

Experience



St. Ignace

2026-2027 GUEST GUIDE



INSIDE:

ATTRACTIONS.
LOCAL SHOPPING.
WHERE TO EAT.

ST. IGNACE

THE *SMALL TOWN* WITH *BIG EVENTS*

2026 SCHEDULE

Weekly EVENTS

MONDAYS & TUESDAYS

Native American Cultural Teachings
& St. Ignace History Teachings
Museum of Ojibwa Culture
6:30pm-7:30pm

THURSDAYS

Bayside Farmer's Market
St. Ignace City Marina Lawn
3pm-7pm

FRIDAYS

Friday Nights at the Museum
Museum of Ojibwa Culture
6:30-8:30 pm

SATURDAYS

Chamber Flea Market, 10am-4pm
Swingin' Iggy Street Party
with Music and Entertainment,
Downtown, 7pm-10pm
Fireworks Over the Bay, Dusk

Special EVENTS

FEBRUARY 12-15 Labatt Blue Adult Pond Hockey

MAY 8-9 Jeep The Mac

MAY 23 Native American Festival

JUNE 5-6 Bronco The Mac

JUNE 25-27 St. Ignace 50th Annual
Car Show Weekend

JULY 4 Community Parade & Party,
Live Music & Fireworks

JULY 24-25 Heritage Days

JULY 31-AUGUST 1 85th Birthday of the Jeep

AUGUST 28-30 Rendezvous At The Straits Powow

SEPTEMBER 5-6 Arts Dockside & Craft Fair

SEPTEMBER 7 Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk

SEPTEMBER 12-13 Antique Tractor Crossing & Games

SEPTEMBER 17-19 St. Ignace 30th Annual Truck Show

SEPTEMBER 25-26 Trek The Mighty Mac

DECEMBER 12 Antique Snowmobile The Mac

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Sadie's Ice Cream Parlor

The Jewel Golf Course
Woodlands Activity Center
The Gem Miniature Golf Course
Cedar Grove Adventure Track
Carousel Arcade
Grand Hotel Mackinac Market, Main Street
Mackinac Island Bike Shop
Sadie's Ice Cream Parlor, Main Street



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WELCOME TO HISTORIC ST. IGNACE

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Founded in 1671, St. Ignace is the state's second-oldest city, just two years younger than Sault Ste. Marie. The city is embraced by two Great Lakes – Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Its rich multi-cultural history, maritime, railroad, and auto heritage, abundant natural resources and recreational activities, year-round festivals and special events have made it a favorite all-season destination for generations of families. From the Mackinac Bridge to Mackinac Island, Castle Rock to the Mystery Spot, Lake Michigan's dunes to downtown tunes, St. Ignace doesn't disappoint.

There's a lot of magic here in the center of the freshwater world, and you're bound to fall under its spell! This guide is here to help you make the most of your visit and have the best experience possible. St. Ignace has so much to offer, and we want to share it all with you.

Please be courteous and leave this guide for the next guest to enjoy.



WHAT'S INSIDE:



DAY TRIPS

- MACKINAC ISLAND
- SAULT STE. MARIE
- LES CHENEAUX
- TAHQUAMENON FALLS

33



SHOPPING

- BOUTIQUES
- GIFT SHOPS
- HOPE CHEST
- RESALE

24



FOOD

- RESTAURANTS TO ENJOY DURING YOUR STAY

28

On the cover: Photo by Alexis Rankin



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THE MIGHTY MAC

There is nothing that says “Michigan” more than the Mackinac Bridge. This iconic engineering marvel has linked Michigan’s two peninsulas since November 1, 1957. The Mackinac Bridge is currently the seventh-longest suspension bridge in the world by total suspended length, and the longest suspension bridge in the western hemisphere.

The Mighty Mac was conceived by bridge designer and engineer David B. Steinman, who is considered among the world’s foremost bridge designers. He and his associates built more than 400 bridges on five continents during his career, including the International Bridge that connects Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, with Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.

Because the Mighty Mac is a suspension bridge, it was designed to adjust to many factors, including high winds and temperature fluctuations. The deck at the center span of the bridge can move 35 feet east or west when under severe weather conditions.

To guarantee bridge safety, routine maintenance and inspections are performed continuously. For additional information about the construction of the bridge, to check on bridge conditions, or to view the Live Bridge Cam, visit the Mackinac Bridge Authority online at www.mackinacbridge.org.

The Mackinac Bridge does close under rare circumstances, like extremely high, sustained winds or falling ice. While you probably won’t have to worry about a closure during your summer visit, you can subscribe to text alerts regarding bridge closures by texting MacBridge to 67283.

Did You Know?

The Mackinac Bridge Authority replaces the steel grating that comprises a portion of the main deck. Throughout the year, the MBA sells pieces from old grating to the public. Check www.mackinacbridge.org for more information about buying one of these unique souvenirs.

Best Views

A great place to view the Mackinac Bridge is from Bridge View Park, just west of the Mackinac Bridge toll plaza. On-site is an enclosed observation pavilion that has information and exhibits inside about the history and construction of the bridge. The park also offers public restrooms, picnic tables and grills, and a telescope that allows for up-close views.

Straits State Park offers a unique, head-on view of the bridge that can be accessed by a short trail leading from camp sites through a wooded area to an open viewing point.

Head west along US-2 a few miles outside of town, and you’ll find a roadside park with an unobstructed view of the Mackinac Bridge from a high vantage point. Stop and have lunch at one of the picnic tables and



Discover the Details

- **Total length of bridge:**
5 miles / 26,732 feet
- **Height of main towers above the water:** 552 feet
- **Height of roadway above the water at midspan:** 199 feet
- **Number of wires in each cable:** 12,580
- **Total weight of bridge:**
1,024,500 tons
- **Total number of steel rivets:** 4,851,700
- **Bridge construction began:**
May 7, 1954
- **Bridge open to traffic:**
November 1, 1957



take in the view.

Want to walk directly underneath the Mackinac Bridge? Stop at Colonial Michilimackinac Historic State Park in Mackinaw City. From here, you can walk directly under the bridge and get an up-close look at the structure.

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PARKING

State Street Parking – Two-hour parking is available along State Street. Perfect for a quick shopping trip or grabbing a bite to eat or an ice cream cone, this free parking is clearly marked. No overnight parking is allowed.

Chambers Alley Lot – Parking is available behind the business between Central Hill and Truckey Street. These spots are free for the first three hours, unless signs say otherwise.

Marquette Street Lot – Located across the street from Little Bear East Arena at 275 Marquette Street, this paid parking lot offers spots for \$10 per day from December 1 through March 31, and \$8 per day from April 1 through November 30. Overnight parking is an additional \$10. To pay for parking, register your license plate with the HONK app, a digital parking platform, using your smartphone.

Dock 3 – Parking at Dock 3 is free for daily park and playground visitors. For commercial use, including Arnold Freight, permit parking is paid by using the drop box payment solution for daily, weekly, monthly, or annual parking. These permits are also available in the Clerk's Office at City Hall.

Boat Launch – For those using the boat launch, parking here is \$6 per day. This is valid for vehicles with trailers attached. Additional free three-hour parking is located nearby at the end of Hazelton Street.

Public Marina – Parking at the St. Ignace Marina is available for Marina customers and their guests.

EUP TRAVEL TIPS

Bring a paper map or take screenshots of your map – Cell phone service can be spotty to nonexistent in certain areas of the EUP, making it risky to rely on your smartphone for directions.

Bring a fully charged power bank and your charging cable – Roaming and searching for a GPS or data signal can drain a smartphone battery quickly.

Call ahead and make reservations – We might be sparsely populated, but we are popular. While you may find lodging and eating accommodations without planning, it's risky to head north without a confirmed reservation, especially on weekends and during events. Establishments may not be open as late as you're used to, so be sure to check hours online or by calling to make sure you don't miss your chance at a tasty meal!

Pack for the ever-changing weather – Temperatures can fluctuate, especially along the lakeshores. Dress in, or bring along, layers. Also, if you're going exploring or adventuring, pack extra shoes and socks in case things end up more rugged than you planned.

Bring supplies – Should you end up stranded in your car or on a trail, you will want to be prepared to spend a day, or even a night, in the wilderness. Have a well-stocked emergency bag with snacks, water, blankets, and a tarp, among other necessities.

Get gas and use the restroom when you can – Gas stations can be few and far between once you get into the heart of the Upper Peninsula. Also, if you think you should use the restroom when you've stopped to fill up, that means you probably should. Not only are gas stations limited, but rest areas are as well.



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HISTORY

The Mackinac Straits region – Center of the Freshwater World – has for centuries been a busy crossroads for people and commerce. Long before the first Europeans stepped upon its heavily forested shores, the Anishinaabe already had a thriving economy, communities, and culture here. They hunted, fished, and foraged the area's abundant natural resources, and had a vast trade network throughout North America using the Great Lakes region's wealth of water-based trade routes – from Lake Huron to the east, Lake Michigan to the west, and along the inland lakes and rivers feeding the basin.

When the first French explorers and fur traders arrived in the area in the 17th century, they used the same waterways as the Indigenous Tribes to further explore the interior of the Great Lakes region and to export beaver pelts procured by Indigenous peoples to buyers in the east. The voyageurs traded a variety of goods with the Indians, including guns, tools, and wool blankets in exchange for the furs, which were then transported via canoe to the northeastern population centers at the time, including Montreal and Quebec City. It should come as no surprise, then, that the water routes once used by the Native Tribes and voyageurs are still used to transport coal, iron ore, limestone, salt, and grain on massive freighters to ports throughout the Great Lakes region and beyond. Today, these same waters also provide a host of recreational opportunities in what is now one of the Midwest's premier vacation destinations.

It was in 1671 that French Jesuit priest Father Jacques Marquette founded a mission on Moran Bay, naming it St. Ignace in honor of St.



Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order. Marquette was an unusual missionary in that he endeared himself to the Native peoples, amongst whom he lived, by learning their languages and customs. And while he was assigned to bring Catholicism to them, he also honored and respected their beliefs and traditions. The rich history and vibrant culture of the Odawa, Ojibwa, and Huron, who inhabited the area, continue to influence it to this day.

In 1683, the French built a military outpost in St. Ignace known as Fort deBuade to protect the interests of the fur traders. The area had become the center of the Great Lakes fur trading economy, and St. Ignace had become among the largest settlements in what was then known as New France. Its economic importance was such that the Straits region experienced the rule of three different nations for 130 years. When the French were defeated during the Seven Years War, 1754-1763, the British took overrule of the area until the United States took possession of



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Mackinac Island and Fort Michilimackinac after winning its independence in the American Revolution. However, when war broke out between the U.S. and Great Britain in 1812, the British again took possession of the fort on Mackinac Island, and it wasn't until the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in 1814 that Fort Mackinac was reclaimed by the U.S.

