

GO GREAT LAKES BAY GUIDE

Explore the Fall Season

when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan

Fall
Top Things to Do

Fall
Can't-Miss Festivals + Events

Fall
Top Things to Do with Kids



FLIP to explore
in winter



Hold out your left hand. See where the thumb meets the rest of the hand? That's where you'll be when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan. And with six unique cities to discover — Bay City, Birch Run, Chesaning, Frankenmuth, Midland, and Saginaw — you'll find endless ways to explore this fall.

Rise above it all on America's longest treetop canopy walk or immerse yourself in spectacular hues on an autumn river cruise. Spend a day unearthing unique antiques and artisan-crafted finds, or bask in the warm European charm of Michigan's Little Bavaria.

Whether you'll savor one of six inviting cities or wash away your cares amidst waves of fall color...

It's time to Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan

GoGreat.com

Start Exploring FIND FRESH FALL ADVENTURES

Planning to Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan this fall — but need tips on what to see, do, taste, and experience? You've found yourself on the right side of this guide!

Whether you'll set your sights on vibrant hues with a fall color river cruise — or follow your taste buds to fresh cider & donuts at apple orchards & farms — use the page numbers below to skip straight into exploring autumn's best.

Top Things to Do this Fall _____ Skip to page **1**

Can't-Miss Fall Festivals + Events _____ Skip to page **13**

Top Things to Do with Kids this Fall _____ Skip to page **17**



Looking for winter trip ideas instead? Flip this guide over to the other cover!



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Dow Gardens – Midland, MI



TOP THINGS TO DO THIS FALL

Trees ablaze in crimson & gold as radiant hues paint sunset skies — it's fall, folks, and isn't it simply breathtaking? Now is the season for snuggling by campfires and taking leisurely strolls through nature's display.

Find yourself sampling at apple orchards, sauntering through pumpkin patches & corn mazes, and enjoying delicious mulled wine with friends. Whether you hike, bike, or sit back and sip cider together, discover the best of fall when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan!

Outdoors + Nature



Explore amidst 110 acres of breathtaking beauty at Dow Gardens. Drenched in color, the gardens come alive each fall with autumnal shades and unforgettable scenery — including bird's-eye views from four stories high along the nation's longest treetop canopy walk within Whiting Forest!

Take your fall experience to new heights (right through the colorful treetops) at Frankenmuth Aerial Park! Experience combination courses with ropes and ziplines, fly through the air, swing through trees, and challenge yourself at this aerial obstacle course.

Explore thousands of acres of unspoiled nature at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. Whether you boat through the "Everglades of Michigan" with Johnny Panther Quests Adventure Trips, or cruise the 6.5-mile Wildlife Drive auto tour, experience wildlife encounters with spectacular species and marvel at Mother Nature's paintbrush.

Snuggle up under a cozy blanket and let the rhythmic clip-clop of horses' hooves lull you into relaxation with Fantasy Carriage Company or Frankenmuth Carriage Company. Ride in comfort through leaf-lined streets, take in the hues of fall, and gather tidbits of history and lore of Little Bavaria on your ride through Frankenmuth!

Bring your favorite adult beverage and up to 15 friends for a colorful ride through Frankenmuth with PedAle Trolley! Tour the fall colors in unique fashion on a City River Tour, and enjoy 3 - 5 stops at shops, pubs, and attractions. Too few riders for the whole trolley? Look to single seats on Thursday- or Saturday-night bar-hopping tours!

Sip a seasonal hard cider or brew on a pedal-powered mobile party with Sunrise Pedal Trolley! Gather 8 -15 friends, and cruise through Downtown

Bay City, enjoying views of the riverfront alive with fall color! Tour picturesque historic districts, take in Uptown, and enjoy every drop of local flavor on your fall excursion.

Take a colorful trek through Chippewa Nature Center and discover one of the largest private, non-profit nature centers in the United States! With 19 miles of scenic trails, fall for seasonal splendor, autumnal workshops, and an Arboretum with more than 100 species of Michigan-native trees and shrubs.

Gaze at the sunset in serenity on the nearly mile-long shoreline at Bay City State Park — and take a gander at fall color from two observation towers in Tobico Marsh, one of the largest freshwater coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes. Choose the paved trail, or go where you like through acres of gorgeous fall colors!

