

# Kringle Capitol of the World

## Racine Wisconsin

By Jan Ross



**A** Kringle is a Scandinavian pastry, a sort of Nordic pretzel, which can be filled with a variety of sweet options. From strawberry cheesecake to apple to pecan, this pastry is available in just about every flavor. Hand rolled from Danish pastry dough which has rested overnight, the sheets of flaky dough are layered, then shaped into an oval, filled with fruit or nuts, and then baked and iced. A typical Kringle is a large, flat oval measuring

approximately 14 inches by 10 inches and weighs about 1.5 pounds.

Wisconsin has historically been a center of Danish-American culture, so it makes sense that the Kringle was designated the Official State Pastry in 2013. Racine, a charming small town located on the shore of beautiful Lake Michigan has long been a location to seek out this delicious treat. The pastry was first introduced to Racine in the late 1800s by immigrant Danish bakers,



architecture; an amazing art museum and zoo; and the historic Wind Point Lighthouse. The lake provided area residents and tourists with plenty of opportunities for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and other watersports, and area restaurants provide any international delicacy you can imagine.

All of this makes Racine a perfectly lovely place to visit but we were there primarily for the Kringle. Before we could indulge in our first taste of Kringle, we checked into the delightful and family-friendly Harbourwalk Hotel, which is located right on the Lake Michigan waterfront with a wonderful view of the lake. We were traveling with our daughter, son-in-law, and nine-year-old grandson, so we appreciated our comfortable marina-view rooms, the great indoor pool and the easy access to area attractions.



and as the town was home to more Danes than anywhere else in the country, there are more Kringle bakeries in Racine than you will find anywhere else. Unofficially designated the Kringle Capitol of the World, Racine today has five bakeries offering different varieties of Kringle, so you can sample until you find the perfect combination.

My family recently paid a visit to Racine to enjoy the lovely beaches, parks, and trails; Frank Lloyd Wright

After settling in, we took a short walk to nearby North Beach, Wisconsin's first beach to be designated as a Certified Blue Wave clean beach by the National Clean Beaches Council. We were astonished to see 50 acres of clean sand and clear, blue water in the middle of a city! Free parking, lifeguards, a great kids playground, volleyball courts, concessions and a wheelchair accessible walkway, meant there were plenty of people on the beach enjoying this great location.



There was even a family of ducks enjoying the beach and the beautifully clear water of Lake Michigan.

In the late afternoon, we spent some time in our indoor pool at the hotel, then dressed and walked along the walkway by the marina to nearby Reefpoint Brew House. We were interested in some local brews, great food and a great view, and we

experienced all of these at this popular, local restaurant.

On our way out of town the next day, we stopped at the beautifully maintained Wind Point Lighthouse. This lighthouse is one of the oldest and tallest still operating on Lake Michigan. Built in 1880, the huge fog horns could be heard 10 miles out into Lake Michigan and the Fresnel Lens used dozens of glass prisms to

create an immensely powerful light. Fuel for the light had to be carried by the lighthouse keeper or his assistants up 144 iron steps every day, and the lens had to be cleaned daily.

We strolled around the meticulously maintained grounds, then took a tour which included the history of the lighthouse and the daily life of families who lived there.

The highlight of our visit to Racine was, of course, the Kringle. A number of bakeries make the pastry, but Lehmann's Bakery was voted the best in Racine, so how could we pass that up? Made fresh daily and shipped all over the country (you can order on their web site), their Kringles are offered in 36 flavors with a variety of fruit, nut, and gourmet fillings. Lehmann's is a complete bakery, so





they also had plenty of goodies on display in their case. Cookies, cupcakes, eclairs, and other delights vied for our attention.

But we were all about the Kringle. It was a tough choice with so many different fillings. We ended up with strawberry cheesecake because how can you go wrong with strawberry and cheesecake? Our first Kringle

was delicious, fresh, and flaky – the perfect pastry.

Now that we have tasted Kringle, we will either have to order some online or return to Wisconsin in the very near future.

If you are in the area, don't pass up this unique and delicious culinary delight!

