

# A PERFECT DAY IN SPENSERTOWN

## SAMPLE ESSAY

*(Everything in this essay is fiction – any resemblance to actual places, streets, people, etc. are strictly coincidental.)*

Good morning, welcome to SpenserTown. We're going to have a perfect day. Put on your walking shoes and comfortable clothes. Make sure you have your camera and, of course, this tour book.

First, we are going to travel to City Center. All of the morning activities will be in that area of the city. Take the freeway to exit 22 and turn left. Public parking facilities are clearly marked.

## BREAKFAST

For breakfast, we have several options. Just decide what you feel like eating today. At 111 Portland Street, you will find The Bakery. The greatest pastries baked fresh daily, good coffee, and an assortment of juices make for a satisfying continental breakfast. The prices are wallet-friendly and you can order a combination of drink and pastry for just a few dollars.

If you are looking for more food, head over to The Arch at 5434 Missouri Drive (just around the corner) and get in line. Like the line indicates, the food here is worth the wait. The place will be crowded and noisy but the biscuits are homemade, the juice fresh squeezed, and the egg dishes delicious. The prices are a little high but, I think you will agree, absolutely worth it. While you're waiting, look around at the people on the street or playing in the park next door.

## MORNING ACTIVITIES

After breakfast, we're ready for the morning activities. Option A is a walking tour of the City Center sights. It requires about a mile of walking but it is all on sidewalks, and the ground is flat. There are also opportunities to rest along the way. There is no charge. Option B is a riding tour. It involves a shuttle bus and covers more territory and no walking, but has an admission fee. Both options start just steps from where you are.

### RIDING TOUR

At the City Center Square, you can catch a tour shuttle. If so, we will meet you back here in a couple of hours.

## WALKING TOUR

If you chose the walking tour, let's get started.

- The City Center Square where you are standing was originally the town market place. Fresh fruit and produce would be sold from stalls along the pathways. Today the Square is a gathering place and a resting place.
- From the Square we will move north on El Paso Boulevard to City Hall. This is an old building made entirely of native granite. The dome on top is real gold! You can walk into the building if you are interested in architecture. There is no admission fee.
- From City Hall, turn left onto the Savannah River Walk. Commercial ships used to dock along here and fisherman would sell fresh catch. Today pleasure boats dock for passengers to enjoy the collection of shops and restaurants along the waterfront. Walk down the street and enjoy the sights. At the little plaza there is a statue honoring Spenser, America's Favorite Traveling Dog. This is a good photo opportunity. A small playground will provide a break for the children with you, and just across the street is a great little coffee shop if your parents need a pick-me-up.
- Resuming our walk, we will turn left on El Paso Boulevard as we leave the river. On the left is the SpenserTown Methodist Church. It is the oldest church in town and was built over 100 years ago. You can go inside and look at the beautiful stained glass windows. This is another good photo opportunity.
- Continuing down El Paso Boulevard, you will pass several other churches. Some of them will be open and you can go inside if you would like.
- Three blocks down El Paso Boulevard, you will turn right onto St. Louis Avenue. The SpenserTown Train Station is on the right. It is an old station with the traditional ticket window and wooden benches. Pretend that you are going on a train ride and let the children "buy" tickets, "wait" on the benches, and go outside to "see" the train arrive. If you are lucky, you might actually see the train arrive. The people who work in the train station are very nice and will be glad to answer your questions or even pose for pictures.
- Leaving the train station, continue on St. Louis Avenue, ahead on the left is a lovely garden with a fish pond. Sit down and take a break. You can buy food from a vending machine to feed the fish and ducks.
- Next door to the park is one of my favorite souvenir shops, The Good Boy Shop. It carries all kinds of special Spenser t-shirts, trinkets, and other souvenirs. It also has a selection of SpenserTown tour books if you are looking for more information.
- Leaving the souvenir shop, continue on until St. Louis Avenue runs into the City Center Square and you are back where you started. At this entrance to the park, there is a very nice 9/11 memorial. This is a good

place to have a conversation with your children about patriotism and how people displayed flags everywhere after this terrible thing happened to our country. There is a little stand nearby that sells patriotic stuff if you would like to buy a flag or a decal or a pin to mark this memory with your kids. This is a good place to take a photo.

