



# Great Lakes

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## Best Places to Eat

- New Scenic Cafe (p604)
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- Tucker's (p561)
- Slows Bar BQ (p567)
- The Old Fashioned (p586)

## Best Places to Stay

- Freehand Chicago (p527)
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- Brewhouse Inn & Suites (p583)
- Cleveland Hostel (p551)

## Why Go?

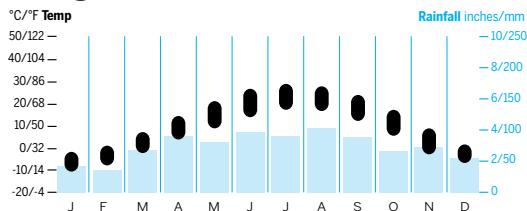
Don't be fooled by all the corn. Behind it lurks surfing beaches and Tibetan temples, car-free islands and the green-draped night-lights of the aurora borealis. The Midwest takes its knocks for being middle-of-nowhere boring; so consider the moose-filled national parks, urban five-ways and Hemingway, Dylan and Vonnegut sites to be its little secret.

Roll call for the Midwest's cities starts with Chicago, which unfurls what is arguably the country's mightiest skyline. Milwaukee keeps the beer-and-Harley flame burning, while Minneapolis shines a hipster beacon out over the fields. Detroit rocks, plain and simple.

The Great Lakes are huge, offering beaches, dunes, resort towns and lighthouse-dotted scenery. Dairy farms and orchards blanket the region – fresh pie and ice cream await road-trippers. And when the Midwest flattens out? There's always a goofball roadside attraction, like the Spam Museum or world's largest ball of twine, to revive imaginations.

## When to Go

### Chicago



**Jan & Feb** Skiers and snowmobilers hit the trails.

**Jul & Aug** Finally, it's warm! Beer gardens hop, beaches splash, and festivals rock most weekends.

**Sep & Oct** Fair weather, bountiful farm and orchard harvests, and shoulder-season bargains.

## History

The region's first residents included the Hopewell (around 200 BC) and Mississippian River mound builders (around AD 700). Both left behind mysterious piles of earth that were tombs for their leaders and possibly tributes to their deities. You can see remnants at Cahokia in southern Illinois, and Mound City in southeastern Ohio.

French voyageurs (fur traders) arrived in the early 17th century and established missions and forts. The British turned up soon after that, with the rivalry spilling over into the French and Indian War (Seven Years' War, 1754–61), after which Britain took control of all of the land east of the Mississippi. Following the Revolutionary War, the Great Lakes area became the new USA's Northwest Territory, which soon was divided into states and locked to the region after it developed its impressive canal and railroad network. But conflicts erupted between the newcomers and the Native Americans, including the 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana; the bloody 1832 Black Hawk War in Wisconsin, Illinois and around, which forced indigenous people to move west of the Mississippi; and the 1862 Sioux uprising in Minnesota.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, industries sprang up and grew quickly, fueled by resources of coal and iron, and cheap transportation on the lakes. The availability of work brought huge influxes of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia and southern and eastern Europe. For decades after the Civil War, a great number of African Americans also migrated to the region's urban centers from the South.

The area prospered during WWII and throughout the 1950s, but was followed by

20 years of social turmoil and economic stagnation. Manufacturing industries declined, which walloped Rust Belt cities such as Detroit and Cleveland with high unemployment and 'white flight' (white middle-class families who fled to the suburbs).

The 1980s and '90s brought urban revitalization. The region's population increased, notably with newcomers from Asia and Mexico. Growth in the service and high-tech sectors resulted in economic balance, although manufacturing industries such as car making and steel still played a big role, meaning that when the economic crisis hit in 2008, Great Lakes towns felt the pinch first and foremost.

## ILLINOIS

Chicago dominates the state with its sky-high architecture and superlative museums, restaurants and music clubs. But venturing further afield reveals Hemingway's hometown of 'wide lawns and narrow minds,' scattered shrines to local hero Abe Lincoln, and a trail of corn dogs, pies and drive-in movie theaters down Route 66. A cypress swamp and a prehistoric World Heritage site make appearances in Illinois too.

### Information

**Illinois Office of Tourism** ([www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com))

**Illinois Highway Conditions** ([www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com))

**Illinois State Park Information** ([www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov)) State parks are free to visit. Campsites cost \$6 to \$35; some accept reservations ([www.reserveamerica.com](http://www.reserveamerica.com); \$5).

## GREAT LAKES IN...

### Five Days

Spend the first two days in **Chicago**. On your third day, make the 1½-hour trip to **Milwaukee** for culture, both high- and lowbrow. Take the ferry over to Michigan and spend your fourth day beaching in **Saugatuck**. Circle back via **Indiana Dunes** or **Indiana's Amish Country**.

### Ten Days

After two days in **Chicago**, on day three make for **Madison** and its surrounding quirky sights. Spend your fourth and fifth days at the **Apostle Islands**, and then head into the Upper Peninsula to visit **Marquette** and **Pictured Rocks** for a few days, followed by **Sleeping Bear Dunes** and the wineries around **Traverse City**. Return via the galleries, pies and beaches of **Saugatuck**.