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**FRESH PLACES, FRESH
SPACES: A GREAT LAKES
ROAD TRIP**

DEAR TRAVELLERS TO THE GREAT LAKES REGION,

I am honoured to be the Director of Great Lakes USA, and to welcome you to such a special part of the United States.

Great Lakes USA is a collection of eight beautiful and unique states, each with so much to offer travellers from all around the globe. Whether you're looking for a fly/drive outdoor adventure, a luxurious cruise or something completely off the beaten path, you'll find it in this magical region.

While every state is different, there is one natural gem that connects us all: water. The Great Lakes.

These five lakes collectively span 246,463 square kilometres, making it the largest body of fresh water on the planet. And these aren't just any lakes. These are lakes that feel more like oceans. Ones that breathe life into the region, offering new worlds to explore.

In **Illinois**, you have the great city of Chicago overlooking the beautiful shore of Lake Michigan. The rest of Illinois features a multitude of gorgeous settings to lose yourself in, including over 60 state parks to enjoy the wonder of every season.

Indiana's 20+ state parks each offer their own unique landscape, from sand dunes to canyons, caves and especially the majestic waterfalls of the state's crown jewel, Turkey Run State Park.

Michigan boasts three national forests, three national parks, two national lakeshores, and more than 100 state parks, including Isle Royale, the least visited national park in all of the United States.

Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes, gives new meaning to the great outdoors with its plethora of pristine bodies of water and natural sites that invite adventurers into the wilderness.

The northern part of **Ohio** stretches along the coast of Lake Erie, and about 60 minutes west of Cleveland you can ferry across the lake to Put-in-Bay on South Bass Island. Often called the "Key West of the North," Put-in-Bay is known for lively entertainment, historic sites and breathtaking water views.

Pennsylvania features the old-growth hemlocks of the North, the rolling countryside of the South, millions of acres of public land and the fabled city of

Philadelphia, where visitors will find a trove of American history sites.

In **New York** more amazing water views can be found in the great city of Buffalo which sits on the eastern end of Lake Erie. Here, you'll find a remarkable arts, music and architecture scene filled with good food and friendly people.

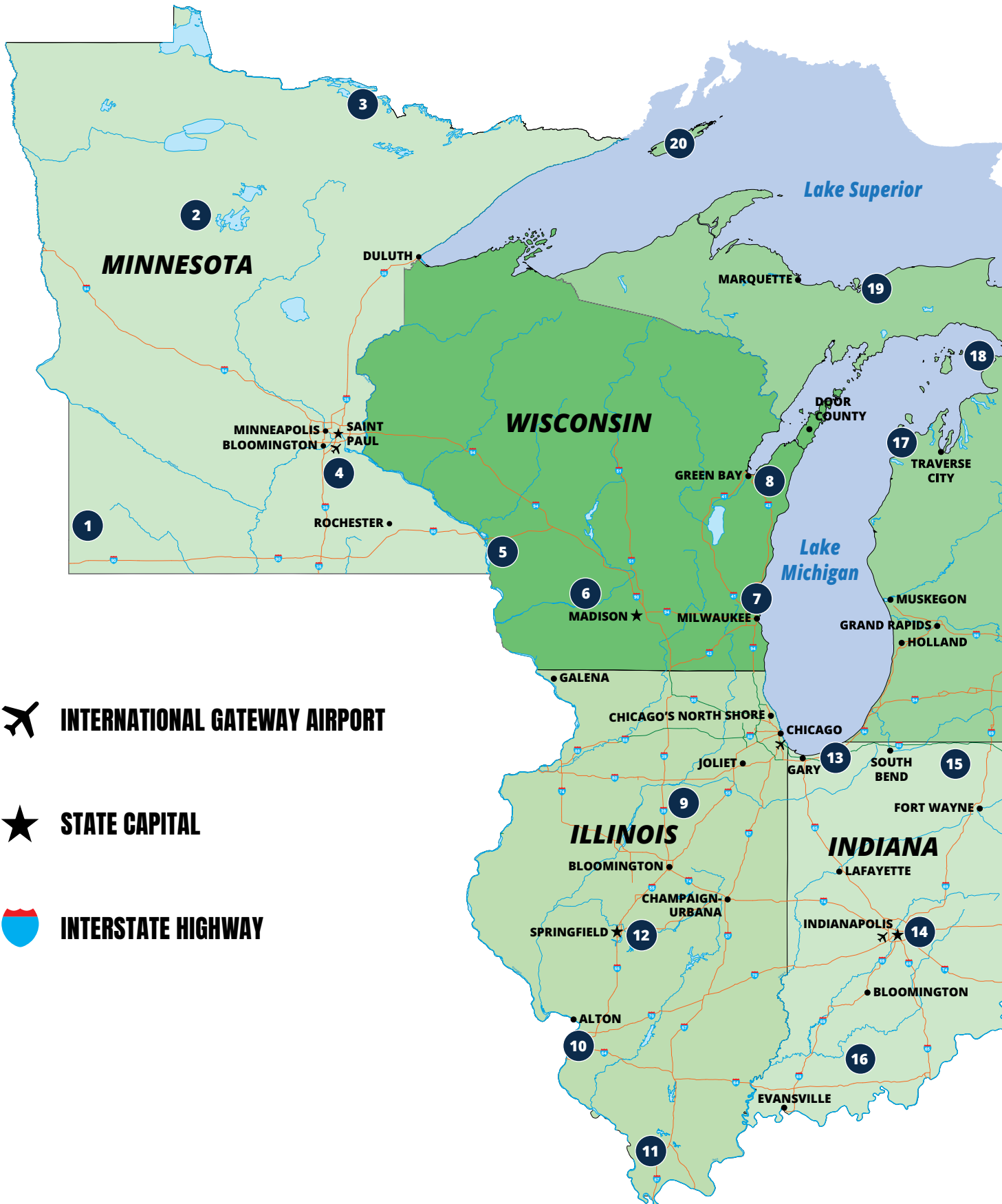
When you visit **Wisconsin**, you're entering "America's Playground." It's surrounded by water on three sides and over half the state is forested, allowing you to get the absolute most out of outdoor activities.

I could go on and on about the amazing things that await – but instead, I'll extend a personal invitation for you to see for yourself. Exploring the Great Lakes region is a great opportunity to slow down, stay awhile, and savour all the diverse experiences this region has to offer.

Enjoy greatness in our regions.

Best,

Sally Davis Berry
Great Lakes USA Tourism Director



INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY AIRPORT



STATE CAPITAL



INTERSTATE HIGHWAY

POINTS OF INTEREST

MINNESOTA

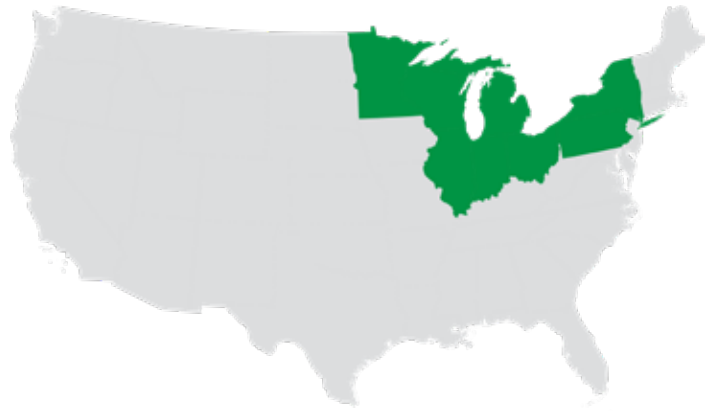
- 1 PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT
- 2 ITASCA STATE PARK
- 3 VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK
- 4 MALL OF AMERICA®

WISCONSIN

- 5 WISCONSIN GREAT RIVER ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY
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NEW YORK

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THE GREAT LAKES STATES

A trip to the Great Lakes region promises a journey as vast and varied as its shorelines. Together they form the world's largest collection of freshwater lakes, shaping the landscapes, lifestyles, and cultures of the states that border them. A true four-seasons destination, the region offers everything from vibrant cities and historic byways to natural wonders, pristine wilderness, and world-class attractions — no matter when you visit.



Copper Harbor (MI)