See shades of autumn like never before amidst picturesque terraces and row-upon-row of bursting blooms at Dahlia Hill. Experience a kaleidoscope of seasonal color from more than 300 unique dahlia varieties across 3,000 plants!

With close to 100 miles of interwoven paths, find yourself immersed in stunning fall splendor along the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail. Wander, hike, or rent bikes from multiple Ray's Bike Shop locations, and enjoy your time beneath the colorful canopy.

Look to the sky along 142 miles of Saginaw Bay Birding Trail for fall glory and glorious nature sightings! Home to 200+ species of birds, discover sprawling shoreline and natural areas that make this trail a birder's paradise.

Tee off amidst autumnal landscapes and gorgeous fall foliage at two of Michigan's must-play public golf courses, The Fortress and Apple Mountain, or discover more than a dozen other courses dotted throughout the region.



BaySail Appledore Tall Ships
Bay City, MI

Guided Fall Boat Tours



Seeing fall color from the water, aboard a gorgeous Appledore Tall Ship schooner? That's an experience you'll only find with BaySail! Get tickets to an Autumn Color Tour River Cruise in October, and enjoy the water, wildlife, and changing leaves on a crisp autumn day!

Savor waterside views of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge with an expert who's been boating these waters most of his life. Book your Fall Color Tour with Johnny Panther Quests Adventure Trips, and relax aboard a shallow-draft boat through stunning displays of fall and wildlife in nature.

Relax aboard a 12-passenger tour boat for a one-of-a-kind ride through autumn foliage along the Cass River with Frankenmuth FunShips. Relish the hues along the countryside on a 30-Minute or 1-Hour River Tour, or experience fall colors — and flavors — on a Wine & Chocolate River Tour.

Float in tranquility down the tree-lined Cass River aboard the iconic Bavarian Belle Riverboat. Soak in a fall color show from the water and learn about

Bavarian Inn Holz Brücke
Frankenmuth, MI



the history and architecture of the Bavarian-themed village of Frankenmuth.

All aboard the Princess Wenonah with Bay City Boat Lines! Experience the splendor of the season as you cruise in comfort or even dance on deck. With Saginaw River Guided Tours, Carefree Cruisin' dinner cruises, and even Rock the Boat concert cruises, choose which way to float into fall!

Bring your own snacks, drinks, and tunes and drift away with Bay City Tiki Boat Tours! Climb aboard for a scenic, three-hour fall color cruise and be mesmerized by seasonal hues all along the Saginaw River.

Paddling + Fishing



Wind through picturesque scenery on color tours through serene waterways this season. Join Chippewa Nature Center on guided kayak outings, or paddle beneath the Bavarian Inn Holz Brücke with Frankenmuth Kayak Adventures. Look to local outfitters Ike's Mobile Kayak Rentals, Nor'East Outdoors, and Cattail Kayak Rental to float through Mother Nature's waterside canvases.

There's never a bad day fishing on "the Bay" when you take a chartered excursion! Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay is known internationally for its splendid walleye and bass fishing. Think big fish and even bigger fall fun on Michigan's big water!



Bay City State Park
Bay City, MI

Camping



Snuggle up around the toasty campfire and roast marshmallows into s'mores — the nights are cooler and so is camping at Bay City State Park! Open year-round, there isn't a season that isn't "camping season" in this region, but it's undeniably gorgeous in autumn.



Frankenmuth FunShips – Frankenmuth, MI

Orchards + Farms



Stop into the small-town orchard of Bayne's Apple Valley Farm, where all is "peace, love, and apples!" Sample what's on tap at Bayne's Hard Cider House, and browse bakery items and goods by Michigan artisans. Enjoy a beverage while you cozy up on a crisp fall day with cider donuts or a gourmet caramel apple — possibly in an igloo on the patio!

Drink fresh-pressed cider and devour donuts, or treat yourself to a cider slushie (and even cider sundaes) at Leaman's Green Applebarn! Wander around or take a hayride through this family-owned farm, try a unique Goat Yoga session, and take home pre-picked or u-pick apples.

Pet farm animals, pick your pumpkin, and taste the treats of the season at Johnson's Pumpkin Farm. From baby gourds to enormous pumpkins that barely squeeze into your trunk, you'll find your favorite on this 25-acre farm. Lose yourself in corn or soybean mazes, but find your way back for live music on weekends, shopping, and cider & donuts!