With the decline of the fur trade in the mid-1800s, commercial fishing and logging became the primary economic drivers in the Straits area. The first sawmill in St. Ignace was built in the 1870s, and rail ferry service connecting the rail lines of the Upper and Lower Peninsulas was established in the 1880s. The Martel Furnace Company, a smelting operation that made quality steel, also began production in St. Ignace in the 1880s, further adding to the local economy.

In 1888, all-season ferry service began with the launching of the railroad ferry, St. Ignace. It had a propeller at its bow, which allowed it to break ice ahead of it, opening year-round transportation in the Straits of Mackinac.

Car ferry service across the Straits of Mackinac began in 1923. Drivers wishing to travel to the Upper Peninsula would line up to wait for a ferry to take them across the five-mile-wide strait, which took about 45 minutes. However, during the peak summer season or on the opening day of deer season, drivers and their vehicles would frequently have to wait hours for a ferry. But with the opening of the Mackinac Bridge in 1957, the gateway to the north blew wide open. What once took hours to accomplish would now take only minutes, encouraging further development of the tourism economy and introducing generations of a new type of explorer to the area – vacationers.

FOR THE HISTORY BUFF

If you or someone you're traveling with loves history, consider making a stop at one or more of these historical sites in St. Ignace:

Kiwanis Beach

This historic site once served as the original Native settlement in the area

Museum of Ojibwa Culture

Here you'll learn the history of the 17th-century Huron Indian Village, Father Marquette's French Jesuit Mission, and local Ojibwa Indian traditions and culture.

Historic Totem Village

Touted as Michigan's oldest and largest American Indian gift shop. This cultural landmark offers authentic native and crafted gifts, art, and cultural artifacts rooted in Odawa and Ojibwe heritage.

City Dock #3

Also known as Coast Guard Park, this viewing pier once served as a railroad terminus at the Straits of Mackinac.

Wawatam Dock and Lighthouse

The Wawatam Lighthouse became an icon of St. Ignace in 2006 after being spared from demolition in Monroe, Michigan, and moved to the former railroad pier previously used by the *Chief Wawatam* train ferry.

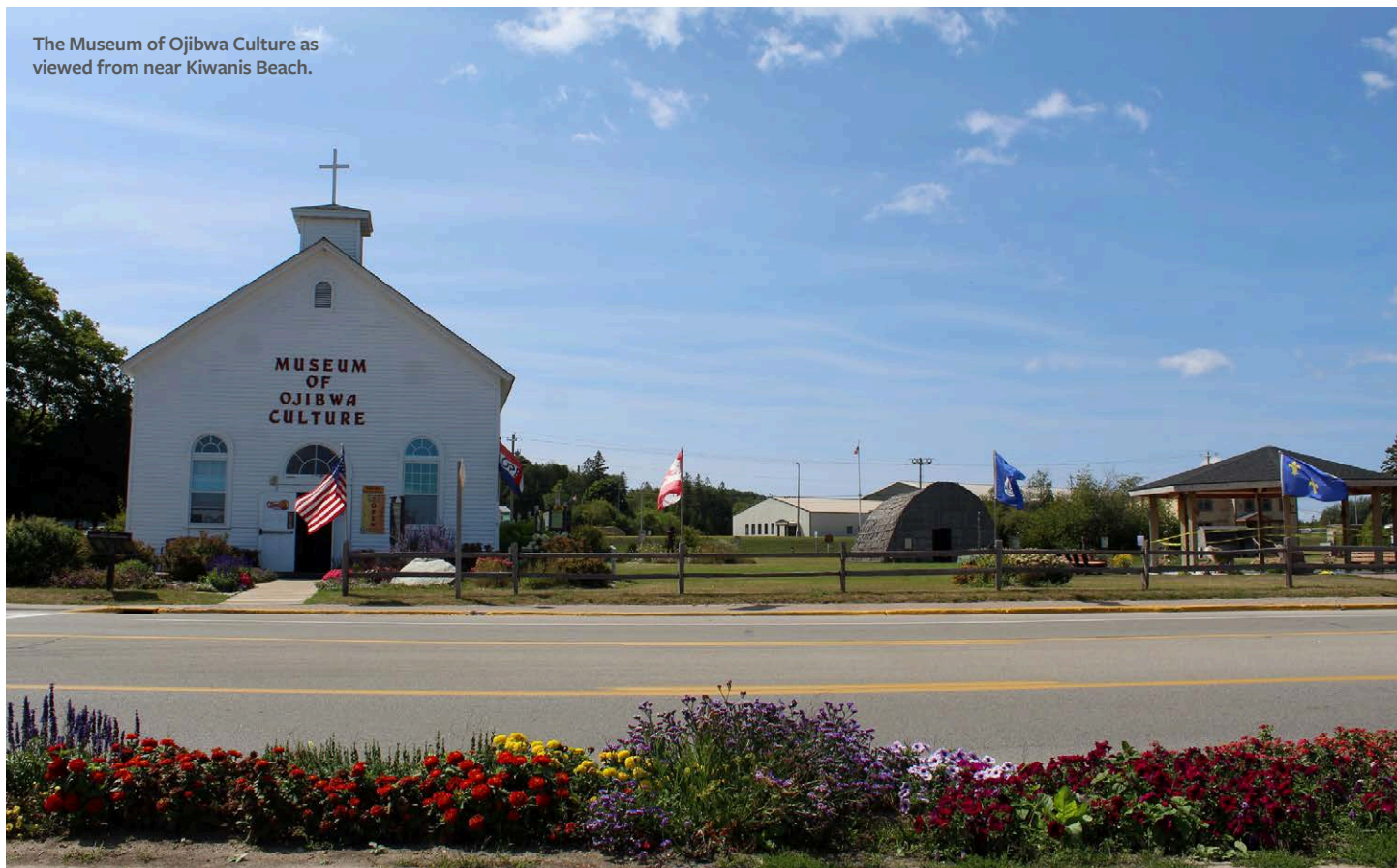
Father Marquette National Memorial & New France Discovery Center

Located within Straits State Park, the memorial commemorates the life of Father Jacques Marquette. Father Marquette founded Sault Ste. Marie in 1668 and St. Ignace in 1671, and was crucial in early interactions between the indigenous people and French settlers. The memorial is set to reopen in July of 2026 following a closure to renovate and re-imagine the memorial.

Straits Cultural Center

The Michilimackinac Historical Society's new museum is set to open to visitors in the summer of 2026.

The Museum of Ojibwa Culture as viewed from near Kiwanis Beach.



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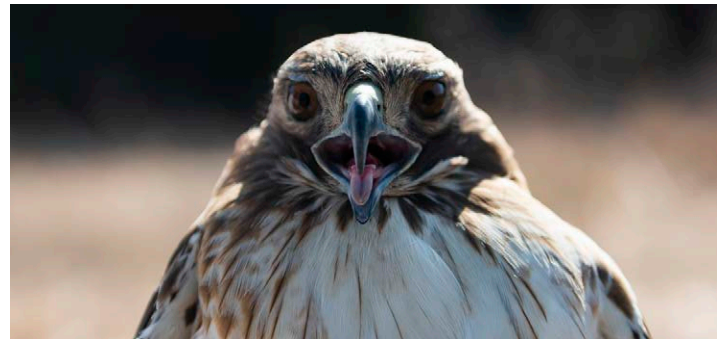
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EUP WILDLIFE: BIRDS, BUGS & MORE

The Eastern Upper Peninsula is a haven for wildlife and is recognized by the Nature Conservancy as one of "The Last Great Places" in the Northern Hemisphere. The North Huron Birding Trail has five unique birding zones in St. Ignace, Les Cheneaux, DeTour, Drummond Island, and the Pickford grassland area.

particularly birds of prey such as owls, hawks, and falcons. The Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch holds bi-annual bird counts from Mackinaw City, St. Ignace, and Mackinac Island. Their researchers also band owls and red-tailed hawks in the spring from Mackinaw City, and continue the owl banding in the fall from St. Ignace.

Those by the water at dawn or dusk may encounter river otters, especially when on Mackinac Island.

Other animal sightings in the area may include white-tailed deer, black bears, moose, porcupines, badgers, eagles, beavers, and blue-spotted salamanders.



Rudyard, a rural town off I-75 between St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie, is known as the Snowy Owl Capital of Michigan. The vast expanses of open fields and various high perches, including power lines, poles, and barns, allow the owls to hunt throughout the winter as they migrate south from their northern homes.

You may be *leky* — lucky enough to find a sharp-tailed grouse lek in the area of Rudyard or Pickford. The birds can be found at these competitive breeding display locations throughout the year, but especially during their peak mating season of March through June.

In the late fall, you might see a large, dark mass floating in Lake Huron on the northeast side of the Mackinac Bridge as you cross. It's not an oil spill or debris, but a raft of thousands of Redhead ducks. The birds spend several weeks here on their journey south to warmer climes at the start of winter.

The Straits of Mackinac is a superhighway for migrating birds,

Miss the Midges

Not all wildlife is a welcome sight. Midges are non-biting, fly-like insects that resemble mosquitoes but don't feed on blood. While a nuisance to visitors and residents alike, these slow-flying creatures don't pose a threat to people. If you're near the water, you may run into swarms of them in the spring when water temperatures are rising. They have a short life span dependent on weather conditions. Bug spray won't keep them away, so plan to bring a hat and something to cover your face to keep as many of them off you as possible. Wind and cooler temperatures will keep them at bay, as will distance from the water.