ILLINOIS

White River State Park, Indianapolis, Indiana

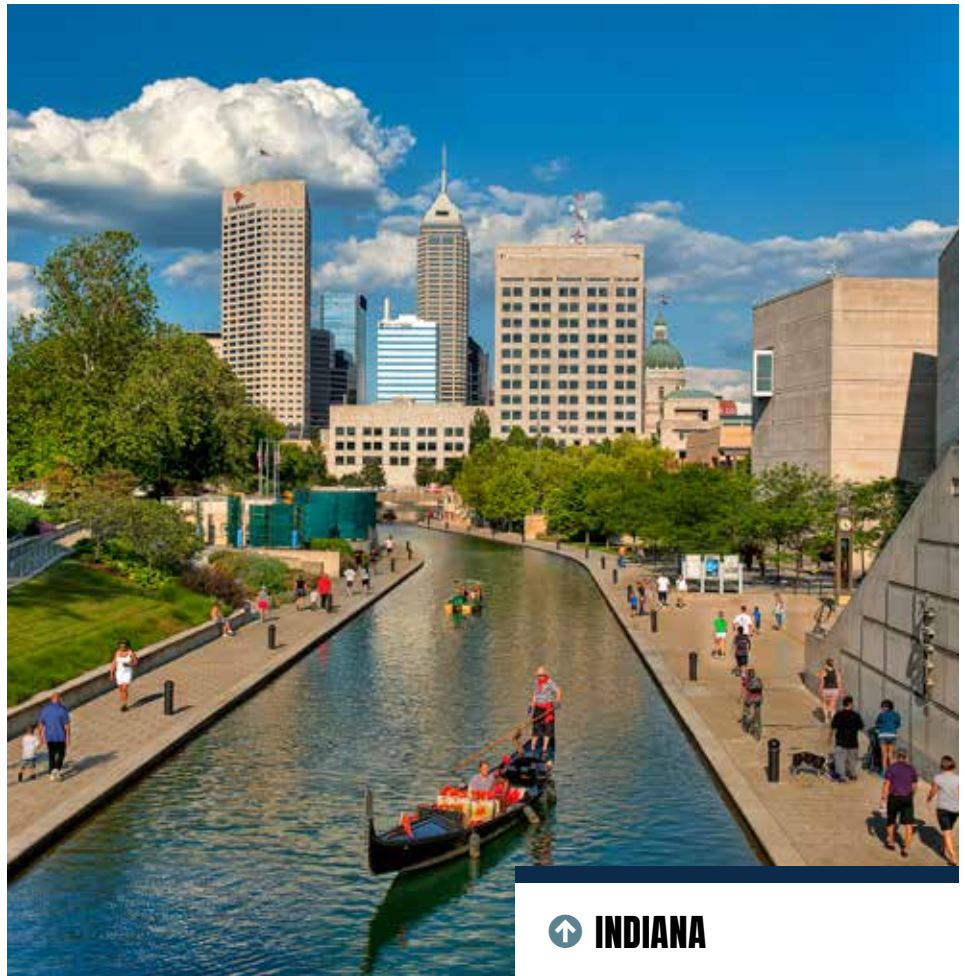
The Middle of Everything

The Windy City dazzles with its skyline, museums, and culinary bragging rights, but beyond the marquee metropolis of **Chicago** lies more than 60 state parks, 2,900 lakes, and seven scenic byways that wind through limestone bluffs, prairie landscapes, and rolling wine country across Illinois.

Springfield, the state capital, brings history to life in the Land of Lincoln, where the legacy of the 16th U.S. president is told through museums and monuments. To the west, the **Great River Road** follows the Mississippi past dramatic scenery, while in the south, **Shawnee National Forest** entices adventurers with waterfalls, sandstone canyons, and vineyards.

Undiscovered gems await, too: the **North Shore**—just 30 minutes from Chicago—offers upscale shopping, striking architecture, and bucket-list worthy attractions like the **Chicago Botanic Garden** and **Ravinia**, the nation's longest-running outdoor music festival. In central Illinois, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** buzzes with energy from a large international student population, infusing the university town with global flavours and culture.

Pro Tip: Starting in the heart of downtown Chicago, **Route 66** winds through the **Heritage Corridor** and the **Great Rivers and Routes** regions. With the highway's milestone 100th anniversary in 2026, there's no better time to plan an all-American road trip.



INDIANA

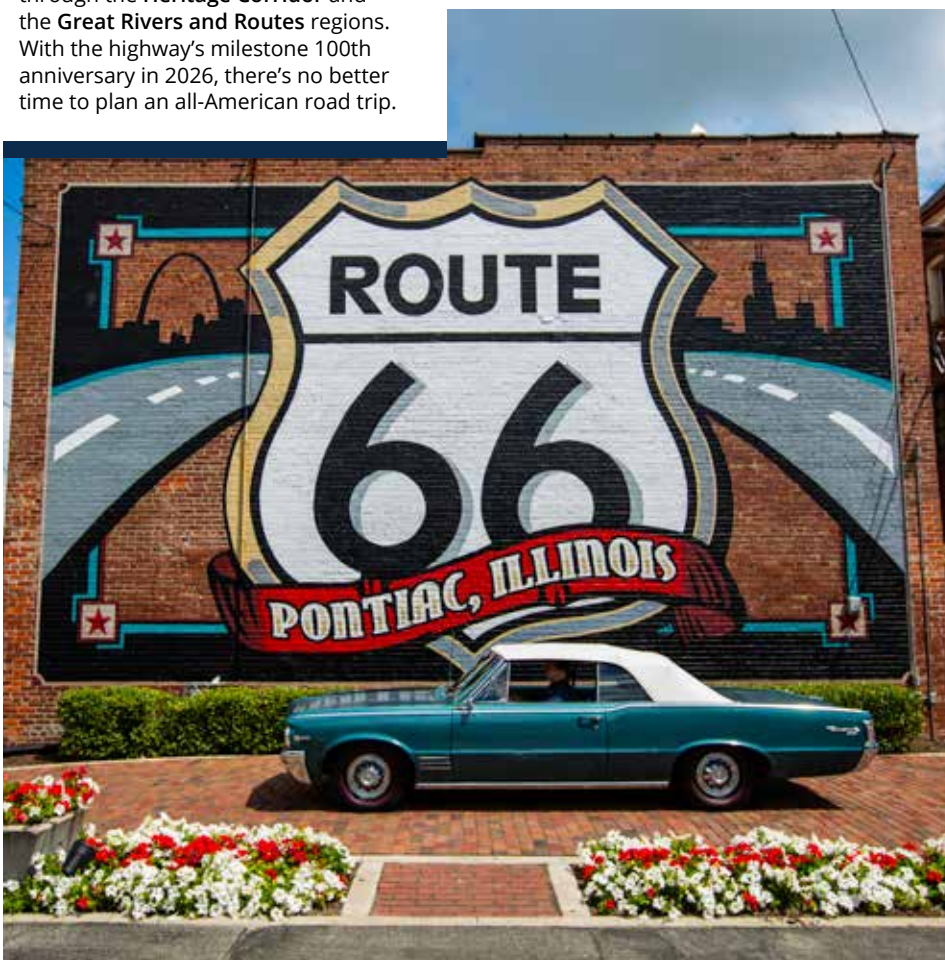
The Hoosier State

Known for its legendary hospitality, Indiana has been called one of the friendliest states in the U.S. It's home to **Indianapolis International Airport**, North America's top-rated mid-sized airport, the country's number one waterpark, **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari**, and a calendar filled with festivals and events. Whether you're after family-friendly attractions, wide-open spaces, or a little retail therapy, you'll find it here.

History buffs can explore **Vincennes**, Indiana's first city, or wander **Spring Mill State Park**, home to a restored grist mill that puts pioneer life on full display. Parke County is also the **Covered Bridge Capital of the World**, boasting 31 historic bridges across nine picturesque communities, while **Amish Country** offers scenic carriage rides and timeless charm.

Nature enthusiasts should head to **Indiana Dunes National Park**, a pristine 15-mile stretch of **Lake Michigan** shoreline with giant dunes, sandy beaches, and more than 50 miles of trails. Or, hike, kayak, horseback ride, cast a line, or chase waterfalls at **Turkey Run State Park**, Indiana's crown jewel, with sandstone gorges, suspension bridges, and deep ravines.

For a unique getaway, tee off along the legendary **Pete Dye Golf Trail**, unwind at the storied **French Lick Resort and Spa**, or spend a night in the floating cabins on **Patoka Lake**.



Route 66 Shield Mural, Illinois



WHERE THE MOTHER ROAD *Meets the River Road*

Celebrate 100 years of road tripping in the only place in America where the Mother Road of Route 66 meets the scenic beauty of the Great River Road. Follow the neon signs to the It's Electric Neon Sign Park, dine at historic Route 66 roadside cafes, take a walk through the river bluffs and prairies and relax with a glass of locally crafted wine beside the Mighty Mississippi River.

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↑ MICHIGAN

The Great Lakes State

Michigan caters to urbanites, long weekenders, and travellers in search of tranquillity. The Great Lakes State stretches across two peninsulas – one shaped like a hand – with endless room to roam. Its freshwater coast, the longest in the U.S., was carved by glaciers more than 12,000 years ago, and is dotted with shipwrecks, underwater preserves, maritime parks, and sandy shores.

Detroit stands as a symbol of American revitalisation, buzzing with art, music, and creativity. **Grand Rapids**, nicknamed “**Beer City USA**,” boasts more than 35 breweries on its Beer City Ale Trail, which has more craft beer per square mile than almost anywhere on earth. For a unique escape, **Frankenmuth**, or “Little Bavaria,” is home to **Bronner’s Christmas Wonderland**, a holiday hotspot one-and-a-half football pitches in size, with an illuminated Christmas Lane, Silent Night Chapel, and year-round festivities.

If you’re looking to get off the grid, **Isle Royale National Park** in the **Upper Peninsula** offers a true wilderness escape. Accessible only by boat or seaplane, it’s one of the least-visited national parks in America, making it a bucket-list haven for intrepid adventurers. For another memorable getaway, **Mackinac Island**, a Victorian-era National Historic Landmark, offers car-free charm with historic lodging, unique shops, horse-drawn carriages, Fort Mackinac, Grand Hotel, world-famous fudge, and lively nightlife.

