



SCENIC ROAD TRIPS
THROUGH
New York State Parks



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OPPORTUNITY.

**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

parks.ny.gov



Cave of the Winds, Niagara Falls USA



Adventure & Thrills

Niagara Falls: Where fun for all ages is measured in gallons per second!



From Cleveland: 3.5 hours
From Toronto: 1.5 hours
From Pittsburgh: 3.5
From Albany: 4.5 hours

Spend the day experiencing the thundering waters of the mighty Niagara Falls. Get up close to this natural wonder with a visit to the world famous Niagara Falls State Park. Start early with a ride on the iconic Maid of the Mist boat and then head over by trolley to Goat Island, where you can dine at the Top of the Falls restaurant, then descend into the gorge for an exhilarating soaking on the Cave of Winds' Hurricane Deck within inches of the roaring waters. (niagarafallsstatepark.com)

Head 15 minutes north for more heart-pounding action with a Jet Boat trip up the Class V rapids of the Niagara River Gorge and its whirlpools. (niagara-jet.com; whirlpooljet.com)

Bring a set of dry clothes so you can enjoy the many cafés and shops in nearby Lewiston, a charming riverfront village, after you catch your breath from the wild—and wet—ride.



If Niagara Falls is your base, Old Falls Street offers dining and entertainment. Stay the night at any of the hotels within steps of the Falls or for more unique lodging, book a yurt at Four Mile Creek State Park along Lake Ontario, just minutes away. (newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com)

Day Two, head to Letchworth State Park, about an hour and a half drive from Niagara Falls. Voted the best state park in the nation in 2015, Letchworth is known as the Grand Canyon of the East. It does not disappoint when it comes to spectacular views and non-stop adventure with its three major waterfalls and cliffs as high as 600 feet.

Find miles of trails to bike and hike. Other great ways to see this 17-mile long gem along the Genesee River Gorge include hot-air ballooning or white-water rafting (balloonsoverletchworth.com; adventure-calls.com). For a break in the action, enjoy a relaxing drink or bite to eat at the Glen Iris Inn overlooking the park's picturesque Middle Falls. (glenirisinn.com)

Tip

For savings on all the park's cool attractions, make sure to buy the Niagara Falls USA Discovery Pass. (niagarafallsstatepark.com)



Waterfalls & Wineries

Island Hopping

What's more relaxing than spending a few days among award-winning vineyards and 'gorge-ous' backdrops in the Finger Lakes?



From Toronto: 4.5 hours
From Pittsburgh: 5 hours
From Philadelphia: 5 hours
From New York City: 4 hours

With more than 35 wineries and vineyards, Seneca Lake offers the perfect location to jumpstart a Finger Lakes getaway filled with wild beauty, rugged gorges and a bounty of wining and dining. Take advantage of a climate that supports hardy native grapes and premium hybrids by making a stop along the Finger Lakes Wine Trail. (fingerlakeswinecountry.com)

Head to the southern end of the lake for outdoor adventure. A must-see is Watkins Glen State Park with its well-deserved reputation for leaving visitors spellbound. The glen's stream descends 400 feet, generating 19 waterfalls along its course, and a gorge path with over 800 stone steps that wind over and under waterfalls. The Cavern Cascade is one of two falls that you can walk behind.

Drive east on Route 79 for 25 miles to Cayuga Lake and the many gorges and waterfalls near the city of Ithaca and the surrounding area. Roughly 12,000 years ago glaciers formed Cayuga Lake and its steep valleys that are now home to 100 waterfalls within ten square miles of the city's downtown. (visitithaca.com)



A Finger Lakes Vineyard

On the way, be sure to see Robert Treman State Park's craggy gorge and trails that follow the Enfield Glen past a dozen waterfalls including the 115-foot Lucifer Falls. On a hot summer day there's nothing more refreshing than swimming in the stream-fed pool at the base of the flowing waters. Just a few miles away, Buttermilk Falls State Park takes its name from the foaming cascade formed by Buttermilk Creek as it flows down the steep valley side toward Cayuga Lake.

Talk about a nice pairing! Continue exploring the region's vineyards with a stop along the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail then sample some of the local farm-to-table cuisine ranging from fine dining to rustic charm. The Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway includes a number of destinations around the lake. (cayugawinetrail.com; cayugalake.com)

Cap off the scenic excursion by experiencing Taughannock Falls State Park and its namesake waterfall. Taughannock Falls plunges 215 feet down rocky cliffs that tower 400 feet above the gorge making it the tallest free-falling waterfall east of the Mississippi. Tours on the gorge and rim trails offer spectacular views from above and below the falls.

