



LAKE
MICHIGAN
beach

GUIDE

Pictured: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

LAKE MICHIGAN *beach* GUIDE



THE GREAT LAKES (AND BEACHES) STATE

Michigan is home to some of the most incredible, unique landscapes that are rare to find all in one state. There aren't many states you can name off the top of your head that are home to several thriving cities, forests, rolling hills, waterfalls, farmland, and our favorite—fresh water beaches. We may be a bit biased to the Great Lakes (Lake Michigan in particular) as a brand marketing company located in Grand Rapids, but we believe that Michigan's western coast is by far one of the best features of our state, and even the country.

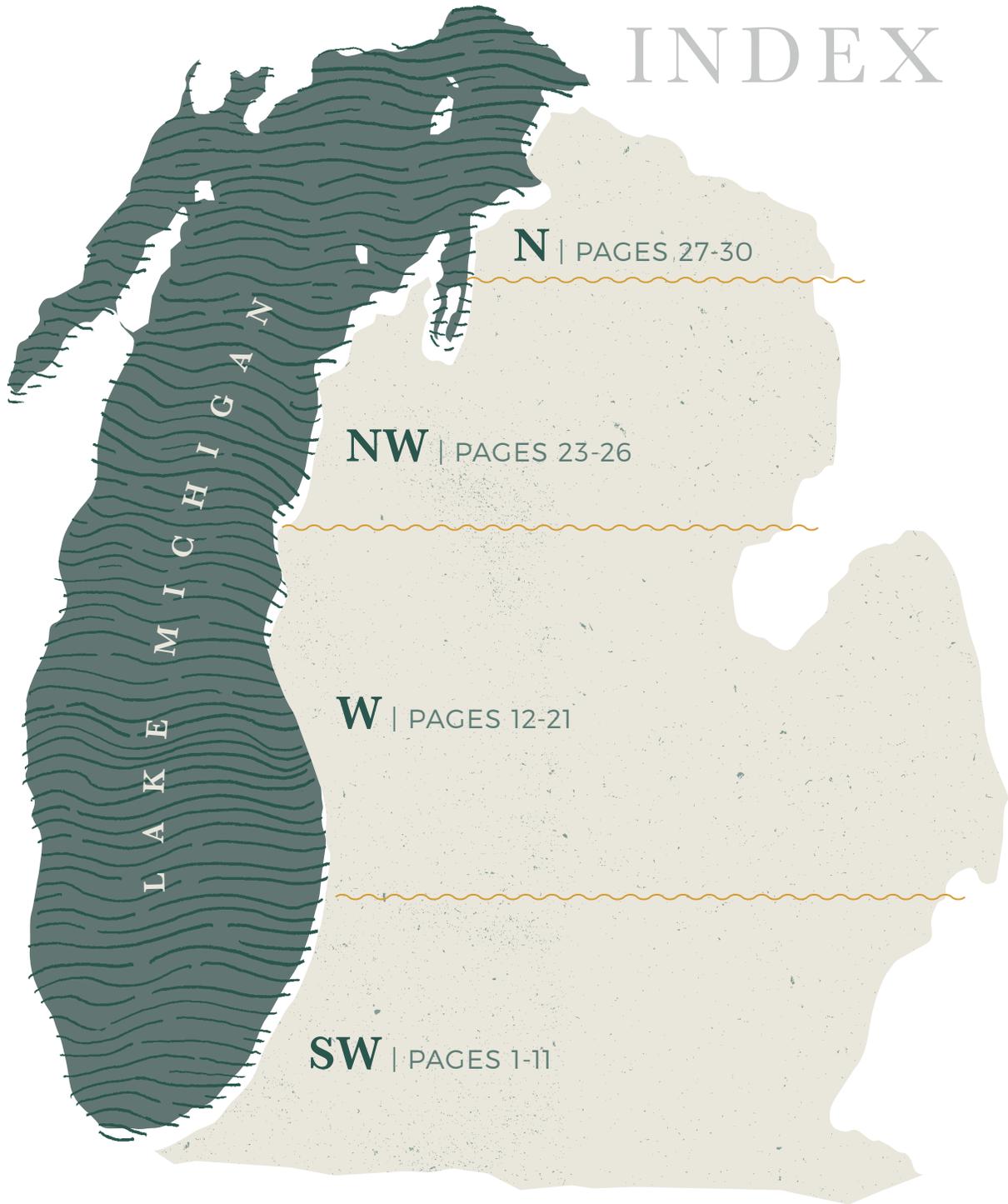
TO PROTECT AND TO TAP OUR CREATIVITY

As a certified B Corporation, TIS is a group of creatives with a triple-bottom-line mentality (people, planet, profit)—so Lake Michigan is especially important to us. First and foremost, the lakes and dunes are one of our most significant natural resources in Michigan, and we are dedicated to protecting these natural landscapes by treating them with respect and care. Just as important, the lake is a place we retreat when we need to recharge, to seek inspiration, to reflect, to tap into our creativity, and to simply relax and let go. Lake Michigan beaches are the most picturesque spots to do so.

PUTTING THE FOCUS ON THE BEACHES

Because we're so partial to Lake Michigan, we wanted to spread the love and appreciation by creating this beach guide for you to use time and time again. With this guide, we set aside all the extras—lodging, entertainment, special events—and put the focus back on the beaches, honoring their beauty just as they are—raw, real and our natural hero. Whether you're taking a road trip along the coast, planning a week-long vacation, or want to learn about a beach in a nearby town, our Lake Michigan Beach Guide will become your favorite go-to resource this summer. You'll definitely want to bookmark this one for safe keeping!