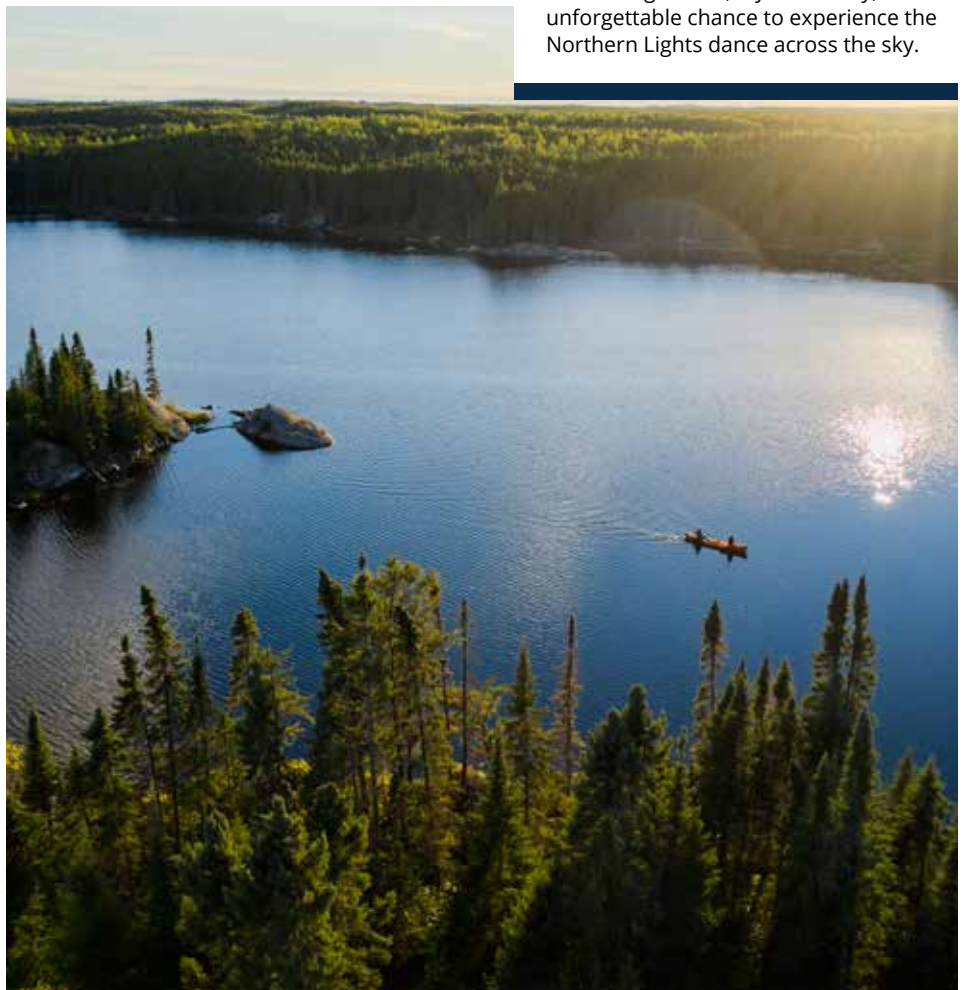
↓ MINNESOTA

Star of the North

Filled with theatres, galleries, museums, and a cultural influence that stretches far beyond the Midwest, the Twin Cities of **Minneapolis–Saint Paul** are the beating heart of Minnesota. No visit is complete without a stop at the **Mall of America®** in **Bloomington**. More than a mall, it’s a landmark institution and entertainment hub — the largest shopping complex in the U.S., with over 500 stores, an indoor theme park, an aquarium, and countless other attractions.


Outdoors, Minnesota more than lives up to its nickname as the “**Land of 10,000 Lakes**”. Cruise across **Lake Superior**, a playground for boating and waterside dining, or explore the cliffs and trails of **Gooseberry Falls State Park** on the rugged **North Shore**. Hike to the cascades of **Minnehaha Falls**, or paddle through the **Chain of Lakes**. Further north, **Itasca State Park** draws visitors from around the world to snap a photo at the iconic birthplace of the **Mississippi River**.

For a true bucket-list adventure and paddler’s paradise, head to the **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness**, hailed by *National Geographic* as a must-see in your lifetime. Further north, **Voyageurs National Park** offers boating, hiking, and fishing — and, if you’re lucky, the unforgettable chance to experience the Northern Lights dance across the sky.



Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota

FIND INSPIRATION AT EVERY TURN

A person with a backpack stands on a wooden walkway, looking at a large rock formation by the water. The scene is set in a natural, wooded area with trees and a body of water in the background.

Experience the change in Michigan, where timeless beauty invites you to reconnect with nature and what matters most. From the tranquility of a lakeside sunrise to the thrill of a forest trail, every step renews your sense of wonder. Let the Great Lakes soothe and inspire – season after season in Pure Michigan.

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Niagara Falls State Park, New York

← NEW YORK

Everything You Love

As one of America’s major international gateways, **New York City** dazzles with eclectic energy — a cultural powerhouse of attractions, architecture, and history. But beyond the billboards of **Times Square** and the buzz of **Broadway** lies a state rich in nature, heritage, and unexpected wonders.

Follow the 518-mile **Great Lakes Seaway Trail**, one of the nation’s first scenic byways, which links **Niagara Falls** to **Thousand Islands** through charming waterfront towns. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore the 2.5-million-hectare **Adirondack Park** — the largest park outside Alaska — or head south to soak in the natural mineral springs of **Saratoga Springs**. Spend a day sailing on one of the 11 **Finger Lakes** in New York’s wine region, or float along the **Erie Canal**. For something truly unique, the **Natural Stone Bridge** unveils another geological wonder, the largest marble cave in the eastern United States.

For a different flavour, the **Catskills** are an Appalachian Mountain playground of trails and waterfalls, while the **Chautauqua-Allegheny** region in the southwest pairs outdoor adventure with the **National Comedy Center**. The **Hudson Valley** rounds out the experience with stately Gilded Age mansions and scenery so stunning it earned a spot on *National Geographic Traveler’s* “Best of the World” list.

The Great American Getaway

From the urban energy of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to vast forests and mountain trails, Pennsylvania delivers both city thrills and outdoor escapes. Spanning 11.6 million hectares in the heart of the mid-Atlantic, it boasts one of the largest expanses of green space between New York City and Chicago, with 124 state parks free for all to explore.

The Allegheny National Forest dominates the western portion of the state, with attractions like the 211-mile Route 6 National Scenic Byway, the Allegheny Reservoir, and Kinzua Bridge State Park—once the world’s longest railway bridge, now a dramatic skywalk and observation tower. Trails weave through ancient woodlands, ATV routes criss-cross rugged hills, and kayakers drift along winding waterways. Visit in summer to witness the rare spectacle of synchronous fireflies illuminating the night sky in perfect unison.

Elsewhere, the Pocono Mountains promise year-round adventure, from ski slopes to waterfalls, while the Susquehanna Valley serves as central Pennsylvania’s outdoor playground. The Great Lakes region adds sandy beaches and sailing to the mix near the city of Erie at Presque Isle State Park, while Lake Erie Wine Country boasts more than 20 wineries for sipping and swirling.

For adrenaline seekers, the Youghiogheny River, gateway to the Laurel Highlands, delivers some of the best whitewater rafting in the East. By night, the Pennsylvania Wilds reveal star-studded skies at Cherry Springs State Park and the Dark Skies Reserve, both ranked among the world’s premier stargazing sites.



↑ WISCONSIN

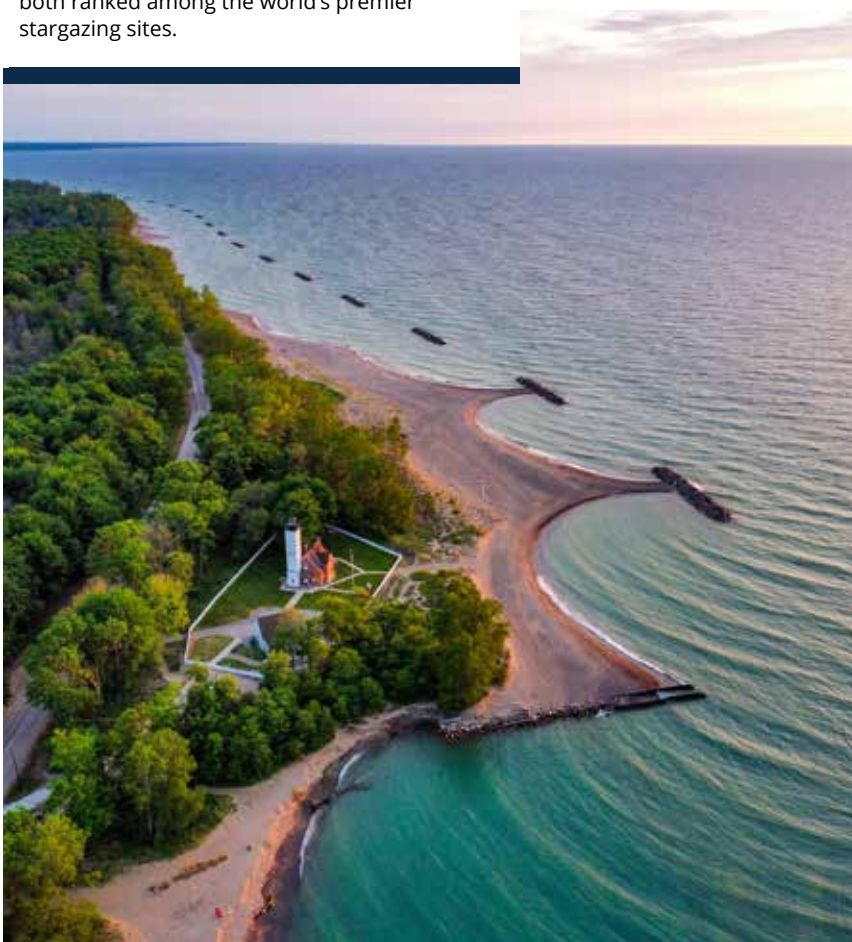
Wonders Await

Wisconsin brims with surprises at every turn. In Milwaukee, the state’s largest city, creativity buzzes through breweries, lakefront festivals, and the revitalised RiverWalk. In Madison, where capital meets college town, life revolves around lakes, farmers’ markets, and a lively downtown. Football fans flock to Green Bay, home of the Packers and Lambeau Field, for one of the best NFL experiences in the country. Or to relax, head north to Door County for 300 miles of coastline, quaint villages, five state parks, and a thriving arts scene.

