

GO GREAT LAKES BAY GUIDE

Explore the Winter Season

when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan

Winter
Top Things to Do

Winter
Can't-Miss Holiday Traditions + Events

Winter
Top Things to Do with Kids



FLIP to explore
in fall



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 winter.

Trek four stories high in the snowcapped trees on America's longest canopy walk or race down hand-packed toboggan runs inside a magical winter sports park. 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 along miles & miles of unspoiled, snowy trails...

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

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Start Exploring **FIND FRESH WINTER ADVENTURES**

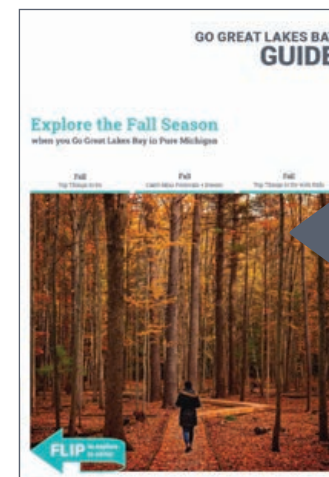
Planning to Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan this winter — but need tips on what to see, do, taste, and experience? You've found yourself on the right side of this guide!

Whether you'll bundle up & venture out into the snowy scenery or find inviting places to cozy in, warm up & unwind, use the page numbers below to skip straight into exploring winter's best.

Top Things to Do this Winter ————— Skip to page **1**

Can't-Miss Holiday Traditions + Events ————— Skip to page **11**

Top Things to Do with Kids this Winter ————— Skip to page **19**



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



Scan the QR codes throughout this guide to explore more on GoGreat.com



Dow Gardens – Midland, MI

TOP THINGS TO DO THIS WINTER

Bundled up in bright-white snow, snuggled 'round for hot cocoa, or off to festivals and seasonal celebrations? Indulge in each and more as you discover these top winter wonderlands and extra-cool events when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan!

Whether you're a nature lover and snowy trails make you smile, or you're a connoisseur of cozy and only indoor warmth will do, read on to find your scene among these top wintertime outings.

Outdoors + Nature



Step off the beaten path and discover 110 acres of winter wonders at Dow Gardens. Explore within Whiting Forest, and travel four stories high along the nation's longest canopy walk! Enjoy a bird's-eye view of snowy forest and ponds, and dare to step out onto the Orchard Arm — with its glass-floored overlook forty feet in the air!

Bundle up and get outdoors at Midland City Forest, transformed each year into a Winter Sports Park! Head for the fan-favorite first — four snow-packed, iced, and elevated toboggan runs! Slip into skates at the large outdoor ice rink, hit the trails on snowshoes or a fat tire bike, then warm up with hot cocoa by the bonfire or inside the Chalet.

Snuggle under a blanket for a horse-drawn ride with Fantasy Carriage Company or Frankenmuth Carriage Company. Experience snowy scenery along the rhythmic ride, travel over the Bavarian Inn Holz Brücke (wooden bridge), and experience the beauty of "Little Bavaria."

With 19 miles of beautifully groomed trails, strap snowshoes or cross-country skis and glide into a winter adventure at Chippewa Nature Center! Head indoors to warm up and watch for wildlife at observation areas. Learn about native species, visit the gift shop, or simply gaze at the wintertime scenery and picturesque Pine River.

Experience Bay City State Park like never before this winter — its mile-long shoreline covered in snow, and trails groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing adventures! Explore the trails and snowy woodlands on a fat tire bike for

smooth riding, and stop into the Visitor's Center to warm up after your excursion.

Bring your own skates or lace up a rental pair at the Frankenmuth Ice Rink inside Zehnder Park. With room for 200 skaters per hour, bring your partner and gather friends to glide over fresh ice, cooled by its own refrigeration system and smoothed with its own Zamboni!

Twirl under the colorful lights and skate alongside the scenic Saginaw River at Wenonah Park in Downtown Bay City. Rent a pair of blades or bring your own, dress warmly for this waterfront experience, and prepare for fun and figure 8s this winter!

Coast down snowboarding hills and discover sledding thrills at Hoyt Park in Saginaw! Strap your boots into cross-country skis for a winter workout and fresh air, or pick up a stick for a friendly game of hockey on the outdoor ice rink. Skate rentals are available, and so is hot chocolate in the warming house!

If your version of winter wonderland includes a frozen lake full of fish, then set up your shanty on Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay (or the Saginaw River)! With safe fishing ice typically locked in by early- to mid-January, enjoy what's arguably the best ice fishing for walleye in all of Michigan!

Explore miles upon miles of connected trails and sprawling, snowy countryside on the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail. Winter lovers will find fresh air, gorgeous scenery, and open mileage for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or fat tire biking.