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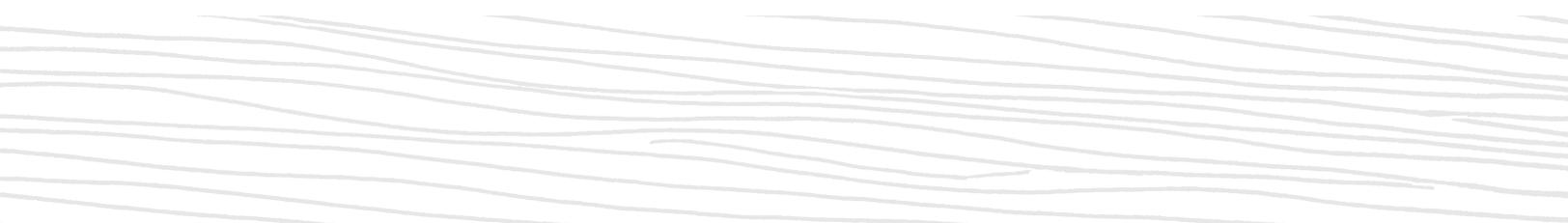


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TOWNLIN BEACH

10376 TOWN LINE AVENUE, UNION PIER, MI 49129

Looking for a cozy Lake Michigan beach to pass the day with your special someone? Townline Road Beach in Union Pier, MI near New Buffalo offers 101 feet of inviting public beach. A wooded overlook and staircase will lead you to a sandy pathway carved between wispy dune grass and trees. Limited parking is available along Town Line Ave., so make sure to arrive early in the day or for sunset.

- County park
- Limited parking
- No alcohol
- No dogs
- No glass
- No fires
- Free parking
- Remote
- Lodging nearby





UNION PIER-BERRIEN STREET LAKE ACCESS

15706-15714 LAKESHORE ROAD, UNION PIER, MI 49129

Hidden beyond a wooded path, lined with majestic, mossy trees and shrubbery, Union Pier-Berrien Street Lake Access in Union Pier, MI features 100 feet of public beach access, perfect for couples and small groups. Located at the end of Berrien St. and Lakeshore Rd., this Beach is the spot to be if you want to pass the day with close friends under the summer sun.

- County park
- Limited parking
- No alcohol
- No dogs
- No glass
- No fires
- Free parking
- Remote
- Lodging nearby





CHERRY BEACH

SOUTH CHERRY BEACH, CHIKAMING TWP, MI 49128

A long, wooden staircase leads you down to Cherry Beach in Chikaming Twp, MI—268 feet of glorious public beach along Lake Michigan.

Surrounded by woods and small dunes covered in dune grass, Cherry

Beach is an ideal getaway for friends. Need a break from the water?