For natural wonders, the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is a must-see, boasting more lighthouses than any other national park site and 19 of its 21 islands are open for camping and kayaking. Accessible only by boat, Witches Gulch in the Wisconsin Dells reveals a dramatic rock cavern sculpted by centuries of wind and water. And in Lake Geneva, you can hike the 21-mile lakeshore path before visiting Yerkes Observatory, home to the world’s largest refracting telescope and a landmark in the history of astronomy and architecture.

For a taste of the highlights, drive the All-American Great River Road National Scenic Byway, a 250-mile route that follows the Mississippi River with stops at orchards, small towns, cheese shops, and dramatic landscapes—especially stunning in autumn.

Fun Fact: Wisconsin is the only place outside of Europe where you can earn a Master Cheesemaker certification — a three-year advanced degree in the state’s most famous export.



Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania

HERE'S TO A WORLD FILLED WITH WONDER



Plan your Great Lakes getaway at [TravelWisconsin.com](https://www.TravelWisconsin.com)

TRAVEL
WISCONSIN



WHERE CULTURE COMES TO LIFE

Home to generations of stories, traditions, and communities, the Great Lakes region is a place where history isn't just told — it's experienced. From ancient Indigenous cultures to democratic beginnings and residential legacies, the region has been at the forefront of shaping the nation for centuries.

Whether you're wandering through a vibrant arts district, exploring a museum, or touring a historic home, you'll find literary landmarks alongside architectural icons, world-class cultural institutions beside quirky roadside oddities, and festivals that transform entire cities into living canvases begging to be explored.

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE

The Great Lakes are home to vibrant Native nations whose influence is still felt today. At **Ganondagan State Historic Site** (NY), visitors can step inside a full-size replica of a 17th-century Seneca longhouse and learn about the democratic system that helped inspire the U.S. Constitution. The **Iroquois Museum** (NY) showcases contemporary Native art alongside archaeology, while the **National Museum of the American Indian** (NY) shares their story within a broader historical lens. Delve further into regional heritage at the **Akwesasne Cultural Center and Museum** (NY), the first Native American library east of the Mississippi; the **Seneca-Iroquois National Museum** (NY), which offers deeper insight into Haudenosaunee culture; and the **Museum of Ojibwa Culture** (MI), which explores the seasonal lifeways, spirituality, and traditions of the Ojibwa people.

Meanwhile, the **Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art** (IN) houses one of the nation's premier Native American and Western art collections, and the **Oneida Nation Museum** (WI) invites visitors to experience Haudenosaunee traditions through beadwork, storytelling, and artefacts. Along Lake Superior, the **Grand Portage National Monument** (MN) interprets Ojibwe culture during the fur trade era, while the **Mille Lacs Indian Museum** (MN) and **Lower Sioux Agency** (MN) bring Indigenous heritage to life through immersive, living history experiences. **Frog Bay Tribal National Park** (WI), the first tribal national park in the U.S., celebrates the cultural and spiritual importance of water, honouring ancestral connections to the land and preserving traditions for future generations.

Indigenous culture is also etched onto the land itself. **Cahokia Mounds** (IL), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, preserves what was once the largest city north of Mexico — a thriving community that peaked around 1100 CE. The **Angel Mounds Historic Site** (IN) tells the story of another important Mississippian settlement, where earth mounds rise above the Ohio River floodplain. In Wisconsin, more than 200 **effigy mounds** (WI) remain, ancient earthworks believed to be sacred symbols of animals, spirits, and the natural world. And at the **Pipestone National Monument** (MN), Native people continue to quarry red stone for ceremonial pipes, linking today's artisans to centuries of tradition.



Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site (IL)



Oneida Pow Wow (WI)

WHERE History MEETS THE ROAD



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AMERICAN HISTORY

For those fascinated by America's past, few places are as iconic as Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty (NY), a gateway for millions arriving in search of a better life. The **Museum of the American Revolution** (PA) and **Independence Hall** (PA), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, immerse visitors in the fight for freedom, while the **Liberty Bell** (PA) stands as a timeless symbol of the new nation. In the Midwest, the **George Rogers Clark Memorial** (IN) in Vincennes, a National Historic Landmark, commemorates the Revolutionary War victory that secured the Northwest Territory for the United States. Looking toward the future, 4 July 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of *The Declaration of Independence* — a nationwide celebration branded as **America 250**, with many states hosting events to mark the milestone.



National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (OH)



Conner Prairie (IN)

For a bit of presidential history, pay a visit to the **Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum** (NY), the **Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum** (MI), the **Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site** (IN), the **Lincoln Boyhood Home** (IN), and the **Land of Lincoln** sites (IL). Illinois also invites visitors to explore the **Ulysses S. Grant Home State Historic Site** (IL) in Galena, the **Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home** in Dixon, and will soon add a contemporary chapter with the **Obama Presidential Center** (IL) in Chicago, opening in 2026.

For a glimpse into American ingenuity, **Milwaukee** is home to the world's only **Harley-Davidson Museum** (WI), while the **Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation** (MI) explores everything from the Model T to civil rights, offering a vivid look at life through the decades. In nearby **Detroit**, the **Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History** (MI) is the largest institution of its kind outside the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., honouring generations of resilience and achievement. In Indiana, **Conner Prairie** (IN) — the state's first Smithsonian-affiliated living history museum — brings the 19th century to life with immersive re-enactments from Indian camps to prairie towns.

Minnesota celebrates flight at the **Charles Lindbergh House and Museum** (MN), where the aviator's groundbreaking Atlantic crossing takes centre stage. In Illinois, travellers can hit the road on the **First Hundred Miles of Route 66** (IL), where retro diners and historic travel stops mark the start of America's most legendary highway. In Ohio, stories of courage come to life at **Columbus's National Veterans Memorial and Museum** (OH), which shares personal accounts of service, and at **Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center** (OH), set on the banks of the river once crossed by enslaved people in search of freedom. For a deeper look into that chapter, the **Levi & Catharine Coffin Interpretive Center** (IN) is known as "The Grand Central Station of the Underground Railroad."



Martin House Complex (NY)

ARCHITECTURAL ICONS

Few regions match the architectural legacy of the Great Lakes, driven in large part by the vision of **Frank Lloyd Wright**, often hailed as America's most influential architect. In the early 20th century, Wright transformed design with his philosophy that buildings should co-exist with nature. His masterpiece, **Fallingwater** (PA), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, appears to rise straight out of the **Laurel Highlands** over a rushing waterfall, while the **Martin House Complex** and **Graycliff Estate** (NY) in Buffalo and **Samara House** (IN) are considered some of his most important works. At **Taliesin** (WI), Wright's home and studio – also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, visitors can step inside the world where he lived, worked, and experimented. The **Frank Lloyd Wright Trails in Wisconsin**, **New York** and **Illinois** help tie the story together with a road trip-worthy line-up that features UNESCO-listed **Frederick C. Robie House** (IL) and **Unity Temple** (IL), along with his **Home and Studio in Oak Park** (IL) in addition to the nine sites in Wisconsin.



In **Chicago**, the iconic **Architecture Boat Tour** (IL) is the most entertaining way to see landmarks like the Gothic-inspired **Tribune Tower** (IL) and the soaring **Willis Tower** (IL), the tallest building in the Midwest. In **Detroit**, free walking tours showcase icons such as the shimmering **Guardian Building** (MI), dubbed a “cathedral of finance” for its Art Deco mosaics, and the reborn **Michigan Central Station** (MI), reimaged as Ford’s Mobility Hub. **Columbus** (IN) is nicknamed “Athens of the Prairie” for mid-century gems by Eero Saarinen, I.M. Pei, and others that define the skyline. Minnesota shines with cultural landmarks such as the **Weisman Art Museum** (MN) and the **Guthrie Theater** (MN), where the Endless Bridge offers sweeping views over the Mississippi River. And then there’s the **Mall of America**® (MN), a pop culture landmark where an indoor theme park, aquarium, and endless shops embody America’s flair for big, bold, unapologetic design.



Chicago Architecture Boat Tour (IL)

▼ Fallingwater

Our views. Your adventure.

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THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY



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Chicago Botanic Garden



Grosse Pointe Lighthouse

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ART AND EXPRESSION

Art in the **Great Lakes** is both world-renowned and wonderfully local. The **Art Institute of Chicago** (IL) houses masterpieces like *American Gothic* and Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, while **Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museums** (PA) include the **Andy Warhol Museum**, home to the largest collection of his work in the world. In **New York**, the **Museum of Modern Art** (NY) showcases icons of contemporary creativity.

Beyond the headliners, regional gems shine too. In **Indianapolis**, **Newfields** (IN) blends art with gardens and a historic estate, while the **Milwaukee Art Museum** dazzles with a wing-like design that dramatically "takes flight" each morning. The **John Michael Kohler Arts Center** (WI) pushes boundaries by transforming everyday spaces into fantastical folk art, and in **Minneapolis**, the **Walker Art Center** (MN) pairs cutting-edge exhibitions with a whimsical sculpture garden, home to the iconic *Spoonbridge and Cherry*. In **Grand Rapids**, the **Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park** (MI) ranks among the nation's top cultural attractions, while **Buffalo's AKG Art Museum** (NY) showcases everything from Monet to Warhol, securing its place as one of America's premier modern art museums.

