

Midwest – Cruising Lake Huron

The backbone of the Great Lakes is a rock formation called the Niagara Escarpment, and it runs along the Canadian shore of Lake Huron and creates some of the most dramatic cruising grounds on the lakes. The Bruce Peninsula, part of this escarpment, separates Lake Huron from Georgian Bay with magnificent overhanging cliffs and grottos. Sailing further northwest reveals the spectacular North Channel and the Straits of Mackinac. This strait between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan and the surrounding region have historically been known as Michilimackinac. Pronounced “Mackinaw” for short, it has witnessed French Jesuit missionaries and voyageurs, the development of the beaver fur trade and the competition between England and France to be the dominant colonial power in North America. La Salle, the quintessential 17th century French explorer, built the first European sailing vessel to ply the Great Lakes. In August 1679, LaSalle set sail west upon Lake Erie cruising on waters previously traversed only by birch bark canoes. On the third day, he entered a strait at the western end of the lake. La Salle simply named it “*le détroit du lac Érie*” meaning the strait of Lake Erie. Today, we simply call the city now located there Detroit. That is where this cruise begins, and the first half of it approximates LaSalle’s journey along the northern shore of Lake Huron to Mackinac Island. This cruise alternates between U.S. and Canadian ports of call, please follow all customs and immigration rules for both the U.S. and Canada while boating on Lake Huron.

1. - Estimated Mileage: 0

Kean’s Detroit Yacht Harbor



Detroit, MI

313-822-4500

HIGHLIGHTS

Up-and-coming restaurants, a do-it-yourself attitude, scenic and social parks, public transit, bike lanes and a safe, walkable riverfront are redefining downtown Detroit.

Architecture from Albert Kahn and Isamu Noguchi lives next to all-night joints selling loaded Coney dogs and Prohibition-born speakeasies pouring locally crafted beer and cocktails. The city's Greektown, Eastern Market, Entertainment District, and Corktown neighborhoods are booming with activity.

2. - Estimated Mileage: 50

Sarnia Bay Marina



Sarnia, ON

519-332-0533

HIGHLIGHTS

Ontario's Blue Coast has miles of scenic shoreline, award winning floral gardens and picturesque parks. This waterfront community features an array of fun activities including winery tasting tours, heritage sites, professional live theatre, boutique shopping, decent lead art gallery tours and visits to apple orchards and berry farms.

3. - Estimated Mileage: 57

Maitland Valley Marina



Goderich, ON

519-524-4409

HIGHLIGHTS

Since Victorian times, Goderich has been known as the “Prettiest Town in Canada”. It is also the winner of multiple Communities In Bloom Awards. Parks, beaches, walking trails, golf, fishing, special events, museums, heritage architecture and the rich maritime history are just a few of the attractions to enjoy. Of special note is the Huron Historical Gaol, the location of the last public hanging in Canada. This unique octagonal building served as the Huron County jail from its opening in 1842, and is now a museum.

4. - Estimated Mileage: 55

Port Elgin Harbour



Port Elgin, ON

519-832-6535

HIGHLIGHTS

Saugeen Shores has been a popular vacation destination since the early 1900's with 12 beaches to choose from. Southhampton Main Beach is the most well known and stretches for a couple of miles. Families will enjoy a ride on the Port Elgin Railroad. It departs from The Station located on the Port's main beach. It's a 15-minute ride through North Shore Park aboard an authentic narrow-gauge train with a replica of an 1836 American Steam Engine.

5. - **Estimated Mileage: 55**

Tobermory Marina



Tobermory, ON

519-596-2731

HIGHLIGHTS

Tobermory is home to the Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five National Marine Park. Dramatic cliffs rise from the turquoise waters of Georgian Bay, and black bears roam and find refuge in both rocky and wooded areas of the Bruce Peninsula. Fathom Five offers some of the best freshwater diving opportunities in the world. Clear water, submerged cliffs, caves, and overhangs and more than 20 historical shipwrecks offer a variety of underwater experiences. Everyone, from the novice snorkeler to the most advanced diving enthusiast, can find lots to explore.

6. - Estimated Mileage: 53

Sportsman's Inn Resort & Marina



Killarney, ON

705-287-9990

HIGHLIGHTS

The village of Killarney was founded in 1820 as a fur trading post on Georgian Bay. The surrounding area is a wilderness landscape that showcases a wild coast dotted with pink granite and the La Cloche Mountains' white quartzite ridges. There are over 50 exceptionally clear, sapphire colored lakes set among jack pine hills. Outstanding hiking trails, for every skill level, are found throughout Killarney Provincial Park.

7. - Estimated Mileage: 25

Drummond Island Yacht Haven



Drummond Island, MI

906-493-5232 ext 2

HIGHLIGHTS

First settled in the late 1860's, Little Current grew into a major Great Lakes port with docks filled with passenger freighters, sawmills on the waterfront employing hundreds of workers, and visitors crowding into the towns three hotels. Today, visitors cross the town's most famous landmark, the swing bridge, to discover a lovely town where they can enjoy shopping along the downtown streets.