Take a hike in the nearby wooded areas, or enjoy a few peaceful moments on the scenic overlook at the top of the staircase.

- County park
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- No dogs
- No glass
- No fires
- Free parking
- Remote
- Lodging nearby





WARREN DUNES STATE PARK

STATE PARK ROAD, SAWYER, MI 49125

Three miles of shoreline, six miles of hiking trails, year-round access and an abundance of amenities make Warren Dunes State Park the perfect lakeshore camping destination in southwestern Michigan. Vast recreational opportunities will keep the whole family entertained all week. Surrounded by dunes, Warren Dunes State Park is an explorer's paradise. Make a reservation online and pack up for your sandy beach getaway!



- State park
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Pet friendly
- State park pass required
- Family friendly
- Lodging nearby
- Sports
- Hiking
- Playground
- Food
- Restrooms



LIONS PARK BEACH

1701 LIONS PARK DRIVE, ST JOSEPH, MI 49085

Located in the bustling beach town of St. Joseph, MI, Lions Park Beach offers kid-friendly activities with a playground, food, and lots of space to run and play. With dozens of restaurants and entertainment nearby, St. Joseph and Lions Park Beach is a fabulous vacation destination for the entire family. Hop between Lions Park Beach and Silver Beach next door for a variety of fun!

- City beach
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Pet friendly
- Small daily fee
- Family friendly
- Lodging nearby
- Playground
- Food
- Restrooms





SILVER BEACH

101 BROAD STREET, ST JOSEPH, MI 49085

Neighboring Lions Park Beach in St. Joseph, MI, Silver Beach is the vacation hot spot along Michigan’s southwestern coastline. Offering pavilions, picnic areas, charcoal grills, playscapes, onsite art and sculpture, ample parking, an outdoor amphitheater, equipment rentals and much more, Silver Beach is the perfect summer vacation destination for beach-going families. Boasting 1,600 feet of public beachfront, Silver Beach is kept impeccably clean and is conveniently located near restaurants, entertainment and lodging.



- County park
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- No glass
- \$6 county residents, \$10 non-county residents
- Family friendly
- Pets allowed (on sidewalks, not on beach, must be leashed)
- Lodging nearby
- Sports
- Hiking
- Playground
- Food
- Restrooms



HAGAR PARK

5408 MICHIGAN 63, COLOMA, MI 49038

Located in Hagar Twp. just north of Benton Harbor, MI, Hagar Park is a wonderful destination for couples and small families who want to escape the crowds for a day. A long, wooden staircase leads you down to the sandy Lake Michigan beach, surrounded by trees, small dunes, brush and dune grass. Charcoal grills and picnic tables make Hagar Park a day-long destination. You can even bring your leashed pups with you! If you want a taste of the local cuisine, dine at ★ **Hagar Beach Café** for breakfast or lunch for a delicious menu with vegetarian and vegan options.



- Township park
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Pet friendly
- Hiking
- Playground
- Restrooms

★ SEE PG. 31 FOR HAGAR BEACH CAFÉ DETAILS



SOUTH BEACH

60 WATER STREET, SOUTH HAVEN, MI 49090

South Haven, MI is home to South Beach, well known for its family-friendly beachfront and amenities. The beach's playground, gorgeous pier, and vast coastline offer plenty of entertainment for the day, but are close enough to other nearby entertainment including skateparks, memorials, restaurants, and more. South Beach is open year-round, with designated hunting areas for the fall, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing for the winter, boating, canoeing and kayaking during the summer, and hiking and camping throughout all four seasons.

- City park
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- No dogs
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Hiking
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Food





WEST SIDE COUNTY PARK

2152 LAKESHORE DRIVE, FENNVILLE, MI 49408

If you're looking for a private, hidden gem along Lake Michigan, West Side County Park is just the place to spend your afternoon. This beautiful rocky beach located in Fennville, MI has it all—630 feet of public beach, sandy areas for relaxing, wooded areas to hike and explore, restrooms, a playground, and covered picnic area. West Side County Park will soon become one of your favorite Lake Michigan beaches!