Trek gently to enjoy the Saginaw Bay Birding Trail. Bundle up, bring your binoculars, and discover this birder's paradise along 142 miles of wintry shoreline!



Bay City Antiques Center/Bay Antique Center
Bay City, MI

Shopping



With more than 50,000 trims, gifts, and ornaments to shop — including the opportunity to have your items personalized — experience the world's largest Christmas store, Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland!

Scout for treasures at the largest antique mall in Michigan, Bay City Antiques Center/Bay Antique Center. Explore 60,000 square feet and more than 400 booths in this block-long antique mall, and shop an impressive collection of local and regional antiques, alongside European imports.

If winter is simply your reason for a new wardrobe, seasonal decor, gifts, and housewares, then Birch Run Premium Outlets is your wonderland! Enjoy savings of up to 65% at more than 100 stores, including Columbia Factory Store, Michael Kors, Nike, The North Face, Pottery Barn Outlet, and more.

Brighten up winter with an outing to more than 40 stores at the European-inspired Frankenmuth River

Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland
Frankenmuth, MI



Place Shops! Sample Michigan-made wine, spirits, and fudge, and discover the kind of shopping experience you'll want to make a winter tradition!

Explore "Michigan's Largest Village of Unique Shops," dusted with snow and perfectly cozy in the winter, at Pride and Country Village. Travel through historic, refurbished farm buildings and shops including a woodshop, candlemaker, farmhouse full of antiques, furnishings, and decor — and the Schoolhouse Fashion Boutique for winter wear!

Coffee Shops + Tea Lounges



Wrap your hands around a nice, warm mug of delicious winter respite! Breathe in the aroma of locally roasted beans from Creation Coffee, Populace Coffee, or Live Oak Coffeehouse — or find just the right cup of tea or a seasonal latte at Grove Tea Lounge. With full menus to small plates for savoring, baked goods and pastries made fresh, and java jolts to mellow-mood teas, let cozy coffee shops and tea lounges warm you up this winter.



Frankenmuth Kaffee Haus
Frankenmuth, MI

Eat + Drink



Whether you cuddle by candlelight at Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie, indulge in Italian cuisine and a dramatic dining experience at Gratzl, delight in delicately crafted homegrown gourmet at Aster, or pair fine wines fermented in-house with decadent menu items at Artisan Urban Bistro, discover tantalizing ambiances and magical evenings at restaurants that are ready for winter date nights!



Aster — Midland, MI



Frankenmuth Brewery – Frankenmuth, MI

Beer, Wine + Spirits



Watch the flakes fly through a wall of windows, overlooking the scenic Cass River, while staying warm & cozy inside Michigan's oldest microbrewery, Frankenmuth Brewery. Choose from 15 beers on tap, including winter's flagship Christmas Town Ale.

Linger in a laid-back space with six taps and inventive craft at Oracle Brewing Company. Order their fan-favorite C-Beans, a delicious chocolate coffee stout.

Cozy up at Midland Brewing Company, overlooking a wintry outdoor beer garden that backs up to the Pere Marquette Rail Trail! Try their winter seasonal, Lumberjack Brawl Midnight Wheat, with notes of chocolate, caramel, banana, and clove.

Sip on suds that pay homage to the area at Tri-City Brewing Company, like the robust Saginaw Joe Porter and Brownhoist Nut Brown Ale. Keep watch for Hot Dog Fridays and Trivia Nights!

Kick back with seasonal brews, seltzers, and wines in a relaxing space at Loggers Brewing Company. Try the Superior Sunset Ryewine or Electric Squirrel IPA and keep an eye on the calendar for Trivia Nights, Euchre, and live music.

Indulge in a one-of-a-kind wine tasting (mixing wines with each other, lemonade, or even cream soda) at Modern Craft Winery, tucked inside Bead Haven at Frankenmuth River Place Shops.

Experience "worldly wines made local" in Downtown Midland at Grape Beginnings Winery. Split plates of Crab Puffs and Honey G Bruschetta while you sample your way through a five-pour tasting flight!

Gather in a warm, inviting space at Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie and order the Tap Sampler to explore six tap wines! Savor regional charcuterie or build your own tasting board to enjoy with house specialty cocktails like Sapsucker, made with bourbon and Michigan maple syrup.

Partake in a six-pour tasting session to explore a portfolio of more than 100 products at the Frankenmuth tasting room of Michigan's most-awarded winery, St. Julian — and be sure to try the Solera Cream Sherry!

Distillery, brewery, winery — experience all three in one at Three Bridges Distillery & Taproom! Order up a wood-fired sourdough pie, available on-site from Pizza Baker, and enjoy alongside your Cold Brew Old Fashioned, Oatmeal Stout, or Cinnamon Whiskey Sour.

Sink into an overstuffed leather chair by the fireplace inside Old Town Distillery, and taste vodka, rum, whiskey, and Moonshine, distilled right on-site! Order the Old Town Fashioned — or try a cocktail flight to sample all four spirits.