There's more to Grandpa Tiny's Heritage Farm than meets the eye! From craft fairs to photo ops to picking the perfect pumpkin, you'll find your favorite fall memories are made here! Take a step back in time, meet the animals, have a hayride, and end the day with cider & donuts.

Located on the grounds of Weiss Centennial Farm, explore the five-acre Frankenmuth Corn Maze! With 2.5 miles of winding trails, three observation bridges, and more than 20 interactive game stations, you might get lost, but you'll enjoy it! Play yard games, stop by the petting zoo, and check out hayrides on weekends.

Farmers Markets



Fall is harvest time, which means our local farmers markets are overflowing with fresh produce and one-of-a-kind goods! Shop for homegrown goodness — and gather fresh-cut flowers — local honey, meat, Great Lakes fish, cheese, yummy baked goods, and all-things-fall decor! Sample from the Midland Area Farmers Market, Downtown Saginaw Farmers Market, and Frankenmuth Farmers Market, to name a few.

Johnson's Pumpkin Farm
Saginaw, MI



Shopping



Wander through six refurbished farm buildings packed with unique and seasonal treasures at Pride and Country Village, or track down deals from 100+ brands at Birch Run Premium Outlets. Discover special autumn events at Frankenmuth River Place Shops' European-inspired shopping village, and get your hands on bountiful fall finds!

Antiquing



The largest in the state and voted "Best Antique Mall" in Michigan by AAA, Bay City Antiques Center/Bay Antique Center is a collector's dream! With more than 60,000 square feet of displays and more than 400 vendors, map out your best-day-ever around this block-long motherload — and find dozens of other local treasure troves to add to your fall antiquing adventure!

Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie
Frankenmuth, MI



Fall Festivals



Apple cider & fresh cider donuts, craft fairs & festivals, and all kinds of fall fun, right? Right! For forgotten treasures and unique items, head to the Michigan Antique Festival in Midland. Be ready for bountiful beer sampling, food, and German heritage at Frankenmuth Oktoberfest, and discover countless other celebrations of fall!

Outdoor Dining Patios



Enjoy the crisp fall air — and warming lamps and fire bars that make dining al fresco a delicious experience long into autumn! Discover picturesque views from welcoming patios, and fall in love with local fare from one of dozens of food trucks with seasonal street foods on the menu!



Drift Shoreside Beer Garden
Bay City, MI

Social Districts



From dancing to dining, live music to yoga, outdoor social districts are welcoming and whimsical places to enjoy the fall season! Purposeful street closures for The Commons Pedestrian Plaza & Refreshment Area in Midland provide the perfect place to dine outdoors in your favorite sweater and boots, and sip a spiced cocktail or two!



Beer, Wine + Spirits



Taste 150 years of brewing tradition while soaking up scenic fall river views at Frankenmuth Brewery, Michigan's oldest microbrewery. Choose from 15 beers on tap, including their authentic Oktoberfest lager or Pumpkin Chucker pumpkin ale.

Linger in a laid-back space with six taps and inventive craft at Oracle Brewing Company. Sip on something fit for the season, like C-Beans, a chocolate coffee stout.

Don your flannel and cozy up by the fire pit in the beautiful backyard beer garden of Midland Brewing Company this fall. Order their traditional German Märzen-style Oktoberfest, with hints of slight toffee sweetness.

Sip on suds that pay homage to the area at Tri-City Brewing Company, including Saginaw Joe Porter and Brownhoist Nut Brown Ale — best enjoyed with flavors from rotating food trucks!

Kick back with street eats and seasonal brews at Loggers Brewing Company! Try the Floodwater Coffee Red, featuring caramel & praline coffee, and watch for food trucks and Trivia Nights.

Experience a wine tasting unlike any other (mixing wines together, with lemonade, or even cream soda) at Modern Craft Winery, located inside Bead Haven at Frankenmuth River Place Shops.

Unwind with “worldly wines made local” right in Downtown Midland at Grape Beginnings Winery. Experiment with a five-pour flight and split plates of Crab Puffs and Tomato Basil Bruschetta.

Oracle Brewing Company – Saginaw, MI

Gather in an intimate space at Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie and discover six tap wines, served at the perfect temperature. Try the Tap Sampler or house specialties like Sapsucker, made with bourbon and Michigan maple syrup!

Explore a portfolio of more than 100 products during a guided, six-pour sampling at the Frankenmuth tasting room of Michigan's most-awarded winery, St. Julian (and try the ever-popular Solera Cream Sherry).

