ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

The Great Lakes

Chicago, the dunes and lighthouses of Lake Michigan, and Detroit.

Length	12 days, 11 nights
Distance	1,250 km, 7 driving days
Behind the wheel	15 h 10 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Chicago O'Hare (ORD), Detroit (DTW) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Chicago	Days 1–3	**8**
Holland	Day 4	**10**
Traverse City	Days 5–6	**12**
Mackinaw City	Days 7–8	**14**
Frankenmuth	Day 9	**16**
Detroit	Days 10–11	**18**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Chicago	30	40 min	
2		Chicago			
3		Chicago			
4		Holland	240	3 h	
5		Traverse City	270	3 h 10 min	
6		Traverse City			
7		Mackinaw City	190	2 h 30 min	
8		Mackinaw City			
9		Frankenmuth	330	3 h 30 min	
10		Detroit	150	1 h 50 min	
11		Detroit			
12		Flight home from DTW	40	30 min	

1,250 km · 15 h 10 min behind the wheel · on average 180 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: US Census Bureau (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at Chicago O'Hare (ORD), drive to Chicago · About 30 km (20 mi), 40 min
Day 4	Chicago, drive to Holland · About 240 km (150 mi), 3 h
Day 5	Holland, drive to Traverse City · About 270 km (170 mi), 3 h 10 min
Day 7	Traverse City, drive to Mackinaw City · About 190 km (120 mi), 2 h 30 min
Day 9	Mackinaw City, drive to Frankenmuth · About 330 km (200 mi), 3 h 30 min
Day 10	Frankenmuth, drive to Detroit · About 150 km (90 mi), 1 h 50 min

Well prepared

ESTA

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 90 days, but do need an approved ESTA before boarding. It costs about $40, is valid for two years (or until your passport expires) and is applied for online. Apply at least 72 hours before you fly, and only on the official site.

esta.cbp.dhs.gov

Passport

An electronic passport (with the chip symbol), valid for the whole stay. Children need their own passport and ESTA.

nl.usembassy.gov

Driving licence

Your Dutch driving licence is accepted for renting and driving a car as a visitor. An international driving permit next to it helps with police and some rental desks.

anwb.nl

Renting a car

The renter is the main driver and pays with a credit card in their own name (no debit or prepaid card); the deposit is held on it. Usually from 21, and from 21 to 24 you pay a young-driver fee of about $25 a day. Book from home with insurance included (CDW/LDW and extra liability, SLI) and an extra driver if you want to take turns. Returning the car elsewhere (a one-way trip) costs extra. Fuel is sold by the gallon (3.8 litres); fill it up yourself before you bring it back.

Driving in the USA

Keep right; speeds are in miles an hour (65 mph is 105 km/h). Turning right on red is allowed after stopping, unless a sign says no. At a 4-way stop, whoever stopped first goes first. For a stopped yellow school bus with flashing lights you stop in both directions. Toll roads are often electronic only: ask your rental company about its toll pass. On remote stretches (parks, desert) there's little signal and a long way to the next pump: fill up at half and download the map.

Renting an RV

You can rent an RV from about 21 with an ordinary car licence. On top of the rent, count on mileage (often per mile), a kit with bedding and kitchen things, cleaning and the campsite: in the popular parks you book those months ahead on recreation.gov. Big RVs aren't allowed on every park road. Take photos of the RV when you pick it up: damage and missing items are the most heard complaint.

recreation.gov

National parks

Most big parks charge per car. Visitors from abroad pay $100 a person extra at 11 popular parks; the annual pass for non-residents is $250. Some parks need a timed-entry reservation in high season.

nps.gov

Money and tipping

Prices are without sales tax, which is added at the till. In restaurants a tip of 15 to 20% is usual. Cards are accepted almost everywhere; at the pump you may be asked for a ZIP code, so pay inside.

Travel insurance and health

Care in the USA is very expensive: take travel insurance with worldwide medical cover, and check whether your health insurance covers the USA. Cancellation insurance covers the trip if you can't go; insure the rental car with the rental company (see Renting a car). Take medicines in their original packaging, with a prescription in English. Emergency number: 911.

Power, phone and time

110 volt with flat two-pin plugs (type A/B): bring an adapter. A US eSIM is cheaper than roaming. The mainland has four time zones, Arizona mostly without daylight saving time.

Customs

Fresh food, meat and fruit may not be brought in. Declare food you carry.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] ESTA, printed
- [ ] Driving licence (and an international one)
- [ ] Credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels
- [ ] America the Beautiful pass for the parks
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (110 volt)
- [ ] Car charger and phone holder
- [ ] eSIM or offline maps
- [ ] Sunscreen, sunglasses and a cap
- [ ] Water bottles for the desert
- [ ] Hiking shoes
- [ ] Layers: the coast and the nights get cold
- [ ] Medicines, in your hand luggage
- [ ] A pen, for this booklet

DON'T FORGET

Notes



DAYS 1–3

Chicago IL

Architecture by boat

Land at Chicago O'Hare (ORD), drive to Chicago: about 30 km (20 mi), 40 min

3 nights

CHICAGO · DAYS 1–3

HOTEL

- [ ] Sentral Michigan Avenue · 3★ — roughly €140
  808 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE
- [ ] SpringHill Suites by Marriott Chicago Chinatown · 3★ — roughly €130
  2357 S WENTWORTH AVE
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Chicago Downtown Magnificent Mile · 3★ — roughly €120
  101 East Erie Street
- [ ] Hyatt House Chicago West Loop-Fulton Market · 3★ — roughly €110
  105 N MAY STREET
- [ ] Hyatt Place Chicago Midway Airport · 3★ — roughly €120
  6550 S Cicero Ave

