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Crossings

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Cover: Spring Flowering Trees



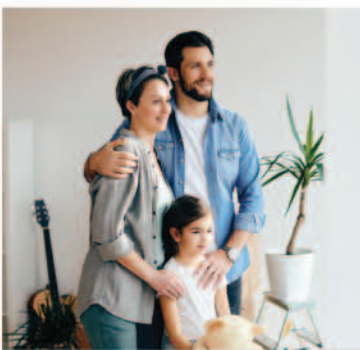
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Blue Angel Psychotherapy & Support Services is a testament to her lifelong passion for mental health and dedication to helping those in need. As a medical doctor and the sole founder, she witnessed firsthand the struggles of patients with mental health concerns and the limitations of conventional medical approaches in addressing these issues. This observation, coupled with her intrinsic passion for mental health nurtured since high school, propelled her to pursue a master's in psychotherapy and follow a path of dedicating her life to the aid of others. *Services are offered in person or online. Call today for your free 15 mins consultation.*

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BY RENU SAGGAR

raptors throughout the season.

As the weather warms, Marquette County's abundant waterways come to life. With 83 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, more than 150 streams and over 300 lakes, the region offers a wide range of on-the-water experiences. Visitors can kayak calm inland lakes, paddleboard across *Marquette Bay* or spend time along the sandy shoreline at *McCarty's Cove*. Lake Independence and Greenwood Reservoir provide additional options for swimming, paddling and relaxed time on the water surrounded by spring greenery.

Golfers will also find spring an ideal time to hit the greens at *Marquette Golf Club*, home to the acclaimed *Greywalls* and *Heritage* courses. The 36-hole facility is known for its dramatic elevation changes, rolling terrain and expansive

Spring is in the Air in Marquette

Spring in Marquette County brings a noticeable shift across Michigan's Upper Peninsula as hardwood forests begin to bud and longer days signal the start of a new season. Rising temperatures and changing landscapes create ideal conditions for outdoor recreation, time on the water and a full slate of spring events.

Outdoor enthusiasts can take advantage of miles of hiking and biking trails that highlight the county's changing scenery. Elevated viewpoints such as *Thomas Rock Scenic Overlook* provide sweeping views of forested terrain and Lake Superior's shoreline, while trails like *Mount Marquette* reward hikers with panoramic perspectives of the city and lake below. Cyclists and others can explore the *Iron Ore Heritage Trail*, a well-maintained, multi-use path that winds through forests, wetlands and historic mining corridors, offering an accessible way to experience the landscape as spring unfolds.

Presque Isle Park serves as a focal point for spring recreation, with shoreline paths well suited for walking, birdwatching and taking in uninterrupted views of Lake Superior. Nearby nature preserves and wooded trails provide additional opportunities to observe migratory birds returning to the region, making Marquette County

a rewarding destination for birding enthusiasts. The *Little Presque Isle Songbird Trail* offers quieter settings where visitors may encounter songbirds, waterfowl and



Yellow Dog Falls

views, offering a memorable playing experience set against the natural backdrop of the Upper Peninsula.

After a day spent outdoors, Marquette's historic downtown offers a lively atmosphere. Visitors can unwind at locally owned restaurants, breweries and coffee shops, with dining options that range from casual fare to globally inspired cuisine. Craft breweries such as *Ore Dock Brewing Company*, *Kognisjon Bryggeri* and *Upper Peninsula Brewing Company* are popular gathering spots, while shops and galleries showcase work by regional artists. Downtown galleries, including *The Gallery, Marquette*, *DeVos Art Museum* and *Lake Superior Photo Art Gallery* offer opportunities to explore contemporary art, fine art and photography that reflect the area's strong connection to the landscape and place.

Beyond Marquette, nearby communities such as Ishpeming, Negaunee, Harvey, Gwinn and Michigamme Township add depth and variety to a spring visit, each offering its own historic character, outdoor access and local flavor. In Negaunee, *Strega Nonna* is a favorite for a relaxed evening meal, known for its house-made pastas, classic Italian dishes and inviting atmosphere. In Gwinn, *Up North Lodge* offers hearty comfort food and regional craft brews in a casual, rustic setting that makes it an easy place to unwind after exploring nearby trails or scenic back roads.

Unique festivals and events further bring Marquette County to life throughout the season. Each spring, Downtown Marquette Restaurant Week highlights the local dining scene as participating restaurants introduce special menus and limited-time offerings that span everything from fine dining and fresh local seafood to artisan baked goods, pub favorites and global cuisine. Also occurring each spring, Marquette Mountain's Spring Carnival celebrates the transition to warmer weather with live

music, race events, après-ski festivities and the iconic Slush Cup, drawing locals and visitors alike to the slopes for one last celebration of the winter season. As Easter approaches on April 5, family-friendly traditions continue the seasonal momentum. The Annual City-Wide Egg Hunt invites children to follow daily clues leading up to a community-wide hunt organized by local nonprofits and businesses, with many families extending the celebration at festive Easter brunches hosted by downtown restaurants such as Delft Bistro. The season continues into May with the Big Bay Relay on May 16, a longtime community tradition that sends five-person teams running together along the scenic 26-mile route from Marquette to Big Bay.

With accessible outdoor recreation, a walkable downtown, distinctive neighboring communities and a full calendar of spring events, Marquette County offers a fabulous setting for seasonal travel in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For more information visit them at travelmarquette.com.

Photo Credit: Travel Marquette x SkyNav





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The Little River Railroad

BY RENU SAGGAR

in Coldwater. The traditional course offers a uniquely enjoyable and very playable challenge, winding through the tall trees, rolling hills and chain of lakes.

Family Friendly Fun

As the days grow warmer, Coldwater Country's family-friendly attractions spring back to life. *Adventure Zone* delivers high-energy fun with go-karts zipping through the fresh air, mini golf surrounded by bright greens, laser tag showdowns and immersive virtual reality experiences—perfect for kids and kids at heart, ready to shake off winter cabin fever.

For a nostalgic throwback, lace up your skates at the *Skate Ranch*, where maple skating floors, disco lights and upbeat music set the scene for laughs, friendly competitions and attempts at skating backward. Spring also signals the return of classic favorites like the *Capri Drive-In* and

Spring Fun in Michigan's Coldwater Country

Soft breezes, blooming flowers and sun-splashed landscapes—spring awakens Michigan's Coldwater Country. Nestled in south-central Michigan near the Indiana border, this scenic region—featuring Coldwater, Bronson, Quincy, Union City, Colon, Athens and Allen—bursts to life with blooming landscapes, lakeside allure and small-town charm.

Outside Adventures

With more than 100 sparkling freshwater lakes, Coldwater Country comes alive in spring, offering endless ways to enjoy the great outdoors. As the ice melts and nature stirs, paddle the peaceful *Union City Heritage Water Trail*, where budding trees and returning birds set the scene for a serene on-the-water escape. Or hop aboard a boat and cruise the North and South Chains of Lakes in Coldwater, soaking up sunshine, gentle breezes and the fresh energy of the season.

Fishing enthusiasts will love springtime on the lakes, when bass, perch, bluegill and walleye are active and plentiful. Cast a line in the crisp morning air, then head into town to warm up with coffee at a cozy local café before your next adventure.

On land, spring invites cyclists to explore rolling countryside along scenic 15- and 20-mile routes, lined with blooming wildflowers and bright green fields.

Golfers can tee off at more than two dozen courses across the region, including the one-of-a-kind 9-hole *Iyopawa Island Golf Course*, where peaceful lake views, fresh fairways and a distinctive layout make every round feel like a breath of fresh air. The Coldwater Golf Course is one of the most historic golf courses in all of Michigan. First opened in 1920, the scenic links are located on the shores of beautiful Morrison Lake,

Short's Root Beer Stand, where warmer evenings make movie nights and frosty treats even sweeter.

The *Children's Museum of Branch County* adds hands-on learning and imaginative play, giving young explorers plenty of space to move, create and burn off energy after a long winter indoors.

Ride the rails with an authentic 100 year steam engine train at the *Little River Railroad*. Train enthusiasts won't want to miss a scenic springtime ride aboard this historic rail line. Seasonal excursions roll through the countryside, including the beloved *Easter Egg Express*—complete with a visit from the Easter Bunny and an egg hunt in the park at Quincy that delights young passengers and families alike.

Enjoy nature with a visit to the *Critchlow Alligator Sanctuary*, which opens for the season in April. Observe amazing animals and their tropical habitat during guided tours and animal interactions. Walk through the swamp and feed the alligators or just watch them bask and swim at this reptile paradise.

Seasonal Festivals & Events

Coldwater Country springs into celebration with a lineup of seasonal events and community gatherings that showcase the region's creativity and hometown spirit. As spring unfolds, streets and public spaces come alive with music, color and connection.

The *Cultural Jubilee: Cultivating Community* is a community-wide celebration of cultural connectivity, bringing together art, live music, dance performances, local vendors, interactive displays, meaningful conversations and diverse flavors that fill the air and energize downtown spaces. It's a joyful reflection of the people and stories that make Coldwater Country unique.

Mother's Day weekend blooms with an annual swap meet

and car show, drawing families, collectors and car enthusiasts alike. Craft vendors, food trucks, gleaming show cars, raffles and springtime shopping create a festive atmosphere—making it the perfect way to celebrate moms, enjoy the sunshine and kick off the season together.

Arts & Entertainment

Get inspired by Coldwater’s thriving art scene! Stroll through downtown to find colorful murals, student art and outdoor sculptures—or warm up inside the *Tibbits Opera House* art gallery.

Speaking of Tibbits, this historic gem offers live performances all year—from musicals and concerts to professional theatre and comedy shows.

Want more nostalgia? Pack some blankets and head to the *Capri Drive-In* for a double feature under the stars. With twin screens and room for 1,000 cars, it’s a classic movie night you won’t forget.

For a little enchantment, visit Colon—the *Magic Capital of the World*. Discover spellbinding performances, quirky shops and magical experiences that make this small town truly extraordinary.

Antiques & Eats

Treasure hunters, rejoice! *Allen*, Michigan’s Antique Capital, is packed with hidden gems across five giant antique malls, including the 25,000-square-foot *Allen Antique Barn*.

While you’re exploring, visit Amish shops across Branch County for handcrafted furniture, delicious baked goods, artisan jewelry and seasonal gifts—all with a warm welcome and a touch of tradition.

Refuel at one of Coldwater Country’s local eateries, from cozy diners and lakeside patios to international cuisine and gourmet

BBQ. Whether you’re craving a quick bite or a sit-down dinner, there’s something to satisfy every palate.

Great Places to Stay

If you’re planning long weekend, a romantic getaway, a family reunion, or a milestone event, you’ll find great places to stay including major national chain hotels and family-owned motels. Those who enjoy being closer to nature will find area campgrounds convenient and scenic. If you’re looking for an affordable place on the lake with all the comforts of home, vacation rental homes are the way to go!

Plan Your Trip

Ready for blooming landscapes, fresh-air adventures, and festive spring fun? Head to ColdwaterCountry.com to plan your adventure or download the Coldwater Country app for insider tips, event information and everything you need for the perfect spring escape. 📱



Union City Heritage Water Trail



Flint City Bucks AFC soccer game

BY RENU SAGGAR

features a visitor center with live animals and educational exhibitions.

Another unique park, great for kids and adults alike, is *Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad*, a turn-of-the-last-century Great Lakes town boasting 24 historic structures and a vibrant community eager to greet you. Part of the parks system it features a rebuilt diesel and a coal-fired steam engine, both of which pull the 11 original and replica wooden coaches with a classic red caboose.

One more unique park is the *Mounds ORV Park* in Mount Morris. This 370-acre off-road vehicle facility welcomes Jeeps, trucks, ATVs, UTVs, dirt bikes and more to go mudding on its many trails.

Explore Something Unique this Spring in Flint & Genesee County

When the weather warms up in Genesee County, Michigan, the fun really starts. From sports to outdoor recreation or nights out with friends, Flint & Genesee is the destination for a weekend away. Explore a unique vacation when you visit *Flint & Genesee*.

Golf is a Genesee County mainstay, and with good reason. Historically known for the PGA Tour's *Buick Open*, and now for the *PGA Tour Champions Ally Challenge* presented by McLaren, each year. The fairways and greens at *Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club* will be filled with golf legends and golf fans, all there for the love of the game. The family-friendly event also features spectator events, community concerts and more. Check out Pro-Am tickets and day or weekend passes by visiting TheAllyChallenge.com.