Experience a distillery, brewery, and winery in one at Three Bridges Distillery & Taproom! Take a peek at the distilling process through a viewing wall as you sip your Cold Brew Old Fashioned, Oatmeal Stout, or Cinnamon Whiskey Sour.

Slip inside Old Town Distillery to taste vodka, rum, whiskey, and Moonshine, or Old Town Shine, distilled right on-site. Order the Apple Ginger Fizz or Old Town Fashioned — or a cocktail flight to sample all four spirits!

Relax with artisan cocktails in an intimate space inside The Public House, and choose from house cocktails like Cherry Chocolate Rain to enjoy with snacks from Potato Street Tacos to Parm Fries.



The Public House – Bay City, MI

Loggers Brewing Company – Saginaw, MI



Three Bridges Distillery & Taproom – Midland, MI



Frankenmuth Brewery – Frankenmuth, MI



Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie – Frankenmuth, MI

Live Entertainment + Nightlife



With cooler nights, the entertainment scene heats up! Enjoy country superstar Cole Swindell to Celtic punk band The Dropkick Murphys at The Dow Event Center.

Groove to virtuoso Afro-Cuban musicians The Gavilán Brothers at Midland Center for the Arts — and don't miss the Midland Symphony Orchestra performing picturesque works from around the globe in Postcards.

Spend the evening rolling with laughter at The Temple Theatre during comedic performances by Kevin James and the "King of Rant," Lewis Black.

Enjoy Comedy Night at the State Theatre of Bay City on multiple fall weekends, or catch a laugh-out-loud dueling pianos performance, Cool 2 Duel.

Make your way into Stardust to bowl for strikes, but stick around for the thrill of axe-throwing, four escape rooms, an arcade, and The Taproom, with 41 rotating craft beer taps, tasty cocktails, and delicious burgers.

Bounce into retro gaming fun this fall at Crazy Quarters Arcade. Spend hours playing classic arcade games and dozens of pinball machines — then celebrate your new high score with brisket nachos from on-site Tex Mex Grille!

Bring back the nostalgia at Brinstar, with a blend of video arcade games and pinball machines. Sample from a creative menu of mouthwatering burgers and fresh-cut fries, with 12 beers on tap to wash it down!

Dare to find your way out this fall at Great Lakes Escape Game, Saginaw Escape, or Code Breakers Escape & Puzzle Rooms! Work to unravel cryptic clues and break free together before your time is up. Good luck!

Wear your favorite OHL player jersey and enjoy excitement on the ice during an action-packed Saginaw Spirit hockey game at The Dow Event Center.

State Theatre of Bay City — Bay City, MI



Dow Gardens — Midland, MI

Self-Guided Tours



Travel country roads, leaf-peeping places, and scenic spots on a curated Fall Color Tour! Enjoy elevated views and leaf-lined trails with a plan in place or head out on a whim!

Follow your nose and taste buds — and our fresh-pressed Cider & Donuts Tour — for a delicious fall experience all its own!



Saginaw Art Museum
Saginaw, MI

Arts + Culture



Step into a vision that is the Saginaw Art Museum, a 1904 Georgian-Revival mansion with Italianate gardens in full fall splendor.

Explore permanent and changing exhibits in the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum, and enjoy the outdoor Sculpture Garden with 20 bronze and metal sculptures on display.

Discover rich history and autumnal beauty at the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House & Gardens of Saginaw and experience a truly authentic tea ceremony.

Alden B. Dow Home and Studio
Midland, MI



Find your creative niche this fall! Discover the region's largest paint-your-own pottery studio, Painterly Pottery. Hand-create from ready-to-glaze pottery at Space Studios, or attend a Pick-Your-Project Workshop at Board & Brush Creative Studio, and leave with a hand-stained and personally painted piece of wooden decor for your home!

Explore spectacular works of art — virtually, before you venture out — with the Great Lakes Bay Region Public Art Passport! Your “passport” includes information about public works of art with photos, Google map locations, and aerial viewing.

Architectural Tours



With the Mid-Century Modern Midland mobile app to guide you, cruise your way along a self-guided tour of more than 400 stunning structures this fall.

Reserve a guided tour through the Alden B. Dow Home and Studio, an oasis of Mid-Twentieth Century Modern architecture and design.

Take the self-guided Center Avenue Historic District Walking Tour through Bay City and revel in beautiful views of buildings and homes that were built prior to cars!



Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum
Bay City, MI

Museums + History



Dive into a piece of the past while on the water at the permanently moored Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum, located aboard the U.S.S. Edson.

Pay tribute to local Michigan veterans at the Michigan Heroes Museum, the only museum of its kind in the country.

Lose yourself inside a castle, the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History, and explore stunning architecture, captivating exhibits, and extensive collections that tell the story of Saginaw.

CAN'T-MISS FALL FESTIVALS + EVENTS



Find our packed calendar of festivals + events at
GoGreat.com/Events

Frankenmuth Auto Fest
Frankenmuth, MI

Warm apple cider on cool, crisp days. Wooded walks & colorful country drives, spiced lattes & cinnamon sugar donuts. Getting lost in corn mazes and searching for the perfect pumpkin. Now's the time to take part in autumn's quintessential activities and truly celebrate the season of fall!

Gather together for the harvest season at huge auto fests and homemade craft shows, big country get-downs and cozy, intimate events. Explore extravagant markets, sample street fare, and raise your glasses in a toast to autumn when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan.

September



Frankenmuth Auto Fest (September)

Jumpstart fall festival season at Frankenmuth Auto Fest, where you'll find more than 2,500 classic cars, street rods, and muscle cars! Marvel over an impressive array of polished-to-perfection icons representing Michigan's automotive heritage, and don't miss the Big Block Party on Main Street!

The Great Lakes Market at Uptown Bay City (September)

Celebrating the thrill of the hunt, find your fall faves at the annual, two-day autumn edition of The Great Lakes Market. Discover unique treasures, trinkets, and handmade items from more than 70 artists and makers, listen to live music, and enjoy flavors of fall!

Annual Country Craft Show (September)

Fall isn't complete without a trip to Leaman's Green Applebarn for cider slushies and the Annual Country Craft Show! Apples are ripe for the picking and so are hundreds of handmade items at this two-day event with artisan jewelry, wood art, metal crafts, candles, clothing — and fresh apple cider & donuts!

Funtown Chowdown Food Truck Festival (September)

Head to Frankenmuth River Place Shops to feast on street fare from more than 20 Michigan-based food trucks. Listen to live music and sip seasonal brews as you sample your way through the fleet of mobile eateries!

Frankenmuth Oktoberfest (September) Don dirndl or lederhosen for the annual, four-day German festival, Frankenmuth Oktoberfest! Be transported into Little Bavaria where you'll twirl to live music on a large wooden dance floor, dine on authentic German food, and sample beer from the world-famous Hofbräuhaus brewery of Munich.

Japan Festival (September) Experience Japanese performing arts and a wide variety of cultural demonstrations at Japan Festival in Saginaw. Amidst acres of gardens in fall color, learn Japanese arts of bonsai, ikebana, and origami. Enjoy performances of Taiko drums and a Japanese harp (koto) ensemble, and partake in a Japanese tea ceremony.

Hell's Half Mile Film & Music Festival (September)

Connecting filmmakers and musicians with festival-goers, experience community through four days and nights of independent film, live music, and eclectic fun in Downtown Bay City. View genuinely independent films and meet their makers, listen to original music, and mingle with fellow festival-goers at what MovieMaker called one of "The 25 Coolest Film Festivals in the World, 2023."

River of Time Festival (September) See history alive this fall! Join hundreds of historical re-enactors, dressed in period clothing and living the parts of Native Americans, Colonists, French voyageurs, and Civil War-Era soldiers. Marvel at skill demonstrations and period musical performances, watch meal preparations, and taste history.

Michigan Antique Festival (September) Visit hundreds of high-quality dealers sprawled out across 80 acres at the Michigan Antique Festival in Midland. A fall staple for more than five decades, discover one-of-a-kinds, antiques, shabby chic, primitives, and more. Bring your classic car out and show it off, or simply take a gander at one of Michigan's longest-running car shows. Stay for the day, or the weekend — event camping is available!

Frankenmuth Fire Arts Festival (September) The fall weather might be brisk, but the heat is on at Frankenmuth Fire Arts Festival! Learn to use fire to create keepsakes in professionally presented workshops, or experience the artistry of amateur makers in competition. Food trucks and live entertainment (including a fire dancers' troupe) make this hot festival a cool can't-miss!