- County park
- No dogs
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Hiking
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Sports





PIER COVE PARK

2290 LAKESHORE DRIVE, FENNVILLE, MI 49408

A small, historical, unique park, Pier Cove Park in Fennville, MI offers beautiful lakefront access off Lakeshore Drive. First surveyed in 1839, Pier Cove was once a bustling town, mostly known as a major point for labor distribution during the Civil War era. Today, Pier Cove offers a small beach along Lake Michigan, with channels cutting through the part-rocky, part-sandy beach. Pier Cove is a serene space to spend time alone to reflect, or share a romantic moment with a significant other.

- City park
- Little parking
- Free parking
- Pet friendly
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Hiking



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TUNNEL PARK

66 NORTH LAKESHORE DRIVE, HOLLAND, MI 49424

Tunnel Park is one of West Michigan’s most treasured parks, located in Holland. From the spacious parking lot, you and your family will be taken through a tunnel leading right into the beach along Lake Michigan, surrounded by dunes for climbing and playing, and lots of sandy beach for sunbathing and playing games. The kids will love passing the day playing on the playground, climbing the dunes, swimming in Lake Michigan, and eating lunch under the sunshine.



- County park
- Ample parking
- \$5 parking for county residents
- \$7 non-residents (Memorial Day - Labor Day)
- Pet friendly (off season Labor day - Memorial Day)
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Hiking
- Restrooms
- Food (vending machines)
- Sports



KIRK PARK

9791 NORTH LAKESHORE DRIVE, WEST OLIVE, MI 49460

Kirk Park, located in West Olive near Holland, MI, offers 68 acres of Lake Michigan sandy beach, high bluffs and wooded dunes, with several hiking trails, a scenic overlook, restrooms, horseshoe court, and off-leash areas for dogs. There are nearly endless exploration opportunities at Kirk Park, whether you want to walk along the coastline, hike through the wooded trails or climb the sand dunes. Prepare to completely unplug for the day at Kirk Park—there is little-to-no cell service on this beach. We all need to unplug now and then!



- County park
- Ample parking
- \$5 parking for county residents
- \$7 non-residents (Memorial Day - Labor Day)
- Pet friendly (off leash beach area)
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Hiking
- Restrooms
- Food (vending machines)
- Sports



MUSKEGON STATE PARK

3560 MEMORIAL DR, NORTH MUSKEGON, MI 49445

Boasting over 2 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, Muskegon State Park in Muskegon, MI is a family-friendly park for all four seasons. Families can enjoy snow sports like luge and cross country skiing at the Winter Sports Complex during winter months, and trails to hike and bike in the spring, summer and fall. The Lake Michigan coast in Muskegon State Park offers scenic views of the Muskegon pier and lighthouses, dunes, forest, and of course, the miles and miles of the beautiful Lake Michigan waters. Looking to grab a bite to eat? Bear Lake Tavern is just up the road. ★ **Unruly Brewing Co.** brews some super-tasty beers just a 15-minute drive from the park.



- State park
- Ample parking
- State park pass required
- No dogs
- No alcohol (except on campground during camping season)
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Camping
- Sports
- Restrooms

★ SEE PG. 31 FOR UNRULY BREWING CO. DETAILS



DUCK LAKE STATE PARK

3560 MEMORIAL DRIVE, WHITEHALL, MI 49461

Duck Lake State Park is a beautiful 728-acre day park in Whitehall, MI in Muskegon County. Sandwiched between Duck Lake and Lake Michigan, this state park offers gorgeous scenic views of Lake Michigan and beachfront on Duck Lake. A large dune towers over Duck Lake and its channels, with lots of ground to hike, climb and explore. Catch the sunset on the Lake Michigan side, with its coastline bordered by large rocks, dune grass, and rich, blue-green water.

- State park
- Ample parking
- State park pass required
- No dogs
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Restrooms





CHARLES MEARS STATE PARK

400 WEST LOWELL STREET, PENTWATER, MI 49449

Charles Mears State Park in the beloved Lake Michigan beach town of Pentwater, MI is one of Manistee County's most popular beaches. Playscapes, sports courts, piers, and boat launches make Charles Mears a one-stop spot for your favorite summer. There are plenty of campsites to reserve, or rent a cabin or vacation home nearby. And the best part? Your cherished pups can enjoy your beach trip with you along this pet-friendly shoreline!