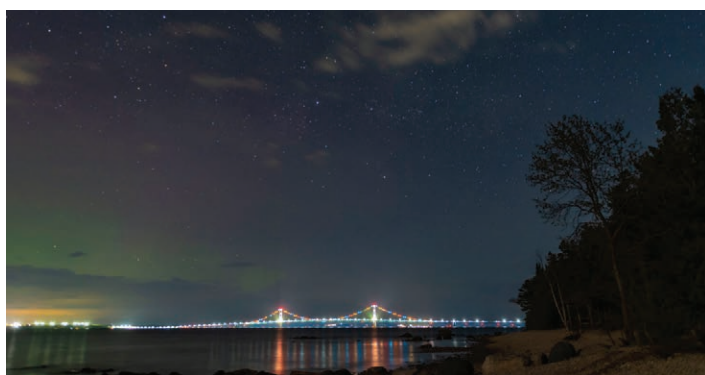
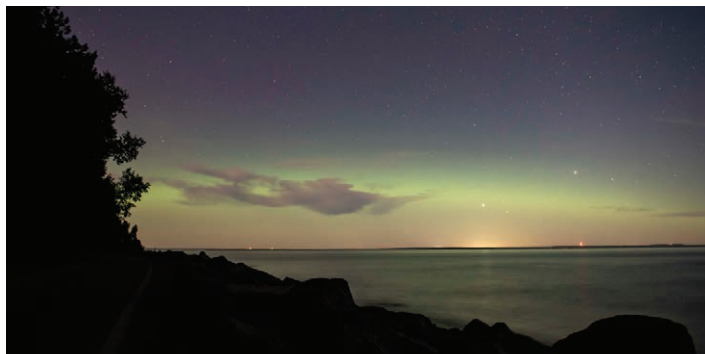
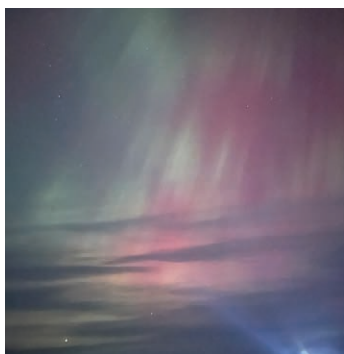


NIGHT SKY VIEWING

The Eastern Upper Peninsula is a haven for stargazers. With some 4.2 million acres of forest land in the area, there is hardly any light pollution to detract from the stars in the quiet night sky. The northern lights can often be spotted in the area as well. Below the bridge, Mackinaw City is home to Headlands International Dark Sky Park. With over 500 acres of pristine woodlands, two miles of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline, and the Waterfront Event Center, the Headlands is a must-visit destination. Access is typically free, though on some busy nights (meteor showers, aurora sightings) and for scheduled events, there may be a fee. Find out more by visiting www.midarkskypark.org.

In and around St. Ignace, the best stargazing will be in areas with a clear view of the horizon, such as a field or body of water. Even in downtown St. Ignace, light pollution is minimal enough to allow for clear star visibility on a cloudless night.

For those looking to catch sight of the aurora borealis, a northern-facing view is optimal. Predicting when the aurora borealis will be visible is difficult and can only be done one to two days in advance. Check the KP index provided by NOAA to find the latest information regarding geomagnetic activity.



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TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

North Country National Scenic Trail

Trailhead located west of Castle Rock and Castle Rock ponds takes hikers along the North Country Trail. Off I-75 (Castle Rock exit) take Lant Road to Castle Rock Road.

Cut River Roadside Park

A beautiful roadside park area where you can view the Cut River Bridge and Lake Michigan. Short trails take you down to a sandy beach area along Lake Michigan or along the river. From the intersection of US-2 and I-75, drive west 24 miles on US-2.

Maple Hill Trail

Enjoy all or a part of this winding trail between the towns of Moran and Rudyard. Hikers can walk along the Niagara Escarpment, a rare rock formation, or enjoy wildlife at the beaver dam. From St. Ignace to I-75, take exit 352 for M-123. Turn right onto Charles Moran Rd. Turn left onto East Lake Rd. Signs for the North Country Trail are along here.

Peek-A-Boo Trail

The roughly 4 mile Peek-a-Boo Hill trail is an all season, non-motorized trail open to hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. The trail features some sections covered with rock while others are dirt, including the difficult "black diamond" mountain biking section that will include jumps, humps, a rock garden, and various other obstacles. The trail follows a looping design that starts and ends in Cedarville, with the trailhead



Peek-A-Boo Trail Opens

located alongside the running track on State Avenue used by Les Cheneaux Area Schools. The track's parking lot will pull double duty for trail users.

Huron Boardwalk

A picturesque walk along the historic St. Ignace downtown waterfront

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St. Ignace Rail Trail to Trout Lake

This 26-mile trail is almost entirely within the Hiawatha National Forest. It follows an abandoned rail corridor from St. Ignace north to Trout Lake. The trail passes among woodlands, wetlands, and open green spaces. Open to cyclists, hikers, ORVs, and snowmobiles. Park at Little Bear East Arena on Marquette Street.

Sand Dunes XC Ski Trail

A popular destination for cross-country skiers. Trails accommodate beginners to advanced skiers. Groomed for classic style cross-country skiing. From the intersection of US-2 and I-75 drive west 12 miles on US-2 to Brevort Lake Road. Turn right (north) and drive 0.4 mile north to the trailhead on the left (west) side of the road.

Straits State Park

Within this state park are picnic areas and observation platforms that offer superb views of the Mackinac Bridge and the Straits of Mackinac. Trails and history of the area make it a popular destination in St. Ignace. Located on Church Street, in the City of St. Ignace, south of US-2.



Little Bear East Fitness Trail & Fishing Pond



Straits State Park

Native Plant Garden & Trails

The Hiawatha National Forest St. Ignace Ranger Station is home to a beautiful array of native wildflowers and has three scenic trail loops to hike. From the intersection of US-2 and I-75 in St. Ignace drive west about 5 miles. Parking lot/driveway is on the right/north side of the road.

Foley Creek & Horseshoe Bay Wilderness Area

An often-overlooked area of Lake Huron shoreline, this trail system is accessed from Foley Creek National Forest Campground. A 2.5-mile trail leads out to the 7-miles of protected shoreline. Located just north of St. Ignace, the Foley Creek National Forest Campground entrance is off County Road 320.

St. Ignace XC Ski Trail

A seven-mile ski trail that traverses woods and some pipeline clearing along a scenic route that skirts four lakes. Begins across from the high school on Portage Road; ends at Doc Holle's Winter Recreation Area on US-2 and Cheeseman Road.

Little Bear East Fitness Trail

At a little over a half-mile, this mixed surface (gravel, grass, and dirt) pathway is perfect for a quick walk on a lunch break, or to stretch your legs after a long car ride. Open year round, the trail features fitness and stretching stations to take your walk to the next level, or bring a fishing pole and try your luck casting off the fishing platform into the stocked pond (perch & walleye). Conveniently located near the North Country trailhead, you can make a quick loop and continue on further down the North Country trail. Dogs on leash allowed, doggie clean-up bags provided.

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BOATING



Anyone who loves the water and watching boats will get their heart's content in the Straits area. From ferries to "footers" and catamarans to cabin cruisers, you're sure to see them all plying the waters of the Straits of Mackinac.

Freighters sailing the Straits range in size from 500 feet to more than 1,000 feet. The 1,000-foot-long boats, known as "1,000-footers," carry a variety of cargo that includes iron ore, coal, grain, limestone, and salt. Some of them can accommodate more than 70,000 tons in their holds.

Boats that are northbound for Lake Superior must go through the Soo Locks at Sault Ste. Marie, a 50-minute drive north of St. Ignace. A viewing stand in Soo Locks Park in downtown Sault Ste. Marie provides the public with an opportunity to watch the freighters as they pass through the locks – and it's free. There are also boat tours of the locks for those wanting a first-hand experience locking through. There are several ways to find out when freighters are anticipated to pass through the locks. You can visit www.marinetraffic.com or download its app. The Soo Locks Visitor Center has information on site at Soo Locks Park, or you can call its boat schedule hotline at (906) 202-1333. You can also stop in at the Sault Convention and Visitors Bureau at 225 E. Portage Avenue or call them at (906) 632-3366.

St. Ignace has several public parks and vantage points to view the ferries bound for Mackinac Island. For a unique view of the Mighty Mac, there are ferry trips offered by both Shepler's Ferry and Arnold Transit Company (formerly Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry Company) that make a detour under the Mackinac Bridge before going to the Island. Check their respective schedules to plan your trip.

Another spectacular site to see in the Straits of Mackinac is hundreds of colorful, billowing sails as sailboats race their way to Mackinac Island during two of the most iconic freshwater sailboat races in the country – the Wintrust Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac and the Bayview Mackinac Race, both in July. You will also see a variety of local vessels racing with the wind all summer long, as well as power boats and fishing vessels headed out for a day of pleasure boating and net pulling.

MACKINAW BOATS

St. Ignace has a historic boat on display in downtown St. Ignace in a viewing building next to B.C. Pizza. *The Edith Jane*, a Mackinac Boat, was donated to the city by the Michilimackinac Historical Society. She was built in St. Ignace in 1899 by the Chenier family, who settled in the area around 1830. The boat is made of pine planks with an oak frame and is 19-feet eight-inches long, has a six-foot four-inch beam, and draws one-foot six inches. She was later converted to power.

SIGHTSEEING TOURS AND RENTALS
Mackinac Straits Watersports Rental Co.

For the past several summers, Mackinac Straits Watersports has offered kayaks and jet-skis for rent for guests looking for an on-the-water view of St. Ignace. While costs are subject to change, hourly rentals of kayaks cost about \$35 per hour per person, while jet-skis cost about \$120 per hour per person. For those looking to get out on the water during their vacation, contact Mike for rental availability and current rates at (517) 528-9545.

Mackinac RIB Adventure Tours

A new addition to the water recreation scene in the St. Ignace area is Mackinac RIB Adventure Tours with local Captain Jerry. Join Captain Jerry aboard his RIB (rigid inflatable boat), a former U.S. Navy special operations boat, for an unforgettable tour of the Straits of Mackinac. Contact Captain Jerry at jerrythibault@yahoo.com or by telephone at (906) 430-8560 to schedule your tour today.

Sip n' Sail Cruises

Hop aboard a Sip n' Sail Cruise to experience historic Mackinac Island and the Mackinac Bridge from the sparkling blue waters of the Straits of Mackinac. While viewing spectacular scenery, you can sip a favorite beverage, chat with friends old and new, and listen to live music or an award-winning DJ. Choose from the 81-foot-long *Isle Royale Queen III* or the 55-foot-long *Robin E*, a glass-bottom boat, that offer a variety of cruises running from mid-May to mid-October. Private charters are also available. For more information or to make a reservation, visit www.sipsailcruises.com, where you can purchase tickets online, or call (844) 906-9006.

**Shepler's Sightseeing Tours**

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry offers a variety of special cruises in addition to its daily ferry service to Mackinac Island, including sunset cruises – a new addition for the 2026 season – and several lighthouse cruises. All cruises depart from the Mackinaw City dock but are well worth the trip across the Mackinac Bridge. For details and more information, visit their website at www.sheplersferry.com, or call (231) 436-5023.



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SPECIAL EVENTS

St. Ignace is known for its many events, specialized bridge crossings, and car shows. With an elite line-up of events beginning with the Labatt Blue U.P. Pond Hockey Championship in February and ending with the Antique Snowmobile Bridge Crossing in December, there is something for everyone in St. Ignace.