Unwind with artisan cocktails in an intimate space inside The Public House, and choose from inventive, handcrafted options like the Ruby Soho or Cherry Chocolate Rain.

Arts + Culture



Step into an awe-inspiring collection of works at the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum. Enjoy changing exhibitions in the gallery and bundle up for the outdoor Sculpture Garden, beautiful when blanketed in winter white.

Discover the historic charm of the 1904 Georgian-Revival mansion that is the Saginaw Art Museum — with two award-winning modern wings, a permanent collection in excess of 2,000 objects, and a dynamic exhibition program!

Explore an oasis of Mid-Twentieth Century Modern architecture, the Alden B. Dow Home and Studio. Schedule a tour this winter to witness living art and timeless artistry.

Indulge in traditional Japanese arts, snowy scenery, and cozy indoor experiences at the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House & Gardens of Saginaw. Enjoy a Traditional Tea Ceremony and explore workshops in origami, bonsai, and calligraphy.

Relax and create in a comfortable environment inside Painterly Pottery, the region's largest paint-your-own pottery studio. Choose from more than 1,000 unfinished items, and discover classes in mosaic design or glass fusion.

Create something new this season at Board & Brush Creative Studio! Bring out your inner artist at fun, friendly workshops that result in inspirational pieces of wooden decor for your home.

Discover an out-of-this-world creative place, Space Studios, and the Glaze Bar & Pottery Studio inside. DIY from ready-to-be glazed pottery, or learn wheel throwing, hand-building, and glazing techniques during a scheduled session.

Visit the gallery that makes art accessible to all at Studio 23/The Arts Center. Drop into the on-site Craft Bar, a self-service art experience! Choose a project off the menu and receive your packet with instructions and supplies.



Michigan Heroes Museum – Frankenmuth, MI



Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum – Bay City, MI

Museums + History



Discover the only museum of its kind in the country, the Michigan Heroes Museum. Featuring uniforms and displays of Michigan veterans of our seven foreign wars and space program, learn the stories of true Michigan heroes!

Board the U.S.S. Edson, a National Historic Landmark that is home to the Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum. Take a self-guided or veteran-guided tour through the permanently moored ship and its passageways and Officer's Quarters.

Take a trip back in time at the French chateau-style castle in the middle of the city, the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History. Discover three floors of fascinating displays, alongside traveling exhibits and special programs.

Alden B. Dow Home and Studio – Midland, MI



Live Entertainment + Nightlife



Discover cool, cold-weather events inside the warmth of The Dow Event Center! Be part of the action from the best seats at a Saginaw Spirit hockey game, enjoy the Aaron Lewis 2023 Acoustic Tour, or experience Mania: The Abba Tribute, with fantastic costumes, staging, and effects.

Get your tickets for the live stage at Midland Center for the Arts this winter! Hear two of jazz's brightest stars in Jazz at Lincoln Center: Sing & Swing or marvel at the Aurora Borealis as the Midland Symphony Orchestra performs alongside a live film featuring the Northern Lights.

Appreciate art deco inside the State Theatre of Bay City, and live entertainment on stage. Rock your night away to different beats and bands with tickets to the improv show Band Roulette, or sign up for side-splitting laughter at Comedy Night with Rob Little.

Step into historic grandeur at The Temple Theatre this winter and become mesmerized by The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

When winter is just too cold, step into bowling shoes and roll for a strike at Stardust — then find your way out of four escape rooms, try axe-throwing, and test your skills on arcade games! With tasty food and The Taproom on-site, enjoy this wonderland of winter entertainment.

Cozy in for retro gaming fun at Crazy Quarters Arcade. Discover dozens of pinball machines and enjoy hours of playing arcade classics including Pac-Man, Galaga, Asteroids Deluxe, and Space Invaders Deluxe!

Open late-night for added fun, enjoy old-school arcade games, specialty burgers, and a selection of 12 beers on tap at Brinstar. Shoot for high scores on classics from Centipede to Duck Hunt — and try to get your name on the Game Leader Board!

Decipher cryptic clues, piece together captivating puzzles, and toy with intriguing gadgets to get your team out of a locked room at Great Lakes Escape Game, Saginaw Escape, or Code Breakers Escape & Puzzle Rooms. Search for answers, but act fast — either solve the puzzles to break out, or run out of time!

Saginaw Spirit Hockey at The Dow Event Center – Saginaw, MI



The Temple Theatre – Saginaw, MI

Live Holiday Entertainment



Take your holidays to new heights at the State Theatre of Bay City with A Rocky Mountain Christmas, A John Denver Tribute. Revisit holiday classics on the silver screen at Sundays in the City movies, and enjoy every minute of A Miracle on 34th Street or It's A Wonderful Life.

