ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

Minnesota and Wisconsin's north woods

Lakes, forests and the north shore of Lake Superior.

Length	12 days, 11 nights
Distance	1,730 km, 7 driving days
Behind the wheel	22 h 40 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Minneapolis (MSP), Minneapolis (MSP) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Minneapolis	Days 1–2	**8**
Duluth	Days 3–4	**10**
Grand Marais	Days 5–6	**12**
Bayfield	Days 7–8	**14**
Madison	Days 9–10	**16**
Minneapolis	Day 11	**18**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Minneapolis	20	20 min	
2		Minneapolis			
3		Duluth	250	2 h 50 min	
4		Duluth			
5		Grand Marais	180	2 h 30 min	
6		Grand Marais			
7		Bayfield	310	4 h 40 min	
8		Bayfield			
9		Madison	520	7 h	
10		Madison			
11		Minneapolis	430	5 h 10 min	
12		Flight home from MSP	20	20 min	

1,730 km · 22 h 40 min behind the wheel · on average 250 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 Minneapolis (MSP), drive to Minneapolis · About 20 km (10 mi), 20 min
Day 3	Minneapolis, drive to Duluth · About 250 km (150 mi), 2 h 50 min
Day 5	Duluth, drive to Grand Marais · About 180 km (110 mi), 2 h 30 min
Day 7	Grand Marais, drive to Bayfield · About 310 km (200 mi), 4 h 40 min
Day 9	Bayfield, drive to Madison · About 520 km (330 mi), 7 h
Day 11	Madison, drive to Minneapolis · About 430 km (270 mi), 5 h 10 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 1–2

Minneapolis MN

The chain of lakes

Land at Minneapolis (MSP), drive to Minneapolis: about 20 km (10 mi), 20 min

2 nights

MINNEAPOLIS · DAYS 1–2

HOTEL

- [ ] TownePlace Suites by Marriott Minneapolis near Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €130
  2500 Lindau Lane
- [ ] AC Hotel by Marriott Bloomington Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €130
  8100 26th Avenue South
- [ ] Element by Marriott Minneapolis Downtown · 3★ — roughly €140
  501 N 6TH AVENUE
- [ ] Hampton Inn and Suites Minneapolis University Area, MN · 3★ — roughly €80
  2812 University Avenue Southeast
- [ ] Element by Marriott Bloomington Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €150
  2402 East 82nd Street

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DAYS 3–4

Duluth MN

The lift bridge on Lake Superior

Minneapolis, drive to Duluth: about 250 km (150 mi), 2 h 50 min

2 nights

DULUTH · DAYS 3–4

HOTEL

- [ ] South Pier Inn · 3★ — roughly €170
  701 S Lake Ave
- [ ] Residence Inn Duluth · 3★ — roughly €140
  517 W Central Entrance
- [ ] Park Point Marina Inn · 3★ — roughly €130
  1033 Minnesota Ave
- [ ] Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Duluth · 3★ — roughly €120
  1510 MAPLE GROVE ROAD
- [ ] Canal Park Lodge · 3★ — roughly €170
  250 Canal Park Dr

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DAYS 5–6

Grand Marais MN

The North Shore Scenic Drive

Duluth, drive to Grand Marais: about 180 km (110 mi), 2 h 30 min

2 nights

GRAND MARAIS · DAYS 5–6

HOTEL

- [ ] Poplar Creek Guesthouse · 3★
  11 Poplar Creek Drive, Inland from Grand
- [ ] East Bay Suites · 3★
  21 Wisconsin St
- [ ] Skyport Lodge · 3★
  205 Fireweed Lane

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DAYS 7–8

Bayfield WI

The Apostle Islands' sea caves

Grand Marais, drive to Bayfield: about 310 km (200 mi), 4 h 40 min

2 nights

BAYFIELD · DAYS 7–8

HOTEL

- [ ] Hauser's Bayfield Cabin · 3★
  94495 Raspberry Shore Drive
- [ ] Pinehurst Inn Bed & Breakfast · 3★
  83645 State Hwy 13
- [ ] Old Rittenhouse Inn · 3★
  301 Rittenhouse Avenue
- [ ] Queen's View Bayfield · 3★

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DAYS 9–10

Madison WI

Between two lakes

Bayfield, drive to Madison: about 520 km (330 mi), 7 h

2 nights

MADISON · DAYS 9–10

HOTEL

- [ ] Holiday Inn Express and Suites Madison Central by IHG · 3★ — roughly €110
  610 John Nolen Dr
- [ ] Hampton Inn & Suites Madison Downtown · 3★ — roughly €100
  440 West Johnson Street
- [ ] Home2 Suites By Hilton Madison Central Alliant Energy Center · 3★ — roughly €100
  2153 Rimrock Rd
- [ ] SpringHill Suites Madison · 3★ — roughly €130
  4601 Frey Street
- [ ] Hotel Ruby Marie · 3★
  524 E. Wilson Street

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DAY 11

Minneapolis MN

Before the flight home

Madison, drive to Minneapolis: about 430 km (270 mi), 5 h 10 min

1 night

MINNEAPOLIS · DAY 11

HOTEL

- [ ] TownePlace Suites by Marriott Minneapolis near Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €130
  2500 Lindau Lane
- [ ] AC Hotel by Marriott Bloomington Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €130
  8100 26th Avenue South
- [ ] Element by Marriott Minneapolis Downtown · 3★ — roughly €140
  501 N 6TH AVENUE
- [ ] Hampton Inn and Suites Minneapolis University Area, MN · 3★ — roughly €80
  2812 University Avenue Southeast
- [ ] Element by Marriott Bloomington Mall of America · 3★ — roughly €150
  2402 East 82nd Street

NOTES

What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Minneapolis	€160	–	€60	**€220**
2	Minneapolis	€160	–	€60	**€220**
3	Duluth	€160	–	€60	**€220**
4	Duluth	€160	–	€60	**€220**
5	Grand Marais	€160	–	€60	**€220**
6	Grand Marais	€160	–	€60	**€220**
7	Bayfield	€160	–	€60	**€220**
8	Bayfield	€160	–	€60	**€220**
9	Madison	€160	–	€60	**€220**
10	Madison	€160	–	€60	**€220**
11	Minneapolis	€160	–	€60	**€220**
12	Flight home from MSP	–	–	€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/north-woods/

PHOTOS

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Duluth	Mayor Roger Reinert on stairway in Duluth's City Hall.jpg · Cckruger, CC0
Grand Marais	20180227-FS-LSC-0077 (40448639790).jpg · Forest Service, USDA, Public domain
Bayfield	20241018-USDA-RD-WI-N G-7590 (54083862074).jpg · USDAgov, Public domain
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