Bridge Crossings

Crossing the Mackinac Bridge is an experience no matter the circumstances. It is made even more special, however, by the themed crossing events that bring together enthusiasts from across the country to the Mighty Mac.

The summer season begins with **Jeep the Mac** on May 8, 2026, during which Jeep owners bring their vehicles to St. Ignace for a weekend of off-road adventuring. Bringing together drivers from either side of the Straits of Mackinac, the Jeep the Mac parade is a uniting experience for Jeep drivers of all backgrounds.

Bronco the Mac happens next, with vintage and modern models of the classic Ford SUV descending upon St. Ignace June 5, 2026. After a coordinated group crossing where the Broncos take control of the bridge, participants gather in town for trail riding, live music, food, drinks, and a friendly atmosphere.

The **Antique Tractor Crossing** is one of the more unique bridge crossing events, bringing people to St. Ignace. Beginning September 12, 2026, antique tractor enthusiasts will trade the field for the straits for a celebratory weekend honoring Michigan's rich agricultural heritage.

Off-road vehicles take their turn across the bridge on September 25, 2026. The 12th Annual **Trek the Mighty Mac** invites off-road enthusiasts to St. Ignace for a weekend of trail-riding adventures. The event is open to side-by-sides, three-wheelers, four-wheelers, and dirt bikes only.

The last annual crossing of the year features **Antique Snowmobiles** in early December. To qualify, snowmobiles must be at least 25 years old and must have a wheel kit installed. While breakdowns have been known to occur during the crossing, part of the event's charm is seeing fellow riders help everyone make it across the five-mile span.



The lone biennial crossing, **MINI on the Mack** brings together MINI drivers from across North America in an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the largest MINI Parade. Their goal is to set the record by topping 1,451 vehicles. The next MINI on the Mack event will take place in 2027.

History and Heritage

Founded in 1671 by French Jesuit missionary Father Jacques Marquette, St. Ignace has a rich history that continues to be celebrated today.

The **St. Ignace Annual Native American Festival** celebrates the living culture of the Anishinaabe people who have called St. Ignace home for centuries. Held on the grounds of the Museum of Ojibwa Culture in downtown St. Ignace, the festival features drummers, dancers, artists, and storytellers who come together to honor and share their traditions. This free event is set for May 23, 2026.

The **St. Ignace Heritage Festival** celebrates the local history with an immersive flair. Set in the 1760s, festival participants learn traditional skills, like how to make bird bark baskets and hand drums. Special presentations, live music, and traditional foods are offered in addition to other activities throughout the two-day event, July 24 and 25, 2026.

Rendezvous at the Straits Powwow is an authentic Native American gathering held August 28 through August 30, 2026. An open community celebration that welcomes all, the Rendezvous features dancing, drumming, singing, as well as art demonstrations and vendors.

Car Shows

St. Ignace Car Show Weekend is the biggest event of the summer. The 50th anniversary of the event will be celebrated June 25 through June 27, 2026, with hundreds of classic and custom vehicles on display and on parade.

Another anniversary event will be celebrated this year, with the 30th annual **Richard Crane Memorial Truck Show** set for September 18 and 19. About 200 big rigs will take over St. Ignace for the weekend event featuring shows, vendors, music, food, and the famous Parade of Lights across the Mackinac Bridge.





Other Events

The **85th Birthday Celebration of the Jeep** will be held July 31 through August 1, 2026. This festive gathering will honor Jeep heritage in the place where the passion runs deep.

Arts & Crafts Dockside offers a unique Labor Day experience, bringing the Huron Boardwalk to life with nearly 100 exhibits showcasing original handcrafted arts and crafts. Stay in town to enjoy food, music, and activities September 5 and 6, 2026, leading up to the annual **Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk**.

If you're looking to experience St. Ignace during winter, don't miss out on a weekend of nostalgic, friendly competition as part of the **Labatt Blue U.P. Pond Hockey Championship**. Held annually in February on frozen Moran Bay (if conditions allow), this open-air hockey event is a classic for any hockey player or fan and offers views of an iced-over Lake Huron and easy, walkable access to St. Ignace bars, restaurants, and hotels.

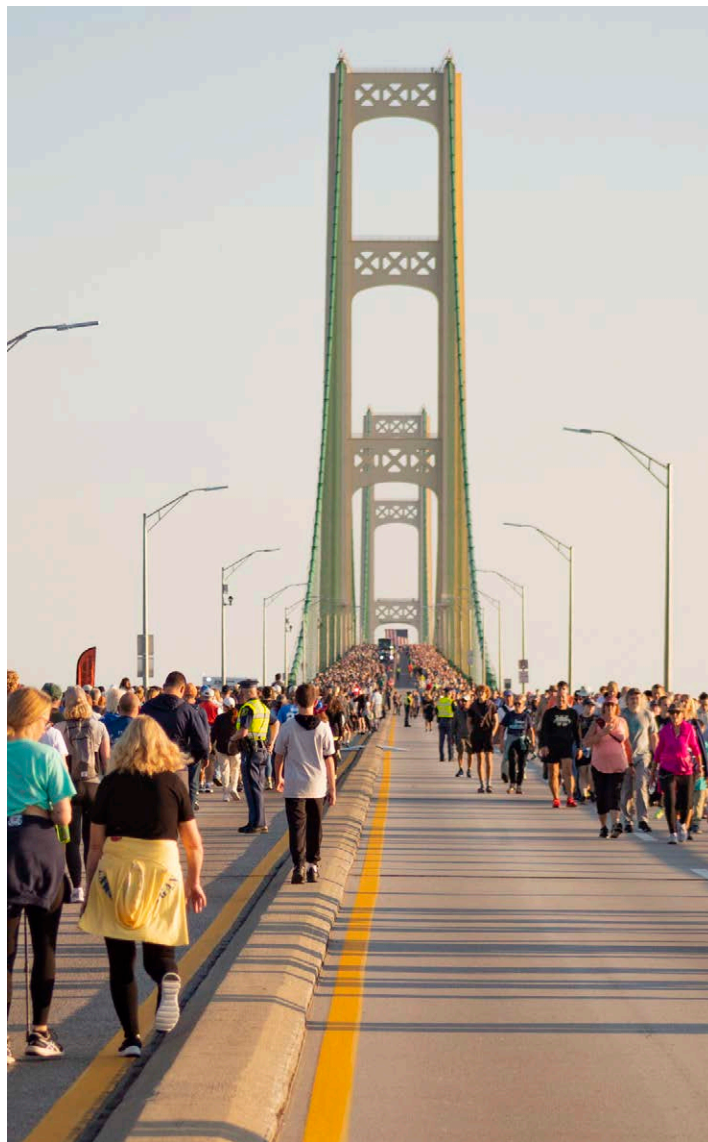
Fireworks and Drone Shows

Weekly fireworks shows begin Saturday, June 27, through September. Held every Saturday at 10 p.m., or dusk, throughout the summer, the spectacle is viewable from the boardwalk, restaurants, and streets of downtown St. Ignace. In addition to fireworks, drone shows are scheduled throughout the summer of 2026 on May 8, May 22, June 5, June 26, July 31, September 4, and September 25, at 10 p.m. These shows feature hundreds of synchronized drones that light up over the waterfront in a choreographed display set to music.

Weekly Summer Activities

Summer is full of recurring events outside of the major attractions. As part of **Music by the Bay**, local musicians perform at American Legion Park every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in June from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. These performances are held nightly beginning July 1 through September 6.

Friday Night at the Museum is held at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. through July and August. These events



offer traditional teachings from local tribal elders in the longhouse on the grounds of the museum. The learning continues at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture as part of the Traditional Native American Teachings every Monday and Tuesday through July and August.

Swinging Iggy brings live music and street performers to downtown St. Ignace every Saturday in July and August from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.



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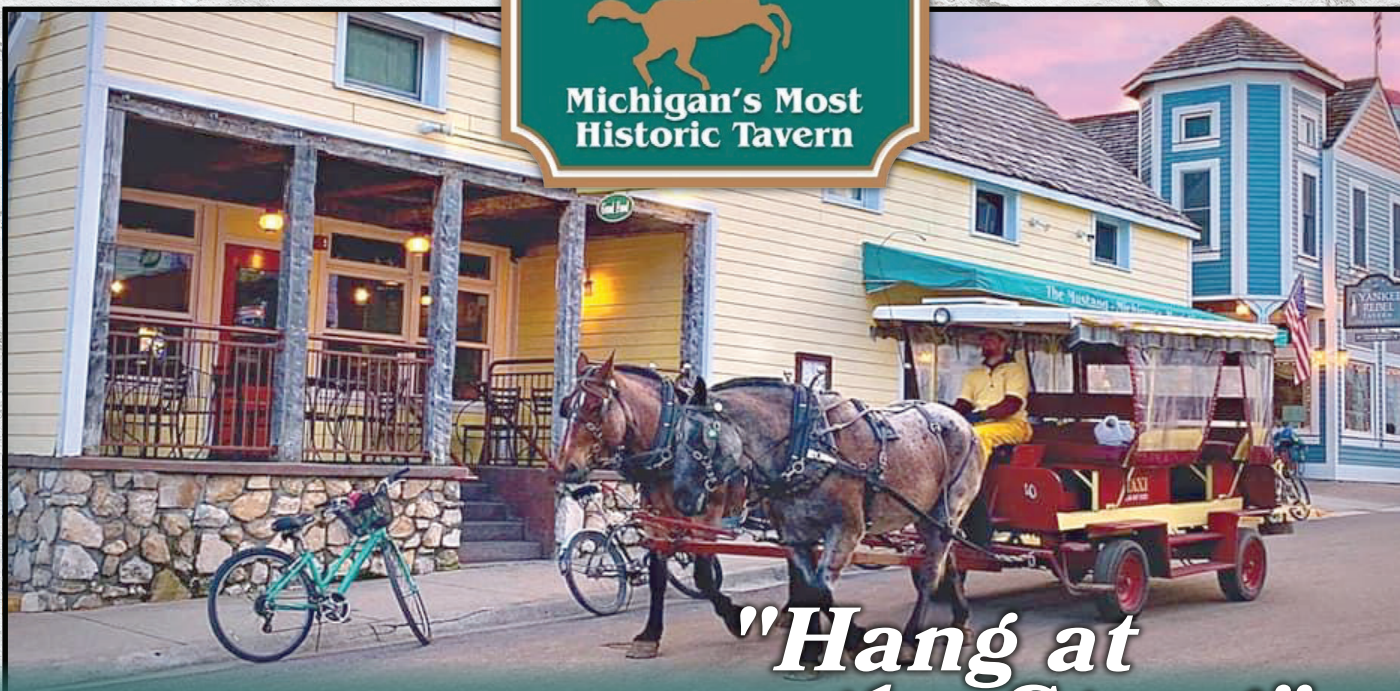
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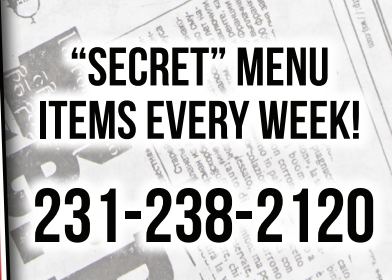
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FISHING

If you're angling for a good time, the Straits area doesn't disappoint. From the Great Lakes to inland lakes, rivers, and streams, anglers will find a wide variety of species for which to fish.