Celebrate the season at Midland Center for the Arts! See Cirque Dreams Holidaze dazzle in a Broadway-style production infused with contemporary circus arts, or delight in Irving Berlin's White Christmas The Musical.

Enjoy a delicious lunch or dinner at Zehnder's Restaurant, then take in a fun-filled holiday show by Three Men and a Tenor — or learn how to make yuletide favorites at multiple Zehnder's Holiday How-To Classes.

Savor seasonal delights amidst the grandeur of The Temple Theatre. Experience the Saginaw Choral Society: A Classy Brassy Christmas & More, and enjoy the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra performing popular holiday classics.

Jingle all the way to The Dow Event Center to hear multiple Grammy® nominee Martina McBride sing the sounds of the season in an intimate theater setting during The Joy of Christmas Tour 2023.



Fantasy Carriage Company
Frankenmuth, MI

Holiday Light Shows



Sing along to the sounds of Christmas at the magical, 40-foot tree that is the centerpiece of Frankenmuth's Spectacular Musical Tree Show! Enjoy an experience

where time slows, popular Christmas songs play, and thousands of colorful lights dance about.

Bring hot cocoa & marshmallows and get cozy in your car for Little Bavaria's "Little" Driving Light Tour! Play holiday tunes and follow the tour through festive streets and twinkling neighborhoods, over bridges and beneath brilliant light displays.

Find your new favorite tradition at The Freeland Lights! Watch the trees dance and see Christmas displays come to life from the warmth of your

Dow Gardens Christmas Walk
Midland, MI



vehicle. Listen to sounds of the season with your radio at 93.9 FM, and sing along to favorite Christmas songs as thousands of lights dazzle and dance to the classics!

Take a leisurely drive along 25 Christmas Lane, leading to Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland, and experience a dazzling display of more than 100,000 holiday lights, aglow every evening from dusk to midnight, year-round!

Holiday Events



Join carolers and stroll along gently-lit pathways through a winter wonderland during the Dow Gardens Christmas Walk. Sip a steaming cup of hot cocoa or coffee while enjoying an old-fashioned evening of candlelight, complemented by merry melodies of the season.

Celebrate the wonders of Christmas at Frankenmuth ChristKindlMarkt, a traditional German Christmas market filled with artisan



State Theatre of Bay City
Bay City, MI

goods to fresh greenery. Experience live entertainment, festive foods, and the holiday spirit — and sip on warm mulled wine while you shop!

Make your holidays merry & bright during The Great Lakes Market - Holiday Market! Celebrate the season with unique creations of art and crafts, food and holiday magic, and experience a greenhouse filled with Christmas trees. Sing along to your favorites as live musicians play, and give yourself the gift of delicious food truck flavors!

Experience holiday merriment on Sundays leading up to Christmas at Sundays in the City in Downtown Bay City! Discover shops and eateries decked out for the holidays, free horse-drawn carriage rides, strolling carolers, and holiday movies at the historic State Theatre of Bay City.

CAN'T-MISS HOLIDAY TRADITIONS + EVENTS



Find our packed calendar of festivals + events at
[GoGreat.com/Events](https://www.gogreat.com/events)

Dow Gardens Christmas Walk
Midland, MI

Wish lists & shopping trips, fresh snow & hot cocoa — the season of merriment & joy is upon us! Now is the time to take part in all the magical events and twinkling holiday traditions that make this season so special.

Whether you and yours gather for tree lighting ceremonies, caroling adventures, or holiday markets — meet up at 25 Christmas Lane and shop the world's largest Christmas store or mingle at merry concerts together — read on to discover jolly events, joyous outings, and the places to be for all the holiday glee when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan!

Holiday Traditions



Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland (Year-Round) The world's largest Christmas store and a must-visit holiday destination, spend quality time with your loved ones

at Bronner's! Shop from 50,000 trims, gifts, and ornaments — and get yours personalized for the perfect family souvenirs. Look for ornament signing events throughout the season, and be sure to snap a photo with Santa!

Fantasy Carriage Company (Year-Round) With freshly fallen snow and sprigs of pine, snuggle under a blanket for a horse-drawn holiday ride! Take in twinkling lights through festive neighborhoods and see shops along Frankenmuth's Main Street trimmed with Christmas bounty. Sing carols and spend time in silent awe on this beautiful and scenic holiday tradition.

Frankenmuth Carriage Company (Year-Round) Cozy up for a holiday memory in the making! Enjoy your horse-drawn ride through seasonal displays and light-lined streets of Downtown Frankenmuth, and ride over the Bavarian Inn Holz Brücke (wooden bridge) while visiting other holiday highlights.