Michigan's Big Country Fest (September) Slip on cowboy boots and saunter your way into Michigan's Big Country Fest in Frankenmuth. Swing your partner to live music by Shiatown, Waylon Hanel, and more. Enjoy food trucks, sample craft beer flights (and a fantastic Bloody Mary Bar), and learn how to line dance at this boot-scootin' festival!



Frankenmuth Oktoberfest – Frankenmuth, MI

October

Northwood University International Auto Show (October)

Get a glimpse into the automotive future at the Northwood University International Auto Show, the largest outdoor new car show in North America! Experience a modern campus and bleeding-edge display of auto models, with more than 500 vehicles from 65 manufacturers.

Fall Harvest Festival (October) Experience the Homestead Farm at Chippewa Nature Center come alive with demonstrations during Fall Harvest Festival! Partake in living history and programs that focus on autumn traditions of the 19th century. Learn the trades of crop harvesting, blacksmithing, cider making, and woodworking, and listen to traditional music.

Scarecrow Fest (October) Celebrate fall during Scarecrow Fest, a family-friendly event at Frankenmuth River Place Shops with special scarecrow displays throughout Frankenmuth! Enjoy themed weekend activities, launch the ever-popular pumpkin catapult, hop into a barrel train ride, shop arts & crafts, and "fall" into fun!



River of Time Festival – Saginaw, MI

November

Deal Hunters' Weekend (November) While the deer hunters are away, get in on the thrill of the hunt — for bargains — during Deal Hunters' Weekend at Birch Run Premium Outlets! Set your sights on this three-day bargain-bagging extravaganza, which coincides with opening weekend of firearm deer hunting season, and be on the lookout for special events and savings opportunities far beyond everyday finds.



Northwood University International Auto Show – Midland, MI



Frankenmuth Auto Fest – Frankenmuth, MI

TOP Fall Things to Do WITH KIDS



If leaf piles are for jumping in, puddles are for playing, and your people still get caramel apples all over their little faces — then this guide to fall family fun is for you!

With pumpkin patches & corn mazes ready — and fresh apple cider & donuts waiting at orchards & farms — read on to discover what to do this season when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan!

Outdoors + Nature

Rediscover the magic of childhood wonder at Dow Gardens! Kids of all ages will be inspired by 24 beautiful bronze sculptures in Gary Lee Price's Celebrate the Children exhibit, on display through September. Catch a bird's-eye view of brilliance, too, inside Whiting Forest — along a 1,400-foot canopy walk through the trees that stretches as high as 40 feet in the air!

The colorful treetops await your family this fall at Frankenmuth Aerial Park! Swing through the woods and challenge yourselves on an aerial obstacle course with ziplines! Enjoy hours of fall fun and one-of-a-kind memories with the kids.

Crunch leaves underfoot together at Chippewa Nature Center. Explore 19 miles of nature trails and hands-on exhibits at the Homestead Farm, Visitor Center, and Ecosystem Gallery. Be sure to climb the two-story observation tower that overlooks the wetlands!

Meet more than 150 animals, including African penguins and a two-toed sloth, at the Saginaw Children's Zoo! Situated on 10 acres of landscaped paths, pass through beautiful gardens and find peacock feathers before riding the hand-carved carousel and miniature train!

Explore 56 acres of Reptile Sanctuary, Rainforest Experience, and more at Wilderness Trails Zoo. Home to more than 200 animals and 50 different species, get hands-on in the petting area or have a close encounter with a parakeet!

Discover the changing season together along nearly a mile of Saginaw Bay shoreline at Bay City State Park. Walk through a nearby lagoon full of wildlife, birds, and even fish to catch, and climb two observation towers in the scenic Tobico Marsh for fall color and fun.

Take the fam and cruise into fall on a horse-drawn carriage ride! Cozy up together under a warm blanket and ride through streets of Little Bavaria with Fantasy Carriage Company or Frankenmuth Carriage Company. Learn fascinating stories about Frankenmuth, and be sure to frame the photo of this forever memory!



Leaman's Green Applebarn — Freeland, MI



Dow Gardens — Midland, MI



Johnson's Pumpkin Farm — Saginaw, MI



Tomac Pumpkins — Chesaning, MI



Saginaw Children's Zoo — Saginaw, MI

Orchards + Farms

Sip cool cider slushies while experiencing one of the area’s oldest working orchards at Leaman’s Green Applebarn! Have a hayride, try your hand at farm chores, pet and feed baby animals, go on a scavenger hunt, and learn fun facts about farming. Enjoy fresh donuts, pick a peck of apples, and don’t pass up a ride on the Apple Barrel Express!

