

## Midwest – Cruising Lake Superior

“Superior” says it all since superlatives abound. Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area and the largest by volume in North America. The Ojibwe people called it *gichi-gami* meaning “a great sea”. Cruising around Lake Superior is a step back in time. At the mouth of the Michipicoten River, nine layers of encampments have been discovered. Two thousand years ago the Laurel people developed seine net fishing there. Through the years the lake passed through a variety of dominant cultures; Anishinaabe, French, British and American. Each group drew their sustenance and fortune from the lake and the surrounding natural resources. Harvesting fish, fur, copper, timber and iron ore, then transporting these products across Lake Superior brought wealth to the lucky and shipwreck to the mariner who did not heed the power of the great sea. Of the thousands of shipwrecks on the Great Lakes, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* is the most well known and occurred on Lake Superior. On the afternoon of November 9, 1975 the *Edmund Fitzgerald* cast off her lines from the docks at Superior, Wisconsin (just across the bay from Duluth). She had a full load of taconite pellets to feed the blast furnaces just south of Detroit. That afternoon, the National Weather Service predicted a storm would pass over Lake Superior, and the *Fitzgerald’s* route the following day. Just over 24 hours later the storm deepened with wind gusts from 70 to 75 knots and waves between 18 and 25 feet recorded. At 7:20 PM the *Edmund Fitzgerald* had vanished. She sailed no more, and all 29 souls on board were lost at sea. The prudent mariner should have a healthy respect for Superior, especially in the wilderness cruising areas of the Canadian coast. Lee shores in changing weather, poor holding at anchor and very cold water are all hazards, but the sheer beauty of the surroundings is well worth the risk for the sailor who is prepared and self sufficient. This cruise begins in Duluth and the estimated mileages between destinations for this itinerary are calculated running counterclockwise around Lake Superior. 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 Superior.

### 1. - Estimated Mileage: 0

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## Lakehead Boat Basin, Inc



*Duluth, MN*

218-722-1757

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

Named for the French explorer, Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Lhut, “Duluth” is the largest American city and port on Lake Superior. A tourist destination for the Midwest, Duluth features the United States' only all-freshwater aquarium, the Great Lakes Aquarium; the Aerial Lift Bridge, which spans the Duluth Ship Canal into the Duluth–Superior Harbor; and Minnesota Point, the world's longest freshwater bay mouth bar, spanning 6 miles. The Glensheen Historic Estate, located on the shore of Lake Superior, was built as the family home for wealthy businessman Chester Congdon. Glensheen has 38 rooms and is built in the Beaux-Arts style.

2. - Estimated Mileage: 31

### **Port Wing Marina**



*Port Wing, WI*

715-774-3555

### HIGHLIGHTS

At Twin Falls Park walk up the path to the observation deck looking down on Larson Creek flowing over the falls to the cavern below. Every July, celebrate Lake Superior Day beginning with the Saturday market and continuing with displays, exhibits, vendors, and speakers highlighting aspects of living on the shores of spectacular Lake Superior.

3. - Estimated Mileage: 44

## Presque Isle Marina



*Marquette, MI*

906-228-0464

### HIGHLIGHTS

Stockton Island is one of the Apostle Islands, in northern Wisconsin, and its most popular destination. It is part of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The island has miles of white sand beaches in Quarry, Julian and Presque Isle bays. It is also known for its large population of black bears, and low bush blueberries ready for picking.

4. - Estimated Mileage: 13

## Apostle Island Marina



*Bayfield, WI*

715-779-5661

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

With breathtaking views and pristine waters, Bayfield is one of Wisconsin's top destinations for a getaway in a picturesque setting. This small harbor town serves as the door to the 22 coastal Apostle Islands highlighted by stunning rock formations and six historic lighthouses. Bayfield's Big Top Chautauqua is one of the nation's most revered tented theater troupes. Enjoy live entertainment and original productions under this 900-person giant canvas tent. In July, Bayfield hosts the Festival of Arts, where over 90 artists from throughout the Midwest gather to showcase their art in a juried show.