## LUNCH TIME

It is lunch time, and I'm sure you are hungry. Right down El Paso Boulevard is the favorite local hot dog place called The Hungry Puppy. It specializes in all kinds of hot dogs and corn dogs with several options of side dishes. You can eat there or take the food to go and eat in the Square.

If you are more interested in a sit-down meal, there is a world famous, family-style, home-cooking restaurant around the corner on Philadelphia Avenue called Crazy Horse Family Cafe. There are no reservations and no dress codes at this place. You are seated at a table with other diners. There are no menus – just a list of daily specials and an assortment of side dishes served automatically. Save room for dessert – they are usually pretty special.

## AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

### NAP

After lunch, you may want to head back to your hotel for a nap or a little reading – and that's okay. If you are up for continuing to explore SpenserTown, I have a great idea for you.

### HIKING

Jump in your car or call a cab and head up north to Columbia Grasslands Park. A beautiful five thousand acres of forest, lakes, streams, and grassland with miles of walking and horse trails are available to all. Here you can rent horses or bicycles and take to the trails or walk until you drop. Children can run and play. Most trails are easy for even the smallest child, and all trails are identified with degree of difficulty. You might want to stop on the way and pick up bottles of water. Don't worry – there are bathrooms throughout the park. There are also statues and benches and even a little gazebo. Sometimes on the weekends, you will find couples getting married out here. Over in the corner is a century-old cemetery. You can make up interesting stories about the families that have found their final resting place there. Help children determine how old people were when they died. You can talk about how people live longer now. At the end of this excursion, you might be ready to head for your hotel and rest for awhile. Let's look ahead for a minute to plan for the evening activities.

**NOTE:** SpenserTown is fortunate to have some special activities available in the evening. In the summer there are free concerts on the river and in the City Center Square. Going here will not require any dressing up. Ask at the desk in your hotel for the options available that day. You can also call the Visitors' Center at 123-111-2222. The other option for evening will require that you clean up a little. The Michigan Theater downtown has a daily performance at 8pm. The cost is minimal and the dress code is pretty casual. One of the dinner options requires reservations. This would be a good option if you decide to try the theater.

## **DINNER**

I am assuming that everyone will be hungry for a full meal at dinner time so both options provide plenty to satisfy hungry tummies. The first option is Rose City Diner, a mid-priced American continental type restaurant with yummy seafood and steak entrees. This restaurant offers alcoholic beverages and has a children's menu. Reservation can be made by calling 123.123.1234. Rose City Diner is located on America Way in downtown SpenserTown. Parking is available in the lot across the street and you can leave your car there if you chose to go to the theater. Valet parking is also available at the restaurant for a small fee.

The other dinner option is more casual. Mom's is a neighborhood type Italian restaurant located at 124 Yellowstone Street (near City Center Square). Public parking lots are on both sides of Yellowstone Street. Dress is casual, and the menu is typical Italian. Prices are very good, and the children's menu has everything from chicken fingers to spaghetti. Two children eat free for every adult meal ordered. Beer and wine are available, and no reservations are required. The famous dessert includes vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, and sprinkles – a real crowd pleaser.

## **EVENING ACTIVITIES**

With full tummies, let's make our way to the nearby evening activities. Whether you selected the free concerts or the theater or whether you would rather take a stroll along the river or visit the large bookstore on the corner, evenings in SpenserTown are magical.

Thanks for coming to visit us. Please come back real soon.

## REFERENCE LIST

The Bakery, 111 Portland Street, 123-123-8765  
The Arch at 5434 Missouri Drive, 123-123-6543  
SpenserTown Tour Company, City Center Square, 123-123-9999  
SpenserTown Methodist Church, 555 El Paso Boulevard, 123-111-8787  
The SpenserTown Train Station, 123 St. Louis Avenue, 123-111-6542  
The Good Boy Shop, 276 St. Louis Avenue, 123-123-3423  
The Hungry Puppy, 715 El Paso Boulevard, 123-111-8080  
Crazy Horse Family Café, 1142 Philadelphia Avenue, 123-123-3421  
Columbia Grasslands Park, Highway 50, exit 23  
SpenserTown Visitors' Center, City Center Square, 123-111-2222  
The Michigan Theater, 329 El Paso Boulevard, 123-123-4587  
Rose City Diner, 342 America Way, 123-123-1234  
Mom's, 124 Yellowstone Street, 123-111-4325