Forget pork tenderloins, the Indy 500, Bobby Knight and everything else Indiana is known for. The Hoosier State is staking a new claim as a beer powerhouse, and nowhere is that more apparent than in Indianapolis. Although the state boasts almost 90 breweries, roughly 25 of them reside either downtown or on the outskirts of the city. That number is sure to rise, making it impossible to visit all of them in one trip.

Yet it's not just the powerful brewery scene that makes the Hoosier capital a hot spot for a weekend getaway. The city is on the cusp of a massive distillery rollout. Pair that with an exciting food scene, and you'll wonder why it took you so long to get to the Crossroads of America.

**Friday**

Kick off your journey with a stop at **Triton Brewery** (5764 Wheeler Road, tritonbrewing.com). Although it's about 20 minutes from downtown, you'll do best having a car in Indy, as public transport isn't widely available. It's worth the visit, especially if the Hatchblower Pepper IPA is on tap. Don't let the name scare you—the hops blend nicely with the pepper (a combo of green pepper, chilipines, and jalapeños), putting heat on your lips, not in your sips. Year-round favorites include the Rail Splitter IPA and Fieldhouse Wheat.

As you make your way back into the heart of the Circle City, stop at **Flat 12 Bierwerks** (414 N. Dorman St., flat12.me). This dog-friendly brewery is always hopping, whether in its tasting room or patio, where you might find people hanging around the fire pit or playing cornhole. Samples are free, and you can taste as many as you'd like. There is a beer for every palate from the brewery's flagship Half Cycle IPA to seasonal favorites like the Cucumber Kolisch.

**Saturday**

Fuel up for the day's adventures at **Café Fatachou** (225 W. Washington St, tomilsonontaproom.com). Located on the second floor of the Historic Market House at the Indianapolis City Market, the bar features 18 rotating taps of Indiana ales and lagers. The beer alone is worth the stop, but the energy from beer-loving peers celebrating the start of the weekend makes this an ever-bigger must-do.

You have a plethora of incredible restaurants to choose from in downtown Indy, but veer toward Massachusetts Avenue (or, simply, Mass Ave), where you'll find the newly opened **Union 50** (620 N. East St., union-50.com), which serves prohibition-style cocktails, regional beers and a creative menu that changes seasonally. Still thirsty? Venture across the street to **Ralston's Draughthouse** (635 Massachusetts Ave, ralstonsdraughthouse.com) for a selection of 40 craft beers.
You can’t do an Indy beer tour without visiting Sun King Brewing (135 N. College Ave., sunkingbrewing.com), Indiana’s second-largest brewery, which has picked up medals at the Great American Beer Festival and World Beer Cup competitions. Expect to find crowds; Sun King offers some of the best prices on growler and bottle fills.

Sun King staples include the easy-sipping Sunlight Cream Ale, Wee Mac Scottish-Style Ale with its toffee undertones and the perfectly hopped Osiris Pale Ale.

**The Hoosier State is taking a new claim as a beer powerhouse.**

You’re now on your way to Broad Ripple, one of Indy’s most beloved areas, where you’ll find eclectic shops, art galleries, a vibrant bar scene and the Monon Trail, a 35-mile rails-to-trails corridor. Stop at Brugge Brasserie (2011 E. Westfield Blvd., bruggebrasserie.com), a Belgian themed brewery known for its moules and frites and Tripel de Riple, a blond triple. If it’s available, try Bad Kitty, a Leibzigg-style gose with a lemony sour finish.

Broad Ripple is also home of Thre Wise Men Brewing (1201 Broad Ripple Ave, thr3wisemen.com) where you’ll find seven of the brewery’s beers plus dozens of guest taps. One of its lightest is the Snow Bunny Blonde. Bold flavors are found in Rocky Ripple Pale Ale(brewed with a mix of Cascade, Crystal and Glacier hops) and the Centennial Martyr Double IPA (which uses clover honey from an Indiana farm).

Book a table for dinner at St. Elmo Steak House (127 S. Illinois St., steinos.com). Sit in either the more casual 1933 Lounge or the elegant, upscale restaurant, but do get St. Elmo’s renowned shrimp cocktail. The sauce packs a punch you’ll remember for a long time.

**Sunday**

Start your day at Tow Yard Brewing Co. (501 Madison Ave., towyardbrewing.com), another newcomer as of 2014. Head brewer Bradley Zimmerman worked for several years in Seattle, and he’s now infusing the Pacific Northwest into his Midwestern beers.

Its house beer is the Horse Power Double Pale Ale but if it’s a warm day, try the Hook Up, a blend of its Goldie Hops, an American-style golden ale, and citrus-forward soda. Order lunch off a deli menu that includes interesting creations like the Gator Done with fried alligator meat and buffalo sauce or the Deli Lama with falafel, smoked yogurt sauce, Sriracha fried onions and garlic naan. It’s also a great place to watch a game on one of the many TVs. Bonus? Free parking.

From there, drive to Indiana City Brewing (24 Shelby St., indianaicitybeer.com) where the tasting room is so simple that it borders on elegant. Try Shadow Boxer, a year-round oatmeal stout with a hoppy finish than most, Yacht Rock, a Belgian-style wheat ale; or Double Tribute Pale Ale (or its slightly less hoppy relative, Tribute).

Indiana City runs specials on growler and bottle fills on Sundays, so stock up.

Your last stop is in the historic Irvington neighborhood, where you’ll find Black Acre Brewing Co. (5822 E. Washington St., blackacrebrewing.com), a nanobrewery that opened in 2011 with the intent of making seasonal and specialty beers. It’s so small that you can buy its beers only at the brewery. Black Acre actually has over 100 recipes in its toolbox, but try the Saucy Intruder, a rye IPA and the brewery’s signature.

—Karen Asp