5. - Estimated Mileage: 4

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## **Madeline Island Yacht Club**



*La Pointe, WI*

715-747-2655

### HIGHLIGHTS

Madeline Island is the only island in the Apostle Island chain open to commercial development and private ownership. The community of La Pointe, located on the western edge of the island and established by French colonists as a fur trading post, was one of the earliest European settlements in the area. Hiking and biking are popular activities, with bicycles and mopeds available for rent. Also for hire are kayaks and canoes used to explore the underwater caves and hollows of the cliff faces.

## 6. - Estimated Mileage: 65

### Ontonagon Village Marina



*Ontonagon, MI*

906-884-4225

### HIGHLIGHTS

The lakeshore at Ontonagon is bordered by the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, a 60,000-acre swath of wild waterfalls and majestic woods. It is a popular destination for hiking, biking and fishing.

## 7. - Estimated Mileage: 64

## Eagle Harbor State Dock



*Eagle Harbor, MI*

906-289-4416

### HIGHLIGHTS

This small village in the Keweenaw Peninsula is now a quaint harbor town but was a boomtown in the early history of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The red brick Eagle Harbor Lighthouse sits on the rocky entrance to the harbor and is a working lighthouse as it still guides mariners around the northern edge of the peninsula. Scuba divers will find many wrecks just off shore in the Keweenaw Underwater Preserve.

8. - Estimated Mileage: 16

## Copper Harbor State Dock



*Copper Harbor, MI*

906-289-4966

### HIGHLIGHTS

Copper Harbor is off the beaten path, but that's what makes it so nice. The town's name alludes to the former use of its harbor as a port for shipping copper mined from local deposits during the mid-19th century. A tour of the Delaware Mine, an authentic copper mine, is the best way to learn the history of the rugged men who mined the ore. The top of Brockway Mountain is a superb place to view Lake Superior, the surrounding woodlands and inland lakes. At 735 feet above the lake, one can see Isle Royale about 50 miles away.

9. - Estimated Mileage: 54

## Witz Marina



*Skanee, MI*

906-524-7795

### HIGHLIGHTS

Captain Walfred Been, who came into Huron Bay and sought shelter from a storm in 1870, founded Skanee. He named it after his home province of Skåne in Sweden. Other than enjoying some hunting, fishing or hiking it is easy to just sit back and admire the forested Abbaye Peninsula and the rocky Point Abbaye.

10. - Estimated Mileage: 62

## Cinder Pond Marina



*Marquette, MI*

906-228-0469

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The land around Marquette was not developed until 1844 when iron deposits were discovered nearby. The village of Marquette began on September 14, 1849, with the formation the Marquette Iron Company. In the late 19th century, during the height of iron mining, Marquette became nationally known as a summer haven. Visitors brought in by Great Lakes passenger steamships filled the city's hotels and resorts. Today, visitors tour the Marquette Maritime Museum and the Marquette Harbor Light. The DeVos Art Museum is located at Northern Michigan University, the city's well known campus.

**11. - Estimated Mileage: 38**

**Bayshore Marina**



*Munising, MI*



906-387-3445

### HIGHLIGHTS

Munising is located on the southern edge of Munising Bay across from Grand Island. It is the gateway to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore along the shore of Lake Superior east of town. The park is known for the dramatic multicolored Pictured Rocks cliffs. Unusual sandstone formations like Miners Castle and Chapel Rock define the park's headlands. Twelvemile Beach has a trail through a nearby white birch forest. Remnants of shipwrecks dot the shoreline around Au Sable Point's 19th-century lighthouse.

### 12. - Estimated Mileage: 38

#### Grand Marais Marina (Burt Township)



*Grand Marais, MI*

906-494-2381

### HIGHLIGHTS

The name Grand Marais has a dual meaning given to it by French explorers, both “great marsh” and “harbor of refuge”. Grand Marais was one of five U.S. Life-Saving Service Stations along this section along the coast of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In mid-June, the harbor at Grand Marais is the site of the annual seaplane fly in hosted by the Grand Marais Pilots Association. A month later, the harbor is the site of the Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium, a multi-day event that attracts sea kayakers from around the country.

