

Hey Debbie! Oh, just imagine escaping Texas in mid-September, hitching up your shiny Airstream and heading north toward Michigan. It's like Mother Nature laid out a red carpet just for us. The drive is about 1300 miles, but once you arrive, it's prime time: fewer crowds after Labor Day, cooler temperatures in the 60s and 70s, and golden sunlight filtering through the first hints of fall colors. No more sweltering Texas heat – just crisp air that refreshes without overwhelming, perfect for an outdoor adventure.

Lower Michigan: Yoopers coined Trolls for residents of the Lower Peninsula—a playful jab because they live "under" (or south of) the mighty Mackinac Bridge,

The Mitten: Northern Lower Michigan (including Traverse City, Petoskey, Mackinaw City, Leelanau Peninsula, Sleeping Bear Dunes, and the Tunnel of Trees) in September offers a perfect transition from summer to fall—mild weather, fewer crowds than peak summer, and the early hints of vibrant autumn colors amid stunning lakeshore scenery.

The caravan starts in the charming village of Suttons Bay, a perfect spot on the eastern shore of the Leelanau Peninsula to gather the group, stretch your legs after the long drive, and soak in the area's welcoming vibe of turquoise bays, rolling hills, and laid-back charm for 4 days.

Venture out from Suttons Bay for rewarding day trips along the Leelanau Peninsula—scenic drives on M-22 offer stunning Lake Michigan views, vineyards, and charming stops.

Leland, often called Fishtown:

Northport:

Traverse City

Old Mission Peninsula

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Visit Glen Haven Historic Village in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore,

Moving north to Indian River: The landscape features clear, wooded waterways, sandy beaches, marshes (like the Indian River Spreads rich in wildlife—eagles, ospreys, otters, loons), forests, and small-town charm halfway between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron—perfect for relaxed boating, fishing, and nature escapes for three days.

Day trips from Indian River highlight northern Michigan's waterways, history, beaches, and small-town charm—quick scenic drives (20-90 minutes) along US-31, I-75, or M-68 make them easy and enjoyable.

Cheboygan

Mackinaw City

Mackinac Island

Petoskey

Charlevoix

Crossing the Mackinac Bridge from Mackinaw City to the Upper Peninsula delivers an exhilarating drive over one of the world's longest suspension bridges—five miles of soaring green spans connecting Lakes Michigan and Huron.

The Upper Peninsula: The Yoopers. A fun twist on “U.P.-ers” that captures their rugged, independent spirit amid forests, lakes, and heavy snow.

Arrive in Sault Ste. Marie (Michigan’s oldest city, founded 1668): Waterfront gem at the St. Marys River rapids, linking Lakes Huron and Superior for 3 days.

Watch the freighters on St. Mary’s River from our campground. Waterfront activities include kayaking, paddling, relaxing at parks, and enjoying river sunsets.

Things to do and see:

Soo Locks (Michigan side):

Soo Locks Boat Tour

Museum Ship Valley Camp (MI): Tour a 1917 freighter

Rotary Island Park & Boardwalk (MI): Stroll paths, picnic, spot ships, and the International Bridge.

Tower of History (MI): Offers panoramic views of the river, locks, rapids, and wilderness.

Canadian Bush Plane Heritage Centre: [ON side] A top-rated museum. A perfect waterfront stop to see Canada’s northern flying legacy up close!

Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site (ON side): Walk the trails, see heritage buildings, and birdwatch along the canal.

Take the Big Ben Double Decker Hop-on Hop-off Bus Tour[MI side]—a fun, narrated loop through downtown, highlighting sights, history, and easy stops for a full-day overview.

A day trip from Sault Ste. Marie, MI, to Tahquamenon Falls State Park and Whitefish Point combines thundering waterfalls, dramatic Lake Superior shores, and haunting maritime history
Total round-trip: About 150-180 miles, 4-5 hours driving time (plus stops), doable in one long day (start early, return by evening).

Munising, MI, offers some of the Upper Peninsula’s most breathtaking scenic drives along Lake Superior’s rugged shoreline, colorful cliffs, forests, and waterfalls for 3 days.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore Boat Tour

MI Dogs: Led by veteran musher Laura Neese (Iditarod & Yukon Quest finisher), the 1.5-hour summer tour lets you cuddle adorable sled dog puppies, meet her energetic Alaskan husky race team, get kisses and hugs, hear heartfelt trail stories, and learn about mushing/off-season life—all hands-on and full of joy.

Day trip to Kitch-iti-kipi. This renowned natural attraction is Michigan’s largest freshwater spring, with more than 10,000 gallons of water per minute gushing through fissures in the underlying limestone at a constant 45 degrees Fahrenheit. By means of a self-guided (accessible) observation raft, visitors can view this crystal-clear pool with an emerald green bottom.

Marquette, Michigan, in September shines as a crisp, vibrant Upper Peninsula gem—Lake Superior’s southern shore town blends lively downtown energy with rugged outdoor adventures, emerging fall colors, and perfect shoulder-season calm (fewer crowds than for 3`days.

Top things to do:

Chase emerging fall foliage: hike Presque Isle Park or Sugarloaf Mountain for reds/oranges against Lake Superior.

Presque Isle Park: dramatic cliffs, rocky coves, easy trails with panoramic views.

Sugarloaf Mountain: short, steep hike to 360° summit vistas of the lake and changing forests.

Downtown: stroll historic streets, shops, galleries, breweries (Blackrocks), harborfront.

Lake Superior fishing.

Lakeland Sculpture Park: free quirky metal sculptures in woods. Top things to do: Marquette Lighthouse and Maritime Museum, Presque Park, historic downtown and the Ore Docks

Ontonagon, Michigan, sits on the western edge of the Upper Peninsula, along Lake Superior—a quiet, scenic harbor town that serves as the perfect base for exploring the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. “The Porkies” in September is a serene, stunning Upper Peninsula retreat—Michigan’s largest state park (60,000+ acres) with old-growth forests, Lake Superior shores, waterfalls, and emerging fall colors that make it one of the Midwest’s top foliage spots.

Our campground is directly across from Lake Superior and the state park entrance.