If you're ready to hit the links you're in luck! There are over 20 courses around Genesee County, each offering varying levels of difficulty. Notable area courses include the *Captain's Club at Woodfield* (Grand Blanc), *Coyote Preserve Golf Club* (Fenton), *Fenton Farms Golf Club*, and *Sugarbush Golf Club* (Davison). The Flint & Genesee – the region's convention and visitors' bureau – will be happy to assist golfers in putting together customized,



Spring Meadows Country Club in Fenton. affordable golf packages that will fit your budget and your needs.

Once spring hits, professional soccer starts up in Flint & Genesee with the *Flint City Bucks* and *Flint City AFC*, the USL2 men's and women's soccer teams, which play at Kettering University's historic *Atwood Stadium*. Experience the community pride at a Flint City Bucks game with the *Flint River Rats* cheering on their home team.

Flint & Genesee is also a great place to visit if you love outdoor recreation. Genesee County is home to the largest county parks system in the state of Michigan with over 11,000 acres of woods, water and fun. Fan favorites to enjoy include, *For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum* in Burton, which boasts 383 picturesque acres as well as a barrier-free treehouse for everyone to enjoy. The preserve also

Annual events ramp up in the spring in Flint & Genesee, with the *Sloan Auto Fair* in June, music festivals like *Alley Fest* and the *Flint Jazz Festival* in July and mainstay community events, including *Back to the Bricks* and the *HAP Crim Festival of Races*. Between all those events, there are art fairs, farmers' markets, summer festivals and more throughout the towns and cities surrounding Flint's city center.

For those who enjoy a night out, both downtown Flint and the surrounding communities have unique experiences for you to explore. In Flint, *Sauce Italian American Kitchen*, located at the Hilton Garden Inn Flint Downtown, offers excellent Italian-inspired food and drinks. Upstairs at the hotel, enjoy the *Simmer Rooftop Bar* for great views of the city.

South of Flint, the *Fenton Winery & Brewery/Dream Machine Distillery*, is a local brewery, winery, and distillery serving handcrafted drinks and amazing food to go along with it. The *RailYard* in Fenton, is located in an old gristmill. The bar features several rotating restaurants serving from reused shipping containers. It also features fun games and a wall of beer that patrons can self-pour. 🍺

From sports to parks to relaxation, there is something unique to find in Flint & Genesee. Learn more at ExploreFlintandGenesee.org.

Spring Begins Here



Explore spring at your own pace in Flint & Genesee

From championship golf to art-filled evenings and vibrant local festivals, Flint & Genesee has plenty to enjoy as the season warms. Discover scenic parks, welcoming spaces and local cuisine that invite you to embrace refreshing spring moments. Savor live entertainment, outdoor fun and moments worth lingering over.



ExploreFlintandGenesee.org



BY RENU SAGGAR

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Rest Easy at Choice Hotels Michigan

Spring flowers bloom as the earth reawakens from its long winter's sleep. There's no better cure for Spring Fever than a weekend getaways to experience Michigan's seasonal beauty. With *Choice Hotels* strategically located throughout the Great Lakes State you'll find the perfect haven to return to after a day of exploration. Their rich portfolio of diverse brands offers a range of accommodations that cater to every traveler's wants and needs.

When planning your next vacation or weekend get-a-way plan a stay in one or more of these hotels: Ascend, Cambria, Comfort Inn, Sleep Inn, Quality Inn, Clarion, Mainstay, Econolodge, Roadway Inn, Suburban or Woodstay Suites. Each of these brands provides a dependable and comfortable retreat!

Cambria hotels offer design-forward accommodations and the chance to enjoy little indulgences. The upscale essentials for the modern traveler elevate your routine in the state-of-the-art fitness center, indoor pool, then unwind in design-forward guest rooms with spa-inspired bathrooms and premium bedding.

Located near the heart of Traverse City, *Cambria* hotel is a highly-rated all-suites hotel property in a charming coastal town. Located a 5-minute drive from Bryant Park and Traverse City State Park, it has received numerous awards, including being named Hotel of the Year multiple times by Choice Hotels International.

It's ideal for both leisure and business travelers, offering a blend of comfort and convenience in a beautiful setting.

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Whether you're planning a scenic tour, a shopping trip, or a weekend retreat, Choice Hotels is the perfect home base across Michigan, ensuring your adventure is memorable and comfortable. [Learn more](#)

Start planning your Michigan travel at ChoiceHotels.com/Michigan



West Branch is Michigan's Hidden Golf Gem

Tucked into the rolling woods of northern Michigan, West Branch is a hidden gem for golfers who crave championship-caliber play without the crowds of big-city resorts. Here, the fairways are framed by towering pines, the air is fresh and clean and every round feels like an escape.

At the heart of it all are two legendary courses: *The Dream Golf Course* and *The Nightmare Golf Course*. Aptly named and consistently regarded as championship-level challenges, these sister courses deliver unforgettable experiences for players of all skill levels.

The Dream invites you to swing boldly across sweeping fairways, immaculate greens and scenic water features that test your precision while rewarding smart course management.

The Nightmare raises the stakes. With dramatic bunkering, strategic hazards and demanding approach shots, it's a thrilling test that will push even seasoned golfers to bring their best game. Together, they create the ultimate 36-hole golf getaway — one that's as scenic as it is challenging.

After conquering the course, retreat to comfort at *Lumber Jack Lodge*. Designed with golfers in mind, this welcoming lodge offers group golf packages perfect for buddies' weekends,



The Dream golf course in West Branch Michigan

corporate outings or tournaments. Each package includes a complimentary hospitality room — the ideal space to recap birdies, missed putts and plan tomorrow's rematch. A shuttle service is also available for a fee, so your group can travel easily between the courses, the lodge and local hot spots.

Inside, relaxation comes naturally. Unwind in the spacious atrium, recharge in comfort or pamper yourself

poolside after a long day on the links. Step out onto the large private patio and soak up Michigan's beautiful weather. Enjoy a quiet evening with your favorite cigar and a deck of cards, surrounded by friends.

When it's time to dine, you won't have to go far. The lodge's onsite restaurant offers delicious options to satisfy every appetite. Later, explore West Branch's vibrant local scene with farm-to-table cuisine, handcrafted libations from talented mixologists and inviting wine and cider tasting rooms throughout town.

In West Branch, golf isn't just a game — it's an experience. Championship courses, relaxing accommodations and memorable nights! Your next round begins in West Branch. For more information go to visitwestbranch.com. 🍷

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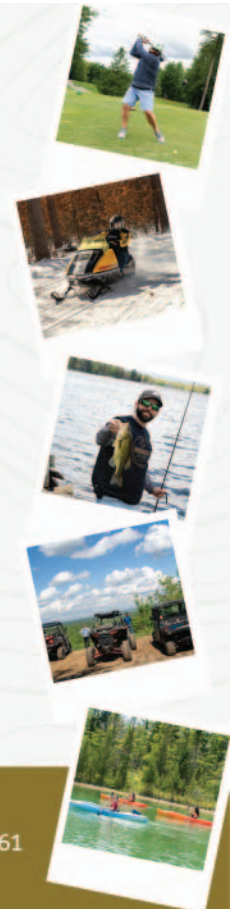
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BY RENU SAGGAR

of Washington, D.C. August 21-23. The INDY Car Series will make history by hosting the first-ever motor race on the National Mall and the streets of the capital. Free to the general public, the race will offer stunning vantage points of symbols of national unity.

To build momentum for the big day, the America 250 Commission has organized a unique five-day countdown of *National Moments* across the country. On July 2nd Philadelphia will convene a Special Session of Congress and the official placement of the Semiquincentennial Time Capsule. The birthplace of the Declaration of Independence, will

America's 250th Birthday Celebration

Whether you are a history buff, a motorsports enthusiast or a family looking for a fun day out, the America 250 celebrations this summer offer a unique opportunity to reflect on the nation's past and celebrate its future. While the primary focus rests on July 4, 2026, the commemorative calendar spans the entire year, blending historical reverence with modern cultural milestones. From the National Mall to the heartland and the coasts, the spirit of 1776 will be alive and well throughout 2026. This summer, America will commemorate its Semiquincentennial with a spectacular array of events that blend tradition, innovation and patriotic pride.

The nation's capital is pulling out all the stops for the country's birthday, with a calendar packed full of events. The summer-long festivities will feature a mix of world-class sporting events, cultural festivals and more. The July 4th fireworks on the *National Mall* are expected to be the largest in U.S. history, choreographed to a live orchestral performance.

In a unique twist, combat sports fans can also look forward to the UFC Fight on the White House lawn on June 14th. A temporary arena will be constructed on the South Lawn, with thousands more ex-

pected to watch from the adjacent Ellipse.

The centerpiece of the summer will be the historic *Freedom 250 Grand Prix*

also be hosting a "once-in-a-generation" summer with global sporting events like the 2026 *FIFA World Cup* and the *MLB*



Yellow Dog Falls

All-Star Game on July 14.

On July 3rd, New York City will host an historic, first-ever non-New Year's Eve Ball Drop in Times Square to signify the final countdown to the 250th birthday.

On July 4th get ready for America's Ultimate Block Party. Los Angeles will host a star-studded televised performance and festival with thousands of simultaneous community gatherings linked via a national broadcast. The National Mall will transform into a vibrant festival from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, including pavilions representing every U.S. state, filled educational exhibits with AI-powered historical figures and the largest pyrotechnics display in history.

Ohio is a state with a rich presidential and innovation history. Local communities are crafting events that highlight their unique place in the American story. Statewide, the America 250-Ohio Commission is promoting themed trails and creative stops, making it easy for families to turn a weekend drive into a historical tour, celebrating the state's legacy as the birthplace of inventors like Thomas Edison and the Wright brothers. The *Holmes County 250th Festival* is scheduled for July 25, 2026, at Harvest Ridge in Millersburg. Highlights include a reverse parade, where the floats remain stationary while attendees walk or drive past and a drone light show. The "America 250 Concert" in Troy takes place on June 6, 2026. This massive free Fulton County concert doubles as a celebration for the 50th Anniversary of the *Troy Strawberry Festival*.

Michigan's celebration highlights the state's role in the "American Experiment" long before and after the Revolution. *Greenfield Village & The Henry Ford* in Dearborn Salute to America (July 2-5, 2026) will feature the Detroit Symphony

Orchestra and massive fireworks displays. Northern Michigan & The Straits: Fort Mackinac will feature programming focused on British military occupation and the transition to American control. Marquette County is preparing to celebrate America's 250th by offering a unique perspective on America's story through Indigenous heritage, Great Lakes maritime culture and its historic iron mining legacy.

New Jersey, the "Crossroads of the Revolution," is leaning heavily into its 18th-century heritage, while also fostering modern community gatherings. Signature events include the *Sail 4th 250 Flotilla*. From July 3rd to July 5th, the Port of New York and New Jersey will host a massive international review of tall ships. This event will feature over 60 tall ships and 50 naval vessels from more than 30 nations. A maritime parade will be visible from the Jersey Shore and includes public tours and dockside festivals.

The *Battle of Monmouth Reenactment*, takes place from June 19-21 at Monmouth Battlefield State Park. This large-scale reenactment will bring the Revolutionary War to life, commemorating the pivotal 1778 battle.

In Florida, Mexico Beach is all ready for America's 250: Grand Fireworks Show and a Sandy Shores 5K Fun Run is in order, come and join in the fun, let's celebrate together! Localized events in Mexico Beach FL for America 250 (2026) are part of broader gulf Coast and Florida celebrations, the area is focusing on a patriotic, beachside experience. Panama City Beach (PCB) and the surrounding Bay County area have a packed calendar for the America 250 celebration in 2026. The PCB area is hosting a massive, multi-day fireworks series July 2 to July 5, that is expected to be one of the largest in the Southeast. 🇺🇸



Capital Fireworks



iFly Indoor Skydiving

BY RENU SAGGAR

clear spring and summer nights, visitors can peer through telescopes at distant planets and constellations, guided by experts who make the vast universe feel surprisingly close. It's a different kind of spectacle — quiet, inspiring, and memorable. For an even deeper look at the region's natural beauty, hop aboard a guided eco-cruise with the *Hackensack Riverkeeper*. These boat tours offer a one-of-a-kind perspective on the Meadowlands waterways, bringing visitors up close to the wildlife, wetlands and history of the Hackensack River. It's an unexpected experience — and a reminder that this region is as rich in nature as it is in entertainment.

Your Spring & Summer Start Here ~The Meadowlands in Full Swing

When spring hits the Meadowlands, everything turns up a notch. The energy. The crowds. The weather. Just minutes from New York City — but unmistakably New Jersey — this region becomes a warm-weather playground where sports, music, adventure and unending possibilities all collide.

Start with a signature event: the world famous *Hambletonian* at *Meadowlands Racetrack*. Early August, this world-class harness race transforms the track into a celebration of tradition and high stakes. It's not just about the race (though the competition is thrilling), it's about the atmosphere — the fashion, the food, the buzz of thousands gathered for one of the sport's most prestigious days.