Bring your own boat, fish with a local charter boat captain, or try your luck from shore at a fishing pier or platform. All you need is a valid Michigan fishing license and a sense of adventure, and you're ready to go!

Fish species found in the area include bass, crappie, yellow perch, northern pike, coho and Chinook salmon, smelt, trout, and walleye. Or, if you just want to spend a relaxing afternoon or evening on the water with a cool beverage in hand looking at the sights from the water, there are opportunities for sailing the Straits aboard a variety of vessels.

Downtown St. Ignace Fishing Pier at Chief Wawatam Park S. State Street

Species available include bass, yellow perch, and migratory salmon.

Little Bear East Sports Park Pond 275 Marquette Street

Species available include perch and walleye.

Castle Rock Ponds

Castle Rock Road – Exit 348 off I-75, Lant Road to Castle Rock Road
Species available include yellow perch and rainbow trout.



Brevort Lake

About 20 miles west of St. Ignace, Brevoort Lake in the Hiawatha National Forest – a 4,233-acre lake – offers a boat ramp that is accessible at the Brevort Lake Campground on Boedne Bay. A day-use fee of \$6 is charged.

Species available include bass, crappies, muskellunge, sunfish, and yellow perch.

Carp River

Approximately two miles from the Carp River Campground is a small boat launch site at the mouth of the Carp Wild and Scenic River on Lake Huron. It is managed by Hiawatha National Forest. The 20-site rustic campground in Hiawatha National Forest on the river is about a 15-minute drive northeast of St. Ignace. Fees are charged. For more information or to make a campsite reservation, visit www.recreation.gov or call (906) 203-9872.

Species available include brook, brown, and rainbow trout, steelhead, migratory salmon, and smelt in the spring at the river's mouth.

E.U.P. Fishing Charters

Fish with one of the most knowledgeable charter captains in the Straits area. Since 1987, Captain Dennis has fished for salmon, steelhead, and lake trout in the Straits of Mackinac. And as a bonus, you'll also get an education about the exotic species inhabiting the waters, as well as the geology of the area. Fish aboard a 27' Tiara Pursuit. For more information, call (251) 504-1046.

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BEACHES

Located at the meeting point of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, St. Ignace is a haven for those looking to enjoy Michigan's freshwater. From lounging on the beach with a book and some sunscreen and diving into the clear water to skipping stones and digging in the sand, there is a beach experience for everyone.

Classic Beach Experience

If you're looking for a classic sandy beach moment, ideal for lounging on a towel and building sandcastles, head west on US-2. **The northern coast of Lake Michigan** is lined with dunes that can be accessed directly from the road or from one of many roadside parks and campsites. During peak summer, when air and water temperatures near annual highs in the mid-70s and 60s, respectively, you'll likely see cars parked along either side of US-2. These folks are stopping to make use of the easy access to Lake Michigan and to set up for a day at the dunes. This is an easy, quick beach option, but it requires extreme caution. US-2 is a busy highway where the speed limit is 65 miles per hour. When exiting your car, be wary of vehicles passing by, and try to avoid parking on the northern side of the road so you don't have to cross the street. It is important to note that some areas of the dunes are protected, and human activity is prohibited to prevent erosion, protect native dune grass and piping plover nests, among other precautions.

Looking for something a bit more private? **Lake Michigan Campground** is 20-minutes west of St. Ignace, about halfway to Brevort. You might miss the turn off for Road 3109 if you're not looking closely, but if you pull off into this wooded camp area, you'll find parking, picnic tables, pit toilets, and stairs down to the beach. Whether you're stopping just for the view or for a day-long excursion, you won't be disappointed by the vista.

Those looking to stay right downtown will enjoy **Kiwanis Beach**, which offers easy access to Moran Bay. Here you'll have the same sandy beach but with the bonus of proximity to food and ice cream as well as views of ferry traffic and Mackinac Island.

Rock Hunters

For those interested in searching for rocks and skipping stones, **Colonial Michilimackinac Historic State Park**, just south of the Mackinac Bridge, is the place to be. If you're planning to wade into the water, you should bring shoes you can wear into the water, because the rocky terrain will not be kind to your feet. On a calm day, though, the selection for stone skipping can't be beat. **Mackinac Island** is also known for its rocky beaches, especially at British Landing, about four miles around the Island. Here you can skip stones directly at the Mackinac Bridge. When you get tired, lay a towel down and nestle into the stones while keeping your eyes peeled for an interesting find.



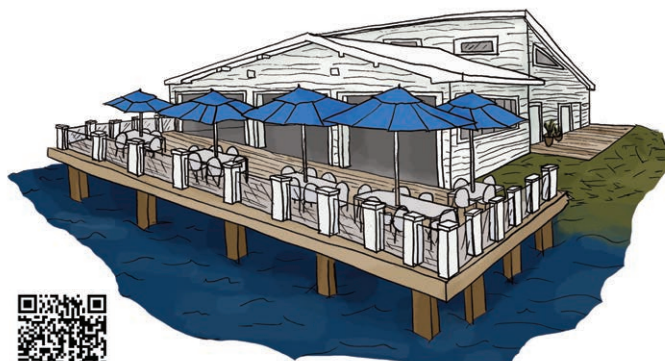
Safe, Smart Swimming

Warning! The Great Lakes are as powerful as they are beautiful.

Unlike inland lakes, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan have strong rip currents and, depending on weather conditions, pounding waves. It is important to track water and weather conditions and keep in mind personal abilities and comfort level in water. Many beaches have a flag system indicating swimming conditions; when a green flag is flying, conditions are ideal for swimming. A yellow flag indicates high-risk conditions, and a red flag means conditions are too dangerous for anyone to be in the water. Safe, smart swimming is important no matter the conditions.

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SHOPPING

Feel the bay breeze caress your face and ruffle your hair as you stroll historic downtown St. Ignace, breathing in fresh lake air scented with hints of chocolate nut fudge! Here you can explore a wide variety of shops and emporiums, a pharmacy and gift shop, restaurants, pubs, and museums that hug the Moran Bay waterfront for more than a mile. Browse a fine selection of high-end sportswear, work by local artists, and one-of-a-kind souvenirs. Eat ice cream cones, world-famous fudge, and sample a famous U.P. pastie, all while gazing out at the bold, blue bay.

The following recommendations may not include all the shopping options in St. Ignace.

Souvenirs and Clothing

The Mackinac General Store carries Michigan-made items, bath and body products, t-shirts, jewelry, jams, mixes, and more. Located inside the Mackinac Grille restaurant, this is an easy stop before or after grabbing a bite to eat, where there is something for everyone in your group.

Northern Sails prides itself on offering everything inside for under \$24. This includes clothing in sizes infant to adult 5x, souvenirs, gifts, jewelry, toys, and sunglasses.

The Historic Totem Village and the **Indian Village** are two distinct souvenir stores that honor the Anishinaabe culture of the area. At Totem Village you'll find Native-made jewelry, beadwork, carvings, and regalia, alongside antique tools, herbal teas, crystals, and hand-forged items from a local blacksmith. Indian Village has similar offerings, in addition to more generic

souvenirs, and is wallpapered with birch bark decorated with pictographs of arrows, animals, canoes, and headdresses.

If you forgot your swimwear, need some beach accessories, or are looking for the perfect souvenir shirt, check out **Tropic North** for a diverse selection to choose from.

Wolfe's Emporium and Simple Sweets combines gifts and sweets into one special shopping experience. Here you can find wildlife sculptures and Michigan-made décor alongside handcrafted gourmet candies.

For a wide variety of souvenirs, collectibles, and seasonal items, **Das Gift Haus** is a fun stop for the whole family to look for something to commemorate the trip to St. Ignace.

If you forgot to bring layers or want to expand your selection of outdoor gear, **Adventure Up North** is the place to stock up. Here you'll find a curated selection of backpacks, hammocks, apparel, and more. You'll also find one of the largest selections of Stormy Kromer hats and gear in the region.

Antiques, Resale, Vintage

If you're up for a little adventure shopping, **The Hope Chest Resale Shop** on Ferry Lane, a half block from the Family Fare grocery store south of downtown, has gently used clothing for babies, children, and adults, shoes, dishes and housewares, furniture, sports equipment, toys, books, and so much more for perusing and purchasing. You never know what treasures you will find at The St. Ignace Hope Chest. Because the Hope Chest is run by volunteers, it is open for limited hours only. For information about hours of operation, visit The Hope Chest on Facebook.

North of downtown, you'll find **Cottage Up**, which offers home décor and vintage pieces. Cottage Up has a curated selection of vintage furniture, décor, and accessories to furnish your Eastern Upper Peninsula cottage or bring



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The Straits of Mackinac is one of the best places to buy fresh whitefish. With several stores to choose from, including **Mackinac Straits Fish Company**, **Manley's Fish Market**, **Gustafson's Smoked Fish**, options for fresh fish are plentiful. These shops are also a great place to get advice on how to prepare whitefish, among other fresh fish, and try other variations of whitefish, including dips and smoked options.



For those looking to take home a more refined souvenir, check out **Gold Mine Jewelry** for a selection of Polish pottery, custom Michigan stone pieces, sparkling diamonds, and hand-crafted artisan work.

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Coffee

Nothing starts the day like a good cup of coffee, and St. Ignace has plenty of options for you to choose from. While many hotels offer complimentary coffee, you may want something more specialized or atmospheric. *This page may not include every coffee option in St. Ignace*

At **Boardwalk Coffee & General Store**, settle into one of the cozy booths or couches to enjoy your coffee with a book or conversation near the fireplace. Their extensive menu includes specialty lattes like the Dirty Mac, which features masala chai, maple spice, sea salt, and cinnamon sprinkle, and classic coffee options like the macchiato, an espresso with a dash of steamed milk. For those who haven't developed the taste for coffee or don't want the caffeine, the menu also includes hot chocolate — white or dark, Italian sodas, and tea. If coffee on an empty stomach sounds off-putting, no worries! The Boardwalk also has a selection of pastries, waffles, bagels, breakfast burritos, croissant sandwiches, soups, and grilled sandwiches.