Santa's Reindeer Farm (November – December) Take a break from the holiday hustle at Santa's Reindeer Farm on Grandpa Tiny's Heritage Farm in Frankenmuth. Gather in a cozy barn to meet Santa and his reindeer-in-training (and be sure to write

your letters to Santa before you arrive). Enjoy this special experience that includes making a keepsake ornament with the Woodworker and becomes a one-of-a-kind annual holiday outing.

Nate & Mary Ida Doan Santa House (November – December) Capture the Christmas spirit with a visit to Santa in his workshop at the Nate & Mary Ida Doan Santa House inside Veterans Park in Bay City. Explore this cozy log cabin and feast your eyes on fascinating displays, like elves in the kitchen busily making cookies! Have your photo taken with Santa, keep watch for visiting reindeer, and surely experience the magic of Christmas.

Midland Santa House (December) Step into pure magic inside the North Pole that is the Midland Santa House! With holiday music playing and jolly elves busy at work, walk through a magical mixture of lofts and displays, cozy up to a fieldstone fireplace, and sit in Santa's chair! Visit with Old Saint Nick himself, be on the lookout for reindeer (who may use the slanted roof for take-offs), and return time and again to experience the merriment of the season!

The Northern Star Train (December) All aboard The Northern Star Train — tickets are free and the memories are priceless! Operational throughout the Midland Santa House season, take a magical 20-minute ride through town aboard a whimsical train decked out in holiday spirit. Choo-choo!



Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland – Frankenmuth, MI



Fantasy Carriage Company – Frankenmuth, MI

Holiday Light Shows

25 Christmas Lane (Year-Round) Leading to Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland, drive along 25 Christmas Lane to witness a dazzling display of more than 100,000 holiday lights! Discover animated decorations and twinkling lights adorning every lamp post and tree. Open every evening of the year, experience this half-mile lane of lights and the perfect holiday photo op!

Little Bavaria's "Little" Driving Light Tour (Seasonal) Fill your mugs with hot cocoa, set the radio to holiday tunes, and head out for Little Bavaria's "Little" Driving Light Tour! Starting at the Willkommen archway at the entrance to the city, tour festive streets as you drive over bridges and underneath brilliant light displays!

Frankenmuth's Spectacular Musical Tree Show (November – January) Meet at this magical, 40-foot tree for a holiday interlude! Experience a seven-minute journey through popular Christmas music with thousands of lights dancing about to each beautifully remixed song.

Saginaw Waterworks Lighting Ceremony (November) From darkness to brilliance in the blink of an eye, experience the iconic Saginaw Waterworks Lighting Ceremony and delight in a display that's been lit for nearly a century! Don't miss the moment — arrive early — and savor the magical display of hundreds of thousands of lights, the official kickoff to Holidays in the Heart of the City.

Santa's Arrival & Wenonah Park Tree Lighting (November) Join with hundreds in Wenonah Park for Santa's Arrival and the Wenonah Park Tree Lighting! Enjoy carolers and musical performances, sip hot cocoa in the pavilion — and fancy yourselves a horse-drawn carriage ride to mark this joyous occasion!

Midland County Courthouse Lighting (November) Enjoy a merry, magical evening as the lights go bright at the Midland County Courthouse! Kick off the holiday season with cocoa and cookies, and welcome Santa Claus as he makes his way over from the Tridge to officially open the Midland Santa House for the season!

The Freeland Lights (December) Once you've seen The Freeland Lights free show at Hayes Park, you'll discover a new annual holiday tradition! Drive into the park, tune your radio to 93.9 FM, and listen to your favorite Christmas songs while thousands of lights dazzle and dance to the classics.



Holiday Events



Festival of Trees (November) Visit a magical winter wonderland of decorated trees and wreaths, and pick up raffle tickets for your chance to win one at the Festival of Trees in Midland. Stroll through seasonal creations of local artists and designers, take home holiday decorating inspiration, and join thousands who attend this annual, three-day event!

Holidays in the Heart of the City (November) Feel the Christmas spirit in Saginaw at Holidays in the Heart of the City. Visit Santa & Mrs. Claus in Borchard Park, where free pony rides are found. Enjoy caroling, hot cocoa, and cookies while visiting holiday open houses — and take in horse-drawn wagon rides, holiday concerts, and the finale fireworks show! Don't miss the next morning's Christmas Parade, with marching bands, floats, and costumed characters!

Midland Santa Parade & Cocoa Crawl (November) Get your twinkle on and spend an afternoon at this year's Midland Santa Parade & Cocoa Crawl. Join the jolliest party in town, then stop at various Downtown shops to sample their spin on that cold-weather classic: hot cocoa! Vote for your favorite and enjoy a merry good day!

Zehnder's Holiday Lunch & Dinner Shows (November) Taste tradition and be entertained by a one-of-a-kind holiday show during Three Men and a Tenor Holiday Lunch & Dinner Shows at Zehnder's Restaurant. Enjoy your meal of delicious, golden-fried chicken and mouthwatering sides — served up with plenty of belly laughs!