Outside the gallery walls, murals transform entire neighbourhoods in **Philadelphia** (PA), the "Mural Capital of the World," and **Cincinnati** (OH), one of the nation's top mural cities, praised by publications like *USA Today*. **Detroit's** murals are on full display at the **Eastern Market** (MI) and throughout the **Grand River Creative Corridor** (MI), home to more than 100 colourful pieces. Festivals also bring art to the streets, from the massive **ArtPrize** (MI) competition in **Grand Rapids** to the beloved **Ann Arbor Street Art Fair** (MI) — the largest juried art fair in the U.S., featuring nearly 1,000 artists and spanning 30 city blocks.



Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park (MI)



QUIRKY AND UNFORGETTABLE

Then there are the places that make the region uniquely its own. The **Circus World Museum** (WI) preserves Wisconsin's rich big-top legacy. On the **North Shore of Chicago**, the **Bahá'í House of Worship** (IL) stands as the only Bahá'í temple in North America and one of just a handful in the world. One All-American must-do is the **Minnesota State Fair** (MN), one of the largest in the country, where you can sample more than 500 foods — many on sticks — from deep-fried candy bars to pickle pizza. Wash it all down at **Yuengling** (PA), the nation's oldest brewery. And surely you can't miss **Groundhog Day** in **Punxsutawney** (PA), where thousands flock each year to see if spring will come early.

Mackinac Island (MI) preserves Victorian-era charm with horse-drawn carriages, while **Champaign-Urbana's Monticello Railway Museum** (IL) offers a nostalgic ride through railroad history. In **Indianapolis**, the **Madam Walker Legacy Center** (IN) honours the life of **Madam C.J. Walker**, America's first self-made female millionaire. For a taste of the holidays year-round, **Santa Claus, Indiana**, is home to **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari** (IN), a holiday-themed amusement park consistently ranked among the nation's top water parks, while Minnesota has a pink beach at **Iona's Beach Scientific & Natural Area** (MN). And for the ultimate quirky overnight, **Wisconsin's House on the Rock** (WI), long dubbed an architectural surreal dream, remains one of America's strangest most unusual attractions.



Bahá'í House of Worship (IL)

MUSICAL LEGACY

The **Great Lakes** have been the birthplace of some of the world's most influential sounds. **Detroit (MI)** gave the world **Motown** and **techno**, and you can still feel the beat in venues across the city. Each year, it amps things up further with the world's largest **Free Jazz Festival (MI)**. In **Minnesota**, fans can step inside **Paisley Park (MN)**, the home and creative sanctuary of Prince. And in **Cleveland**, the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (OH)** is a shrine to everyone from Elvis to Beyoncé.

Chicago's (IL) legendary blues clubs from **Kingston Mines** to **Buddy Guy's**

Legends — keep the city's soulful sound alive. The **Metropolitan Opera (NY)** delivers world-class performances night after night, while **Carnegie Hall (NY)** remains one of the world's most prestigious stages. When it comes to

sheer scale, nothing tops **Summerfest (WI)** in **Milwaukee**, certified by *Guinness World Records* as the world's largest music festival, with more than 800 acts performing on the shores of **Lake Michigan** each summer.

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (OH)



SPORTS LEGACY

The region is also a mecca for sports fans. Devotees can trace America's pastime at the **National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown (NY)** or catch the action at the **Little League World Series (PA)**. **Wrigley Field (IL)**, home of the Chicago Cubs baseball team, remains one of the country's most

iconic ballparks, while the roar of engines at the **Indy 500** has thrilled car racing fans for over a century, a tradition celebrated at the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Museum (IN)**. American football faithful can make a pilgrimage to **Lambeau Field (WI)**, home to one of the sport's most passionate

fan bases, while hockey lovers can cheer on the **Detroit Red Wings (MI)**, the winningest U.S. team in NHL history. Minnesota is also known as the 'State of Hockey' and home to the **United States Hockey Hall of Fame (MN)** and countless professional and collegiate games year-round.

Track and field enthusiasts won't want to miss the **Penn Relays (PA)**, the oldest and largest meet in the country, while tennis fans flock to the **USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center (NY)** for the U.S. Open. In the college ranks, few experiences compare to a Saturday football game at the **University of Michigan's Big House** in Ann Arbor (MI), with more than 100,000 fans packing the largest stadium in North America, a rivalry clash at **Ohio State** in **Columbus (OH)**, or a basketball showdown at the home of the **Indiana Hoosiers (IN)**.



University of Michigan's Big House (MI)

LITERARY GIANTS

Authors and writers have long found inspiration in the **Great Lakes**, making it an ideal destination for a literary pilgrimage. **Cooperstown (NY)**, named for James Fenimore Cooper, set the scene for *The Last of the Mohicans*, while the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum (WI)**

honours the beloved author of *Little House on the Prairie*. On **Long Island**, the **Gold Coast Mansions (NY)** echo with F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*-era glamour, while **Philadelphia** keeps the gothic spirit alive at the **Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site (PA)**. **Illinois** pays tribute at the **Ernest**

Hemingway Birthplace (IL), **Indiana** boasts the **Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library (IN)**, and **Minnesota** celebrates **F. Scott Fitzgerald (MN)**. Meanwhile, **Wisconsin** charms little readers at **Bookworm Gardens (WI)**, where fairytales come to life in an idyllic setting.

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WANDER THE WILD: NATURE ESCAPES ACROSS THE GREAT LAKES

Whether you're chasing adrenaline or seeking solitude, craving adventure or a dose of waterside zen, the Great Lakes region is the place to unplug and reconnect with nature. Its landscapes invite you to roam free, breathe deep, and press pause — on land and across watery horizons.



Miners Beach, (MI)

WATER WORLD

Paddle through sea caves and climb historic lighthouses in the **Apostle Islands** (WI), where a lucky winter may reveal glittering ice caves. Head east to the **Thousand Islands** (NY) for kayaking and castle-hopping along the St. Lawrence River. For a true wilderness escape, the **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness** (MN) delivers one of America's most remote adventures, with more than 1,000 lakes and nearly 1,500 miles of canoe routes, ensuring it's just you, your paddle, and the quiet rhythm of nature.

Paddleboard, SUP, or kayak the 40-plus-mile **Huron River Water Trail** (MI), or the urban waterways of **Pittsburgh** (PA), **Minneapolis** (MN), or **Chicago** (IL). Cruise the **Chicago River** on an architectural boat tour (IL) or see the Motor City in style aboard the **Detroit Princess Riverboat** (MI). Feel the need for speed? Hop aboard a **Seadog** (IL) for an extreme ride, or slow things down on a river cruise from **Madison** (IN), which offers everything from laid-back lunch jaunts to multi-day excursions along the **Ohio River**. And in **Voyageurs National Park** (MN), swap paddles for houseboats, drifting between islands and coves on a picturesque day trip or overnight escape.



Youghiogheny River (PA)



Cave of the Winds, Niagara Falls (NY)

Feel the thunderous roar of **Niagara Falls** (NY) or chase more than 150 cascades tucked into the gorges around **Ithaca** (NY). Wander **Starved Rock State Park** (IL), with its sandstone canyons and seasonal waterfalls, or stand in awe of **Tahquamenon Falls** (MI), one of the largest east of the Mississippi. At **Grand Portage** (MN), the 37-metre **Pigeon River Falls** (MN), Minnesota's tallest, is a breathtaking centerpiece of the northern wilderness.

Thrill-seekers can run the rapids in the **Pocono Mountains** (PA), test their skills on the **East Race Waterway** (IN) — America's first man-made whitewater course — or take on the churning **Youghiogheny River** (PA), home to some of the best rafting in the East. Divers, meanwhile, can hunt for hidden treasure at **France Park** (IN), where a flooded quarry reveals everything from mining relics all the way up to a 1940s school bus, or visit **Door County** (WI), where there are around 240 known shipwrecks in the waters of Door County alone (Bermuda Triangle who?), and adventurers can explore about 25 of them in a number of ways, including shipwreck diving, clear-bottom kayak tours, boat rides, and local maritime museum.

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BEACH DAZE

If a laid-back day by the water is more your speed, head to **Presque Isle State Park (PA)**, where **Lake Erie** offers miles of sandy shoreline and endless ways to play. Climb the dunes and spot the iconic lighthouse at **Holland State Park Beach (MI)**, or admire the towering bluffs at **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (MI)**, where you'll be rewarded with sweeping views that stretch to the horizon. For something more secluded, **Fire Island National Seashore (NY)** delivers an idyllic escape on a protected, car-free barrier island.

Pair golden beaches with red-hued cliffs at **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (MI)**, one of the state's most photographed spots and one of just four nationally protected shorelines. In **Peninsula State Park (WI)**, towering bluffs and gentle waves create one of the Midwest's most scenic escapes, while in **Sheboygan (WI)**, the "Malibu of the Midwest," adventurous souls can even catch a wave surfing on Lake Michigan.



Catskills Fly Fishing (NY)

CAST A LINE

An angler's dream, the **Catskills (NY)** are the birthplace of American dry fly fishing, which you can learn about at the **Catskill Fly Fishing Museum (NY)**. Cast for trout in the cool streams of **Pennsylvania (PA)**, where fly fishing is a statewide passion; head to the **St. Lawrence Seaway (NY)**, home to many international tournaments; or explore the **rivers and lakes of Michigan (MI)** in search of everything from steelhead to salmon. Across Wisconsin's **Northwoods (WI)**, reel in walleye, northern pike, and bass from crystal-clear waters, or hire a boat in search of prized catches in **Duluth (MN)**.



