

## Fargo, ND



Fargo. It's one of the best, if not the very best, Coen Brothers movie. It's the name of a reasonably entertaining television drama, based loosely on the aforementioned film. It is also the most populous city in North Dakota – fully fifteen percent of the state's residents are ensconced within the city limits. For our purposes, Fargo offers a number of entertaining golf options, most of them within easy driving distance of the city's curiously named Hector Airport. So grab a National Rental Car and get ready to explore.



Edgewood Golf Course

**Edgewood Golf Course** is a likely first stop. “I grew up there, so I am predisposed to think it’s wonderful,” offers esteemed golf professional John Dahl. “However residents and visitors alike are charmed by Edgewood. It’s an old-school, 1920s-era track, tree-lined, which is rare in this area, and only about 6,300 yards in length.”

Dahl has been the head man at nearby Oxbow Country Club in Fargo for some thirty-five years, and for many years held a firm place on GOLF Magazine’s list of Top 100 Instructors. “The thing about the area is we have virtually no elevation change to speak of. The humorous billboard on the highway sums it up well. It says, “our mountain removal project is complete!”

Edgewood, which is in close proximity to the Red River, holds the interest of golfers even at its truncated length. With numerous doglegs tightening landing areas, putting the ball in the correct position on the fairway is critical, and effectively takes the driver out of the hands of longer hitters. Jack Nicklaus was a long hitter himself six decades ago, even as a teenager. That might explain why he lost in the finals of the Junior Jaycees Tournament at Edgewood, way back in the mid-1950s!



Rose Creek

Speaking of truncated courses, **Rose Creek** is another facility worth visiting, despite it only being half the course it once was, and will be again. A levee adjacent to the golf course has been redirected, taking nine holes out of play for the time being, but the nine that remain (Holes 1-7, 17 and 18) are some of North Dakota's best. Built in the mid-90s, this parkland setting is wonderful grounds for golf, dotted as it is with lakes and ponds throughout. The third hole is a great example. This par-5 threads between a series of ponds on both sides, the fairway funnels to just twenty yards wide after a generously proportioned tee shot. The finishing holes are stout two-shotters, both in excess of 400 yards, both generally playing into the ever-present breeze. The 17th has bunkers right and water left on the approach shot. The finale features water right and out-of-bounds left on the second shot, meaning the tension doesn't abate until the ball is safely on the putting surface.



Detroit Country Club

A bit further out of town, actually across the state line in Minnesota, is [Detroit Country Club](#), about forty-five minutes from Fargo in the town of Detroit Lakes. The club is celebrating its centennial in 2016, and like many 'Golden Age' courses, it is short (6,100 yards) and tree-lined, with small greens. If a player can survive the daunting beginning, a respectable score is in the offing. But first one must negotiate the short-but-tricky second, where the tee ball must hug left, flirting with OB, to avoid being blocked out by the tree canopy on the right side. The third is a 220-yard par-3, followed by an uphill, tree-lined par-4 stretching 420 yards. It's also a dynamite match-play venue, as evidenced by the wildly popular Pine-To-Palm amateur tournament, which has run continuously (save for the World War Two years) since 1931. Players use irons or hybrids during qualifying rounds to insure they keep the ball in play, Once the match play portion begins, drivers come out of the bag, as long-ball hitters attempt to drive the greens of short par-4s, or reach par 5s in two, hoping to pressure their opponent.

According to Dahl, there's pressure on all North Dakotans to get their licks in while they can. "People play with intensity, because the season is short, the weather can be uncooperative, to say the least, and they love their golf. Some avid players post one hundred rounds a year, which is easy to do in Florida or Arizona, but quite the feat in a climate that barely allows a six-month season!"

Fortunately there are other diversions to be found around Fargo. Three colleges in town mean there's a surfeit of sporting activities to attend, the marquee attraction being the North Dakota State University Bison, who've won the FCS title five times in succession. There's also a revitalized downtown area, almost unrecognizable in comparison to what passed for a centralized dining-and-drinking cenmater a few decades past. "For a small city, Fargo has its fair share of lively gathering places," concludes Dahl. Locals flock to places like [Doolittle's](#), for delightful rotisserie-cooked entrees, which management refers to as wood-fired cooking. Smoked hanger steak, spare ribs and Jamaican jerk pork tenderloin are among the favorites. Just as popular

is **Maxwells**, with their New Zealand Elk tenderloin, lobster spinach fettuccini and lime-grilled Norwegian salmon.