- State park
- Ample parking
- State park pass required
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- No fires
- Family friendly
- Lodging nearby
- Camping
- Sports
- Restrooms



SUMMIT PARK

5581 SOUTH LAKESHORE DRIVE, LUDINGTON, MI 49431

Summit Township Park in Ludington, MI is a beautiful recreational area, featuring a playground, baseball diamond, tennis courts, picnic tables, charcoal grills, and a pavilion that can be rented for graduation parties, family reunions, wedding receptions, and more. In addition to all these amenities, Summit Park leads down to a sandy Lake Michigan beach with crystal-clear water. The whole family will love feeling the warm breeze over Lake Michigan on a sunny day. Make sure to stop at the famous Bortell's Fisheries and enjoy some of the tastiest fresh-caught white fish, lake perch, trout and more for lunch or dinner!

- Township Park
- Ample Parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Lodging nearby
- Sports
- Restrooms





CONSUMERS ENERGY HYDROPLANT

3525 SOUTH LAKESHORE DRIVE LUDINGTON, MI 49431

The city of Ludington houses a Consumers Energy hydroplant, the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant, open to the public to learn and explore. The Pumped Storage Plant offers free, ample parking to the public with paved trails to walk, as well as a scenic overlook to the hydroplant and an informational board on its purpose and functions. Whether you're vacationing in Ludington or just passing through, the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant is a unique learning opportunity with a gorgeous view.

- Scenic lookout
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- Family friendly





BUTTERFIELD COUNTY PARK

1100 SOUTH LAKESHORE DRIVE, LUDINGTON, MI 49341

Located adjacent to Buttersville Campground in Ludington, Butterfield County Park has direct access to the campground through a short, wooded hiking trail. Sandwiched between Lake Michigan and Pere Marquette Lake, Butterfield County Park offers more public beach access with ample parking and plenty of beachfront to explore. You'll even catch a view of Ludington Beach and its lighthouses. Make sure you stay for the jaw-dropping sunset over the lake—it's one of the best views in the area!

- County park
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- Family friendly
- Camping adjacent
- Lodging nearby
- Restrooms





PERE MARQUETTE PIER

435 S LAKESHORE DRIVE, LUDINGTON, MI 49431

The Pere Marquette Pier is definitely a hidden gem of Ludington! A 4000-foot paved pathway surrounded by sandy dunes, dune grass and private cottages and condos brings you to a small, sandy beach and scenic pier. At the end of the pier stands a beautiful lighthouse and vibrant aquamarine waters. You may even spot a Piping Plover, one of the endangered birds in the area. Whether you're soaking up the sun on the small remote beach or taking a quiet walk on the pier into the sunset, Pere Marquette Pier is a must-see. Follow S Lakeshore Dr. and park in the lot to the left, immediately before the condominiums.

- Township park
- Small parking lot
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- Lodging nearby





LUDINGTON STATE PARK

8800 M-116, LUDINGTON, MI 49431

Situated between Hamlin Lake and Lake Michigan, Ludington State Park features nearly 5,300 acres of dunes, coastline, marshlands and forests to hike, explore and enjoy. There are 355 modern campsites up for grabs at Ludington State Park, as well as more remote, rustic campsites for those who really love to rough it. The gorgeous coastline is perfect for hiking and relaxing on the sand, surrounded by dunes waiting to be climbed and explored. When you want to take a break from the water, the state park offers 37.5 miles of trails to explore on foot or by bike.