At **Salty Mac Brewing Company**, brewing doesn't just refer to the extensive collection of brews on tap. Their coffee house includes seasonal drinks, house-made flavored syrups, and classic coffee and tea options. Their selection of baked goods includes bagels, muffins, and cookies to help soak up the caffeine.

Biggby Coffee is the newest addition to the St. Ignace coffee scene. The Michigan-based coffee chain is located on US-2 behind the Zodiac Party store and offers all the delicious Biggby drinks you may already be familiar

with. Operating as a drive-through only with no indoor service, this option is fast and efficient, especially if you are looking for something to keep you awake as you head out on the road for the next leg of your journey. A walk-up window to pick up online orders is an added convenience.

Fudge and Sweet Treats

Visitors to the area are often called “fudgies” because when they vacation here, they usually buy fudge. Mackinac Island, known far and wide for its world-famous fudge, is perhaps the largest purveyor of fudge in the entire state. However, several fudge shops in downtown St. Ignace make and sell the sweet concoction. Fudge shops also offer caramel corn, saltwater taffy, caramels, and Michigan-made ice cream. It's guaranteed that your sweet tooth will be satisfied!

Murdick's Fudge operates two stores on Mackinac Island, but has a year-round shop in downtown St. Ignace. Keep an eye out for special seasonal selections throughout the year and stop in for a sample. This is a great option for anyone who wants to buy authentic Mackinac Island fudge but can't make it off the mainland.

On a hot summer day, you might be more inclined to ice cream instead of fudge (but we fully support getting both!). Get your scoops at the **Mackinac Double Decker Ice Cream** for a unique setting, or head to **Molly Moo's** on the other end of town for a classic ice cream parlor experience. Both locations offer lakeside views, so enjoy your ice cream outside on the patio or take it with you as you walk through town on a nice day.



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FISH

With Lake Huron to the east, the Straits of Mackinac to the south, and Lake Michigan to the west, it should come as no surprise that fishing has been central to life in St. Ignace for generations. And with several locally owned and operated fisheries in town, you are guaranteed all the fresh fish

you can eat! Local favorites include perch, walleye, and trout, but what the area is famous for is Great Lakes whitefish. You will find it on nearly every menu in town, prepared using the traditional methods of grilling, frying, or baking, as well as those that incorporate nouvelle cuisine.

Keep your eyes open, and you may even find whitefish livers on the menu, a prized delicacy.

Another seasonal favorite is smelt; a relatively small, silvery fish closely related to the trout. It returns to Great Lakes streams and tributaries to spawn in April. During the spring smelt run, anglers in hip waders stand at the mouths of rivers and streams with their nets and scoop up hundreds of smelt at a time as the slippery, slender fishes make their push upstream to spawn. The fish's mild flavor and white flesh makes it a much sought-after menu item in local restaurants and around dining room tables.




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RESTAURANTS

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B.C. Pizza

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Bentley's Diner

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626 N. State Street, St. Ignace • 906.984.2144

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PASTIES

The Upper Peninsula is known for pasties (pass-tees) – a traditional meat pie filled with a mixture of ground beef, diced potatoes, onion, and rutabaga. The mixture is encased in a half-moonshaped buttery, flaky crust and baked until it's golden brown. Pasties are served alone or, depending on your preference, may be eaten with ketchup or gravy.

Immigrant copper miners from Cornwall, England, brought pasties to Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the early 1800s. The meat pies were portable and made for a quick lunch when working 12-hour shifts in the mines. Pasties were wrapped in newspapers or towels and would stay relatively warm in the miners' lunch buckets or pockets, or miners would place them on a shovel and heat them over a fire. When Finnish immigrants arrived to work in the mines, they adopted their co-workers' meat pie lunches, adding carrots to the recipe.

There are several pastie shops in the St. Ignace area that sell hot, ready-to-eat pies or frozen pasties that you may take home and bake in your own oven. You will also find pasties in local restaurants.

Everyone locally has their favorite – Which will be yours?

Lehto's Pasties

Famous for beef, chicken, and veggie pastie options, this St. Ignace pastie shop has two locations ready to serve you!

1983 W US-2, St. Ignace – Beef Only

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Sposito's Pasties

Home of the "original" cherry pie pastie.

W1228 US Highway 2, St. Ignace

A Taste of the Upper Peninsula

Attached to the Zodiac Party Store, this pastie shop operates year-around. This is the pastie shop internet sensations Josh & Jase visited when they were in Michigan! Make sure to try yours with RayRay's Yooper Hot Sauce, made right here in St. Ignace!

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RAINY DAY

Whether riding a bike, enjoying time on the water, or strolling through downtown, St. Ignace is best enjoyed on a sunny day. Even a rainy day can be fun, though, and there are many indoor activities to keep you occupied until the sun is shining again.

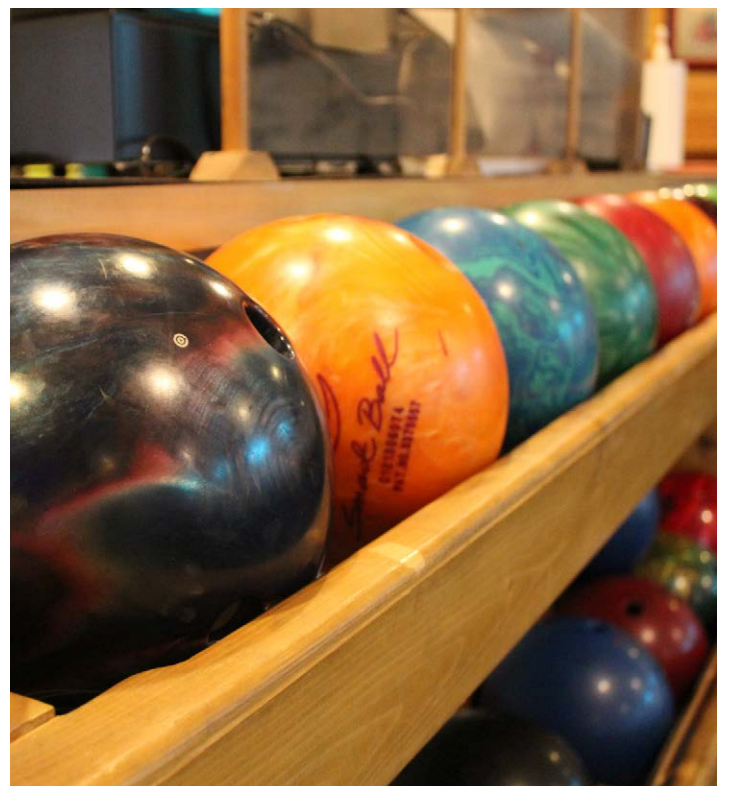
The **St. Ignace Public Library** offers a wide variety of material to browse, comfortable seating, special events, public computers, and programming for children. It is the perfect place to escape a rainy day, or to duck in during a quick thunderstorm.

Alley Yoops is a bowling alley, beer garden, and restaurant at the south end of town. This family-owned, recently reopened bowling alley is the perfect place to bring the family for some indoor fun. Saturday night glow bowling is a highlight among their weekly recurring events.

Another rainy-day option is to catch a movie at the **Courtyard Cinema** just across the bridge in Mackinaw City. Located in the Mackinaw Crossings, this movie theater features new releases and blockbuster hits with all your favorite concessions.

Museums are an excellent way to get to know St. Ignace while staying dry on a stormy day. **The Museum of Ojibwa Culture** is dedicated to local native culture. Exhibits on display interpret the archaeology and history of the 17th-century Huron Indian Village, Father Marquette's French Jesuit Mission, and local Ojibwa Indian traditions and culture. The gift shop offers authentic, handcrafted Native American items.

Little Bear East Arena provides a variety of indoor recreational activities to keep your body moving. An ice arena offers skating events and minor league hockey games in the winter and converts to a multi-purpose event space the rest of the year. Visitors can purchase a day or weekly pass for the walking path and fitness center. Check with Little Bear directly for information regarding fitness classes and special events.



WINTER FUN

St. Ignace is known as a summer destination, but winter here is magical. From the Labatt Blue U.P. Pond Hockey Championship and ice fishing to snowmobiling and hiking through the snow, winter recreation is special in St. Ignace.

Winter conditions fluctuate, so if you're in town when the snow isn't as deep as you hoped, don't worry! Little Bear East Arena has an indoor ice rink that offers public skating as well as youth and minor league hockey games.

Snowmobiling

Local snowmobile clubs often know more about the weather than a meteorologist, as they are constantly monitoring conditions as they work to maintain trails for riders. St. Ignace is one of the most convenient, rider-friendly snowmobiling hubs in the Upper Peninsula. Not nearby. Not "a short drive away". Here, you can access the entire trail system, right from downtown!

The Michigan DNR Designated Snowmobile Trails Map is an essential resource for navigating all the designated Michigan snowmobile trails (and there are so many!) Amazingly, there are snowmobile trails that you can follow from St. Ignace to many locations in the Upper Peninsula: Tahquamenon Falls, Sault Ste. Marie, Newberry, and beyond!

Permits and Necessary Fine Print

Before heading out, every snowmobiler — resident and nonresident alike — needs a Michigan Snowmobile Trail Permit. This permit allows riders to use state-designated trails, thousands of miles of public roads, and authorized public lands.

Permits are valid from October 1 through September 30 of the following year. State-designated snowmobile trails are generally open December 1 through March 31, weather and snow conditions permitting.

You can purchase these permits in St. Ignace at several convenient locations, including Ace Hardware, Holiday Station, and St. Ignace True Value.

The Top-of-the-Lake Snowmobile Museum in Naubinway is a must-see for anyone interested in snowmobiles or Upper Peninsula history. Located about 45 minutes west of St. Ignace, you will discover more than 100 vintage and historic sleds, along with fascinating memorabilia. Early models, prototypes, and historical artifacts give a clear view of the machine's history and how it shaped life in the North.

The museum is well-organized and welcoming, with staff that's always happy to share stories and information. For those interested, trails marked on the DNR map can even provide a snowmobile route that takes you from St. Ignace straight to the museum (make a day of it!).

Cross Country Skiing

Located off US-2 and Brevoort Lake Road, **Sand Dunes** is a complex of trail loops ranging from beginner to expert level and from one mile to several, depending on the course. The trail is groomed for classic cross-country skiing.