Wear overalls for fam photos in the pumpkin patch, and lose yourself (but not your kids) in the corn maze at Grandpa Tiny’s Heritage Farm! Take a tractor-pulled hayride, enjoy cider & donuts, and pet mini-horses, goats, sheep, bunnies, pigs, roosters, and a donkey named Rosie!

Have your camera ready at Johnson’s Pumpkin Farm, and watch your kiddos’ eyes go wide as pumpkins are launched through the air by a trebuchet! Pet farm animals, pick gigantic pumpkins, and taste treats of the season. Cider & donuts await at the end of a 13-acre corn maze, along with a kiddie train ride and horse rides!

Watch a real cider press in action at Bayne’s Apple Valley Farm, and savor the results! Kids of all ages will love gigantic, gourmet caramel apples, warm apple pastries, and, of course, delicious cider donuts from the bakery.

A visit to Grandma’s Pumpkin Patch is a seasonal must for fresh cider & donuts — and the Kidland Play Yard! Filled with family-fun activities from a cow train to hayrides, head to designated Toddlerville for fun with wee ones. Pick your perfect jack-o-lanterns, pet farm animals, and find your way through the 3-acre corn maze.

Explore the best of fall through the Frankenmuth Corn Maze! With 2.5 miles of winding trails, three observation bridges, and more than 20 interactive game stations throughout, you’ll never have so much fun getting lost! Play yard games, enjoy a petting zoo, and hop onto a weekend hayride while you’re here.



Leaman's Green Applebarn – Freeland, MI

Outdoor Mini-Golf + More

Kids of all ages will “fall” for Press Play 989! Hit the batting cages, race go-karts, rock 18 holes of mini-golf, challenge the fam to laser tag — and don’t leave hungry! The menu here includes mouthwatering pizza, wings, wraps, and sandwiches — with wine & cold draft beer for the “big kids”!

Teach wee ones how to mini-golf and challenge bigger kids to up their putt-putt game at Alpine Mountain! Choose between two 18-hole courses, or play a round on each. Jump into go-karts, try bank-shot basketball, and visit the arcade for all-around family fun!

Putt-putt your way through an early-fall afternoon and take photos in front of the rushing waterfall at Dutch Village Adventure Park! Swing for a bucket of balls in the batting cages, and save room for some Hudsonville ice cream!

Take in the sights of fall and a memorable sunset over Liberty Harbor Marina at Buoy 18 Miniature Golf, Arcade & Ice Cream Shop! Order double scoops and hit the arcade inside the game room, free with your mini-golf purchase!

Be part of the excitement as up-and-coming NHL hopefuls defend, shoot, and score at a Saginaw Spirit hockey game! Grab concessions early, and don’t miss a minute of the non-stop action.



Grandpa Tiny's Heritage Farm – Frankenmuth, MI

Indoor Waterparks

There’s a chill to the air outside, but your family will warm up in no time to 50,000 square feet of aquatic fun at Zehnder’s Splash Village Hotel & Waterpark — one of the only indoor waterparks in the country offering two waterparks in one! With day passes and hotel packages, fall into fun on tube slides, lounge in lazy rivers, get doused by the 400-gallon dumping bucket, and relax poolside in your private cabana rental — all indoors!

Choose your favorite from two waterslides and four indoor pools (one pool & whirlpool are reserved just for grown-ups!) at Bavarian Inn Lodge. Swim, play, and enjoy quality time at the largest family fun center inside any Midwest hotel. With a two-story Children’s Village play area and more than 150 video games, your family is sure to have a ball!



Zehnder's Splash Village – Frankenmuth, MI



The Playground – Midland, MI

Indoor Family Fun Zones

Slip into bowling shoes and try for a strike — and find your way out of four escape rooms, play two-story laser tag, and hop into indoor bumper cars at Stardust! With an exciting cosmic light show, parent-approved music videos, more than 50 video arcade games (and The Taproom on-site, parents), treat your family to all kinds of fun!

Indoor fun is endless at Press Play 989! Try your skills at laser tag (parents vs. kids), or battle to see who’s the next Skee-Ball champ in the action-packed arcade. Enjoy an afternoon to remember with games, giggles, pizza, pop, and plenty of high-fives!