Right next door, *MetLife Stadium* keeps the momentum going all season long. Spring and summer mean blockbuster concerts, with upcoming guests such as Bruno Mars, AC/DC, BTS, Guns N' Roses and Ed Sheeran. Witness global tours and sold-out crowds filling one of the largest stadiums in the country. Whether it's pop icons, rock legends or international superstars, the Meadowlands is where unforgettable live entertainment happens. And who could forget—the biggest soccer match of the year. Pair a show with dinner nearby and you've built a perfect night out.

Sports fans won't want to miss the *Premier Lacrosse League Championship* at *Sports Illustrated Stadium* in September. Fast-paced, high-skill and packed with energy, the Premier Lacrosse League brings a festival feel along with elite competition. It's the kind of event where longtime fans and first-time spectators alike leave talking about the action long after the final whistle.

Looking for something a little more hands-on? Head to *iFly Indoor Skydiving* and feel the rush of free fall — no airplane required. It's part thrill ride, part personal challenge and completely unforgettable. Families, friend groups and corporate teams all find themselves grinning ear to ear after stepping out of the wind tunnel.

But here's what surprises many visitors: the Meadowlands also knows how to slow down.

At the *William D. McDowell Observatory* in Lyndhurst, stargazing events invite you to look beyond the stadium lights. On

Nature lovers can also explore the scenic side at the *Meadowlands Environment Center* and nearby trails, where birdwatching, kayaking, and skyline views create a peaceful counterbalance to the high-energy attractions. Spring migrations and warm summer evenings, make it an ideal time to get outside.

And then there's *American Dream* — part entertainment hub, part retail destination and entirely its own adventure. From indoor skiing and water park thrills to shopping, dining and family attractions, it's easy to spend an entire afternoon here before heading out to a concert, game or race.

What makes the Meadowlands special in spring and summer isn't just the individual events — it's how easily they connect. You can begin your day immersed in the natural habitats of the region's wildlife, enjoy lunch with a scenic view of the skyline, spend the afternoon shopping or experiencing the thrills and cap the night off with a live show under the lights. Few destinations offer that kind of range within just a few miles.

This is the season when the Meadowlands feels fully alive — bold, bright and ready for visitors. Whether you're coming for championship sports, bucket-list concerts, high-flying adventure or a peaceful night under the stars, your perfect spring or summer day is waiting here.

The Meadowlands isn't just on the way to somewhere else. It's the destination. 📍

For more information, visit mlcvb.com



Hackensack Riverkeeper



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and Kicking 

**NEW JERSEY'S MEADOWLANDS:
MEMORABLE MOMENTS BEGIN HERE**

HOST OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2026™ FINAL



Contact line: 877-MLCVBUS

Meadowlands | *Live!*
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meadowlandslive.com



MLCVB received funding through a grant from the NJ Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.



BY RENU SAGGAR

seum is America's most decorated battleship. Visitors can explore its decks through guided tours and view historical exhibits.

For a more and interactive experience, head to the nearby *Adventure Aquarium*, which promises a delightful time for families. Home to over 15,000 aquatic species, including the largest collection of sharks on the East Coast, the aquarium's exhibits are sure to captivate. Don't miss the *Stingray Beach Club*, where visitors can touch and hand-feed an array of stingrays, adding a hands-on element to the adventure.

Gloucester County is South Jersey's pastoral core, where "Jersey Fresh" is a way of life. This is a county of sprawling farms, pick-your-own orchards and deep Revolutionary War history. *Red Bank Battlefield Park* is the site of a crucial 1777 battle. The view

South Jersey is a Tapestry of Timeless Charm

Just across the Delaware River from Philadelphia lies a different New Jersey—a region of profound history, whispering pine forests, fertile farmlands and vibrant river towns. South Jersey's core counties—Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem—offer a curated escape where every turn reveals a new layer of natural beauty, special events, local flavors and unforgettable experiences!

Begin your exploration in *Burlington County*, a captivating blend of colonial heritage and a unique ecosystem. *Smithville* is a living-history village that feels like stepping into a Currier & Ives print. Nature lovers can explore the *Pinelands National Reserve*, a vast 1.1 million-acre coastal plain ecosystem unique to South Jersey. Discover ghost towns, ruins of historic industries and diverse wildlife. Canoe down the meandering *Rancocas Creek* with *Pinelands Adventures*, spotting herons and turtles in the tea-colored water. Later, savor the fruits of the land at *Valenzano Winery* in Shamong, where innovative wines made from cranberries and blueberries toast to the Pine Barrens' bounty.

The county's heartbeat is its river towns. Historic *Burlington City*, founded in 1677, feels like a living museum. Stroll along the *High Street* waterfront, lined with impeccably preserved 18th-century homes. For a truly immersive stay, book a room at the *River House*, a charming bed and breakfast overlooking the Delaware.

The *Camden Waterfront* is where the skyline meets the water. This family-friendly destination is packed with a variety of restaurants, shops and entertainment venues offering something for everyone year-round.

History buffs should not miss the *Battleship New Jersey*, which is permanently moored at the Camden Waterfront. At nearly 900 feet long and towering 11 stories high, this floating mu-

seum is well worth the trip alone.

Dinosaur hunters should head for the *Jean & Ric Edelman Fossil Park and Museum* in Mantua Township. The museum overlooks a real quarry where researchers have unearthed 66-million-year-old marine fossils and even a full-blown tyrannosaurus.

For shopping, the *Barnsboro Village* antique shops and the *Mullica Hill* downtown—a designated historic district—offer quaint boutiques and art galleries in a picture-perfect setting.

Satisfy your hunger at *Blue Plate* in Mullica Hill for creative takes on classic diner fare. The *Laurita Winery*, is a destination in itself blending award-winning wines with a stunning campus that hosts summer concerts and a lovely onsite restaurant. For outdoor adventure, kayak the peaceful *Scotland Run Park* lake or hike the trails of *Cerronimo Creek Preserve*.

Salem County is a destination for those seeking serenity. Known as "The Garden Spot of the Garden State," its fertile fields supply much of the region. Salem's charm is unhurried. Visit *Fort Mott State Park* and the adjacent *Finn's Point National Cemetery* for a powerful, windswept vista where the Delaware Bay meets the river.

Dining is hearty and historic. Enjoy a meal at *The Salem Oak Diner*, sitting under a 500-year-old oak tree or grab a famous cream-filled donut at *Creamy Acres Farm*. Salem is also at the forefront of the state's equestrian scene, consider a trail ride at a local stable. For accommodations, choose a cozy farm stay or a bed and breakfast like *The William G. Rothermel House* in Penns Grove. Lastly, experience a true piece of Americana at the *Cowtown Rodeo* in Pilesgrove, the oldest weekly rodeo in the country. 🐾

For more information about planning your next trip to South Jersey, visit southjersey.com.



Visit   
SOUTH JERSEY

VisitSouthJersey.com

GET AWAY CLOSE TO HOME

Wine and dine in South Jersey with 60+ vineyards, breweries, and distilleries surrounded by farm fresh cuisine, vibrant downtowns, history, arts and culture, outdoor adventures, and family fun!



Supported in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.



**SOUTH JERSEY
BY THE ROUTE**

VisitSouthJersey.com/ByTheRoute



BY RENU SAGGAR

Neapolitan pizza with rooftop vibes and *RoofTop at Exchange Place* (Jersey City) delivers skyline cocktails. Cozy options include *City Bistro* (Hoboken), while *Blu on the Hudson* (Weehawken) specializes in seafood and sushi. Don't miss *O'Bagel* (Hoboken) for your breakfast sandwich or *Tops Diner* (East Newark), ranked among the best diners in America. Other local gems include *Liberty House*, *Son Cubano*, *Lokal* and *The Feathered Fox*.

Choose from dozens of options for accommodations including the Hyatt Place Secaucus Meadowlands, Aloft Secaucus Meadowlands and the Harmony Suites in Secaucus, all nearby NY/NJ Stadium

(MetLife). Head over to visithudson.org for lots more information.

Families and curious minds will love the *Liberty Science Center* in Jersey City, featuring the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, interactive exhibits and hands-on experiences from robotics to space exploration.

History buffs should head to Jersey City's *Liberty State Park* where ferries depart daily to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Walk in the footsteps of millions of immigrants at



Hudson River Waterfront Walkway

Big Views, Bold Flavors & World-Class Events in Hudson County

Nestled just minutes from Manhattan, Hudson County, New Jersey offers skyline views, diverse neighborhoods and incredible cuisine—without the sky-high NYC prices.

In 2026, Hudson County will play a pivotal role hosting the *FIFA World Cup 2026™*, with eight matches at nearby *MetLife Stadium*, including the final on July 19. The excitement continues at *Liberty State Park*, with the official *FIFA Fan Festival™* running for 39 days. Celebrate global soccer, culture, music and food with the Statue of Liberty as your backdrop. The FIFA Fan Festival™ will be the ultimate football party! The perfect place to catch all the World Cup action, surrounded by fans from around the world in a one-of-a-kind atmosphere!

Fans will experience an unforgettable mix of live match broadcasts, music, culture, food and entertainment — all with the breathtaking backdrop of the Manhattan skyline!

Hudson County will be rolling out the welcome mat sharing their neighborhoods, culture and love of the game with the world. This is more than just a festival — it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience you won't want to miss!

But the magic of Hudson County goes far beyond the soccer field. From waterfront dining and thrilling water sports, to shopping, the arts and culture, there's something here for everyone.

Start your journey along the 18.5-mile *Hudson River Waterfront Walkway*, linking Jersey City, Hoboken and Weehawken. Framed by parks, murals and cafés, it offers memorable views of Manhattan. Adventure seekers can take to the waves at *Fly Jet Ski* in Bayonne and *Sea the City* in Jersey City. They offer high-speed guided tours around the Statue of Liberty. The *Hoboken Cove Community Boathouse* in Hoboken, provides free weekend kayaking, while *Resilience Paddle*

Sports in Hoboken, offers paddleboard yoga and rentals for a workout with a view. For a sky-high perspective, *FlyNYON* in *Kearny*, offers customized helicopter tours—doors on or off—for the ultimate aerial selfie!

Shopping in Hudson County is a dream with no sales tax on clothing and shoes and options ranging from classic malls to entertainment complexes. *The Plaza* at Harmon Meadow in *Secaucus*, offers retail and entertainment, while *Newport Centre* in *Jersey City*, provides a traditional mall



MetLife Stadium

experience. A few miles away, *American Dream* in East Rutherford, is one of North America's largest complexes, featuring 500+ stores, luxury brands, an indoor theme park, water park and even an indoor ski slope for snow lovers. *Big SNOW American Dream* delivers year-round winter with skiing, snowboarding, tubing and lessons—perfect for beginners and thrill-seekers alike.

Hudson County isn't just a feast for the eyes—it's a feast for your taste buds. From classic diners and gourmet food trucks to waterfront dining and rooftop bars, the culinary scene is as diverse as the World Cup itself. *Battello* (Jersey City) offers elevated modern Italian fare with sweeping waterfront views, *Porta* (Jersey City) serves

the *Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration* before gazing up at *Lady Liberty* herself.

The arts thrive here too: Jersey City's colorful murals make for an inspiring self-guided tour, while *Mana Contemporary* in Jersey City, offers cutting-edge exhibitions and artist residencies.

So, what are you waiting for? Pack your bags, grab your team jersey and get ready to experience the excitement, flavors and unforgettable vibes of Hudson County. Your ultimate 2026 travel destination—and a World Cup adventure—is just a short ride away. 🍷

For more information on hotels, eateries and attractions, visit www.visithudson.org

Traveling to NYNJ Stadium for the Matches this Summer?



Visit **Hudson County, NJ** for top-rated restaurants and scenic adventures, relaxing along the Hudson River waterfront, where you can take in stunning skyline views of Manhattan. We have dozens of options for accommodations that are perfect for a World Cup 26 visit!



   @visithudsonNJ



Supported in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism

 **Hudson County**
New Jersey
visithudson.org



BY RENU SAGGAR

downtown or around to the island's back bays. And if you can't bring your bicycle, rent one (or a surrey) from affordable bike rental shops that dot the island.

Fishing and Crabbing

If fishing is your thing, the fishing pier on the Intracoastal Waterway—known locally as “the back bay”— is popular with visitors and island natives alike. Surf fishermen swear by the beaches along *Hereford Inlet* in North Wildwood. And crabbing is beloved along the west side of the island.

Make the Wildwoods More Affordable

There's a lot of free fun in the Wild-

The Wildwoods So Much to Do ~ So Much That's Free

The sea. The sand. The sun. Is there anything more alluring than the Southern Jersey Shore? And that's just the start of the Wildwoods' affordable appeal.