Sparkling waters and picturesque coastlines in the Thousand Islands are the perfect summer setting for watersports and anglers.



From Albany: 3.5 hours
From Toronto: 3 hours
From Montreal: 2.5 hours
From Philadelphia: 6.5 hours

Hook up your boat or camper and head to the Thousand Islands, a vacation paradise for water enthusiasts along eastern Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Fish the big water for trout, salmon and walleye or head into the river system for pike, bass and panfish. Sail, cruise, waterski, kayak, tube ...and more! (visit1000islands.com)

The fishing is excellent at Wellesley Island State Park. Its sandy beach on the river offers great swimming, and the park is known for its campsites, cabins and cottages. Boaters enjoy the full-service marina and three launches. Landlubbers can hit the links at the golf course or join one of the outdoor programs at the nature center. Or for a true getaway, reserve a campsite or cabin at one of the boat-access only island state campgrounds like Canoe-Picnic Point Park or Mary Island State Parks. (parks.ny.gov)

While on the river, a must-see stop is the landmark Boldt Castle on Heart Island built by hotel magnate George C. Boldt as a tribute to his wife. Learn the fabled story behind construction of the Gilded Age mansion and why it was never completed. Accessible by water taxi, tour boats and private boat, the castle is open for self-guided tours from mid-May through mid-October. (boldtcastle.com)

Rock Island Lighthouse State Park is off of Fisher's Landing and features a lighthouse commissioned back in 1847. Docking is available to those aboard Clayton Island Boat Tours and private craft (Grass Point State Park is the closest launch site, about a 5-minute boat ride away.) Visit the museum and gift shop, picnic, then climb the lighthouse stairs for spectacular views of the seaway. (claytonislandtours.com)



Boldt Castle

If you love the maritime tradition, then don't miss the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton. Located on the St. Lawrence, the museum galleries hold over 300 unique and beautifully-preserved boats and thousands of boating artifacts. The popular destination offers boat rides, boat shows, programs for all ages, special events and more. (abm.org)

A short drive south on Route 12E brings you to the sparkling waters of Chaumont Bay and Henderson Bay on Lake Ontario, where guided fishing trips from the local villages have been a way of life. Interstate 81 is just a short distance away when the last fish tale has been told.

Tip

After walking along the curving paths of the gorge at Watkins, explore the nearby Catharine Valley Trail by bicycle.

Tip

After a day on the water, nothing tastes better than one of the area's legendary island Shore Dinners – a fresh catch cooked over a wood fire by local fishing guides.



Grand Estates & Gardens

Military History Comes Alive

Explore the beauty and symmetry of gracious dwellings and divine green spaces along the east shore of the Hudson River to Sleepy Hollow.

Spend time exploring our nation's history and military past through some of the premier historic sites and destinations within the Hudson Valley.



From Boston: 3 hours
From Hartford: 2 hours
From Scranton: 2.5 hours
From Burlington: 4 hours



From New York City: 1 hour
From Hartford: 2 hours
From Philadelphia: 2.5 hours
From Burlington: 4 hours

Begin in Columbia County with a visit to the Persian-inspired mansion Olana State Historic Site, the 19th-century home and studio of Hudson River School artist Frederic Edwin Church. The 250-acre estate boasts dramatic views and picturesque landscapes. Visitors can marvel at remarkable interiors filled with original sketches and paintings as part of the guided house tours, or enjoy self-guided walking tours of the grounds. (olana.org)

Travel down Route 9G to the riverfront Clermont State Historic Site, the former seat of the prominent Livingston family. Seven successive generations of the family left their imprint on the site's architecture, room interiors and landscape. Clermont appears much as it did in the early 20th century, filled with family furnishings, art and the lush gardens.



Clermont State Historic Site

Just south is Rhinebeck, a charming village with boutiques, cafés and restaurants, B&Bs and other lodging including the historic Beekman Arms, America's oldest continuously-operated hotel. (dutchesstourism.com)

The riverfront Staatsburgh State Historic Site, elegant country home of the Ogden Mills Family, is a time capsule of the Gilded Age. Learn about the home's transformation from a 25-room Greek Revival style to a Beaux-Arts mansion of 65 rooms and 14 bathrooms. Today the elegant mansion is open for tours, and the house and grounds offer special events. (parks.ny.gov)

Continue down Route 9 to Hyde Park and Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, one of the region's oldest estates. The National Park Service preserved over 200 acres of the original property, including buildings, furnishings, landscapes, formal gardens and more. The centerpiece of the estate is the mansion, a masterpiece of American Beaux-Arts design. (nps.gov/vama)