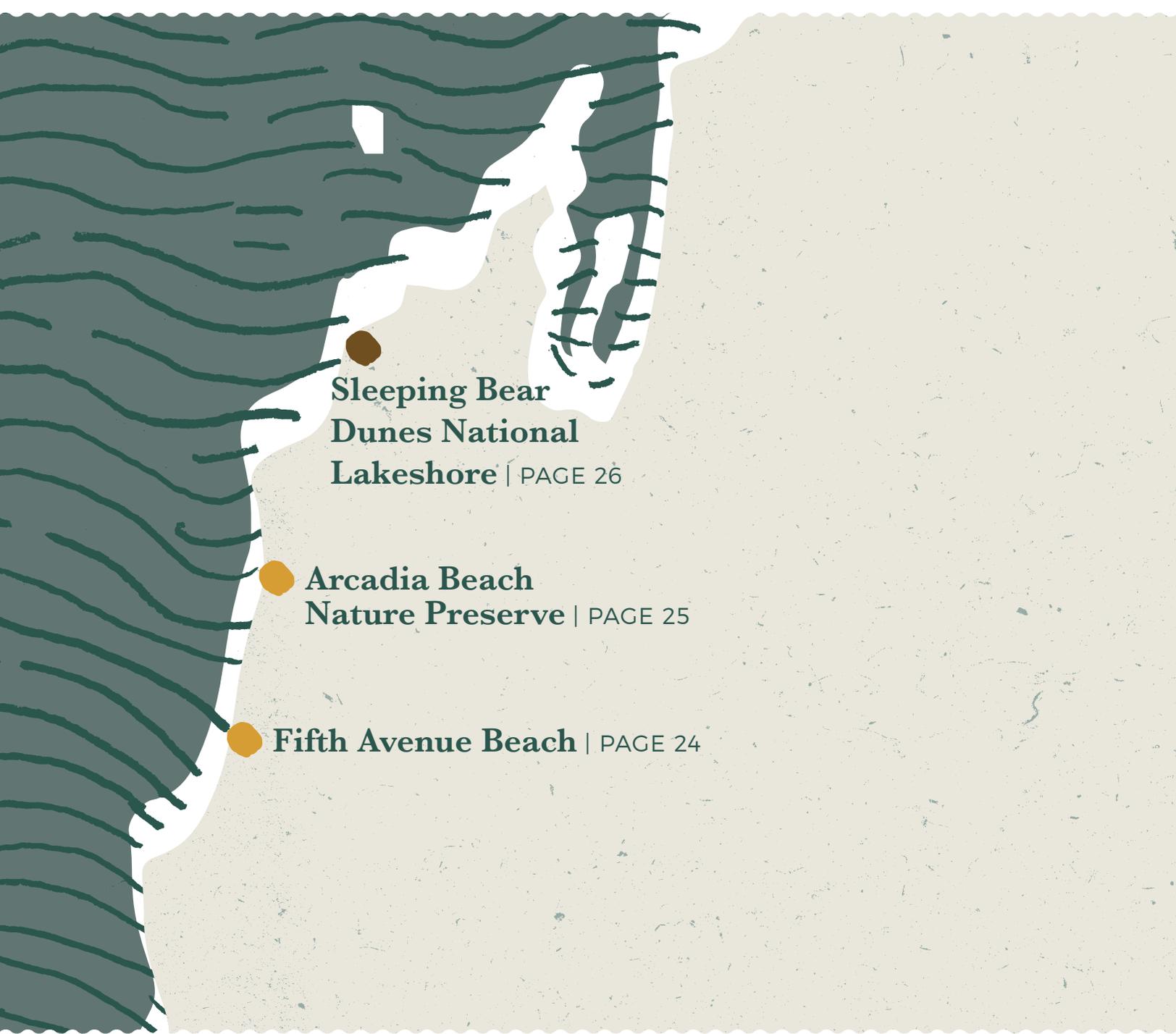
- State park
- Ample parking
- Free street parking
- No dogs
- No alcohol
- No glass
- Family friendly
- Lodging nearby
- Sports
- Camping
- Restrooms



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FIFTH AVENUE BEACH

5TH AVENUE, MANISTEE, MI 49660

Nestled in a quaint beach community in Manistee, MI, Fifth Avenue Beach is a gorgeous, family-friendly Lake Michigan beach offering access to the North Pier, plenty of soft, sandy spots for sunbathing, a playground, tennis court, basketball court, concessions, and much more. In addition to the amenities Fifth Avenue Beach has to offer, the cities of Manistee and nearby Ludington are packed with awesome bars, restaurants and entertainment—making this beach a must-stop during your family vacation.