The Wildwoods are bursting with Free attractions, Free events and festivals. Free outdoor concerts. Free Friday night fireworks. Free movies under the stars. Even a spectacular 2-mile boardwalk and scenic bike paths. Here is just some of what makes the Wildwoods the best family vacation value at the Jersey Shore.

Plenty of Room to Spread Out

The Wildwoods have some of the cleanest, most spacious pristine white-sand beaches on the East Coast. They have been voted Top 10 Beaches in the U.S.” And they're absolutely Free to enjoy with no beach expensive tags required. Everything you want in a great vacation experience is on one five-mile island.

Year-Round Events

There's always something going on, from the *Barefoot Country Music Fest* on the beach to the *Wildwoods' Airshow*, Irish and Italian festivals and street fairs to classic car shows. Like food and music festivals? There's the *Fabulous '50s Weekend* and the *Anglesea Blues Festival*. Like great food? How about the *New Jersey State Barbeque Championships*? Like to know more about the 160-plus events and festivals in the

Wildwoods? Visit WildwoodsNJ.com/events-calendar/.

A World-Famous Boardwalk

With shops, eateries, arcades, carnival games and three exciting amusement piers with over 100-rides and attractions and two Wet 'n Wild beachfront waterparks, the iconic 38-block *Wildwoods' Boardwalk* is ideal for strolling, jogging or biking. And when you get tired of walking, just hop on the famous Wildwoods' *Boardwalk Tram Car* and ride in style.

A Real Slice of Americana

The iconic 80-foot-long, 19-foot-high Wildwoods sign has been dubbed “the Hollywood sign of the East Coast.” And colorful wall murals pay tribute to the musical artists who made their names in the Wildwoods, showcasing the island's rich musical heritage.

Doo-Wop Mid-Century Flair

The Wildwoods offer the largest collection of mid-20th-century architecture in the country, with bright neon signs, unique architectural designs and equally colorful motel names. In the Wildwoods, there's a saying: “As art deco is to South Beach, doo-wop is to the Wildwoods.”

Bikeability' & Natural Beauty

Take a 12-mile round trip bike ride on the bike paths and on the Wildwoods' Boardwalk or pedal on special bike-only lanes along the Wildwoods' streets and

woods. But there are ways to save on other experiences too.

- Keep an eye out for the free *Wildwoods Family Value Coupon Book*—with over \$200 in money-saving coupons: WildwoodsNJ.com/visitor-information/vacation-guide-books/. Individual money-saving coupons can be downloaded and printed for your convenience.

- When you arrive, save on island transportation with a Wildwoods' Boardwalk Tram Car all-day discount pass. And save on parking fees by hopping on the *Wildwoods Island Shuttle Jitney* to the boardwalk and North Wildwood entertainment district.

- Keep an eye out for holiday sales during the Christmas and Easter seasons for *Morey's Piers* and beachfront Waterparks, online at moreyspiers.com. You'll save on the advance purchase of amusement and water park passes.

Now's the Time!

Planning a vacation in the Wildwoods is always smart, but midweek stays or shoulder season make it a bigger bargain than ever. Search accommodations here: <https://lodging.wildwoodsny.com/>.

With so much to see and do for FREE, there's never been a better time to plan your Wildwoods' vacation. For additional information, visit WildwoodsNJ.com. 📖



welcome,

MEMORY MAKERS

The Wildwoods are ready to welcome you to your perfect vacation. Everything you could ever want in a vacation experience is all right here on our 5-mile island. With miles of free white-sand beaches, our world-famous boardwalk and countless activities, it's never been easier to find something to satisfy everybody and every budget. Book your stay today!

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Chef's Garden at Crystal Springs Resort

Jersey's largest lake. Miss Lotta's variety of cruises — including brunch, lunch or dinner cruises or any of their themed cruises, including their popular "Cigar and Whiskey" cruises, begin in early May and run through the end of October.

Food and Festivals

"Those who enjoy food and beverage-themed outings will love the scene in the Skylands this spring and early summer, as May and June kick off our festival

Enjoy a Perfect Getaway in the Sussex Skylands

If you love nature, the Skylands offers a rich playground for adventure. With spring underway, the region comes alive with blooming flowers and trees, warming lakes, ponds, rivers and streams.

Enjoy the Great Outdoors

"With a wide variety of outdoor opportunities and all sorts of wildlife it's easy to enjoy our area's many trails, paths, parks and nature preserves," said Tammie Horsfield, president of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce and Sussex Skylands Destination Marketing Organization in Newton.

"Among them, enjoy colorful dragonflies and butterflies at *Kittatinny Valley State Park* in Newton and the park's *Butterfly & Hummingbird Garden*." Springtime birdwatchers will relish the sight of full nests and active parents gathering food for their young at *Stokes State Forest* in Sandyston/Montague/Frankford and *High Point State Park* in Wantage/Montague, while the tall cascade of *Buttermilk Falls* in the *Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area* will enable a connection to nature like no other!

Lovers of the great outdoors will enjoy the thrill of aerial obstacle courses at *Great Gorge's TreEscape Aerial Adventure Park* in Vernon as well as both *Mountain Creek's Zip Tours* and its *Experience Downhill Package*, an all-inclusive downhill mountain biking experience that comes complete with proper equipment, top-notch instruction and access to Mountain Creek's beginner-friendly terrain.

If fresh, Jersey-grown produce is your interest, head out to any of Sussex County's many farmers markets, including those located in Sparta, Hopatcong, *The Shoppes at Lafayette* and at the *Sussex County Fairgrounds* in Augusta, open this spring.

"Garden enthusiasts will enjoy the rainbow of flowers, plants and herbs offered at Sparta Nursery, Ideal Farms in Lafayette and Farmside Gardens in Sussex, the latter of which also offers green workshops on 'Waking up Your Garden' after the winter, 'Greenhouse Saturdays, and 'Earth Day Workshops,'" Horsfield said.

If you want to hit the water, head to *Lake Hopatcong* and book a cruise on the famed "Miss Lotta," the largest boat on New

season," Horsfield said. Among great activities, "don't miss Crystal Springs Resort's *New Jersey Wine and Food Festival* May 1-3, *Skylands Stadium's Food Truck & Craft Beer Festival* on May 2, and coming to the Sussex County Fairgrounds May 29-31 is *Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest*, where the best music and food from Louisiana and New Orleans arrives in NJ, followed by a celebration of Southern rock and BBQ June 26-28 at the annual *Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival*."

Golf and More

If golf is your passion, the 27-hole *Farmstead Golf & Country Club* in Lafayette and the 18-hole *SkyView Golf Club* in Sparta, both offer attractive natural terrains and engaging and challenging holes.

For a great golfing getaway, enjoy one of six championship-caliber golf courses and accommodations at *Crystal Springs Resort*, a 4,000-acre destination that features two hotels (*Grand Cascades Lodge* and *Minerals Hotel*), 10 restaurants (including its *Crystal Tavern*, 4-star *Restaurant Latour* and seasonal farm-to-table *Chef's Garden*), two spas and a variety of seasonal activities (such as goat yoga, scenic hikes, fishing, archery, ax throwing, laser clay shooting and more).

"Designed by Robert von Hagge, Robert Trent Jones, George Fazio, Roger Rulewich and others, our six courses offer just the right blend of challenge and variety," said Michelle Abate, director of Marketing at Crystal Springs Resort. "Our modern *Cascades*, Zagat-rated *Black Bear* and award-winning, Celtic-style *Ballyowen* (rated the number one public golf course in New Jersey!) welcome both beginners and experienced players alike."

After a long day on the links, visitors can enjoy a range of relaxing massages, rejuvenating facials, herbal therapies and other wellness services at either of the resort's two award-winning spas (*Elements Spa* at Minerals Hotel and *Reflections Spa* at Grand Cascades Lodge). "And don't miss our *Restaurant Latour*, a renowned destination which features the best of the Garden State's bountiful farms and artisan producers as well as an award-winning wine collection," Abate said. 🍷

Plan your visit today at www.sussexskylands.com



GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!



Can't Miss 2026 Events!



May 1 - 3

New Jersey Wine & Food Festival
Crystal Springs Resort
Hamburg, NJ
crystalgolfresort.com

The premier culinary event in the NY metro area. Meet, mingle, and sample the creations of the world's finest chefs.



May 2

Food Truck and Craft Beer Festival
Skylands Stadium
Augusta, NJ
skylandsstadium.com

100+ Craft Beers, 20+ Food Trucks, live music - right on the field!



May 29-31

Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest
Sussex County Fairgrounds
Augusta, NJ
crawfishfest.com

The best music and food that Louisiana and New Orleans has to offer.



GET SET FOR A SUMMER OF

Food, Fests and Music!

June 20

New Jersey Beer & Food Festival
Crystal Springs Resort
Hamburg, NJ
crystalgolfresort.com

Over the top barbecue feast with tastings of 200+ beers, ciders and hard seltzers, live music, lawn games and more.



June 26-28

Rock, Ribs, and Ridges Festival
Sussex County Fairgrounds,
Augusta, NJ
rockribsandridges.com

Annual celebration of great Southern Rock music and finger-lickin' barbeque.



Enjoy the day (and night!) outdoors in the Sussex Skylands, featuring diverse camping options like lakeside RV sites, charming cabins, and wooded tent sites.



July 31-August 8

NJ State Fair
Sussex County Fairgrounds,
Augusta, NJ
sussexcountyfairgrounds.org

Where Farm Meets Fun with carnival rides, fair foods, plus educational and agricultural exhibits.



For more information and a complete list of events visit:

sussexskylands.com



The Sussex County Chamber of Commerce received funding through a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism



Great Falls National Historic Park

BY RENU SAGGAR

lookout point with a panoramic view of the New York City skyline—a reminder of how close, yet distinct, this city is from the metropolis.

Lambert Castle is an 1892 sandstone mansion that has officially reopened for tours after years of extensive restoration, this . Perched high atop Garret Mountain overlooking the City of Paterson, Lambert Castle—originally known as *Belle Vista* stands as one of Northern New Jersey's most striking historic landmarks. Fashioned after an English medieval fortress, the Castle was built by Catholina Lambert, an English immigrant who become one of America's most successful silk manufacturers. The *Grand Art Court* was the mansion's centerpiece, rising

Castles & Waterfalls in Passaic, New Jersey

Passaic, New Jersey, is a city that rewards the curious traveler with a deep sense of place. Known as the “Birthplace of Television” and anchored by the winding Passaic River, this urban center is a vibrant tapestry of industrial grit, colonial history and some of the most authentic international cuisine in the Garden State.

Passaic's identity is inseparable from its industrial roots. Founded as a Dutch settlement in 1678, it evolved into a textile and manufacturing powerhouse during the 19th century. Today, history buffs can trace the city's evolution through its architecture.

Despite its urban density, Passaic offers surprising pockets of green. Pulaski Park provides a scenic vista of the river, where you might see local high school crew teams practicing. The river itself is currently undergoing a massive restoration project, aimed at transforming its banks into a thriving ecological and recreational corridor for future generations.

Passaic's downtown, particularly along Main Avenue, is a bustling commercial district where “mom-and-pop” shops thrive. It's the place to find unique textiles, traditional Latin American goods, and discount finds you won't see in a standard mall. If history is Passaic's soul, food is its heartbeat. The city is a culinary crossroads, particularly famous for its Peruvian and Mexican enclaves. The *Sweet Side: Banana King* is a local institution, famous for its tropical shakes and Latin-style snacks.

While the city of Passaic is a dense urban hub, *Passaic County* stretches far into the lush Highlands of northern New Jersey, offering everything from historic castles to rugged mountain trails. The Paterson *Great Falls National Historical Park*, located just a few minutes north. Here, the Passaic River plunges 77 feet over a rugged basalt ledge—a sight so powerful it inspired Alexander Hamilton to envision the nation's first planned industrial city. It's not just a natural wonder but the engine that powered the American Industrial Revolution.

For those looking for a longer hike, the nearby *Garret Mountain Reservation* offers 568 acres of trails and a stunning

through multiple stories and crowned by a dramatic glass skylight. Don't miss the panoramic view of the NYC skyline from the nearby *Lambert Tower*.

If you're a Bruce Springsteen fan, the *Passaic County Arts Center* in Hawthorne is currently hosting a landmark multi-media exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the *Born to Run* album. It features rare photography and artifacts and runs through July 2026.

Located on the campus of Montclair State University, the *Yogi Berra Museum* is a tribute to the baseball legend and his famous “Yogi-isms.” It's highly interactive and great for families. For more information go to seepassaiccounty.org.



Lambert Castle

European Charm Without the Jet Lag

Discover Lambert Castle, Passaic County's Gilded Age landmark overlooking the historic city of Paterson, New Jersey.