Choose your adventure inside Valley Lanes Family Entertainment Center! Whether it’s bowling, mini-golf, or bumper cars, enjoy the thrill of family fun. With arcade games, laser maze challenges, escape rooms, and delicious food, you’re sure to find something for everyone here this fall!

Flip, fly, and soar to new heights on ginormous, wall-to-wall trampolines at Airborne Adventure Park! Defy gravity on more than a dozen attractions, and practice tricks and flips together in Freestyle Jump!

When fall feels chilly, let the kiddos burn off energy indoors at The Playground — where parents can kick back with a latte and take a break while kids slide, climb, hide, roll, swing, and have a ball in this safe, indoor playground.

Laugh and giggle at views of your crew on a visual adventure through a maze of more than 1,000 mirrors in the Ultimate Mirror Maze! Try The Vault Laser Beam Challenge and see if you can twist, squeeze, and duck your way through laser beams.

Grab a roll of quarters for family fun and retro gaming at Crazy Quarters Arcade. See who the pinball wizard really is on dozens of pinball machines, and enjoy arcade classics including Pac-Man, Galaga, and Asteroids Deluxe!

Step into Brinstar to play a mix of video arcade games and pinball machines, vintage to newer — and treat the fam to specialty burgers and fresh-cut fries while you’re here!

Put your skills to the test in the River Place Game Room at Frankenmuth River Place Shops, where you’ll be met with more than 40 arcade game challenges. Choose from countless prizes in the redemption center, and find sweet rewards at nearby SugarHigh Bakery and SugarRush Sweets & Treats.



Mid-Michigan Children's Museum
Saginaw, MI

Museums + More

Discover 16,000 square feet where “big kids” have just as much fun as wee ones at the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum! With hands-on, interactive galleries from “Insides Out” to “Water, Water Everywhere” — and a Tinker Track where kids can build and ride a scooter — color your own masterpiece and find infinite fun this fall.

View the night sky on an overhead dome and explore outer space without leaving your seat at Delta College Planetarium. Discover astronomy, art, history, culture, and nature — and a gift shop that's out of this world!

Discover the largest collection of motorized fire trucks in the world — and shelves upon shelves of Tonka toys — at the Antique Toy and Firehouse Museum!

Enjoy a place where creativity and collaboration are encouraged, at Spark!Lab@ Smithsonian inside Midland Center for the Arts. Explore what it means to be an inventor in this hands-on learning lab and discover your inner-Einstein!

Bavarian Inn Castle Shops
Frankenmuth, MI



Kids' Shopping

Shop treats, trinkets, and nostalgic candies at Happy Go Lucky, browse kites to wooden toys at Toyberg, or wander into Joyful Tantrum to let the kids experience “a toy store, unplugged”!

Take your time exploring seven gift shops filled with unique toys, candy, and souvenirs at Bavarian Inn Castle Shops — and let the kiddos pick out a special treat from the bakery!

Make your way to Frankenmuth River Place Shops to hunt for souvenirs together, then sample fudge to gourmet cupcakes before hitting the arcade.



Space Studios
Midland, MI

Arts + Entertainment

Make time for quality time working on a piece together at Painterly Pottery! Choose from thousands of unfinished clay items, ready to be personalized by yours truly, at the region's largest paint-your-own pottery studio.

Get creative together at the Glaze Bar and discover unique Pick-A-Project events inside Space Studios! With a wide selection of pottery ready for you to paint, bring your imagination and make it your own.

Brighten up everyone's fall by bringing the kids to The Dow Event Center to see Bluey's Big Play, a brand-new theatrical adaptation of the Emmy® Award-winning children's TV series.

If belting out tunes together would bring your kiddos big smiles, get to Midland Center for the Arts this fall for Disney's Encanto: The Sing-Along Film Concert. Hear Grammy® Award-winning songs performed by a live band while watching the full film!

Discover more than 100 stores and incredible discounts at Birch Run Premium Outlets, with Go! Games & Toys for kids to Pottery Barn Outlet for parents!

Kid-Friendly Fall Festivals

Enjoy tasty street foods (with options for even the pickiest eaters!) at 20+ food trucks during Funtown Chowdown Food Truck Festival this fall! Or, soar into the season — and launch the pumpkin catapult — during Scarecrow Fest at Frankenmuth River Place Shops. With family events fit for all ages, your calendar will be packed all autumn long!