Badlands Off Road Park (IN)

GET AN ADRENALINE RUSH

Relive Olympic history at the **Lake Placid Legacy Sites (NY)**, which hold the distinction of hosting two Winter Games. Train like an athlete and test your skills in sports such as bobsledding, curling, or skating — or simply enjoy being a spectator at one of the many festivals and events held throughout the year. Feel the need for speed at the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IN)**, where the IndyCar experience gives race fans and adrenaline junkies the chance to drive or ride on the famed oval. Prefer to go off-road? **Badlands Off Road Park (IN)** spans more than 324 hectares of rugged trails, perfect for a 4x4 adventure. Or fly through the air on **Aerie's Alpine Coaster (IL)**, where twists, turns, and sweeping bluff-top views pair thrills with scenery.



ADVENTURE ABOVE GROUND

Take a walk on the wild side at **The Wild Center (NY)**, where a suspended aerial trail above the **Adirondacks** leads to a four-storey treehouse, swinging bridges, and an eagle's nest with sweeping views. Ride the **Duquesne Incline (PA)** in **Pittsburgh**, a century-old cable car that climbs **Mount Washington** for postcard-worthy panoramas. Walk across the observation trestle at **Kinzua Bridge State Park (PA)**, on a historic rail bridge repurposed into a breathtaking aerial walkway. For an urban twist, soar through the city on **Flyover Chicago (IL)**, an immersive ride that captures the skyline and Lake Michigan horizons — without ever leaving the ground.

SEEING STARS

Say goodbye to city lights and bask as the night sky envelops you. At **Cherry Springs State Park (PA)**, **Adirondack Sky Center & Observatory (NY)**, **Newport State Park (WI)**, **Headlands International Dark Sky Park (MI)**, **Keweenaw Dark Sky Park (MI)**, **Dr. T.K. Lawless Park (MI)**, and **Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (IL)**, the Milky Way unfolds overhead in breathtaking fashion. In **Voyageurs National Park (MN)** and the **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (MN)**, the dark skies also bring the chance to witness one of nature's greatest shows, the Northern Lights. Green, purple, and yellow lights dance across the horizon, becoming a natural year-round planetarium.



Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (IL)

EXPLORE UNDERGROUND

The **Natural Stone Bridge (NY)** is home to the largest marble cave in the eastern United States, while at **Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park (PA)** — America's only all-water cavern — boat tours glide through limestone chambers dripping with stalactites and stalagmites. Originally discovered by the Indigenous **Seneca** people, the site is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nearby, **Pine Creek Gorge (PA)**, the "Grand Canyon of the East," stretches for 50 miles and plunges 305 metres deep, with fishing and paddling below and rim hikes above.

Go deep underground in the Midwest, where six caves in Indiana each reveal unique features. **Squire Boone Caverns (IN)**, discovered by frontiersman Daniel Boone, honours his legacy with rushing streams and dramatic chambers. **Indiana Caverns (IN)** impresses with an underground stream and Ice Age fossils, while **Marengo Cave (IN)**, a designated National Natural Landmark, dazzles with intricate formations. **Bluespring Caverns (IN)** features the longest subterranean river in the United States, explored entirely by boat. On the banks of the Ohio River, **Cave-in-Rock State Park (IL)** pairs a dramatic 17-metre cave with family-friendly trails and camping.



Marengo Cave (IN)

 MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

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HIKE IT OUT

Trek across 50 miles of sandy trails to see rare plant habitats at **Indiana Dunes National Park (IN)**, one of the country's newest national parks. Get off the grid at **Isle Royale National Park (MI)** in the Upper Peninsula, the least-visited national park in America. Only accessible by boat or seaplane from April through October, it's especially appealing for intrepid adventurers seeking remote camping, fishing, wildlife viewing, and more than 300 waterfalls across the entire Upper Peninsula. For something different, solve nature's puzzle at the **Morton Arboretum (IL)**, home to a 0.4-hectare maze, giant sculptures, and seasonal gardens in Lisle. Or visit **Cuyahoga Valley National Park (OH)**, outside Cleveland, one of the last remaining free national parks in the country.

Take in the views from the **Pomona Natural Bridge** at **Shawnee National Forest (IL)**, scale glacier-carved bluffs at **Devil's Lake State Park (WI)**, wander the dune-backed trails of **Kohler-Andrae State Park (WI)**, or look out over the mighty **Mississippi River** from **Granddad Bluff (WI)**. In Green Bay, scenic hikes trace the **Niagara Escarpment (WI)**, a unique Ice Age formation that stretches from New York to Wisconsin, or see fossils and prehistoric creatures at **Big Bone Lick State Park (KY)** near Cincinnati. For rugged wilderness, tackle the 300-mile **Superior Trail (MN)**, or choose a gentler path through rolling prairies and wildflower meadows at **Glacial Lakes State Park (MN)**.

For a longer jaunt, head to the **Great Allegheny Passage (PA)**, with 150 miles of continuous hiking and biking paths. Explore part of **Michigan's Trail System (MI)**, which spans more than 13,400 miles of state-designated trails, from gentle lakeside walks to intense treks. Journey back in time along the **Ice Age National Scenic Trail (WI)**, where nearly 1,000 miles of glacial landscapes await. Scramble across 300-million-year-old rock formations at the **Garden of the Gods (IL)**, especially stunning in autumn.

Indiana Dunes National Park (IN)



Elk Country (PA)

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

See the Northeast's largest free-range elk herd roaming the **Pennsylvania Wilds (PA)**, best spotted along the 127-mile **Elk Scenic Drive**. Watch bison graze across the prairie at **Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (IL)** and **Kankakee Sands (IN)** or admire them from a scenic wagon ride at **Broken Wagon Bison (IN)**, a family-owned bison farm. Meet alpacas, learn about farming, and shop yarn, soaps, dryer balls, and more at mother-daughter-owned **Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch (IL)**, or admire the majestic national bird at the **National Eagle Center in Wabasha (MN)**.

Get up close to more than 40 species on a drive-through safari at **Wilstem Wildlife Park (IN)**, or book a personal sloth, primate, giraffe, or elephant encounter for a more intimate experience. Howl along with the pack during a night programme at **Wolf Park (IN)**, or, for a whimsical afternoon, hike forest trails alongside friendly goats on a **Hoof It Goat Trek (IL)** in Galena, complete with optional bonfires, wine tastings, and foraging workshops.

Hoof It Goat Trek (IL)



Granddad Bluff (WI)



WINTER WONDERLAND

Forget about hibernating — snow days turn the **Great Lakes** into a cold-weather playground. Ski the downhill slopes of **Lake Placid** (NY), the **Catskills** (NY), the **Allegheny Mountains** (PA), or **Lutsen** (MN), or glide cross-country on trails that weave through nearly every state park. Strap on snowshoes to tromp through fresh powder, blaze your own path, and discover landscapes entirely transformed from summer. The **Minnesota Ice Festival** (MN), **World Snow Sculpting Championship** (MN), and **Sled Dog Marathon** (MN) are all bucket-list worthy events.

Drop a line through the ice on **Minnesota's frozen lakes** (MN), where colourful huts dot the horizon during ice fishing season. Rev up a snowmobile in the **Upper Peninsula** (MI), **Wisconsin's Northwoods** (WI), or the **Tug Hill Plateau** (NY), which sees over 12 metres of snow each winter. Scale frozen waterfalls in **Munising** (MI), where cliffs transform into towering ice walls for climbers. Try dog sledding along the **Lake Superior** shoreline, snow kiting on **Lake Geneva** (WI), tobogganing at **Pokagon State Park** (IN), fat-tyre biking on snowy trails, or lace up your skates for a spin on city rinks and frozen lakes.

Sled Dog Marathon (MN)



Presque Isle State Park (PA)



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lake Shore (MI)

PEDAL POWER

Bike the entirety of **Mackinac Island** (MI), an 8.2-mile loop around the car-free island — 80% of which is designated state park land — where other ways to explore include hiking or travelling by horse and buggy. For a longer trip, follow the **Empire State Trail** (NY), a 750-mile route connecting **New York City** to the **Adirondacks** and **Albany** to **Buffalo**. Or ride singletrack shaded by towering pines in the **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest** (WI), a favourite among Midwest mountain bikers. In Pennsylvania, gravel biking enthusiasts flock to the state's **Endless Mountains Region** (PA) for some of the best trails on the East Coast, while rail trails shine along the 164-mile **Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor** (PA).

Cruise urban paths like the **Lakefront Trail** (IL), stretching 18 miles along **Lake Michigan**, the **Scioto Mile**, which features expansive green parkland connecting downtown **Columbus** (OH) to the Scioto River, or the **Grand Rounds Scenic Byway** (MN), consistently ranked among the most bike-friendly systems in the U.S. For longer rides, try the **Elroy-Sparta State Trail** (WI), the nation's first rail-trail; the **Great River Trail** (IL), which follows the former spur route of the Chicago, St. Paul, Milwaukee, and Pacific Railroad for more than 60 miles. The **Root River State Trail** (MN), a paved path of roughly the same length, is also popular with bikers, hikers, and cross-country skiers.



FRESH PLACES, FRESH SPACES: A GREAT LAKES ROAD TRIP

Craving the ultimate tour of America? This two-week itinerary hits all seven states with a mix of scenic routes, charming towns, star attractions, and lakefront views so stunning you'll wonder why you ever booked a return ticket. Of course, we recommend extending your trip if you can, but if you only have enough time to get a taste of the Great Lakes, these highlights will leave you hungry for your next adventure.