Plan your visit & buy tickets at
Seepassaiccounty.org

Experience a journey through time in this historic landmark. From its grand architecture to curated exhibits, every corner tells a story.



The magical island of Santorini

Take a Greek Island Odyssey

Greece conjures up images of ancient monuments, olive groves and a bleached white landscape glinting against a cerulean blue sea. Where the roots of western civilization are firmly grounded in the rocky soil. Where an exuberant people ooze passion and joy, reveling in the pleasures of good food, retsina and dance.

Greece has been drawing visitors for millennia. Much of our knowledge about the ancient Greeks comes from *Pausinias' Guide to Greece*, a travel guide used by Roman tourists.

If your ideal vacation includes time on the water mixed with history and splash of the exotic, a Greek island cruise is the perfect choice. It's not only a voyage of endless blue horizons, but a journey through a living tapestry of history, culture and dramatic landscapes.

The postcard perfect island of Mykonos is filled with windmills and dazzling white houses overlooking the cobalt waters of the Aegean. Basket-laden donkeys make their way through a maze of ancient streets, designed to frustrate marauding pirates. Near Mykonos, visitors can explore the well-preserved ruins on the island of *Delos*, the most sacred sanctuary in ancient Greece.

According to myth, Poseidon honeymooned on *Corfu*. This picturesque Greek island is one of the most captivating of the Greek Isles — with a breathtaking natural landscape and millennia of history. Wander through the cobblestone streets of Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site or just soak up some sun on one of the island's many beaches.

BY RENU SAGGAR

The true magic of a Greek island cruise often lies in the islands where the crowds thin and the local character thickens. By veering off the standard tourist path, you can find turquoise bays that feel like private pools and villages where the only "traffic" is a stray donkey.

Although Corfu gets the most attention in the Ionian Sea, *Kefalonia* (the setting of Captain Corelli's Mandolin) offers more dramatic mountains and deeper forests. Take a small boat into *Melissani Cave*, with a subterranean lake. The roof has collapsed, allowing sunlight to turn the water an impossible shade of electric blue.

Katakolon is the gateway to ancient Olympia, the home of the original Olympic Games. Among the many outstanding monuments is the *Temple of Zeus* and the ruins of the stadium. A museum displays the world-famous statue of Hermes by Praxiteles.

Santorini may be the quintessential Greek island. Rugged volcanic cliffs are topped by whitewashed villas and turquoise domed churches.



Symi Island.

Visitors can ride the mules up the 547 steps from the harbour to the town of *Fira*. Being mules and being contrary, they prefer to hoof it up along the outside of the path, which can make for some heart stopping views as riders dangle hundreds of feet above the bay.

The way down is where the mules really make an ass of themselves. They get fed at the bottom, so they barrel down the cliff side at full tilt, slipping and sliding over cobblestone steps liberally greased with mule dung. A more prudent alternative may be to ride the cable car.

Located in the Western Cyclades, *Milos* is famous for its surreal volcanic landscapes. Its beaches remain some of the most pristine in the Aegean. Imagine bright white, smooth volcanic rock formations that look exactly like the surface of the moon against a neon-blue sea.

Naxos is known as the Green Heart of the Cyclades. The largest of the Cyclades and is often overlooked for its glitzy neighbors. It's a lush, fertile island where agriculture is as important as tourism. The *Portara*, a massive 2,500-year-old marble gate stands on an islet overlooking the harbor. It's the perfect first view as your ferry approaches. *Naxos* is also famous

for its local cheeses (like *Graviera*) and its unique citron liqueur.

Amorgos is the easternmost of the Cyclades and feels rugged and untamed. It's where the 1988 movie *The Big Blue* about two champion free divers, was filmed because the water here is a deep, intoxicating sapphire. The Monastery of *Panagia Hozoviotissa* is a blindingly white building literally built into the face of a sheer cliff, 300 meters above the sea.

Patmos is a sophisticated blend of spiritual history and high-end elegance. It's a favorite for "slow travel" enthusiasts and small-ship cruisers. Highlights include the Monastery of St. John the Theologian and the Cave of the Apocalypse. Perched high on a hill in the medieval town of *Chora*, the fortress-like monastery offers sweeping views of the archipelago. History buffs will enjoy wandering through the winding alleys now filled with upscale, boutiques.

Rhodes is the largest of the Dodecanese islands. The island's thickly walled Old Town is Europe's largest inhabited medieval city.

Symi Island (pronounced See-mee) is often called the "Jewel of the Dodecanese," and for good reason. *Symi* is famous for

its neoclassical mansions painted in warm shades of ochre, terracotta and salmon. The main town is split into two distinct areas, connected by the *Kali Strata*, a grand marble staircase of about 500 steps. *Galos* (The Harbor) the vibrant lower town is where ferries from Rhodes dock. It's lined with upscale boutiques, sponge shops and tavernas serving the island's famous "Symi Shrimp"—tiny, sweet shrimp eaten whole and fried. *Chorio* (The Village) is quieter and more traditional.

Walking through its narrow alleys offers a glimpse into local life and leads you to the ruins of the *Knights' Castle*, which sits on the site of an ancient acropolis. The 18th-century Monastery of Archangel Michael Panormitis is a major Greek Orthodox pilgrimage site.

If you want to eat the best food in Greece, go to *Sifnos*. It is the birthplace of *Nicholas Tselementes*, the chef who wrote the first Greek cookbook, and the island takes its gastronomy very seriously. The scent of slow-cooked chickpea stew (*revithada*) wafts through the air of the whitewashed villages. It is also famous for its traditional pottery. Foodies who want a stylish, sophisticated, but quiet atmosphere will find it irresistible. 🍷

Mykonos is famous for its windmills.





Rice Family America 250 - Ohio Barn

Photo Credit: Gabe Leidy

BY RENU SAGGAR

dependable tires. In Dayton, Charles Kettering replaced the hand crank with the electric starter. When Dayton's Ermal Frazee couldn't open a beer, he created the pull-tab.

Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail <https://america250-ohio.org/lake-erie-to-ohio-river/>. Lake Erie opened the Midwest to the world, while the Ohio River carried dreams and goods south and west. Canals like the *Ohio & Erie* turned wilderness into a bustling corridor of commerce and connection. These lifelines fueled industry and growth, building the backbone of America. The Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail features seven themes: Lake Erie Lighthouses, Boat Rides & Ferryboats, Lake Erie Museums & Historic Sites, Ohio Canal Museums & Historic Sites, Ohio

America 250-Ohio Kicks Off a Year Long Celebration

America 250-Ohio is creating a year long celebration of the United States 250th Anniversary and you're invited. This year will be filled with events and experiences throughout Ohio. The idea is to tell Ohio's story in U.S. history for 250+ years and to showcase how Ohio and Ohioans have shaped the nation and the world. The celebration will showcase all 88 Ohio counties with experiences and events all year-long. Over 300 communities are planning events which visitors can preview at <https://america250-ohio.org/events-calendar/>.

Statewide Ohio's newly created *Trails & Tales* will highlight significant events, people and places. These self-guided driving tours include places you can visit, something you can do and something you can learn about the story that highlights the theme of the trail. So far, the following four Trails & Tales programs have been created:

Ohio Air & Space Trail <https://america250-ohio.org/air-and-space-trail/>. Before Wapakoneta native Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, the Wright brothers invented the first powered flight airplane in their small Dayton bike shop. Among the many places dedicated to preserving Ohio's aviation heritage are the *National Aviation Heritage Area* in Dayton and the *Armstrong Air & Space Museum in Wapakoneta*. Some of the trail sites provide flying experiences in vintage aircraft allowing you to experience flying for yourself.

Ohio Creativity Trail <https://america250-ohio.org/ohio-creativity-trail/>. A vibrant destination for art lovers, Ohio is home to world-class museums, studios and galleries. The Ohio Creativity Trail features six distinct artistic genres/themes: Literature, Music, Visual Arts, Glass & Pottery, Folk & Traditional Arts and Carousel Art. Explore the website's interactive map to discover more than 100 sites featured on the Ohio Creativity Trail.


Ohio Innovation Trail <https://america250-ohio.org/ohio-innovation-trail/>. Ohio's workshops and labs have reshaped everyday life. In Akron, innovators transformed rubber into

River Museums & Historic Sites, Natural Areas & Overlooks and Aquatic Science & Research Sites.

Two additional trails will be launched in 2026: the Ohio Transportation Trail (April) and Ohio Leadership Trail (November).

Ohio is also showcasing the Buckeye State's role in Hollywood film making with over 250 free movie screenings. *Ohio Goes to the Movies* and will highlight films that have a significant Ohio connection. Screenings are occurring from now through October. To find showtimes and more <https://ohiogotothemovies.org>

There's also a program highlighting outdoor murals throughout Ohio's cities and towns. *Murals Across Ohio* features over 300 murals with an interactive map on their website: <https://america250-ohio.org/murals-across-ohio/>. From colorful walls that celebrate hometown heroes to bold images that reflect local culture and innovation and community pride.

Every month will offer a different theme on how Ohio contributed to U.S. History. Each monthly theme has a web page that highlights related events, partners and resources. You can find out more here: <https://america250-ohio.org/2026-celebration-themes/>. 

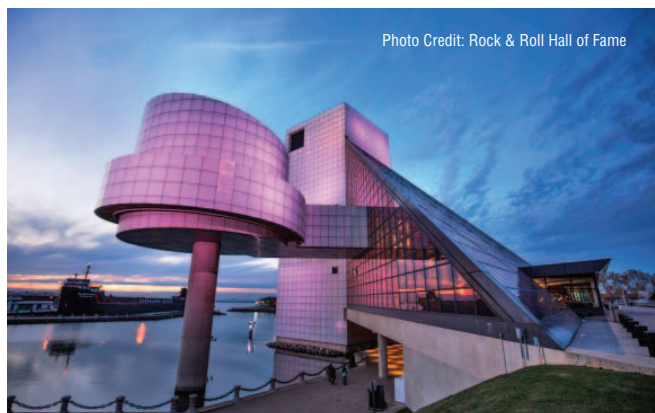


Photo Credit: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame



Ohio Celebrates America's 250th Birthday



America wouldn't be the same without Ohio. Join in hundreds of celebrations all year long around the state. From Ohio-centric movies to fascinating driving trails to local murals and special events, the ways to celebrate how Ohio has contributed to U.S. history are endless.

★ Plan your celebrations at America250-Ohio.org!

Slow Down in Ohio's Amish Country

Ohio's Amish Country invites you to slow down and savor the beauty and vitality of the spring season. Journey down scenic backroads dotted with artisan workshops, farm stands and u-pick flower fields, then explore charming villages filled with locally owned shops. Discover hand-crafted furniture, leather goods, pottery, quilts and beautiful decor shaped by generations of skilled craftsmanship. Antique malls and specialty boutiques offer one-of-a-kind treasures.

Situated in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Ohio Amish Country provides a tapestry of colorful fields set against a backdrop of stunning hillsides. Outdoor enthusiasts will delight in the natural beauty of the rolling landscape. Golfers can challenge their skills at the *Black Diamond Golf Course* or *Fire Ridge Golf Course*, both offering challenging yet rewarding courses.

Whether hitting the fairway or treasure hunting the local shops, take time to enjoy a taste of tradition with an Amish inspired meal. Enjoy a variety of locally made cheese, fresh baked bread, fry pies or sweet treats still warm from the oven.



Sample traditional Amish fare at Der Dutchman Restaurant & Bakery

Mrs. Yoder's Kitchen, The Berlin Farmstead Restaurant and Der Dutchman Restaurant provide an endless buffet of traditional Amish fare while other eateries like *Blue Sky Café, Rebecca's Bistro* and the *Olde World Bistro and Bakery* provide unique menu options rooted in locally sourced ingredients.

Leave room for handmade treats at one of the many bakeries throughout the area including *Miller's Bakery* near Charm, the *Der Dutchman Bakery* in

Walnut Creek or *Hershberger's Farm and Bakery* offering a wide variety of baked goods, bulk foods, different types of cheese, preserves and local produce along with warm greetings from their barn yard friends inside their expansive petting zoo. No visit to Hershberger's Farm and Bakery is complete until you have enjoyed a horse drawn Amish Buggy ride.

Relax and unwind after at one of the charming bed and breakfast inns, cozy cottages, full amenity hotels or for the adventurous, try a tree house cabin nestled within the treetops. A spring visit to Ohio Amish Country isn't hurried, it's an experience rooted in heritage, hospitality and simple pleasures. 🐾

Plan your getaway at <https://www.visitamishcountry.com/>



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Take Flight in Greater Grand Lake

Grand Lake St. Marys in Mercer and Auglaize Counties was created in the early nineteenth century by damming Coldwater Creek and its purpose was to serve as a reservoir for the nearby Miami and Erie Canal. The canal is long gone, but Grand Lake—once the largest man-made lake in the world—remains as a natural and recreational resource for boating, fishing and relaxing.

