

door county travel guide

Door County Travel Guide: Nestled between Green Bay and Lake Michigan, Door County is a picturesque destination known for its charming small towns, breathtaking natural beauty, and a plethora of outdoor activities. Offering a perfect blend of relaxation and adventure, it is a must-visit spot for travelers seeking a serene getaway. This travel guide will explore the best of Door County, including attractions, activities, dining, and accommodations.

Overview of Door County

Door County, often referred to as the "Cape Cod of the Midwest," is a peninsula that features 300 miles of shoreline, stunning parks, and vibrant communities. The area is renowned for its lighthouses, cherry orchards, and art galleries. With a population that swells in the summer months, Door County transforms into a bustling hub of activity, making it an ideal destination for families, couples, and solo adventurers alike.

Getting to Door County

Reaching Door County is relatively straightforward, with several transportation options available:

By Car

- From Milwaukee: About a two-hour drive, take I-43 North to Highway 57 North.
- From Chicago: Approximately a three-hour drive, take I-94 North to Highway 57 North.
- From Green Bay: Roughly a 45-minute drive, head north on Highway 57.

By Air

- Nearest Airports: The closest major airport is Austin Straubel International Airport (GRB) in Green Bay, followed by smaller regional airports in Sturgeon Bay and Ephraim.
- Car Rentals: It is advisable to rent a car, as public transportation options within Door County are limited.

Top Attractions in Door County

Door County is teeming with attractions that cater to various interests. Here are some of the must-visit destinations:

1. Peninsula State Park

- Overview: Spanning over 3,700 acres, this park is perfect for hiking, biking, and bird-watching.
- Highlights:
- Eagle Bluff Lighthouse: A historic lighthouse offering guided tours.
- Scenic Drives: Enjoy stunning views along the park's scenic byways.

2. Door County Lighthouses

- Historic Lighthouses: Visit some of the 11 lighthouses that dot the coastline, including:
- Cana Island Lighthouse: Accessible by a causeway, this lighthouse offers breathtaking views from the top.
- Pottawatomie Lighthouse: Located on Rock Island, it is the oldest lighthouse in Wisconsin.

3. Cherry Picking

- Seasonal Activity: From late June to early August, cherry orchards open their doors to visitors.
- Recommended Orchards:
- Seaquist Orchards: Offers a variety of cherries and other fruits, along with a farm market.
- Cherry Hut: Known for its famous cherry pie and ice cream.

4. Fish Creek and Ephraim

- Charming Towns: Stroll through the quaint streets filled with shops, eateries, and art galleries.
- Activities:
- Shopping: Explore local boutiques for unique gifts and art.
- Dining: Enjoy fresh seafood at local restaurants.

Outdoor Activities

Door County is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise, offering a multitude of activities throughout the year.

1. Hiking and Biking

- Trails: Numerous trails wind through state parks and along the coastline.
- Recommended Trails:

- Ridges Sanctuary: A unique area with diverse flora and fauna.
- Ahnapee State Trail: Perfect for biking and walking, stretching 48 miles from Kewaunee to Sturgeon Bay.

2. Water Activities

- Kayaking and Canoeing: Explore the serene waters of the bay. Rentals are available at various locations.
- Fishing: Charter fishing is popular; catch salmon, trout, or perch in the rich waters.
- Sailing and Boating: Rent a boat or take a sailing tour for a scenic experience on the water.

3. Winter Sports

- Snowshoeing and Cross-Country Skiing: Many parks offer groomed trails for winter sports enthusiasts.
- Ice Fishing: A popular activity on the frozen lakes during the winter months.

Cultural Experiences

Door County is rich in culture and arts, providing visitors with unique experiences.

1. Art Galleries and Studios

- Local Artists: Explore galleries showcasing local artists' work, from paintings to pottery.
- Notable Locations:
- Peninsula School of Art: Offers exhibitions, workshops, and classes for all skill levels.
- Fish Creek Art Studio: Features works from regional artists.

2. Festivals and Events

- Cherry Festival: Celebrated in July, featuring cherry-themed foods, crafts, and parades.
- Door County Lighthouse Festival: A weekend in June dedicated to exploring the region's lighthouses.

Dining in Door County

Food is an integral part of the Door County experience, with a variety of dining options available.

1. Seafood Restaurants

- Recommended Spots:
- The Crab Bucket: Known for its crab dishes and casual atmosphere.
- Wild Tomato: Offers delicious wood-fired pizzas and local brews.

2. Cafés and Bakeries

- Local Favorites:
- The White Gull Inn: Famous for its breakfast, especially the cherry-stuffed French toast.
- Baileys Harbor Coffee Company: A cozy café offering locally roasted coffee and pastries.

Accommodations in Door County

Where to stay can greatly enhance your Door County experience. The area offers a range of options, from hotels and inns to vacation rentals.

1. Hotels and Inns

- Recommended Stays:
- The Landmark Resort: Offers stunning views and a range of amenities.
- The Inn at Cedar Crossing: A charming inn located in Sturgeon Bay, known for its inviting atmosphere.

2. Vacation Rentals

- Options: Many homeowners rent out their properties, providing a home-like experience.
- Platforms: Websites like Airbnb and Vrbo feature numerous listings for all budgets.

Tips for Visiting Door County

To make the most of your visit to Door County, consider the following tips:

1. Plan Ahead: Popular attractions can get crowded during peak season; booking accommodations and reservations early is advisable.
2. Dress Appropriately: Weather can change quickly; layers are recommended, especially in fall and spring.
3. Explore Off the Beaten Path: While popular spots are great, don't hesitate to explore lesser-known attractions for a unique experience.
4. Respect Nature: Follow local guidelines to preserve the natural beauty of the parks and

wildlife.

Conclusion

Whether you're seeking outdoor adventures, cultural experiences, or simply a peaceful retreat, the Door County travel guide has something for everyone. With its stunning landscapes, rich history, and vibrant communities, Door County is a destination that promises to create lasting memories. Embrace the charm of this delightful peninsula, and enjoy all that it has to offer.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the must-visit attractions in Door County?

Some must-visit attractions in Door County include Peninsula State Park, Door County Maritime Museum, Fish Creek, and the charming lighthouses like Cana Island Lighthouse.

What is the best time of year to visit Door County?

The best time to visit Door County is during the summer months (June to August) for warm weather and outdoor activities, but fall (September to October) is also popular for beautiful foliage and harvest festivals.

What outdoor activities can you enjoy in Door County?

In Door County, you can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and exploring the scenic coastline. Winter activities include snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Are there any unique local foods to try in Door County?

Yes! Be sure to try local specialties like cherry pie, fish boils, and artisan cheeses. The area is also known for its wineries and breweries offering tastings.

What is the best way to get around Door County?

The best way to get around Door County is by car, as it allows you to explore the various towns and attractions at your own pace. Biking is also popular, especially in the more scenic areas.

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