Chippewa National Forest (MN)

NEW YORK

NEW YORK CITY

Fly into one of the New York City area's three international airports (JFK, LaGuardia or Newark) to take a bite out of the Big Apple, the "City That Never Sleeps." Stroll **Central Park**, climb the **Empire State Building**, pause to reflect at the **9/11 Memorial & Museum**, and take the ferry to **Ellis Island** to see the iconic **Statue of Liberty**. Refuel with a slice of **pizza**, splurge on one of the city's many Michelin-starred meals, and end on a sweet note with a classic **New York-style cheesecake**.

Central Park



ROCHESTER & FINGER LAKES REGION

Natural beauty and culture collide in the **Finger Lakes region**. Hike the 19 waterfalls at **Watkins Glen State Park**, marvel at the 66-metre **Taughannock Falls**, explore **Letchworth State Park**, the "Grand Canyon of the East," and sample award-winning Rieslings along the **Cayuga Lake Wine Trail**. Back in town, it's fun for the whole family at **Rochester's Strong National Museum of Play** and the **National Toy Hall of Fame**.

WORTH A DETOUR: Take a drive through the **Hudson Valley** and New York's Capital Region before escaping to the **Adirondacks**, where Olympic history meets alpine charm. At the heart of it all is **Lake Placid**, which hosted the Winter Games twice. Tour the **Olympic Center**, ride a bobsled, or watch ski jumpers soar before browsing the boutiques and cafés along Main Street.

Taughannock Falls



BUFFALO

Kick off your trip to upstate New York with a thunderous roar at **Niagara Falls State Park**. How you explore is a choose-your-own-adventure: cruise into the spray on a **Maid of the Mist** boat tour, descend into the **Cave of the Winds**, or take in sweeping views from the **Observation Tower**.

From there, head to **Buffalo**, New York's second-largest city. Take in the masterpieces at the **AKG Art Museum**, admire **Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House**, step into history at the **Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site**, explore the shops and cafés of **Elmwood Village**, or stroll the **Canalside waterfront** along Lake Erie.

EAT THIS: As the undisputed world capital of wings, follow the **Buffalo Wing Trail** to find your fiery favourite.

AKG Art Museum



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Buffalo

PENNSYLVANIA



PITTSBURGH & HERSHEY

Ride the historic **Duquesne Incline** to the top of **Mount Washington** to see how the “City of Bridges” got its name. Below, the **Strip District** buzzes with former warehouses turned food markets, international grocers, coffee roasters, and funky boutiques, the city’s Eastern European roots best exemplified on a plate of pierogis. Art lovers can immerse themselves in the talent of locally born **Andy Warhol Museum**, or dive into culture at the **Carnegie Museums**, which showcase everything from history to science. Craving the outdoors? Hit up the **Great Allegheny Passage**, a 150-mile trail linking the city to the Appalachian foothills.

WORTH A DETOUR: For anyone with a sweet tooth, Hershey is more than a town — it’s a Wonka wonderland come to life. Tour **Hershey’s Chocolate World** to sample cocoa creations and design your own candy bar. Across the street, **Hersheypark** is a full-on, sugar-fuelled theme park with roller coasters and water rides that’s fun for all ages.

Andy Warhol Museum

PHILADELPHIA

For anyone wanting to trace America’s roots, **Philadelphia** is hallowed ground. At **Independence Hall**, the *Declaration of Independence* and the *U.S. Constitution* were debated and signed, while just steps away, the **Liberty Bell** stands as a symbol of resilience and freedom. Snap a selfie at the **LOVE Statue** in John F. Kennedy Plaza before channeling your inner fighter on the iconic “Rocky Steps” at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, one of the largest in the country. Foodies can get lost among the stalls of **Reading Terminal Market**, a 19th-century food hall where everything from soft pretzels to Amish doughnuts beckons.

EAT THIS: You can’t leave without trying a classic **Philly cheesesteak**. Stuffed with thinly sliced beef and dripping with cheese, whether you find your favourite at **Pat’s**, **Geno’s**, or a neighbourhood spot, weighing in on the rivalry is half the fun.



Rocky Statue

INDIANA

FORT WAYNE

Promenade Park

Set on the confluence of three rivers, Fort Wayne's riverfront buzzes with energy. **Promenade Park** is the centrepiece, and home to walking paths, kayak rentals, and open-air concerts. Culture enthusiasts can explore the **Fort Wayne Museum of Art** or see the gilded **Embassy Theatre** bring Broadway and live music to life in a lavish 1920s movie palace. Families will love wandering through **Science Central**, a former power plant turned interactive museum, or getting lost among the tropical blooms at the **Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory**.



SOUTH BEND & INDIANAPOLIS

A buzzing university town, admire the gold dome of **Notre Dame**, the soaring **Basilica of the Sacred Heart**, and the famed "Touchdown Jesus" mural overlooking the football stadium. History buffs will love the **Studebaker National Museum**, which traces the rise of American cars, while art enthusiasts can get lost in the galleries of the **Raclin Murphy Museum of Art**. As night falls, **River Lights** transforms the St. Joseph River into a glowing, technicolour show.

WORTH A DETOUR: The "Racing Capital of the World," Indianapolis lives and breathes speed. At the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum**, admire the legendary IndyCars, trace a century of sports history, and kiss the famous bricks. The **Children's Museum of Indianapolis** — the largest in the world — sparks imagination with dinosaurs, mummies, and space exhibits. Downtown, **White River State Park** brings seven world-class attractions together in one site, including the **Indianapolis Zoo**, the **State Museum**, and the **Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art**. To explore like a local, stroll or cycle the **Cultural Trail**, a 10.6-mile path lined with gardens and public art — and, before you go, refuel with one of Indiana's signature oversized breaded pork schnitzel-style sandwiches.

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis



 Cleveland

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Detroit skyline



DETROIT & ANN ARBOR

The “Motor City” is a place of transformation — cutting-edge, soulful, and pulsing with creative energy. For music lovers, experience the birthplace of techno at **TV Lounge**, **Baker’s Keyboard Lounge**, the oldest jazz club in the world, or **St. Andrew’s Hall**, where Eminem famously stepped into the spotlight. For sports fans, every inch of the city is steeped in championship moments, with four professional teams less than a five-minute walk from each other. For petrolheads, the **Henry Ford Museum**, the **Ford Piquette Plant**, the annual **Detroit Grand Prix**, and the **Detroit Auto Show** offer a taste of motor culture year-round. And when you need to stretch your legs, head to the crown jewel of the city, **Belle Isle Park**, home to one of the oldest aquariums in the country, a beach, and miles of walking and cycling paths.

EAT THIS: Baked in blue steel pans once used for auto parts, **Detroit-style pizza** is distinctly square, with an airy crust lined with crispy, caramelised cheese and topped with a thick layer of tomato sauce.

WORTH A DETOUR: **Ann Arbor** is a walkable and energetic stop en route, where award-winning dining led by James Beard-recognised chefs meets world-class art, abundant outdoor recreation, and a vibrant downtown. Explore the **University of Michigan Museum of Art**, **Waterloo State Recreation Area**, **Michigan Flight Museum**, and search for whimsical fairy doors throughout the city before grabbing a bite at **Zingerman’s Delicatessen**.

TRAVERSE CITY & HOLLAND

Michigan’s northwest coast, **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**, wows with sweeping sandscapes that seem to spill into Lake Michigan. In **Traverse City**, peruse the boutiques and sip local vintages at the **Village at Grand Traverse Commons**, a 19th-century asylum turned marketplace. From there, drive to Mackinaw City and catch a ferry to **Mackinac Island**, where time stands still and no cars have been allowed since the 1800s. Explore by bicycle, horseback, or horse-drawn carriage as you ride past Victorian inns and fudge shops — a living postcard from America’s Gilded Age.

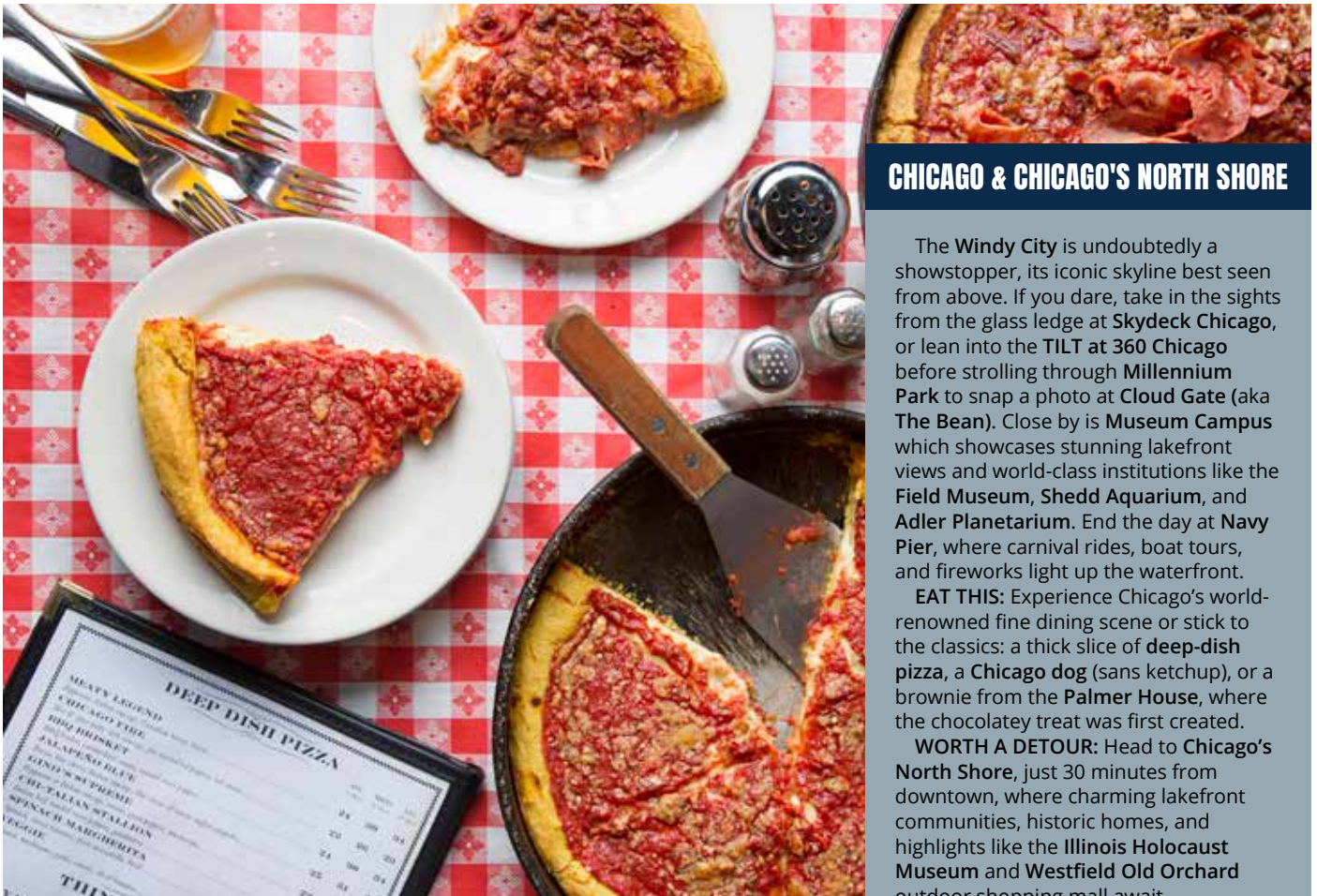
EAT THIS: Northern Michigan is **cherry country**. Pick your own straight from the orchards and taste the tart bite in everything from pies and jams to wine and beer.