- City beach
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- Fires allowed
- Family friendly
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Sports
- Food
- Pavilions



ARCADIA BEACH NATURE PRESERVE

3168 LAKE STREET, ARCADIA, MI 49613

Looking for a family-friendly beach to watch the sunset over Lake Michigan in Manistee County? Arcadia Beach Natural Area in Arcadia, MI just north of Manistee is a beautiful beach to do so. With a playground and swing set for the kids, scenic overlook deck, and cozy beachfront, Arcadia Beach is a quiet area to watch the sunset reflect on Lake Michigan. Bring a blanket or two, a picnic basket and get comfy around a fire in one of the available fire pits!



- City beach
- Ample parking
- Free parking
- No alcohol
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- Fires allowed
- Family friendly
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Sports
- Food
- Pavilions



SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

6900 S DUNE HIGHWAY, GLEN ARBOR, MI 49636

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Empire, MI is one of the most well-known national parks across the United States—and for good reason. Covering an impressive 111.1 square miles, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore covers 35 miles of Lake Michigan coastline, with several access points for scenic overlooks of the dunes, Glen Arbor Lake, and Lake Michigan. The park’s Lake Michigan overlook allows visitors to park and observe or hike the dunes towering above Lake Michigan, exposing miles and miles of crystal blue water. If you’re up for more of a challenge, park at the base of the dunes and hike as far as 3 miles all the way to the Lake Michigan coastline. The beautiful sandy beach is well worth the effort!

- National park
- Ample parking
- State park pass required
- No alcohol
- Camping nearby
- Lodging nearby
- Pet friendly in some areas
- No glass
- No fires
- Restrooms



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FISHERMAN’S ISLAND STATE PARK

16480 BELLS BAY ROAD, CHARLEVOIX, MI 49720

Sandy Lake Michigan beach meets rustic forest at Fisherman’s Island State Park in Charlevoix, MI. A 10-minute drive down a dirt road takes you to Fisherman’s Island beach access, boasting a soft, sandy beach and lots of natural wildflowers and lush shrubbery. Fisherman’s Island State Park is a popular destination for camping, offering 80 rustic campsites leading up to the beach—15 of which are nestled in the dune area along Lake Michigan. If you’re ready to “rough it,” Fisherman’s Island is a nature lover’s dream come true.

- State park
- Ample parking
- No alcohol
- Camping nearby
- Pet friendly
- No glass
- No fires
- State park pass required
- Restrooms





STURGEON BAY DUNES AT WILDERNESS STATE PARK

9600 N LAKE SHORE DRIVE, CARP LAKE, MI 49718

Caribbean-colored waters in Michigan? You may not think something like this exists, but the Lake Michigan beachfront at Sturgeon Bay Dunes will prove you wrong! Part of Wilderness State Park in Carp Lake, MI, Sturgeon Bay Dunes features gradient water of rich blue, aquamarine and green along 4,100 feet of Lake Michigan beach. The park covers 750 acres of hiking trails, dunes, and coastline to explore. Sturgeon Bay Dunes is guaranteed to take your breath away!

- Township park
- Limited parking
- No alcohol
- Camping
- Pet friendly
(except from Apr 1 - Aug 31)
- No glass
- No fires
- Free parking
- Lodging nearby





WILDERNESS STATE PARK

903 WILDERNESS PARK DRIVE, CARP LAKE, MI 49718

Looking for camping, beaches, hiking, year-round activities, and a true nature escape? Wilderness State Park in Carp Lake, MI has all of this and more. Covering over 10,000 acres of land, 6 miles of Lake Michigan coastline, and 250 modern campsites, Wilderness State Park is a northern Michigan haven for the great outdoors, featuring electrifying aqua-blue water and scenic views. The park's three miles of beautiful, undisturbed beach front is perfect for hiking and exploring. Keep an eye out for the endangered Piping Plover waddling around on the beach and in the dunes!

- State park
- Limited parking
- No alcohol
- Camping
- Pet friendly
(except from Apr 1 - Aug 31)
- No glass
- No fires
- State park pass required



SPECIAL PLACES ★



★ HAGAR BEACH CAFÉ | 6218 M-63 NORTH, COLOMA, MI

SW

Hagar Beach Café is the perfect spot to fill up before hitting the beach for the day, or to refuel with a midday meal. Located in Coloma, MI near Hagar Park, Silver Beach, Lions Park Beach, and popular St. Joseph and Benton Harbor destinations, Hagar Beach Café is a family-friendly restaurant dishing up delicious fare for the whole family. Serving breakfast and lunch, the café is working toward 100% scratch-made cuisine, catering to various special dietary preferences. Burgers, mushroom biscuits and gravy, parsnip fritters, homemade milkshakes, and much more are up for grabs at this café—you do not want to pass this spot up.



