

MICHIGAN

Known as the Great Lakes State, Michigan looks like a hand, and is easily identifiable on any map of the United States and also from outer space. It's located in the northern Midwest of the USA and borders the Canadian province of Ontario. Michigan is called the Wolverine State and is divided into two peninsulas with a land area of 150,000 square kilometers. The word Michigan (pronounced "Mishigan", not "Mitchigan"), comes from the Native American word "Mishigamaa", which means "large lake". Michigan has the longest freshwater coast in the world: more than 5200km of shoreline. With its population of almost 10 million, Michigan is the 8th most populous state in the United States. Almost 40% of the state's population lives near Detroit, the largest city, while only 3% live in the entire Upper Peninsula.

The French discovered Michigan in the 1600s and founded the city of Detroit in 1701. During the 1700s control of Michigan alternated between the French, the British, and the local Native Americans. In 1796 the British finally abandoned Detroit and their forts on the Great Lakes. Michigan became a territory in 1805 and the 26th state in January 1837.

Michigan is known primarily for two things: automobiles and its beautiful nature. At the beginning of the 1900s Henry Ford revolutionized auto production by developing the moving assembly line. He and his fellow auto manufacturers (Olds, Buick, Dodge, and others) helped transform private life in the United States and created an economic boom in Michigan that attracted immigrants from all over the world. Today, General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford still produce almost 25% of all cars made in the United States. In addition to manufacturing automobiles, Michigan also builds 50% of all office furniture made in the USA, and is home to Dow Chemical, Whirlpool, and Kellogg's, all of which manufacture products people worldwide use on a daily basis.

As a native Michigander, I am proud of my state's beautiful scenery. Tourism is one of Michigan's largest industries. Tourists in Michigan spend around \$17 billion per year visiting the state's amazing nature and its cultural heritage. Among our most spectacular sites are the Sleeping Bear sand dunes along Lake Michigan, Mackinac Island (a uniquely historical island free of automobiles), the Mackinaw Straits bridge (at 8km in length it is the world's third largest suspension bridge), and the Upper Peninsula with the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, the Porcupine Mountains, Tahquamenon Falls, and Isle Royale National Park. Michigan has over 11,000 lakes and is a paradise for fishing, hunting, canoeing, skiing, ice skating, and snowmobiling. We also have several thousand kilometers of pristine beaches with white sand and crystal clear aquamarine water. The climate is ideal for the production of cherries, apples, and Christmas trees—all of which are products that Michigan exports in large quantity across the United States.

Culturally and educationally Michigan also distinguishes itself. Our 15 public universities, 56 private colleges, and 28 public community colleges attract large numbers of foreign students due to their diverse curricula, high academic standards, and pleasant learning environment. Our largest city, Detroit, is home to the Henry Ford Museum, historical Dearborn Village, and the Detroit Institute of the Arts. The Detroit Symphony and Detroit

Opera House enjoy an international reputation. Finally, Michigan has contributed its fair share to the music world, beginning with Motown Records in the 1960s and continuing up through Eminem and Madonna, both of whom are native Michiganders.

So come visit Michigan and enjoy our beautiful nature, friendly people, and many cultural offerings. We'd be happy to host you!