The North Country Trail extends from New York to North Dakota, with approximately 35 miles of the trail within the St. Ignace district. The trail is open all year, but in the winter it is ideal for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Fat Tire Biking

St. Ignace is a hub for fat tire biking as it is centrally located to some of the top fat tire biking spots in the U.P. **The Silver Mountain Hike & Bike Trail**, located just west of St. Ignace, winds through forested hills and exposed dolomite bedrock for a picturesque loop ideal for biking. In winter, the trail is groomed every week.

Winter Events

The annual **Antique Snowmobile Bridge Crossing** brings together sled enthusiasts for a weekend of fun to kick off the snowmobiling season. Participants with snowmobiles at least 25 years old cross the bridge in a parade leading into St. Ignace.

The Labatt Blue U.P. Pond Hockey Championship brings hockey players and fans together for a series of outdoor, four-on-four hockey games on Moran Bay, right in downtown St. Ignace. The event evokes a feeling of nostalgia, taking the game of hockey back to its roots of friendly competition and fun.



While not directly in St. Ignace, Naubinway is just a 40-minute drive west and hosts the annual **Top of the Lake Snowmobile Show and Ride** to celebrate sleds and snowmobile culture. Each year, the show has a featured Sled, with Yamaha the most recent honoree. The event is hosted by the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum.

Another nearby event is the **sturgeon fishing season**, which is held at the start of February every year on Black Lake near Cheboygan in the Lower Peninsula. To protect sturgeon populations, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources only allows for six fish to be harvested, making this Michigan's shortest fishing season.



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When you're ready to hit the trails in your ATV, ORV, or OHV (off-highway vehicle), make St. Ignace your home base. With nearby access to some of the best trails in the Upper Peninsula, St. Ignace is perfectly positioned for off-road adventures.

From Drummond Island on the east end to Curtis at the west end of Mackinac County, you'll find hundreds of miles of state-designated trails, scramble areas, and eligible county, state forest, and national forest roads to explore.

The Michigan DNR holds two Free ORV Weekends every year – one in June and another one in August. Residents and out-of-state visitors can legally ride Michigan's 4,000 miles of off-road vehicle trails and routes and the state's six scramble areas on two back-to-back days without an ORV license or trail permit. The 2026 dates are June 13-14 and August 15-16.

Licenses and trail permits

An ORV license and trail permit are required for drivers and their vehicles to ride eligible trails in Michigan.

For information about where to purchase licenses and trail permits, visit the DNR website at <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/thingsto-do/orv-riding>. You may also get interactive ORV trail and route maps, PDF maps, and GPX files at the website above.

FUN FOR KIDS

St. Ignace has something for everyone. For families traveling with children, however, there are certain activities that might be of particular interest.

On a hot summer day, plan to take the family to the **splash pad at Chief Wawatam Park**. It's the perfect place to cool off without the commitment of a full beach day. There is plenty of seating nearby for those who want to stay dry and just watch the fun. It's also the perfect spot for a picnic lunch while watching the ferries come and go from Mackinac Island. Here you can walk out to the Wawatam Lighthouse, tell time with an interactive sundial, walk along some old train tracks, and read more about the history of the area.

Just south of the splash pad is **American Legion Memorial Park**, where kids can burn off some energy on the playground with Lake Huron in the background. In the other direction, you'll find **Kiwanis Park**, which has sandy beaches for playing next to the water. Located near Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry Company and one of the Arnold Transit Company docks, this is also a great spot to watch the ferry traffic. The park is also conveniently close to Molly Moo's Ice Cream Shop.

To experience panoramic views of the Straits of Mackinac, visit **Castle Rock** on the north end of town. Climb to the top of this lookout for a view of the area islands, forests, and water. With a viewing platform 195 feet above water level and 183 feet above I-75, this is one of the best places to get an unobstructed, far-reaching view of the straits.

For more unique fun, visit the **Mystery Spot** on the west end of St. Ignace. Be prepared to spend hours here, as there is no shortage of activities ranging from guided tours and mini golf to a maze and zip line.

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DAY TRIP DESTINATION: MACKINAW CITY

Cross the Mighty Mac for unrivaled views of the Straits of Mackinac, with Lake Huron to the east and Lake Michigan to the west. From the high vantage point, you are likely to see ferries travelling to and from Mackinac Island and maybe even a freighter passing below the bridge.

Have breakfast at the **Mackinaw City Bakery**, a family-owned and operated business open from May through October and located just off Central Avenue at 110 Langlade Street. Try one of their Big Mac donuts, grab an iced coffee, or dine in with homemade soup or a sandwich on fresh, homemade bread.

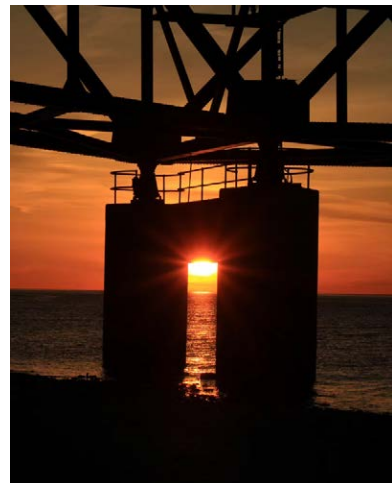
Spend some time at the beach skipping stones and wading into the water at **Michilimackinac State Park** next to **Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse**. Walk underneath the Mackinac Bridge, explore the lighthouse, and stop into the **Colonial Michilimackinac** visitor's center to plan your trip to the historical site.

Grab lunch at **Darrow's Family Restaurant**, located on the west side of I-75. Be sure to grab a slice of pie while you're there or take a piece to go. Take a walk through downtown Mackinaw City to check out the various shops on Central Avenue and in the Mackinaw Crossings mall. If you need to escape the rain or heat, take in a movie at the Courtyard Cinema, open year-round.

Get a heaping scoop of ice cream at Mickey's Ice Cream shop on Huron Avenue. Enjoy your waffle cone or malt from **Wawatam Park**, the Mackinaw City Marina, or **Conkling Heritage Park**. All are located across the street from Mickey's and have views of Lake Huron and the boats coming in and out of port.

Have dinner and a drink at the **Keyhole Bar and Grill** on Central Avenue. While you wait for your broiled whitefish or burger with onion rings, try to count as many keys as you can before losing track. As the sun goes down, head west out of town toward the **McGulpin Point Lighthouse** and **Headlands International Dark Sky Park**. The lakeshore is down a steep hill past the lighthouse, but the views are well worth it, and locals judge the lake's water level by McGulpin Rock.

In the same area is the **Mackinaw Area Historical Society Village**, with a small set of trails and buildings depicting what life was once like in the region, and celebrating the area's heritage. Continuing on, about 11 miles west of Mackinaw City, is **Wilderness State Park** with 26-miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, 20-miles of trails, a swimming beach, and incredible views of the setting sun.



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DAY TRIP DESTINATION: MACKINAC ISLAND

Mackinac Island, a short, scenic ferry boat ride from downtown St. Ignace, is a place that time forgot, but one you will always remember.

In a mere 15 minutes, you will step off the boat into a bygone era when horses reigned (no pun intended!), ornate Victorian cottages were in vogue, and bicycles were the preferred method of transportation. In a short time, you're sure to find yourself shifting gears to a slower pace as you wander the narrow streets of Mackinac, taking in the great, natural beauty and rich history of this unique little Island in the Straits of Mackinac – the “Jewel of the Great Lakes.” Travel + Leisure magazine even named Mackinac Island the “Best Island in the Continental U.S.” in 2022.

Before Mackinac Island became the premier vacation destination that it is today, the Island was home to the Anishinabek people. For hundreds of years, long before the Europeans arrived, the Island was a place of gathering for their seasonal fishing and trapping and a regular stopover while traveling by canoe in the region. It was also a sacred burial ground – a place of reverence and honor. The Island's name, Mackinac, is derived from the Ojibwa word “mitchimackinac,” which means great turtle. The Indigenous peoples thought the Island looked like a large turtle emerging from the water.

Mackinac Island's economic and strategic significance was first noted by the French, and then the British, who used the Island as a base for the lucrative fur trade that existed from the late 1600s into the 19th century. The British built **Fort Mackinac** in 1780 to control the waterways, holding the outpost throughout the American Revolutionary War, despite America gaining independence in 1776. When the War of 1812 broke out between the U.S. and Great Britain, the British again took possession of the fort, and it wasn't until the end of the War of 1812, with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, that Fort Mackinac was reclaimed by the United States.



As the fur trade began to wane, so did the military and economic significance of the Island. However, by the late 19th century, a booming tourism industry began, and the personality of the Island began to change from military outpost to tourism hot spot. Stately hotels were constructed, elegant Victorian summer cottages began to appear on the Island's shoreline and scenic bluffs, and a few motor vehicles made their way to the idyllic Island. But, after a brief foray there, they were permanently banned owing to the terror they created amongst the Island's horses. The ban went into effect in 1898 and remains in effect. In fact, to mark the 125th anniversary of the ban, the mayor of Mackinac Island, the state park director, and even the Governor of Michigan held a re-banning ceremony in July 2023. The primary modes of transportation on the Island today include walking, bicycle riding, and horse and carriage.

Several favorite Island destinations include the iconic **Arch Rock**, a natural limestone arch formation on the southwest end of the Island. The 207-step climb up to the arch is well worth it! The view makes the location one of the most photographed sites on the Island.

Other things to do while on the Island, most of which are part of **Mackinac Island State Park**, include taking a carriage tour where you can learn the history of the Island and see some of its most iconic sites and attractions. Visit Fort Mackinac

and experience what life was like for soldiers and their families during the late 1800s. The **Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum** is a great place to immerse yourself in images of the beauty and uniqueness of Mackinac Island. Stop in at the **Biddle House**, which features the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, and learn the history of Agatha and Edward Biddle. Agatha was an Anishinaabe businesswoman on the Island – a rare occupation for women at that time. And before stepping off the dock and back onto the ferry to the mainland, be sure to buy some of the world-famous fudge found in many shops on the Island – a sweet reminder of your special time there.

A wide variety of programs and special events are held on the Island throughout the summer, including **Music in the Park** on Thursday evenings, bicycle rides and guided walks led by naturalists, and Shakespeare in the Park. Perhaps one of the most anticipated events on the Island is the annual **Mackinac Island Lilac Festival**, which honors the history and uniqueness of the lilac on Mackinac Island. The 2026 festival runs from June 5-14, with the Lilac Festival Grand Parade Sunday, June 14. You won't want to miss it!

For more information about Mackinac Island points of interest, bicycle & carriage rentals, lodging, shopping, dining, and more, visit www.mackinacisland.org, Facebook, or call (906) 847-3783.



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DAY TRIP DESTINATION: TAHQUAMENON FALLS

Tahquamenon Falls, a beloved natural wonder in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is less than an hour away from downtown St. Ignace and an easy, fun day trip. The falls, which are in Tahquamenon Falls State Park, are actually two separate falls – the Upper and the Lower.