Tis the Season Weekends (November – December) Experience the magic of the holidays during Tis the Season Weekends at Frankenmuth River Place Shops! Join in song with strolling carolers, meet Santa Claus and his North Pole team, and celebrate Christmas in the elaborately decorated Santa's Workshop.

Frankenmuth ChristKindlMarkt (November – December) Explore troves of seasonal treasures & treats at mid-Michigan's largest open-air holiday market, modeled after the traditional Christmas markets of Germany. With live holiday music filling the air, sip mulled wine or piping hot cocoa as you shop artisan gifts to seasonal greenery. Sample hot soups, fresh-baked breads, and freshly grilled local Willi's Sausages — and snap a photo with Santa for the family holiday card!



Dow Gardens Christmas Walk – Midland, MI



Sundays in the City – Bay City, MI

Sundays in the City (November – December)

Experience magic & merriment on Sundays leading up to Christmas during Sundays in the City in Bay City! Discover shops and eateries Downtown, all decked out for the holidays, and enjoy free horse-drawn carriage rides, strolling carolers, and holiday movies at the historic State Theatre of Bay City.

The Great Lakes Market – Holiday Market (December)

Celebrate the season of merriment with unique creations of art and crafts — and spend a magical afternoon or evening inside a greenhouse filled with over 40 Christmas trees! Make your holidays bright with architectural salvage and intriguing handmade items, merrily explore food truck fare, and sing along as live musicians play!

Dow Gardens Christmas Walk (December) Stroll a gently lit pathway through a winter wonderland during the annual Dow Gardens Christmas Walk. Join carolers in songs of the season, sip delicious hot cocoa or coffee, meet Santa's reindeer (one weekend only), and enjoy a free, old-fashioned evening of candlelight and music.

St. Charles Old-Fashioned Christmas (December)

Experience the nostalgia of an old-fashioned Christmas in Downtown St. Charles! Enjoy tasty food vendors, a tree lighting ceremony, visits with Santa, and free kids' activities — wrapped up with a festive parade!

Holly Jolly Days (December) Take part in a special shopping experience during Holly Jolly Days in Downtown Midland. Stroll past beautifully painted window displays, and stop into boutiques and shops decorated for the season. Cozy up by outdoor fireplaces with a beverage from The Commons Refreshment Area while discovering special holiday finds — and enjoy complimentary holiday stations and free, scenic horse-drawn carriage rides!

Christmas at the Pines (December) Pay homage to history and the holidays during Christmas at The Pines. Encounter a magical tour through the home of Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow, guided by docents, and experience what Christmas was like when Midland's famous family celebrated it together.

Hollyday Art Fair (December) Make it an annual tradition to shop the Hollyday Art Fair at Andersen Enrichment Center in Saginaw! With room-upon-room of artisan gifts for the season, find distinctive items, meet Michigan makers, and pick up fresh holly! Savor a soup and sandwich lunch, and take home sweets & treats for your holiday entertaining.

Frankenmuth River Place Shops – Frankenmuth, MI





The Temple Theatre – Saginaw, MI



Midland Center for the Arts – Midland, MI



Midland Center for the Arts – Midland, MI



The Dow Event Center – Saginaw, MI

Delta College Planetarium – Bay City, MI

Live Holiday Entertainment

Midland Center for the Arts (November – December)

Add some sparkle to your holidays at MCFTA! Delight in Irving Berlin's *White Christmas The Musical* or be dazzled by a whimsical holiday spectacular of contemporary circus arts in *Cirque Dreams Holidayze*. Make the season magical with the Tony® Award-nominated musical *Million Dollar Quartet*, or listen as Broadway star Abby Mueller sings all your favorite yuletide tunes, accompanied by the Midland Symphony Orchestra.

State Theatre of Bay City (November – December) Sing along at the State Theatre of Bay City at *A Rocky Mountain Christmas*, *A John Denver Tribute*. Share in joy as Bay Chorale performs their annual Christmas concert, see Cole in *Your Stocking* on stage, and watch Sundays in the City movies including *Christmas Vacation* and *A Miracle on 34th Street*.

The Temple Theatre (December) Step into timeless holidays at The Temple Theatre. Experience Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra: *Holiday Superstars*, hear the Saginaw Choral Society in *A Classy Brassy*

Christmas & More, or enjoy a classic holiday film on the Saginaw Silver Screen.

The Dow Event Center (December) Listen to the seasonal stylings of multiple Grammy® nominee Martina McBride as she lights up the stage during *The Joy of Christmas Tour 2023*.

Delta College Planetarium (December) Be surrounded by sights & sounds of the season during a family-friendly showing of *Let It Snow* at Delta College Planetarium. Sing along to classic holiday tunes as festive images dance across a giant, overhead dome!