8. - Estimated Mileage: 63

Meldrum Bay Marina



Meldrum Bay, ON

705-283-3252

HIGHLIGHTS

At the west end of Manitoulin Island, the world's largest freshwater island, is the village of Meldrum Bay. Once a busy fishery and lumber area, the quaint present day village pays homage to its maritime heritage with its inn, cottage resort and general store. It is recognized by some to be quite possibly the best Chinook salmon fishery in Canada. A visit to the Mississagi Lighthouse and museum is an ideal way to round out a visit.

9. - Estimated Mileage: 37

Drummond Island Yacht Haven



Drummond Island, MI

906-493-5232 ext 2

HIGHLIGHTS

After the treaty that ended the War of 1812 forced the British to abandon Mackinac Island, they built a fort on the then unnamed Drummond Island. It would allow their empire to continue to exert their considerable influence on the Native American peoples and the fur trade in the region. Today, Drummond Island bills itself as “Michigan’s Ultimate Playground” with golfing, fishing, wreck diving and hiking among the many activities to partake in.

10. - Estimated Mileage: 33

Cedarville Marine



Cedarville, MI

906-484-2815

HIGHLIGHTS

Located in Les Cheneaux Islands, Cedarville and nearby Hessel are the centers of the wooden boat universe in Michigan. Hessel hosts the antique wooden boat show that is held every year on the second Saturday in August. Vessels include dinghies, rowboats, canoes, launches, sailboats, utilities, runabouts, large cruisers, racers and classic fiberglass boats. It is one of the most popular wooden boat shows in the U.S.

11. - Estimated Mileage: 19

Mackinac Island State Dock



Mackinac Island, MI

906-847-3561

HIGHLIGHTS

Once ashore, buy some fresh handmade fudge, rent a bicycle and start your journey back in time. Fort Mackinac, constructed by the British Army just before the end of the Revolutionary War, played a part in the War of 1812 on the Great Lakes. The Grand Hotel, built in 1887, is perched on a bluff, with sweeping views from its 660-foot long front porch.

12. - Estimated Mileage: 47**Rogers City Municipal Marina**

Rogers City, MI

989-734-3808

HIGHLIGHTS

Lakeside Park is the center of all summer recreational activity in Rogers City. Stretching along ten acres of Lake Huron waterfront, and anchored by the state-of-the-art municipal marina are a sandy swimming beach, playgrounds, volleyball and basketball courts. A large bandshell hosts concerts throughout the summer, and there is a Nautical Festival each August at the park. A special feature of Lakeside Park is the Sailor's Memorial dedicated to the crews of Great Lakes freighters who have lost their lives while underway.

13. - Estimated Mileage: 19**Presque Isle State Dock**



Presque Isle, MI

517-595-3069

HIGHLIGHTS

Two lighthouses are a major draw to Presque Isle. At one end of the “island” is the Old Presque Isle Lighthouse, one of the oldest surviving lighthouses on the Great Lakes. Built in 1840, the harbor light operated until 1871 when the keeper transferred to a new, taller, coastal lighthouse a mile to the north. The Old Presque Isle Lighthouse park is a composed of two main structures, a keepers dwelling and a light tower. The stone and brick tower measures 30 feet tall. Visitors can climb the hand-hewn stone steps for a panoramic view of the Lake Huron shoreline. Nearby is the one-story brick keeper's dwelling that serves as a hands-on museum. The "New Presque Isle Light", at 108 feet, is the tallest lighthouse tower accessible by the public on the Great Lakes. That light station complex is part of a 99-acre township park that includes a playground, picnic area, pavilion and nature trails.

14. - Estimated Mileage: 39

Thunder Bay Shores Marine



Alpena, MI

989-356-0551

HIGHLIGHTS

Alpena's cultural and historical character was formed by a unique amalgamation of maritime, agricultural and industrial influences. The past melds with the future as the community boasts two live theaters, two art galleries, two museum heritage centers, and a vibrant live music scene. It is also home to the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary protecting the Great Lakes and their rich maritime history through research and education. The sanctuary also works to ensure that future generations can enjoy the underwater treasures of nearby "Shipwreck Alley".

15. - Estimated Mileage: 65

Jerry's Marina



East Tawas, MI

989-362-8641

HIGHLIGHTS

The Tawas Bay area is perfect for walking and bicycling. Travel the paved 13-mile Alabaster Bike Path along Lake Huron to the historic Tawas Point Lighthouse at the State Park. The sandy beaches on the bay are recognized as a premier location for both kiteboarding and family outings.

16. - Estimated Mileage: 60

Harbor Beach Marina



Harbor Beach, MI

517-479-9707

HIGHLIGHTS

Located on the eastern shore of Lake Huron in Michigan's Thumb, Harbor Beach is surrounded by farmland and woods. Rich in history, there is much to see in this part of the Thumb. Six scenic parks, two historical museums and a theater. The annual Harbor Beach Maritime Festival, in July, is a terrific opportunity to enjoy a great weekend of water sports and entertainment.

17. - Estimated Mileage: 39

Lexington State Docks



Lexington, MI

810-359-5600

HIGHLIGHTS

Lexington is a charming little harbor village, rich with history of the lumber era and steamships traveling up Lake Huron. Stroll on the beach, play a round of golf or attend one of the free concerts in the park, it is pure Michigan.