NOTES



DAY 4

Holland MI

The Dutch town on Lake Michigan

Chicago, drive to Holland: about 240 km (150 mi), 3 h

1 night

HOTEL

- [ ] Cozy Holland Studio w/ Deck Near Lake Michigan! · 3★
  6070 138th Ave
- [ ] Holland Farmhouse Inn B & B · 3★
  751 Central Ave
- [ ] Homewood Suites By Hilton Holland · 3★ — roughly €90
  625 South Point Hotel Dr.
- [ ] Courtyard by Marriott Holland Downtown · 3★ — roughly €200
  121 East 8th Street
- [ ] TownePlace Suites by Marriott Holland · 3★ — roughly €110
  12132 James Street

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DAYS 5–6

Traverse City MI

Sleeping Bear Dunes

Holland, drive to Traverse City: about 270 km (170 mi), 3 h 10 min

2 nights

TRAVERSE CITY · DAYS 5–6

HOTEL

- [ ] Condo Near Beach & Downtown in Traverse City! · 3★
  630 S Garfield Ave
- [ ] Peaceful Apartment · 3★
  142 E Bay Blvd N
- [ ] Sleepy Bear Retreat · 3★
  630 South Garfield Avenue #109
- [ ] Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Traverse City · 3★ — roughly €110
  3654 N US-31 South
- [ ] Innisfaire · 3★
  7930 S West Bay Shore Dr

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DAYS 7–8

Mackinaw City MI

Mackinac Island, where cars are banned

Traverse City, drive to Mackinaw City: about 190 km (120 mi), 2 h 30 min

2 nights

MACKINAW CITY · DAYS 7–8

HOTEL

- [ ] Snowmobiling Hub! Mackinaw City Home 3 Mi to Beach · 3★
  121 S Marest St
- [ ] Clearwater Lakeshore Motel · 3★
  11380 U.S. 23
- [ ] Baymont by Wyndham Mackinaw City · 3★
  109 S Nicolet St
- [ ] Beach House Lakeside Cottages · 3★
  11490 Us Hwy 23
- [ ] Beach House Lakeside Cottages · 3★
  11490 West US 23

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DAY 9

Frankenmuth MI

Michigan's little Bavaria

Mackinaw City, drive to Frankenmuth: about 330 km (200 mi), 3 h 30 min

1 night

FRANKENMUTH · DAY 9

HOTEL

- [ ] True Bed - and Breakfast! - made fresh by Grandma · 3★
  122 Trinklein Street
- [ ] Drury Inn & Suites Frankenmuth · 3★ — roughly €230
  260 S Main St
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express Frankenmuth by IHG · 3★ — roughly €220
  926 South Main Street
- [ ] Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Frankenmuth · 3★ — roughly €200
  430 S Main St
- [ ] Springhill Suites by Marriott Frankenmuth · 3★ — roughly €220
  530 S Main St

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DAYS 10–11

Detroit MI

Motown and the Henry Ford museum

Frankenmuth, drive to Detroit: about 150 km (90 mi), 1 h 50 min

2 nights

DETROIT · DAYS 10–11

HOTEL

- [ ] Modern Downtown Apartment · 3★
  1212 Griswold St
- [ ] The Cochrane House Luxury Historic Inn · 3★
  216 Winder St
- [ ] El Moore Lodge · 3★
  624 W Alexandrine St
- [ ] AC Hotel by Marriott Detroit at the Bonstelle · 3★ — roughly €370
- [ ] Element by Marriott Detroit at The Metropolitan · 3★ — roughly €370
  33 John R Street

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Chicago	€160	–	€60	**€220**
2	Chicago	€160	–	€60	**€220**
3	Chicago	€160	–	€60	**€220**
4	Holland	€160	–	€60	**€220**
5	Traverse City	€160	–	€60	**€220**
6	Traverse City	€160	–	€60	**€220**
7	Mackinaw City	€160	–	€60	**€220**
8	Mackinaw City	€160	–	€60	**€220**
9	Frankenmuth	€160	–	€60	**€220**
10	Detroit	€160	–	€60	**€220**
11	Detroit	€160	–	€60	**€220**
12	Flight home from DTW	–	–	€60	**€60**

Flights	€1,700
Hotels	€1,760
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€720
Total	**€4,180**
	€2,090 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

Notes

About this booklet

Made on rondreis.expert. Your trip is still there, to change and print again: usa.roundtrip.expert/tours/great-lakes/

PHOTOS

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Holland	Hotel bike parking.jpg · Mitchelldirt, CC0
Traverse City	US Navy 100703-N-0092J-227 Lt. Cmdr. Frank Weiser, from Atlanta, Ga., lead solo pilot assigned to the U.S. Navy flight demonstration squadron, the Blue Angels,.jpg · U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew Johnson, Public domain
Mackinaw City	Mill Creek Mackinaw City Michigan.JPG · Scott Rozanski, CC0
Frankenmuth	20190924-OSEC-PJK-03130 TONED.jpg · USDAgov, Public domain
Detroit	Detroit Skyline from Windsor 2025-09-01.jpg · TheWxResearcher, CC0

MAP AND TYPE

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