Bay City Players (December) Follow along with The Stewart Family — and all the family holiday drama — as they attempt to plan the perfect soiree in *A Good Old-Fashioned Big Family Christmas*.

Pit & Balcony Theatre (December) Leave the kids at home for the adults-only Pit & Balcony After Dark production of *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues* to hear all eight reindeer dish about the real Santa.



TOP

Winter Things to Do WITH KIDS



Warm woolen mittens & fluffy down coats — wrap up the family for wintertime adventures ahead! Whether you sled down snowy slopes and twirl loops at outdoor ice rinks — or dare to barrel down toboggan runs together — enjoy the hot cocoa and rosy cheeks afterwards!

From outdoor fun to indoor escapades, discover seasonal shows and kid-friendly performances, hands-on museums and vintage arcades, and explore a region that's ready to go when covered in snow. Read on to create one-of-a-kind moments and forever memories with these top winter things to do as a family when you Go Great Lakes Bay in Pure Michigan!

Outdoors + Nature

Bundle up for a day of winter play at Midland City Forest, where the park is transformed into a magical Winter Sports Park! Race down four toboggan runs, skate the large outdoor ice rink, and sled your way down the well-lit hill — then enjoy hot cocoa and warmth by the bonfire, or inside the Chalet.

Join a guided Family Snowshoe Hike at the 1,200-acre winter wonderland, Chippewa Nature Center! Enjoy the Ecosystem Gallery and indoor Wildlife Viewing Area for up-close animal sightings. See the Log Schoolhouse and visit the 1870s Homestead Farm for Stories by the Fire or A Homestead Holiday.

With 110 acres of snowy splendor, kids and adults are sure to enjoy Dow Gardens in the winter — especially the canopy walk in Whiting Forest where you'll venture four stories above the forest floor! Take the Spruce Arm to tumble into tree-supported cargo nets, or the Orchard Arm to view the snowy landscape through a glass-floored overlook!

Bring skates or lace up rental pairs for the Frankenmuth Ice Rink at Zehnder Park! With

room for 200 skaters per hour, the whole fam will have fun while gliding along fresh ice, cooled by its own refrigeration system and smoothed with its own Zamboni!

Twirl under the colorful lights, skate alongside the Saginaw River, and enjoy whimsical winter fun beneath the pavilion at Wenonah Park in Downtown Bay City. Bring your own ice skates or lace up rentals, and dress warmly for this waterfront experience!

Get outdoors for fresh air and family fun at Hoyt Park in Saginaw! Ride snowboarding hills, discover sledding thrills, and glide along the outdoor ice rink. Skate rentals are available, pick-up hockey games happen, and hot chocolate is served in the warming house!

Snuggle together under a blanket during a horse-drawn ride with Fantasy Carriage Company or Frankenmuth Carriage Company. See "Little Bavaria" covered in snow, let the kids point out (fudge, taffy, toffee & toy) shops they'd like to visit later, and ride over the historic covered wooden bridge!



City Forest – Midland, MI



Dow Gardens – Midland, MI



Dow Gardens – Midland, MI

Indoor Waterparks

Leave the cold outside and dive into 50,000 square feet of aquatic fun at Zehnder's Splash Village Hotel & Waterpark. Go wild with tube slides, lazy rivers, a six-story family raft ride — and even enjoy poolside dining options! Splash Village offers half- or full-day waterpark passes, family packages, and two whirlpools where adults can relax.

Bring the whole fam to the largest family fun center inside any Midwest hotel at Bavarian Inn Lodge! Discover a two-story Children's Village play area with more than 150 video games, an 18-hole indoor mini-golf course, four indoor pools, and two waterslides.

Kids' Shopping

Bundle up for a Bavarian shopping experience at Frankenmuth River Place Shops! With 40-plus attractions and stores, sample fudge and toffee made in front of your eyes, in-between browsing for clothing and novelty items.

Discover a place fit for princes & princesses at Bavarian Inn Castle Shops! With delicious scents filling the air, let the kids pick something special from the bakery and browse seven elaborate gift shops for unique toys, candy, and souvenirs.

Find something for the whole family at Birch Run Premium Outlets! With shops like Go! Games & Toys, kid-themed Gap Kids, and The Children's Place Outlet, explore 100+ designer and name brand shops for savings of up to 65% off.

Let the kids experience "a toy store, unplugged" at Joyful Tantrum. Discover this whimsical shop and impressive selection of inventive play, concept challenges, games, and toys that inspire — batteries not required!

Discover cool creativity this winter and hands-on play at Toyberg! Check out wooden toys, games, and puzzles, explore science-oriented toys designed to encourage STEM play, and start thinking spring by taking home a new kite.

Shop nostalgic candy, gifts, and novelties at Happy Go Lucky, and bring the kiddos to a place where \$1 will get them a lot (like it used to in the old days)! Explore this shop's unique toys, and keep watch for in-store movie nights.