### 13. - Estimated Mileage: 49

## Whitefish Point State Dock



*Paradise, MI*

906-492-3415

### HIGHLIGHTS

The name of the town says it all about the nearby Lake Superior beach, paradise. Located at the tip of the isolated spit that guards Whitefish Bay, the beach has commanding views of the ore freighters that pass by as they ply Lake Superior. Not only can you walk this sandy beach for miles, but also Whitefish Point offers its namesake lighthouse, fully restored, for tours. It is the oldest continually operated lighthouse on the lake. Next door, is the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, a nod to the fact that the Edmund Fitzgerald went down just 17 miles away. A short walk away is the Bird Observatory where the annual spring migration of hawks, eagles, vultures and falcons is documented, on their way to their northern breeding grounds. In the forest inland, Tahquamenon Falls State Park offers a hike to the hidden upper and lower falls whose waters are tinged amber by the tannins from cedar, spruce and hemlock trees.

14. - Estimated Mileage: 37

## Roberta Bondar Transient Marina



### HIGHLIGHTS

Sault Ste. Marie, or the “Soo”, is located on the St. Mary’s River. French colonists referred to the rapids on the river as Les Saults de Ste. Marie and the village name was derived from that. The rapids and cascades of the St. Mary’s River descend more than 20 feet from the level of Lake Superior to the level of Lake Huron. Hundreds of years ago, this slowed shipping traffic, requiring an overland portage of boats and cargo from one lake to the other. Today, shipping and freighter traffic bypasses the Saint Mary’s Rapids via the American Soo Locks, while smaller recreational and tour boats use the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie Canal. In addition to the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Center, nearby attractions include the Ermatinger Old Stone House and the Sault Ste. Marie Museum. Not to be missed is the Agawa Canyon Tour Train that winds through the pristine landscape of Algoma Country.

15. - Estimated Mileage: 51

## Mamainse Harbour Docks

### HIGHLIGHTS

In the 1600’s, Cape Mamainse and the Coppermine Point Lighthouse were already noted on maps. Voyageurs stopped to trade at the local trading post, while the Ojibwe gathered local nuts, meat, and berries. The lighthouse at Coppermine Point was a landmark for ships sailing in Lake Superior. It marked the northeast entrance to Whitefish Bay, as the lighthouse at Whitefish Point (Michigan) marked the southwest entrance. The Edmund Fitzgerald Trail at Pancake Bay Provincial Park illustrates how the harbor land was exposed as glacial waters receded 5,000 year ago. The park trail also provides information about the shipwreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, which is 5 miles off the coast. Bits of the ship wreckage and lifeboats washed ashore nearby.

16. - Estimated Mileage: 61

**Buck’s Marina**



**HIGHLIGHTS**

Wawa takes its name from the Ojibwe word wewe for "wild goose". The Michipicoten River mouth, on Lake Superior, is about 5 miles from the town of Wawa. This is the magnificent north country. The Michipicoten River was a key link in the historic fur trade, connecting Lake Superior to James Bay far to the north. Today, canoeists paddle the route taking three to four weeks to arrive at the shores of James Bay. Wawa became a boom and bust town over the years. Gold was discovered on Wawa Lake in 1897. The population of Wawa village quickly grew with 1,700 claims staked in 1898. However, most gold production stopped by 1906. The search for gold during the boom led to the unexpected discovery of iron ore. And those mines played out over the ensuing years. Recently its main industries have been forestry and tourism. However, the wood products mill closed down in 2007, leaving sport fishermen, hikers and snowmobilers as the area’s main source of income.