★ UNRULY BREWING CO. | 360 W. WESTERN AVE, MUSKEGON, MI

NW

Fun fact: Unruly Brewing Co. in Muskegon, MI is the first craft brewery in the city to open since prohibition—yeah, that’s a long time. Housed in a fully-restored building from the 1890s, Unruly serves some unique and equally delicious craft beer in downtown Muskegon, just a short drive from Muskegon State Park and Duck Lake State Park—a perfect spot for post-beach libations. If you’re into dark beers, we recommend the Mad Cacao Disease. Yum!

(continued on next page)

SPECIAL PLACES ★



★ **THE MITTEN BAR & BARLEY & RYE** | 107 W LUDINGTON AVE, LUDINGTON, MI **NW**

After spending a long day at the beach, nothing feels better than to kick back and unwind with a drink at the popular local bar—or in this case, conjoined bars. The Mitten Bar and Barley & Rye are neighboring bars, located in the popular beach town of Ludington, and nearby Pentwater and Manistee. The Mitten side features an impressive draft list of all Michigan-made brews, with live music and entertainment on the weekends. If you're feeling hungry for food and whiskey, walk on over to the Barley & Rye side and have fun choosing from their extensive whiskey selection. This is the place to bring your friends and sing and dance the night away!



★ **MUSTANG WENDY'S** | 129 E BAY ST, HARBOR SPRINGS, MI **N**

While passing through the northern region of Michigan, make sure to make a pit stop at Mustang Wendy's in Harbor Springs, MI for a unique spin on fresh West-Mex, where "California cuisine meets Cowboy Cookery." We stopped at Mustang Wendy's for lunch on the second day of our beach road trip, and scarfed down a variety of cuisine including vegan nachos, breakfast burritos, quesadillas, fresh-fish tacos, housemade cocktails and specialty craft beer from Petoskey Brewing Co. Whether you're stopping in for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or just drinks and appetizers, you'll find something you'll absolutely love.

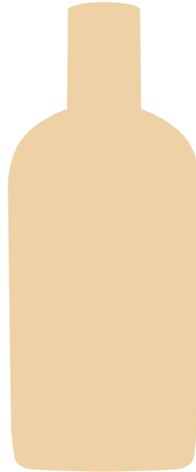


WHAT AN ADVENTURE.

Over approximately 36 hours, a writer, a photographer, a creative director and a CEO traveled nearly 700 miles of the Western Michigan coastline from New Buffalo to Mackinaw City. The result: Several pit stops, some stunning discoveries, a few leg cramps, a lot of laughs, and this freakin' awesome guide to Western Michigan's Lake Michigan beaches.

DURING THE MAKING OF THIS GUIDE:

- 700 miles traveled
- 11% of miles traveled on electric power in the Chevy Volt
- 35 beaches visited
- 6 restaurants and bars visited
- Water Temp: low 40s F
- 1 rescued loon



SUN SCREEN GUIDE

Spending a day, weekend or full week at the beach is always a fun time—but can quickly take a turn for the worst without lathering up on sunscreen. Sunburn is a real threat to enjoying your trip to the beach and to our health. Wearing sunscreen should be non-negotiable, but wearing the right sunscreen is even more important. While sunscreen protects our skin from burns, most sunscreens actually do more damage than they help—made with harmful chemicals like oxybenzone and retinyl palmitate.

Not sure which sunscreens protect you against the sun's rays and are also safe for your body? Check out EWG's Sunscreen Guide, complete with best sport sunscreen, best moisturizers with SPF, best scoring kids sunscreens, and much more. Get the guide mailed to you or view it online for free!

[CLICK TO VIEW ONLINE](#)

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368 Djamond Ave. Southeast, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Phone: (616) 773-3010 | www.theimageshoppe.com

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