It's also a bird-watcher's paradise. Bald eagles, osprey and red-tail hawks. Barred owls, screech owls and great horned owls. Cormorants, egrets and even loons. Along the shores, in the bordering trees and on the water itself, birds of all kinds make use of Ohio's largest inland lake, either as a permanent home, a seasonal nesting site or a layover on a longer migration. And you patient visitors can view them all.

The first nesting pair in Ohio, found away from Lake Erie was on Grand Lake St. Marys and that number has grown significantly. Kathy Garza-Behr, a wildlife communications specialist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, explains why Grand Lake's eagle population has seen such a resurgence.

"Anywhere there's a lot of wetland or water is a stronghold for this bird," she says. "They've started to come across the state following water corridors, finding good, healthy habitat with



Bald Eagle at Lake St. Marys

fish, because that's their main food source."

Much like the bald eagle, the American white pelican was once in peril but has mounted a comeback. While western Ohio used to be on the extreme eastern edge of their migration range, they've started to see these birds spending more time on Ohio's lakes in recent years.

"I would say right now Grand Lake is probably the best viewing area for white pelicans in Ohio when it comes to sheer numbers," says Kathy Garza-Behr.

The birds typically nest on islands and build ground-level nests, with both parents taking turns incubating the eggs for about a month. They're found on their nests from early April to early June. The biggest issue maintaining Grand Lake and other spots as natural resources comes down to keeping a balance between accessibility and preservation. The department always looks to partner with land-owners and other entities to both care for our natural ecosystems and provide opportunities for people to enjoy them. When the ODNR works on land, they make every effort to install trails as well, so folks can get outside and appreciate the state's natural beauty. Grand Lake is an incredible resource for appreciating the avian wonders of Ohio. Grab some binoculars and come on down. 🗺️

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Grand Lake Region

Explore History & More in Miami County

From unique attractions, historic downtowns, events, outdoor adventure and a lot more, Miami County has something for you.

Miami County has not one, but two rivers flowing through it. The *Great Miami River* and the *Stillwater River*. Both offer a variety of experiences on the water such as canoeing, kayaking, camping, paddle boarding, fishing and more. The Miami County Park District is home to over 15 parks. The “Miniature Niagara” at *Charleston Falls Preserve*, has over 216 acres of prairie and forest to explore.

Miami County is a story of captivating history and early innovation. *WACO Air Museum* was once the biggest producer of Biplanes, come learn their history and maybe take a ride in *Sunny*, the resident WACO biplane.

The *Halderman Museum Barn* is home to the personal collection of Tipp City native Gale Halderman, the designer of the original Ford Mustang, who worked for Ford for over four decades. Visit *Johnston Farm & Indian Agency* to learn about early settlers while riding on a canal boat pulled by mules on a restored section of the *Miami Erie Canal*.

Browse the *Bradford Railroad Museum’s* collection of railroad



Bradford Railroad Museum

artifacts and memorabilia and the five-acre *Miami Valley Veterans Museum* with exhibits honoring and preserving the legacy of their veterans from 1745 to present day. Finally, enjoy a whiskey tasting at *Indian Creek Distillery* and learn about their six-generation distilling history.

Enjoy these attractions and more with the *Miami County History Pass*. Launched by the Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau to celebrate America’s 250th birthday, the pass is a free digital guide designed to take visitors on a journey to local museums, historic sites, murals and sculptures. Users will be able to check in at participating locations to earn prizes. This pass connects people with the region’s deep history through interactive experiences.

With over 30 locations, this is sure going to be a fun and an educational way to learn about Miami County history. To learn more or sign up, visit <https://www.homegrowngreat.com/trails/miami-county-history-pass/>.

This mobile-exclusive pass is delivered via text or email and is for participants 18 years of age or older. 📱

Experience for yourself, plan your next adventure at www.homegrowngreat.com/.

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Tee Off in Fulton County Ohio

IF you're looking for a golf outing that's relaxed, friendly and full of Northwest Ohio charm, Fulton County might just be your next hole-in-one destination. This corner of Ohio knows how to mix good golf with good people—and a side of rural scenery that makes every round feel like a mini-getaway.

Start your outing at *Ironwood Golf Course* in Wauseon, a local favorite that offers an approachable yet engaging 18-hole layout. The fairways are welcoming, the greens keep things interesting and the atmosphere is all about enjoying the game—perfect for charity outings, league days or a competitive scramble with friends.

Over in Swanton, *White Pines Golf Course* lives up to its name with tree-lined holes and a classic course feel. It's the kind of place where golfers of all skill levels feel comfortable, whether you're chasing birdies or just happy to keep the ball in play. Pair it with a post-round meal nearby and you've got a full day of fun. *Valleywood Golf Club* is a classic 18-hole course near Swanton/Toledo Airport offering a full golf experience and a friendly challenge for regular play.

For a shorter or more laid-back outing, *Old Pines Golf Club*



The Ironwood Golf Course in Wauseon

in Wauseon offers a charming 9-hole option that's ideal for beginners, juniors or groups looking to keep things light and social. It's proof that you don't need a massive course to have a great time.

What really sets a Fulton County golf outing apart is the community vibe. Expect friendly waves from locals, easy conversations at the clubhouse and plenty of laughs between shots. Add in wide-open skies,

peaceful farmland views and affordable green fees and you've got a golf experience that feels welcoming and refreshingly unpretentious.

So grab your clubs, round up your foursome and head to Fulton County—where golf is fun, the pace is easy and every outing feels like a good day well spent.

While you are here, explore the fascinating *Bracey Gold Bison Ranch*, unique historical museums, great wineries and breweries and a whole lot more!

Make yourself at home in one of our fine hotels, *The Heritage Inn at Historic Sauder Village*, Holiday Inn Express, Tru by Hilton, Rode Way Inn or campgrounds. For more information go to visitfultoncounty.com. 📍





BY RENU SAGGAR

on the Gulf waters. *Heron Pond Trail* takes hikers through a flatwood pine forest and past a historic turpentine still, while *Gator Lake Trail* offers a scenic view of Gator Lake. Or take the boat shuttle to secluded *Shell Island*, a pristine barrier island across the channel from the park.

The Panama City Beach Conservation Park spans 2,912 acres and offers more than 24 miles of bike paths, trails and boardwalks. The 12

Spring Into Adventure In Panama City Beach

There's no better time than now to plan your perfect spring getaway to Panama City Beach. Whether you're seeking the thrill of adventure, the relaxation of a coastal retreat or the challenge of a round of golf, in Panama City Beach, you can make it your *Real. FUN. Beach.* vacation! Imagine endless sugar-white sands and turquoise waves dancing along the Gulf. Ranked No. 5 in USA Today's list of Best Florida Beaches, PCB offers 27 miles of beaches to choose from. It's a symphony of quartz-crystal sand that stays cool underfoot. But it's not just a beach, it's a complete coastal adventure!

A Golfers Paradise

The *Nicklaus Course* at Bay Point Golf Club, the only Nicklaus Design course in Northwest Florida, provides a scenic and engaging round, featuring marshland views and carefully placed hazards for a picturesque challenge. Golfers looking for a more laid-back experience can visit *Signal Hill Golf Course*, known for its welcoming atmosphere and player-friendly design. Meanwhile, *Legacy Golf Club* offers a semi-private layout with a variety of holes that cater to different skill levels, along with a par-3 course ideal for a quick round before hitting the beach or a few quiet morning holes with your best golfing buddies. Work up an appetite after your time on the links? Grab a bite or a brew at Bay Point Golf Club's local favorite, *Neons Bar 72*.

Beyond the Beach

While golf may be the highlight of your spring vacation, Panama City Beach has so much more. After a morning round on the links, take a dip in the crystal-clear waters of the Gulf Coast or set sail on a crowd-pleasing dolphin cruise. Adventure seekers can try parasailing high above the shoreline, diving among vibrant marine life, or go paddleboarding through the serene waters of *St. Andrews Bay*. Explore the area's natural beauty by hiking or biking along the scenic trails or taking an airboat tour.

All Natural Wonders

St. Andrews State Park is a pristine gem anchoring the eastern end of the beach. Explore the more than 1,200 acres of unique coastal terrain teeming with wildlife, hiking trails, or embark on a dolphin-watching tour. Charter a fishing boat for a day

designated trails range from less than a mile to 11 miles long. An additional mile of boardwalks through the park's wetlands allows bird watchers unparalleled opportunities to view migrating and local birds.

Camp Helen State Park is a unique destination that blends history with nature. Once a company retreat in the 1930s, this 185-acre park is now a haven for nature lovers, featuring coastal dunes, freshwater lakes and ancient oak trees draped in Spanish moss.

More Ways To Have Fun

Panama City Beach masterfully blends the tranquil serenity of its natural environment with the pulsating energy of a modern vacation hub. Whether you're passionate about music, food, shopping or the arts, PCB offers endless opportunities to experience its unique culture and have some real fun. Spend your morning listening to nothing but the waves, your afternoon screaming on a roller coaster and your evening saluting the sunset with your toes in the sand.

From its pristine beaches to its vibrant festivals, from its nature preserves to its lively nightlife, Panama City Beach continues to shine as a top destination for adventure, relaxation and everything in between. Come experience the real Florida—the Real. FUN. Beach. For more information go to visitpanamacitybeach.com. 📍



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BY RENU SAGGAR

patted burger or hand tossed wings and catch the big game at *Mango Marley's* or try the award-winning menu at *Killer Seafood*. Prefer to keep things casual? Open-air cafés dish up everything from hibachi to gourmet pizza. Start your mornings right with a visit to *Caribbean Coffee & Café* for a perfectly brewed cup of coffee and don't pass on the cinnamon roll! Then be sure to cool off in the afternoon with a visit to *Mexico Beach Sweets* for ice cream and milkshakes. Mexico Beach's culinary offerings cater to every palate.

Shoppers will adore the vibrant shops, all accessible via the scenic sidewalk that runs the length of town. From unique gifts and artisan finds, to beach-day essentials, you'll discover treasures to take

Mexico Beach, Florida ~ The Unforgettable Coast

Nestled along the Gulf of Mexico with almost five miles of pristine sugar-white sand, *Mexico Beach, Florida* is a tranquil, unassuming coastal gem that recalls "old Florida" beach vibes. For years, families, friends and wanderers alike have enjoyed this Northwest Florida slice of paradise. Those who have visited have created memories lasting a lifetime. Visit once and you'll understand why. It's just another spot on the map, it's a destination that stays in your heart.

Here, time takes a backseat to serenity. There are no towering high-rises to obstruct your view, no blaring horns at traffic lights to disrupt your thoughts, because there are no traffic lights. Since 1946, Mexico Beach has proudly preserved its small-town charm, rekindling vacation memories you had as a kid.

Despite its quaint size, Mexico Beach doesn't skimp on modern comforts. Whether you're craving local seafood, a day in the sun and sand, or a friendly game of pickleball, you'll find it here. Mexico Beach features public parks, fishing charters, vibrant restaurants and great places to take those postcard worthy pictures to share with family and friends. Whether you're planning a leisurely retreat or an adventure-packed getaway, this is a destination for everyone.

What sets Mexico Beach apart from the rest? Our sand! Unlike most beaches

worldwide, where sand consists of a mixture of materials, their powdery white sand is composed almost entirely of evenly sized quartz crystals. This rare, dazzling quartz sand, formed from the Appalachian Mountains millions of years ago, retains its purity due to the absence of silt-bearing rivers in the area. When you sink your toes into the pristine shores, you're stepping into something exceptional.

An Adventurer's Playground

Located right on the Gulf, Mexico Beach is an aquatic playground. From swimming and snorkeling, to kayaking and fishing, there's no shortage of ways to explore the temperate seas, which stay invitingly warm year-round with temperatures ranging from the low 70s to high 80s. Mexico Beach is also a haven for scuba diving and spearfishing. Natural reefs, artificial reefs, and historic shipwreck sites teem with marine life, offering divers a glimpse into the Gulf's vibrant underwater world. The *Mexico Beach Marina + Outfitters* has you covered with tackle, gear and live bait. And if fishing is your passion, local charter captains are eager to guide you on unforgettable excursions to reel in the catch of a lifetime.


Food, Shopping, and Events!

Craving seafood? Indulge in fresh, locally sourced seafood from the seafood market at the *Shell Shack*. Savor a freshly

home as a memento of your visit. Forgot the swimsuit and beach towel? *Beach Planet* has you covered, literally. Be sure to visit *Tortuga Moon* where you will find that memorable #mexicobeachfl t-shirt to enjoy, even back home.

