties north of Twin Falls – and you’ll find some of the best of small-town America. Jerome, Gooding, and Lincoln counties retain much of the charm of agricultural settlements. Shoshone, which straddles a Union Pacific line, kept some of the rowdiness of the railroad’s heyday, too. But in south Jerome, new development is adding a more urban flair, and shopping options are multiplying. You’ll likely notice a couple of the North Side’s ethnic influences, both tied to agriculture. Sheep ranching helped to attract Basque residents in decades past, and Basque culture is still a highlight of Gooding. These days, jobs at dairy farms and cheese factories are drawing Hispanic residents, whose influence is particularly evident in Jerome’s downtown.

### **There’s Lots to See and Lots to Do**

Downtown Jerome boasts freshly refurbished sidewalks, decorated with brick, old-fashioned lighting, banners, trees, and landscaping. Enough of the city’s historic brick and stone buildings are preserved to give downtown an air of the past. Within two blocks of the central intersection – Main Street and Lincoln Avenue – are several restaurants and a fine variety of shops: antiques and espresso, salons and sandwiches, thrift stores and dolls, clothing and cabinetry, bars and barbershops. But more and more, the downtown mix includes stores catering to Jerome County’s growing Hispanic population. They include a Mexican bakery, a meat market, imported gifts, and a quinceañera gown shop, also selling piñatas and fancy Western duds. In downtown’s Mexican grocery stores, you’ll find bins of fiery peppers, cornhusks, and hot-climate fruits.

Inclined to the agricultural? At the Idaho Farm and Ranch Museum, you’ll find a sprawling collection of rusty farm implements of every description. The outdoor museum’s “streets” are lined with buggy barns, a historic church, Jerome’s first jail, old homes, outhouses, and shacks of wood or tin. A mock post office, doctor’s office, and general store share a wooden sidewalk. Tours are by appointment; call 324-5641. On the second weekend in June, when IFARM hosts Live History Days, you can ride a horse-drawn wagon and watch costumed presenters shell corn, churn butter, and display other pioneer skills.

Jerome offers other pleasures for the senses, too. Snake River Canyon scenery beautifies the Jerome Country Club south of town. Saturday-night dances

enliven the old rock Spanbauer Barn, east of Jerome. Horse races at the fairgrounds might stir your blood. And beside U.S. Highway 93 east of Jerome, you’ll find By The Way Espresso in a little log shack with a drive-up window. The espresso shop, popular with the locals, sits between a golf course and a cornfield – an incongruous setting for one of the standard urban pleasures.

The heart of Shoshone is the railroad. Two streets running along each side of the tracks create the appearance of a single, incredibly wide avenue. Fronting this lifeline are: several historic buildings of lava rock construction; the brick Union Pacific depot, now overgrown with ivy; the landmark Manhattan Café, whose walls can teach you a good deal about railroad history; a raised platform for train viewing, with a roof and benches for comfort, and an adjacent rose garden for ambiance; a variety of saloons and shops, including the aptly named Whistle Stop Antiques & Crafts; and a park with a pool and playground.

Shoshone is still about transportation. Several highways converge in Shoshone, which is Magic Valley’s gateway to the scenic splendors of Sun Valley and, beyond that, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. But don’t be surprised if you must wait for a train to pass before heading north.

In Gooding, must-see buildings on Main Street include the 1906 Gooding Hotel, a charming shingle-fronted, two-story building now operating as a bed and breakfast, and the 1920 Schubert Theater, a historic brick building with a tile entryway and a

*LOTS, CONTINUED ON BACK*



## SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO COMPASS POINTS

LOTS, CONTINUED FROM FRONT

noteworthy hand-painted stage screen. The latter building is home to the Gooding Cinema (showing movies on weekend evenings) and the Western States College of Performing Arts and Humanities. At 2 p.m. on Saturdays, the public can watch the recording of Idaho Opry Time shows. To taste some of Gooding's local fare, you might stop for an espresso at Coyote Joe's – where bookshelves and board games lend character – or eat at Zeppes Pizza-Subs, also on Main Street. Zeppes – where the staff is exceedingly friendly and the diners visit between tables – is abuzz with small-town life. The

restaurant's surprisingly large arcade room holds vintage games, a pair of pool tables, air hockey, and a plastic slide for children.

The Gooding Basque Cultural Center serves a multi-course Basque supper on the first Friday of each month (except July); wine cake, homemade stew, and marinated lamb chops are among the menu highlights. At the Gooding Country Club and Golf Course nearby, many trees shade the small course, and cows graze in adjacent fields. Gooding County's historical museum on Main Street is open by appointment only; call 934-5359.

## Two National Monuments

In two national monuments on the North Side, you'll see a formidable but lovely lunar landscape, and a ghostly reminder of the Japanese-American experience in World War II.

Craters of the Moon National Monument, northeast of Shoshone, derives its name from otherworldly lava fields – a harsh, seemingly barren landscape that nevertheless sustains wildlife and a lavish wildflower display. A video at the Visitor Center provides a lesson on lava. Trails take visitors to many of the strange rock formations, and other portions of the

vast moonscape await enjoyment by wilderness hikers, snowshoers, and cross-country skiers.

Minidoka Internment National Monument, southeast of Jerome, commemorates the hardships of people of Japanese ancestry whom the U.S. government interned following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. The monument is newly established, so there aren't many structured activities you can do there yet. But you can see the basalt walls of a guardhouse, and barracks on nearby private land have been turned into farm buildings. Interpretive signs in this ghost town might prompt you to ponder what it was like to be uprooted from a home in Washington, Oregon, or Alaska and brought to this windswept land of lava and sagebrush to live behind barbed wire.

## TRY A BABY HOG

Right beside U.S. Highway 93, on the south side of Shoshone, sits the unassuming building that's been home to the Shoshone Snack Bar for close to half a century. Once a drive-in, the remodeled restaurant now provides indoor booth seating. But the lively crowd of customers generally spills outdoors, to picnic tables out front or to tailgates in the parking lot. Almost all the high school girls in town work here, and Shoshone's football, basketball, and volleyball teams eat post-game meals here regularly. The burgers at Shoshone Snack Bar – including the specialty "Baby Hog," a cheeseburger with ham – have garnered statewide attention. The menu includes plenty of other drive-in classics,

like foot-long hotdogs, chicken strips, floats, shakes, and onion rings the staff is downright proud of. And the fry sauce flows freely. But the restaurant's headline attraction is its lineup of generously

sized, soft ice cream cones. Order a large one, and you're likely to be asked: "Are you sure?" A large ice cream cone (\$1.93) measures a whopping 12 inches from the base of the cone to the tip of the swirl.