17. - Estimated Mileage: 107

**Sunday Harbor Anchorage**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Formed over millions of years ago by meteorite impact, the Slate Islands are a favorite destination for anglers and cruising boaters. Explore the many secluded bays and anchorages and catch a glimpse of the woodland caribou that inhabit this wildlife preserve. A lighthouse was built on Patterson Island, the largest island, in 1903 to help ships locate the harbor at the nearby town of Jackfish.

18. - Estimated Mileage: 30

## Rosspport Harbour Marina



### HIGHLIGHTS

Founded as a stop on the transcontinental railway, this former commercial fishing port features charming gift shops and excellent restaurants for a night out in this quaint village. Take some time to cruise the Rosspport Islands. Explore the island trails and search the cobble beaches for geodes, crystals and agates.

19. - Estimated Mileage: 37

## Nipigon Marina



### HIGHLIGHTS

As the most northerly freshwater port in North America, and the only fresh water port north of the 49th parallel of latitude, Nipigon is a "must-stop" for all boats cruising the North Shore of Lake Superior. Heading up the well-marked deep water channel toward

Nipigon, the cliffs on the eastern shore across from Sawmill Point reveal a series of pictographs. Painted between 400 and 2,000 years ago, their origin and meaning remain a mystery.

20. - Estimated Mileage: 64

**Government Wharf**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Experience the rustic charm of this 19th century mining community near the tip of the Sibley Peninsula. Remnants of pilings and shafts visible below the surface recall the years between 1869 and 1884 when fortunes were made and millions of dollars in silver were extracted from this small offshore island. Take a stroll through the picturesque village where some of the original cottages have been preserved as private summer residences, hike to the Sea Lion rock formation or enjoy tea and sandwiches in the back room at the old General Store.

21. - Estimated Mileage: 21

**Prince Arthur’s Landing Marina**



**HIGHLIGHTS**

The Sleeping Giant guards the entrance to Thunder Bay harbor where grain elevators tower as monuments to the city's origins as a trade and transportation center. The Sleeping Giant is a large formation of mesas on the Sibley Peninsula in Lake Superior that resembles a reclining giant and has become a symbol of the city. The Sibley peninsula partially encloses the waters of Thunder Bay, and dominates the view of the lake from the northern section of the city. Thunder Bay's main tourist attraction is Fort

William Historical Park, a reconstruction of the North West Company's Fort William fur trade post as it was in 1815.

## 22. - Estimated Mileage: 49

### Windigo Ranger Station



#### HIGHLIGHTS

In prehistoric times, large quantities of copper were mined on Isle Royale and the nearby Keweenaw Peninsula. Ancient mine pits and trenches up to 20 feet deep scar the region. Carbon-14 dating of wood remains found in sockets of copper tools indicate that they are at least 5,700 years old. Today, activities on Isle Royale include hiking, fishing, kayaking, and observing nature. The island is covered in wilderness trails. The most popular and best marked is the 40-mile Greenstone Ridge Trail that extends down the island's backbone. The trail leads to the peak of Mount Desor, at 1,394 feet, the highest point on the island, and passes through north woods wilderness, and by inland glacial lakes, swamps, bogs and scenic shorelines.

## 23. - Estimated Mileage: 51

### Grand Marais Recreation Area



*Grand Marais, MN*

218-387-1712

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

Grand Marais is a gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, and a regional arts and crafts hub. It is the home of educational institutions, such as the Grand Marais Art Colony and the North House Folk School, and art galleries featuring the work of local and regional artists. A local North Shore beach called “Paradise” is a mecca for agate hunters. It offers Great Lakes beach combing at its best. Lake Superior acts as a giant rock tumbler that polishes these semi-precious gemstones just waiting for rock pickers to discover them. And visitors, young and old alike, never seem to tire of trying their hand at the time honored pastime of stone skipping.

24. - Estimated Mileage: 49

### **Silver Bay Marina**





**HIGHLIGHTS**

The city of Silver Bay was founded in 1954. This company town was built to process taconite iron ore mined and shipped by train from Babbitt, Minnesota, 60 miles to the northwest. The marina serves as a convenient overnight stop when returning to Duluth or Superior.