And don't miss our robust events calendar, which keeps the spirit of Mexico Beach alive throughout the year. Highlights include the *Unforgettable Vow Renewal Ceremony*, *July 4th Sandy Shoes 5k Fun-run*, the *Gollywhopper Classic*, *Music in the Park*, and the *Mexico Beach Artificial Reef Association's Kingfish Tournament*. There's always something happening in Mexico Beach and everyone is invited to join in the fun.

Plan Your Visit

Ready to experience The Unforgettable Coast for yourself? Let Mexico Beach, Florida, be your next beach destination and discover what makes this coastal haven so special. From relaxing on our warm sandy beaches to savoring fresh seafood, attending vibrant events and soaking in sunsets that rival paintings, Mexico Beach offers an unmatched blend of tranquility and excitement. Don't just take our word for it. Pack your bags and come see why The Unforgettable Coast is more than just another beach vacation. It's an unforgettable memory waiting to be made. 

Discover more at www.MexicoBeach.com.



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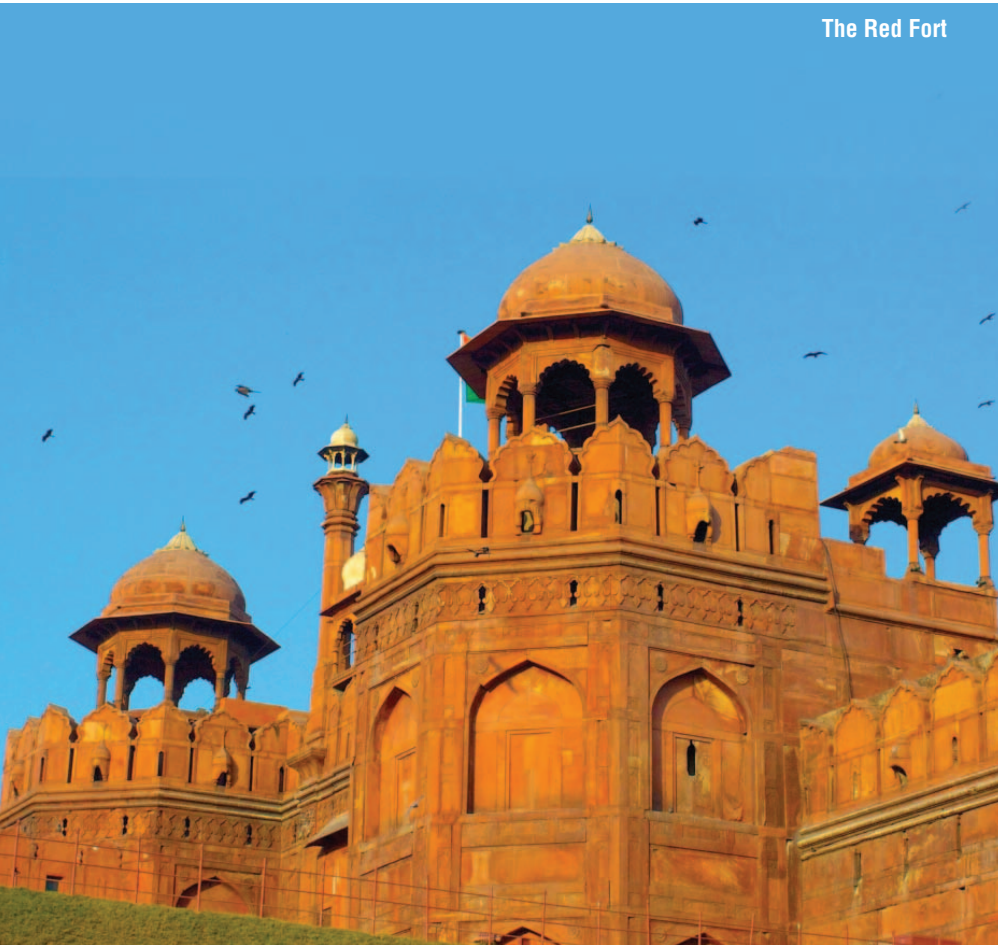
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BY RENU SAGGAR

largest mosque, offers a breathtaking vista of Old Delhi from its southern minaret.

But the Mughal legacy isn't just in monuments. It's in the very air of Old Delhi's (Shahjahanabad) chaotic and historic bazaars. With its tiny alleyways and shops battling for space, *Chandani Chowk* is Old Delhi's main artery. Since the 17th century, this area has been known as a shopper's paradise. Jewelers weigh silver next to centuries-old havelis (mansions), and the iconic *Paranthe Wali Gali*, fries up its famous stuffed breads. Absolutely unmissable for the foodies!

The British built New Delhi in the early 20th century. Designed by Edwin Lutyens, this area is an exercise in imperial grandeur—wide, tree-lined boulevards, sprawling bungalows, the magnificent *India Gate* war memorial and the *Rashtrapati Bhavan*, President's residence. A stark, yet complementary, contrast to the chaos of Old Delhi, it showcases the city's incredible capacity to absorb and reinvent itself.

Delhi is also one of the world's greenest capitals, with over 20 percent of its area under forest cover, including the sprawling *Ridge Forest*. *Lodi Park* is a peaceful

Delhi is a Tale of Two Cities

Delhi is not just a city you visit, it is a city you experience. It's a pulsating, paradox where ancient empires mingle with a vibrant modernity. Where the scent of marigolds mingle with tempting aromas wafting from food stalls and where millennia of history is written not just in stone, but in the very dust underfoot.

Delhi's history is a tale of many cities. It is said to be built, destroyed and rebuilt seven times. Its story begins with the mythical city of *Indraprastha* from the *Mahabharata*. Walk through the colossal, ruined arches of the *Qutub Minar* complex, a UNESCO world heritage site. The soaring 12th-century red sandstone victory tower stands sentinel over the rubble of Delhi's first Muslim city. Here, you can see the fascinating fusion: pillars from demolished Hindu temples were reused to build the adjoining mosque, a literal layering of faiths.

The majestic *Red Fort* (Lal Qila), a fortress-palace of red sandstone, was built in 1648 by Shah Jahan. It speaks of imperial opulence with massive red

sandstone walls, which stand 75 feet (23 meters) high and enclose a complex of palaces. Nearby, the *Jama Masjid*, India's



Delhi's Markets and Bazaars are legendary

green space with 15th-century mausoleums sheltering the Lodi Sultans' remains and a gorgeous triple-domed mosque.

Delhi's attractions mirror its dual nature. For spiritual calm, visit the *Lotus Temple*, a Bahá'í House of Worship in the form of a blooming lotus flower, where silence is the only prayer. Or find peace at the *Gurudwara Bangla Sahib*, the city's most prominent Sikh temple. The breathtaking *Akshardham Temple* is Delhi's most imposing and panoramic spiritual site.

The *National Museum* offers a crash course in Indian civilization, while the *Garden of Five Senses* provides a lush, artistic escape.

Shopping in Delhi is a sport, an art and a negotiation and the bazaars of Old Delhi are unbeatable. *Dariba Kalan* in the historic jewelry lane, is famous for its exquisite silverware, gold jewelry and especially kundan and meenakari (enamel work) pieces.

Fatehpuri Market, located at the western end of Chandni Chowk, it's known for fabrics, textiles and dry fruits.

Khari Baoli, is a kaleidoscope of colors and aromas. Asia's largest spice market is redolent with Kashmiri saffron, Assamese

black cardamom, Kerala peppercorns and Madras lentils. The air is thick with cumin, coriander seeds and the smoky scent of red chilies. Cash is King and haggling is not just accepted, it's expected.

For a more curated (and air-conditioned) hunt, *Dilli Haat* is a government-run open-air market where artisans from across India sell handicrafts, textiles and regional food. For high-end designer wear, explore the boutiques in Mehrauli or Shahpur Jat.

Delhi's streets are a live kitchen where textures and flavors are assembled with theatrical speed. *Kakori* and *Galouti* Kebabs are the aristocrats of the kebab world. *Kakori*, uses finely minced lamb blended with fried onions, poppy seed paste and a delicate spice mix. The *Galouti's* melt-in-the-mouth tenderizing secret lies in raw papaya paste and a lavish use of rose petal essence and saffron.

Delhi offers a vast range of accommodations, from luxurious 5-star hotels and boutique stays, to budget-friendly guesthouses, homestays and hostels. Nestled in the heart of New Delhi's diplomatic enclave *Hotel Suryaa* is a welcoming oasis of comfort and understated elegance.

From the moment you step into its spacious, art-adorned lobby, a sense of calm and attentive hospitality envelops you. The hotel masterfully balances a peaceful retreat-like atmosphere with the incredible convenience of being minutes away from the bustling energy of the city's commercial hubs and cultural landmarks.

Rooms and suites are generously appointed, blending warm, contemporary décor with modern amenities. Large windows bathe the spaces in natural light, many offering serene views over the city. It's a place where you can truly unwind after a day of sightseeing and feel perfectly at home.

Delhi can be overwhelming. It is loud, congested and unapologetically intense. But within that chaos lies its profound beauty—its boundless energy, its deep-rooted resilience and its stunning capacity for juxtaposition.

To know Delhi is to understand that its chaos and its calm are not opposites, but two necessary notes in its complex, symphony. It is a city that challenges and rewards in equal measure. It is truly, India in microcosm: timeless, turbulent and utterly irresistible. 🇮🇳



Humayun's Tomb



BY RENU SAGGAR

ranches in the outskirts of town.

The *Río Celeste* unravels through the rainforests of the Northern Lowlands. One of Costa Rica's most spectacular rivers, the water's supernatural shade of blue is the result of sulphur from the *Tenorio* volcano mixing with calcium carbonate.

From its active volcanos to dream-like waterfalls, travelers will find dwarf cloud forests and a trail that ventures up the mountainside of the park's volcanoes. An abundance of flora and fauna includes puma, jaguars, tapirs and sloths.

Costa Rica is home to two of the world's six sloth species, including the beloved brown-throated three-toed sloth. The poster child of *slothdom*, they're known for their mysterious "smile". The sloth is a serene counterbalance to the hectic pace of modern life. Its ultra slow motion, yoga-like movements are a survival strategy fueled by a low-nutrient diet of leaves.

Nestled in the province of Guanacaste, the *Papagayo Gulf* is the jewel of the Pacific. Home to many of Costa Rica's all-inclusive and exclusive resorts, the gulf's unique microclimate ensures nearly

Where Nature Knows no Limits

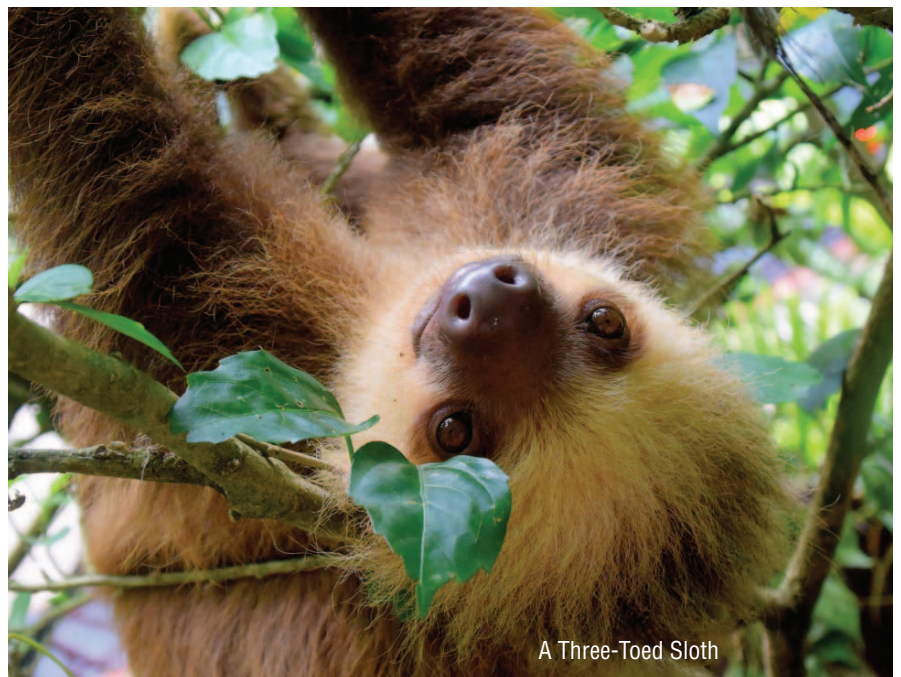
Costa Rica has an emerald-like radiance that seems to emanate from a place deep inside the earth. Dense lowlands give way to rolling savanna, steaming volcanoes and evenings filled with stars. Humpback whales breach on a secluded coast and solemn black frigate birds hang like kites in the wind.