WORTH A DETOUR: A slice of the Netherlands in the Midwest, **Holland** delivers Old World charm with a lakeside twist. Each spring, five million tulips burst into bloom during the **Tulip Time Festival**. At **Windmill Island Gardens**, a 250-year-old Dutch windmill rises above rows of flowers, while wooden-shoe carving and folk dancing keep timeless traditions alive. Beyond its memorable heritage, Holland also boasts some of Lake Michigan’s best beaches.



Traverse City

ILLINOIS



CHICAGO & CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE

The Windy City is undoubtedly a showstopper, its iconic skyline best seen from above. If you dare, take in the sights from the glass ledge at Skydeck Chicago, or lean into the TILT at 360 Chicago before strolling through Millennium Park to snap a photo at Cloud Gate (aka The Bean). Close by is Museum Campus which showcases stunning lakefront views and world-class institutions like the Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, and Adler Planetarium. End the day at Navy Pier, where carnival rides, boat tours, and fireworks light up the waterfront.

EAT THIS: Experience Chicago's world-renowned fine dining scene or stick to the classics: a thick slice of deep-dish pizza, a Chicago dog (sans ketchup), or a brownie from the Palmer House, where the chocolatey treat was first created.

WORTH A DETOUR: Head to Chicago's North Shore, just 30 minutes from downtown, where charming lakefront communities, historic homes, and highlights like the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Westfield Old Orchard outdoor shopping mall await.

Deep-dish pizza

SPRINGFIELD & ROUTE 66

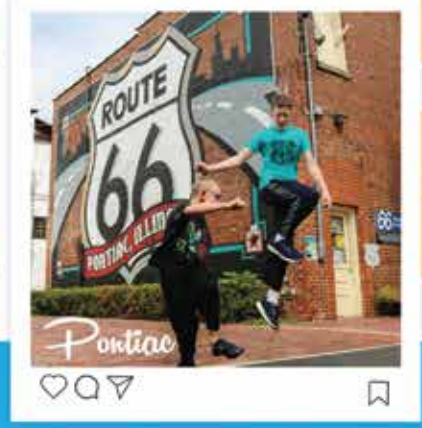
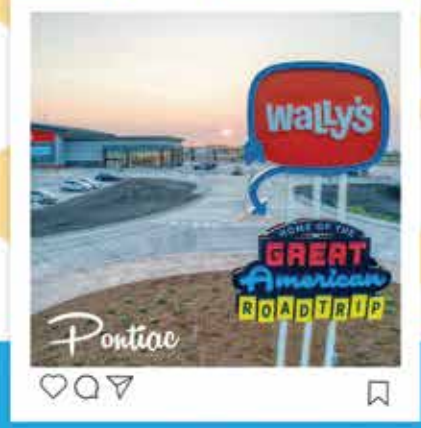
The "Land of Lincoln" brings the 16th president's legacy to life at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, and the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery. When you're ready to refuel, try a Cozy Dog, a Route 66 classic that predates the corn dog, or dig into a local favourite — the horseshoe: part open-faced sandwich, part cheese-fry masterpiece.

WORTH A DETOUR: Few drives capture Americana quite like Route 66, and Illinois is where it all begins. Cruise the first 300 miles past small towns, neon signs, and roadside oddities. In Pontiac, the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum overflows with vintage maps and cars, while kitschy stops like the Pink Elephant Antique Mall and It's Electric - Neon Sign Park make the journey unforgettable.



Pink Elephant Antique Mall

ILLINOIS US 66 The First **HUNDRED** Miles



WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE

Start your day strolling the **RiverWalk**, a scenic promenade lined with breweries, cafés and public art, before touring the **Pabst Mansion**, once home to the city's iconic beer barons. At the **Milwaukee Art Museum**, Santiago Calatrava's soaring wings open each morning like a bird taking flight. Rev up at the **Harley-Davidson Museum**, or graze your way through the **Milwaukee Public Market**, where stalls sling everything from oysters to cheese curds. Time your visit right and you can catch **Summerfest**, the world's largest music festival, or one of the famed sausage races at a **Milwaukee Brewers** home game.

EAT THIS: No visit to Wisconsin is complete without a classic **Supper Club** experience — Prohibition-era restaurants-turned-dining traditions featuring multicourse meals paired with a signature brandy Old Fashioned.

Milwaukee skyline



GREEN BAY

Football is life in Green Bay. **Lambeau Field** is home to the fan-owned Packers, where more than half a million shareholders embody the community spirit that electrifies every tour — from the **Hall of Fame** to **Titletown**. Beyond the gridiron, **Bay Beach Amusement Park** keeps things retro with carnival rides and a wooden coaster for less than a dollar, while the nearby **Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary** offers a quiet escape with trails, wetlands, and rescue animals.

EAT THIS: Try a **kringle**, the official pastry of Wisconsin. A local breakfast staple, these flaky oval Danishes are filled with everything from nuts to fruit.

Bay Beach Amusement Park



DOOR COUNTY & MADISON

Door County blends adventure with awe. Kayak beneath limestone cliffs, slip into quiet coves, or spot **historic lighthouses** along the route from Lake Michigan to Green Bay. On land, **cherry orchards** and character-filled villages invite you to slow down, wander local galleries, and savor moments that stay with you.

EAT THIS: The **Door County Fish Boil** is tradition with flair—fresh Lake Michigan whitefish cooked over an open fire until the dramatic boil-over signals dinner. Paired with potatoes, onions, and cherry pie, it's unforgettable.

WORTH A DETOUR: Madison pairs the state capital with a laid-back, college-town vibe. Tour the gleaming **Wisconsin State Capitol**, a near twin to Washington's, before hitting up **Memorial Union Terrace** on Lake Mendota to watch sailboats drift by. On Saturdays, the bustling **Dane County Farmers' Market**, the largest producer-only market in the country, comes alive with local growers and leisurely strollers.

Door County





  
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VISIT
MILWAUKEE

MINNESOTA

BLOOMINGTON

The largest mall in the U.S., the **Mall of America**® is more than just a retail playground, it's a full-on entertainment complex. With more than 500 stores, shopping is just the tip of the iceberg. Ride roller coasters at **Nickelodeon Universe**®, walk through shark-filled tunnels at **SEA LIFE Aquarium**, or tee off with a round of mini golf, all before dinner. When you're ready to swap neon lights for nature, the wetland trails at the nearby **Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge** reveals the state's wilder side

Nickelodeon Universe®, Mall of America®



MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL & DULUTH

Explore the Twin Cities before flying home from **Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport**. In Minneapolis, cross the **Stone Arch Bridge** for sweeping river views, wander the **Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden**, tour the historic **Mill City Museum**, or chase waterfalls at **Minnehaha Park**. Across the river, **St. Paul** leans into old-world grandeur with the soaring **Cathedral of St. Paul** and the marble-domed **Minnesota State Capitol**. Finally, make a pilgrimage to **Paisley Park**, a mecca for music lovers and the legendary site where Prince recorded and performed.

EAT THIS: A burger with gooey cheese melted into the centre of the patty, the **Jucy Lucy** sparked a friendly rivalry between two Minneapolis bars and has since evolved into Minnesota's signature bite. The **tater tot hotdish** is another must-try, a hearty casserole that's pure comfort during the Midwest's colder months.

WORTH A DETOUR: Perched on the edge of **Lake Superior**, North America's largest freshwater lake, **Duluth** is just 2.5 hours from Minneapolis yet feels a world away. Watch ships glide into the world's largest inland seaport, stroll the lively **Canal Park** waterfront, and soak up sweeping views that embody the Great Lakes experience.



Minneapolis Stone Arch Bridge

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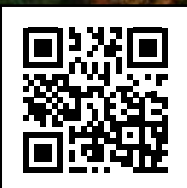
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