The Upper Falls is nearly five stories high and 200 feet wide. It is affectionately called "Root Beer Falls" because of its amber-colored water, which is created by the tannic acid that leeches from the cedar, hemlock, and spruce trees lining the riverbanks. The Upper Falls is accessed through a series of wooden trails, walkways, and staircases that offer viewing platforms. After hiking the park's trails, enjoy a bite to eat and drink a cool craft beer at the restaurant and brewery at the Upper Falls. You will also want to check out the gift shop that's chock full of souvenir items. Restrooms and picnic facilities are also at the Upper Falls.

The Lower Falls, about four miles down the Tahquamenon River from the Upper Falls, is a series of five smaller waterfalls that cascade around an island. The Lower Falls offers swimming and wading in the river.



A new wooden bridge, walkways, and flat trails are wheelchair accessible and make the island and Lower Falls accessible to everyone. Recent renovations at the Lower Falls include a new restroom building, a concession building, and a gift shop. A picnic pavilion and kayak launch are also available at the Lower Falls. The 50,000-acre state park has several campgrounds, both backcountry and modern, some camping cabins, and more than 35 miles of hiking trails.

For more details and to plan your trip, visit the Tahquamenon Falls State Park website at www.michigan.gov/tahquamenonfalls, Facebook, or call (906) 492-3415.



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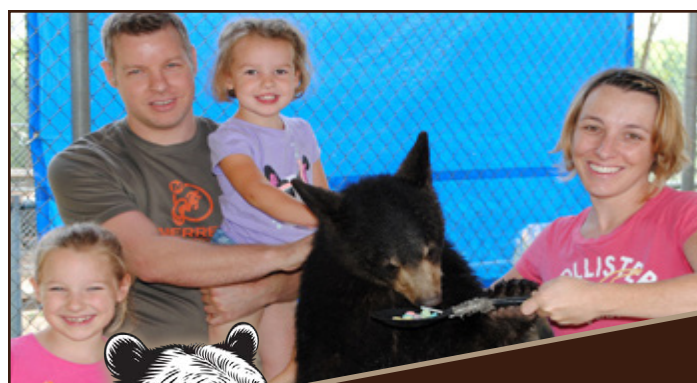


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DAY TRIP DESTINATION: LES CHENEUX ISLANDS

Thirty miles northeast of St. Ignace is the 36-island archipelago – the Les Cheneaux Islands. Here you will find one-of-a-kind places, friendly faces, and a sense of time that will slow your paces!

The **Les Cheneaux Culinary School & Restaurant** in the heart of downtown Hessel prepares individuals to work as professional chefs, sous chefs, and culinary experts. The year-long program focuses on farm-to-table fine dining, with all products sourced from local farmers and purveyors where possible. The school's fine-dining restaurant overlooks Hessel Bay and the Les Cheneaux Islands and can accommodate 80+ guests. During the summer months, culinary students complete their education, showcasing what they have learned by creating menus, preparing food, and operating the restaurant. For restaurant hours and menus, visit www.lcculinary.org, or visit them on Facebook for information about special wine-paired dinners. For reservations, call (906) 484-4800.

The creative heart of this lakeside village beats strongly in the old **Hessel School House**. Built in 1937 through the Works Progress Administration, it operated as a school until 1959. Today it continues to serve the community with an extensive offering of educational programs throughout the year that include lectures, workshops, and art classes for both children and adults. Also on the property is the **Story Book Trail** that features a selection of books displayed along the trail and are available for purchase in the gift store. Sales help fund Hessel School House–Avery Arts and Nature Learning Center programs, such as the annual Aldo Leopold Festival, which honors Aldo Leopold, one of America's most influential naturalists.

Beginning in May and running through December, unless otherwise indicated, the **Les Cheneaux Farmers & Artisans Market** meets every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hessel School House. For more information about Hessel School House programming visit www.hesselschoolhouse.org, Facebook, or call (906) 484-1333.

The **Les Cheneaux Islands Antique Wooden Boat Show and Festival of Arts** has been a major attraction in the Les Cheneaux Islands area since it began in 1978. Featuring antique and classic wooden boats, some more than 100 years old, the show attracts about 150 boats annually. Many vessels are owned by residents of the Les Cheneaux Islands and are still in use, cruising through the Islands during the summer season. The show is always the second Saturday in August in the Hessel Marina. E. J. Mertaugh Boat Works, which anchors the eastern end of the boat display area, had the first Chris Craft franchise in the United States. For more information, visit www.lciboatshow.com or find them on Facebook.

The **Marquette Island Nature Preserves** is comprised of the Aldo Leopold Preserve, the Sheppard-Hardy Preserve, the Catherine Sieberling Stewart Preserve, the Kathy Bricker Nature Lover Preserve, and Wilderness Bay for more than 2,000 acres of protected lands and five miles of Lake Huron shoreline. This northern shoreline of Lake Huron was designated a "Last Great Place" by The Nature Conservancy, a global leader in natural land conservation, in 1973. The preserves feature critical habitats that support a variety of flora and fauna, including aquatic plant species, insects, fish species, and migratory birds.

The Marquette Island Nature Preserves are accessible only by boat (or over the ice in winter). The easiest access to the Aldo Leopold Preserve is at Leopold Landing at Duck Bay. Trails are not regularly maintained, and in many places, they go through dense conifer forests with seasonally wet sections. You will find trail signs for a trail loop about a mile-and-a-quarter-long near Duck Bay, but you can go further up the preserve following old two tracks. You can launch your boat from either Hessel or Cedarville to reach Marquette Island. For more information, visit www.landtrust.org or visit the Little Traverse Conservancy on Facebook.

DAY TRIP DESTINATION: SAULT STE. MARIE

The Soo

Also founded by Father Jacques Marquette, Sault Ste. Marie is located just an hour north of St. Ignace. An easy drive up I-75, the Soo is the second most populated city in the Upper Peninsula. Bustling with activity from the local college, Lake State Superior University, as well as a vibrant tourism industry fueled by the world-famous Soo Locks, this city has something for everyone.

The Soo Locks, a “man-made engineering marvel,” allows freighters and other boats to navigate the 21-foot drop in elevation from Lake Superior into the St. Marys River and to ports of call in the lower Great Lakes and up the St. Lawrence Seaway. A stop at the Soo Locks Visitors Center in Soo Locks Park offers displays about the



history and construction of the locks, how the locks work, and information about the boats that pass through them. An observation platform in the park provides a great vantage point for watching the giant freighters as they are raised and lowered. You can also see construction on the new lock that is being built, which will allow for more efficient traffic flow. The new lock is anticipated to be completed in 2030. For more information about the Soo Locks, visit www.saultstemarie.com, or call (906) 632-3366.

The old downtown is centered around the locks, with several options for coffee, dining, ice cream, and shopping within easy walking distance of the park. Enjoy a strawberry and Nutella crepe at **Oh Crepe and Coffee**, or grab a traditional diner breakfast at **Frank's Place** before or after catching a freighter in the locks.

On a rainy day, you may want to take in a show at the **Soo Theater**. Their performance schedule includes youth theater, Broadway, opera, concerts, musicals, and dramas. Or, maybe you'll visit the **LSSU Arts Center Gallery** to explore their collection of Native American and Western Art. From the LSSU campus, you also have a good view of the International Bridge that spans the St. Marys River to connect Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada. Be sure to also check out the **Alberta House**, home to the Sault Area Arts Center, located at 217 Ferris Street.

For shipwreck aficionados, the **Great Lakes Shipwreck Society's** administration office is located downtown. The building offers a public exhibit, museum store, and access to the Shipwreck Society's noted Great Lakes Images and Papers Collection. If a visit there only further piques your interest, travel another hour and a half northwest to Whitefish Point to see the **Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum**. This seasonal museum teaches patrons about the perils of maritime transport on the Great Lakes, and is home to the Whitefish Point Light Tower. This lighthouse has been in operation since 1861, making it the oldest operating lighthouse on Lake Superior. The **Edmund Fitzgerald**, the legendary freighter that vanished in a storm off Whitefish Point with her entire crew of 29 men on November 10, 1975, is honored here. The ship's 200-pound bronze bell, recovered from the wreck on July 4, 1995, is on display inside the museum as a memorial to her crew. Whether you make it to the museum or not, Gordan Lightfoot's song, “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,” is a Yooper anthem and should be required listening at some point on your drive around the area.



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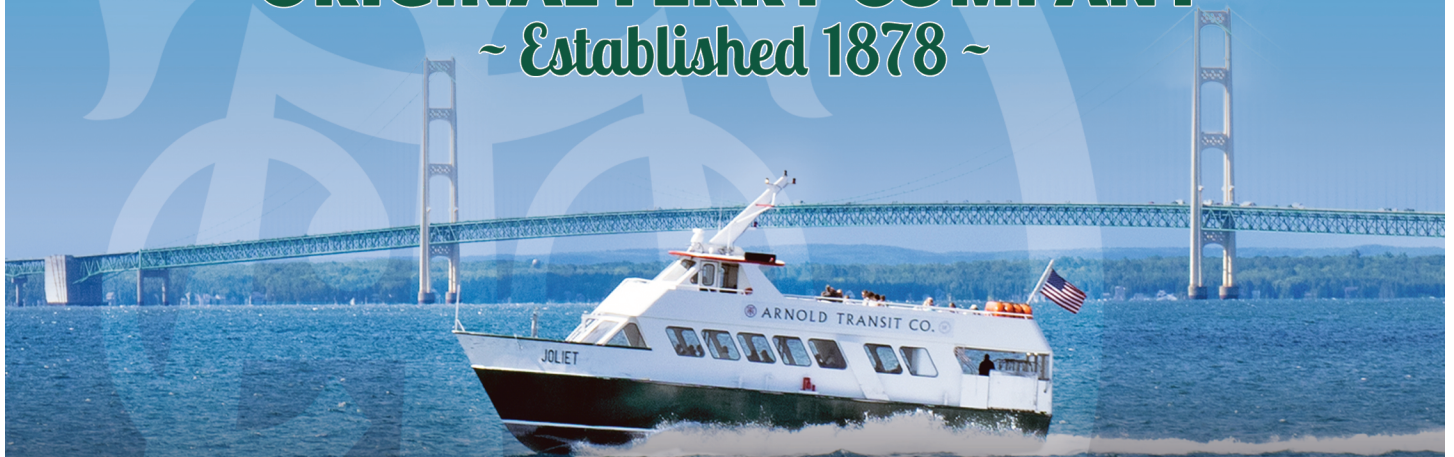


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