Roughly half the size of Ireland, this mountainous nation on the Central American isthmus is home to an astonishing biodiversity. No fewer than a twelve climatic zones sheltering about five percent of the world's known species of flora and fauna. There are at least 50 varieties of hummingbirds and millions of butterflies, including the iridescent blue morphos with an 8-inch wingspan.

Guanacaste, a province in northwestern Costa Rica bordering the Pacific, is known for its beaches and bio-diverse parks like *Rincon de la Vieja National Park*, a must-see Costa Rican paradise.

Liberia, the provincial capital, is known as the "White City" because of the white-

washed walls and expansive colonial architecture. Travelers with a penchant for the Wild West vibe can visit the many



A Three-Toed Sloth

year-round sunshine, making it an idyllic escape. More than just a collection of luxurious properties, the entire Peninsula is a master-planned community committed to conservation, preserving over 70 percent of its land.

Costa Rica's sun shines down on some of the world's most stunning beaches. From the dramatic Pacific shores of Guanacaste, ideal for surfing and golden sunsets, to the wild, palm-fringed Caribbean sands of *Puerto Viejo*, there is a coastline for every soul. Here, the "pura vida" philosophy finds its perfect expression: toes in the warm sand, a tropical fruit drink in hand, and the contentment that comes from discovering a true paradise.

Eco-tourism has surpassed coffee and banana exports as Costa Rica's largest industry. That's impressive when you consider that North Americans consume upward of 28 pounds of bananas per person a year.

Perched along the Nicaraguan border, the remote *Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge* is one of the best places to view indigenous wildlife. Moss covered crocodiles lurk in the shallows, while the jungle's soothing layers of green are interrupted by the flash of a scarlet macaw or a howler monkey's

elegiac roar.

With 10 distinctive life zones, *Santa Rosa National Park* is the only one of its kind on the planet. Costa Rica's first national park is home to over 115 species of mammals, 250 species of birds and 100 species of amphibians and reptiles.

Just to the northwest the majestic *Arenal* volcano rises above the rainforest reaching into the sky with near perfect symmetry. The youngest and most active of Costa Rica's 14 volcanoes, puffs of steam rise from its caldera. The last eruption was in 2010.

Manuel Antonio National Park is the country's smallest, but most visited national park. Lush green jungle spills onto white-sand coves and turquoise waters framed by cathedral-like rock islands. Its special magic is the seamless blend of primary and secondary forest with four breathtaking beaches. You can hike a trail alive with wildlife and minutes later be swimming in the warm Pacific.

National Geographic called *Corcovado National Park* "the most biologically intense place on Earth." Costa Rica's largest park protects one-third of the country's total biodiversity. Raw and untamed, it's an expedition, not just a visit. The jungle

is dense and immersive. Trails are muddy, rivers are crossed on foot. Park access is restricted and requires planning and you must be accompanied by a certified guide.

Costa Rica's culture is a laid-back fusion of indigenous heritage and Spanish influence, expressed through colorful oxcart art, spirited salsa music and deeply held family values. To understand Costa Rica, you must understand the *Ticos*—the affectionate term for its people. Life often revolves around shared meals, Sunday visits and neighborhood fiestas. This extends to visitors with remarkable hospitality, a Tico will gladly give you directions and then invite you for a coffee. In Costa Rica, the true treasure isn't just the landscape—it's the gracious, pura vida spirit of the Ticos who call it home.

This warmth extends to the table. Costa Rican cuisine is hearty and fresh. The day begins with *gallo pinto*, a beloved mix of rice and beans, often accompanied by sweet plantains and rich coffee from local plantations. For lunch, a *casado*—a "married" plate of rice, beans, salad, a protein and fried plantains—offers a delicious taste of the local life. 🍴



The Arenal Volcano

A La Mode Has A Passion For Fashion!

Whether it's dressing up or dressing down — a good dress is all you need to bring a touch of celebration to every day of the week. What sets *A La Mode Ladies Fashions* apart is their ability to combine the latest fashion trends with timeless pieces that withstand the test of time.

A La Mode brings you top-notch collections from Europe, Canada, the US and much more. You won't find the originality and comfort of their clothes anywhere else! They carry a wide variety of styles, taking you from day casual to evening chic!

Top lines for spring include *Eternelle* from Italy, *Culture* from Denmark and *Angela Mara* from Italy.

A leading source of Boho Chic, *Angela Mara* fashion brand is known for its *Lagenlook* (layered look) style, featuring flowing silhouettes, vibrant colors and versatile basics.

Designed for the "Modern Day Woman" seeking an authentic, stand-out look they blend urban lifestyle with cutting-edge modernity. The clothing line is primarily produced in Italy and emphasizes the use of high-

quality natural fabrics like linen, silk and cotton.

Culture is a Danish fashion brand specializing in bohemian-inspired, feminine and comfortable clothing with a Scandinavian, minimalist aesthetic. Known for quality materials, versatile designs and earthy, neutral tones, the brand offers jackets, blouses, dresses and pants designed for effortless everyday wear combining femininity with an "effortless coolness".

Eternelle is a brand known for contemporary, European-inspired women's fashion Made in Italy." They specialize in comfortable, stylish garments including knitwear, linen pieces, dresses and blouses, often featuring a relaxed style offering high-quality knitwear, linens and versatile, chic pieces. The collection includes items like wide-leg pants, sweaters and linen dresses designed for both comfort and elegance.

Shopping at A La Mode is an experience. The staff are friendly and knowledgeable and assist you in finding what exactly you're looking for. It's all about fashion and making the shopping experience comfortable, personable and affordable.

A La Mode also carries a great selection of accessories: purses, jewelry, shoes from *Miz Mooz* and *Django And Juliette* plus much more. Join them on Facebook every Monday at 9 a.m. and Thursday at 5 p.m. for their live stream fashion shows featuring fun outfits and ensemble inspirations! A La Mode is also the home of *Pavel's Tailor Shop*, an independent business located on the top floor of the store. 📍

A La Mode is located at 52 Richmond Street in Amherstburg. Visit their website alamodefashions.ca for store hours.



Eternelle at A La Mode

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Delhi059

By Chef **Kanishk**

*Bringing Delhi's Street Magic to
Canada's Plate!*

Kanishk Budhiraja
Professional Chef



Delhi 059 by Chef Kanishk is more than just a restaurant - it's a journey through the bustling markets, aromatic spice lanes and soulful kitchens of Delhi. A carefully curated menu features classic Indian street food like chaat, kebabs, dosas, biryanis and more - all crafted with authenticity, passion and a hint of nostalgia. What sets them apart is the personal touch of Chef Kanishk Budhiraja, a culinary innovator with over 15 years of global experience. The menu reads like a love letter to Delhi's diverse food culture, thoughtfully organized into creative categories reflecting aspects of the city's culinary landscape. Sections like "Delhi Ki Galiyon Se" (From the Lanes of Delhi) and "Purani Delhi Ke Kebab" pay homage to the city's famous street food and legendary kebab culture. This dedication to authenticity ensures each plate is a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Vegetarians will rave about the Delhi 059 Spcl Reshmi Paneer. There's even a Hakka section, reflecting the Indo-Chinese fusion cuisine that has become wildly popular in metropolitan India. For those with a sweet tooth, the Rabri Jalebi has earned rave reviews and is the perfect end to a satisfying meal. An inviting decor encourages you to relax and savour the 100 percent Halal dining experience. They also offer full-service cocktail bar, catering services and takeout options. Delhi 059 by Chef Kanishk has quickly established itself as a vibrant destination for authentic Indian food. Join them for dinner or an indulgent Live Indian Weekend Brunch Buffet, featuring a wide variety of authentic flavours. Enjoy freshly made dosas, parathas, along with a variety of curries, appetizers, rice, breads, desserts and more - all served hot and fresh.

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Mezzo Ristorante & Lounge

BY RENU SAGGAR

Experience the ultimate dining experience at Mezzo Ristorante & Lounge. Nestled in the heart of Windsor's, Little Italy the area's favorite Italian restaurant offers a refined and unforgettable culinary experience. This elegant establishment combines the essence of traditional Italian cuisine, with a contemporary twist, captivating guests with its exquisite flavors and impeccable service. That's why they've been awarded Top Choice Italian Restaurant of Windsor, Ontario for 2026!

At Mezzo, every detail is meticulously curated. From the expertly crafted menu, to the tables dressed in white linen, every aspect reflects a dedication to excellence.



Dining at Mezzo
intimate atmosphere.

Starters include *Gamberi Arrabiata*, sautéed black tiger shrimp with diced onions in a chili - spiced homemade tomato sauce. Pastas include *Spaghetti Mezzo* spaghetti with homemade beef meatballs in an oven roasted tomato sauce topped with warm

The restaurant's elegant interior has been updated with the theme of "Amalfi Coast Nights." The new decor features deep blues, rich golds and pops of lemon. Live music, soft lighting and comfortable seating create an inviting and

bocconcini and grilled prosciutto. The *Osso Bucco*, veal shank slowly braised in a red wine, vegetables and tomato sauce served over saffron risotto is a customer dinner favourite.

Dessert lovers will find the in-house *Tiramisu* is a must-try. Layered ladyfinger cookies soaked with liquor and espresso flavoured mascarpone cheese and topped with dusted chocolate. From exquisite Italian wines to international varietals, an extensive wine list is curated to complement the flavors of the food. Sample a *Velvet Margarita*, specialty cocktail or a *Fumo Vecchio* (Old Smoke) a whisky based Italianized Old Fashioned.

Mezzo offers both indoor and outdoor dining. During the warmer months the outdoor door patio overlooking Via Italia, offers a romantic dining experience no matter the occasion.

If you're considering a milestone event, or an intimate dinner complete with champagne, add Mezzo to your list. Surrounded by beautifully etched glass walls, Mezzo's private room can accommodate between 35 and 40 guests, and can be set up to host a variety of functions. It's perfect for meetings, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and other milestone events.

Planning a party? Mezzo's catering service offers the same great taste at your location. Affordable and delicious it's perfect for any gathering or occasion.

Mezzo also offers most regular menu items for takeout. Their *Gourmet Boxes to Go* consisting of Mezzo's most popular appetizers, have become a rousing success. 🍷

Visit them at Mezzo.ca to reserve a table online or for a full menu and upcoming events!

Premium Casual Dining at Artisan Grill

Fresh ingredients, artfully prepared, outstanding service, a warm ambience and an extensive wine menu are the hallmarks of your dining experience at Artisan Grill. Located in a heritage building in the heart of Amherstburg's charming and historic downtown, the atmosphere is warm, intimate and sophisticated, with a modern yet comfortable decor. You can dress up or down or dress in between. Either way you're going to enjoy a variety of carefully chosen menu options to satisfy all palettes. Chef Matthew Johnston focuses on creating dishes from scratch using high-quality, ingredients.

The menu is the very definition of comfort food elevated to fine dining. The menu features an impressive selection of expertly grilled steaks, from the flavorful *Bone-In Ribeye* to the indulgent *Tomahawk*, each crafted to satisfy any meat lover's cravings. Seafood fans will delight in the *Blackened Halibut* paired with mango purée or the comforting *Oven Roasted Salmon*.

For those seeking something different, the pasta and bowl offerings like *Mushroom Ravioli* and A spicy *Honey Chicken Alfredo* showcase inventive flavors. Diners rave about the generous portions, outstanding service and inviting ambience, with numerous reviewers highlighting the exceptional steak and

seafood options. With reasonable pricing and a passion for quality, it's no wonder Artisan Grill has become a must-visit dining destination.

The menu features sensational new dishes, as well as keeping your past favorites like the slow roasted *Baby Back Ribs*, char-broiled and smothered in bourbon barbecue sauce.

They've also added a variety of vegetarian and gluten-free dishes, as well as many items that can be modified to accommodate special requests.

Artisan Grill's packages feature great options for every taste and budget and make planning your party a breeze! Choose from four, five and six course menus and custom menus are just a conversation away. Contact them to discuss your requirements

A well-curated selection of wines pair nicely with the menu as well as craft cocktails and beer.

If you're looking for a creative, chef-driven meal in a lovely setting, you will have a wonderful time at Artisan Grill. The restaurant features a bold new look with all new furnishings, including cozy corners with comfy sofas.

A riverfront patio open seasonally, assures a magical evening under the stars watching the ships go by. It's a very popular spot, so reservations are highly recommended, especially on weekends or for popular occasions. Artisan's team is standing by to take your reservation for your corporate event, graduation party, birthday, anniversary or any special occasion or milestone event. 🍷

Visit them online at artisangrill.ca.



Artisan Grill's Heritage building location



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