An hour's drive south is Kykuit, the extraordinary landmark with stunning architecture, scenery, gardens and art. This jewel in Sleepy Hollow was home to generations of Rockefellers including John D. Rockefeller, the richest man in America in his day. The tour includes the magnificent stone house, terraced gardens, 20-century art, galleries and more. Each tour begins at the visitor center at Philipsburg Manor. (hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/kykuit)

Start out at Bear Mountain State Park – only an hour or so north of New York City – and then venture to nearby Fort Montgomery State Historic Site. Tour the remains of the 14-acre fortification, the site of a fierce Revolutionary War battle. Original artifacts, weapons and large scale models of the fort and the attack can be found at the site's museum. Visit parks.ny.gov about events, demonstrations and reenactments.

Continue your path through history with a tour of the famed U.S. Military Academy at West Point 10 minutes north of Fort Montgomery. The central starting point is the West Point Visitor Center. Visitors may enter the West Point grounds through guided tours (westpoint-tours.com). Before you travel, it is recommended to contact the Center at 845-938-2638 for updated status of any tours.

The next stop on the journey is a visit to New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site, where the Continental Army under George Washington spent the last winter and spring of the Revolutionary War. From April through October, you will find costumed staff demonstrating musket drills, reenactments of blacksmith techniques and military medical practices from the 18th century. (parks.ny.gov)

Afterwards, pay tribute at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, located at New Windsor Cantonment. The Hall honors men and women who have been awarded the Purple Heart, and is dedicated to commemorating the sacrifices made by the more than 1.8 million recipients. The gallery provides a visual timeline of America's 20th and 21st century conflicts along with interactive tools to further highlight the Purple Heart and its significance in history.

Spend the afternoon at the nation's first publicly-owned historic site at Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site in Newburgh. Tours are available to explore where General Washington made some of his most important military and political decisions that would help shape the American Republic. Afterwards, visit one of the craft breweries and eateries in the area.



Fort Montgomery State Historic Site

Tip

When in Hyde Park, check out the Culinary Institute of America, enjoy award-winning restaurants and cafés, retail stores and public tours. (ciachef.edu/visiting-new-york)

Tip

Learn more about lodging, dining and other must-see stops at the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area site. (hudsonrivervalley.com)

SET A COURSE FOR FUN!

Whether a day trip, weekend getaway or family vacation, New York's 215 state parks and state historic sites are the perfect stops on the road to adventure. Visitors of all ages can experience the beauty, outdoor wonders and rich heritage found throughout the Empire State.

Feel the sheer power of Niagara Falls or meander along a canyon in a hot air balloon at Letchworth; hike the gorge parks then treat yourself to a vineyard visit in the Finger Lakes; dine on your fresh catch and travel by boat to a campsite in the Thousand Islands; capture the grandeur of the Hudson River's great estates; and hear the roar of cannon fire at American Revolutionary War battlefields.

To explore and stay active or just unwind and relax, there are a variety of four-season, affordable options for you, your friends and family. For more information about state parks and sites, visit **parks.ny.gov**; and for additional attractions and travel destinations be sure to check **iloveny.com**. In the meantime, use these five suggested itineraries for inspiration to start your planning today.

Enjoy!





ENJOY THE RIDE!

It's a big country, with countless wonders to discover. Getting there is half the fun when you travel by car. Your first stop is **geico.com** for a free insurance quote and to enroll in their Emergency Road Service Plan. Then check out these helpful apps and you'll be good to go!

PLANNING AHEAD

- **Roadtrippers**—Helps you plan your perfect road trip, with information on eateries, attractions, scenic spots and more

POWER UP

- **GasBuddy**—Searches for the best gas prices in your vicinity
- **Plugshare**—Provides a nationwide database of charging stations for your EV vehicle

SMOOTH SAILING

- **Tollsmart**—Calculates toll costs across the US and Canada
- **iExit**—Finds the best exit to make a pit stop along interstates

LOCAL FINDS

- **Field Trip**—Notifies your phone when you're near an interesting location
- **LocalEats**—Finds the best independently-owned restaurants across the U.S.

FOR THE KIDS

- **Sago Mini Road Trip**—Allows your little one to take their own virtual road trip
- **Stack the States**—A fun geography game about the 50 states



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We'll make sure you're covered all the way down the trail.



You love life

And you know that spending time in the great outdoors has proven benefits for mind and body, like an improved mood, a sharper memory and lower stress. Did you also know that parks offer healthy activities like guided hikes, yoga classes, wildlife viewing and more? Find out about park programs and events: parks.ny.gov.

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