The Playground — Midland, MI



Bavarian Inn Lodge — Frankenmuth, MI



Airborne Adventure Park — Saginaw, MI



Indoor Family Fun Zones

Leave winter behind inside Valley Lanes Family Entertainment Center! Whether it's bowling or bumper cars that draw you in, discover family fun all around with arcade games, laser maze challenges, escape rooms, and more.

Trade winter boots for bowling shoes at Stardust — and find your way out of four escape rooms, play two-story laser tag, ride indoor bumper cars, and try out more than 50 video arcade games!

Kids of all ages will go wild for Press Play 989! Step into an action-packed play palace with video games, laser tag — and don't leave hungry! The menu here includes pizza, wings, wraps, and sandwiches — and there's beer & wine on the menu for "big kids," too.

When winter weather won't allow outdoor play, bring the kiddos to The Playground! Kids can slide, climb, roll, swing, and have a ball at this safe, indoor playground — and parents can relax with a latte for a little winter break.

Bounce, fly, and defy gravity inside Airborne Adventure Park! With wall-to-wall trampolines, experience a whole new level of indoor recreation on more than a dozen attractions.

Play for hours, rack up points, and win big prizes at River Place Game Room! Test your skills on more than 40 arcade games — then race into nearby SugarHigh Bakery and SugarRush Sweets & Treats for sweet rewards.

Take your family on a cool adventure through a maze of more than 1,000 mirrors in the Ultimate Mirror Maze! Try The Vault Laser Beam Challenge to twist and duck your way through laser beams, and appease your family's sweet tooth at River Sweets Candy with mix & match candy by the pound.

Let a roll of quarters take you out of the cold and into retro gaming fun at Crazy Quarters Arcade! Enjoy arcade classics including Pac-Man, Galaga, Space Invaders Deluxe, and Dance Dance Revolution.

Bring the kids into Brinstar for vintage-to-newer video arcade games and pinball machines — but stay for deliciously creative burgers and fresh-cut fries the whole family will love!



Zehnder's Splash Village Hotel & Waterpark — Frankenmuth, MI

Arts + Entertainment

Winter weather frightful? All is delightful inside Painterly Pottery, the region's largest paint-your-own-pottery studio! Spend time with your family crafting one-of-a-kind creations in a casual and comfortable environment.

Discover an out-of-this-world creative place, Space Studios, and the Glaze Bar & Pottery Studio inside. Create from ready-to-be-glazed pottery, or learn wheel throwing, hand-building, and glazing techniques in a scheduled session.

Spend quality time together at Studio 23/The Arts Center. Stop by the Craft Bar for a self-service art experience, and choose a project off the menu to become your make-and-take art — instructions and supplies are included!

Grab tickets to the coolest games in town, Saginaw Spirit OHL hockey games at The Dow Event Center! Catch the action from the best seats, and check out their full events calendar for other family-friendly performances this winter.

Snag a front-row seat to winter fun at Midland Center for the Arts! See innovative puppetry set to music as Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia performs The Rainbow Fish, or witness a story of love and acceptance between two sisters in Disney's Frozen Jr.

Museums + More

With 16,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, get into hands-on exploration inside the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum. Crawl inside a larger-than-life mouth, color masterpieces in chalk, play in plastic balls, experiment at the Tinker Track, and enjoy this place where infinite fun is found.

Take the kiddos to the cosmos during a mesmerizing show at Delta College Planetarium — and don't pass up a stop at the gift shop for out-of-this-world souvenirs!

See wide eyes and ear-to-ear smiles inside the Antique Toy and Firehouse Museum. "Kids from 1 to 101" will love the NASCAR and Tonka displays — and the chance to see the largest collection of motorized fire trucks in the world!

Spend quality time exploring and inventing as a family inside Spark!Lab® Smithsonian at Midland Center for the Arts! Discover pop-up STEM exhibits and experience an interactive space where curiosity is encouraged.

Midland Center for the Arts — Midland, MI



Antique Toy and Firehouse Museum — Bay City, MI



Mid-Michigan Children's Museum — Saginaw, MI

Family Holiday Traditions

A must-visit destination any time of year, visit Bronner’s CHRISTmas Wonderland this winter! See sights and sounds of the season at the world’s largest Christmas store and shop from more than 50,000 ornaments, trims, and gifts.

Make a seasonal stop to Santa’s Reindeer Farm on Grandpa Tiny’s Heritage Farm. Gather in a cozy barn to meet Santa and his reindeer-in-training, and deliver wish lists! Enjoy this special experience that includes making an ornament with the Woodworker and becomes a one-of-a-kind holiday outing.

With holiday music playing and jolly elves busy at work, step into pure magic inside the Midland Santa House! Walk through a magical mix of displays, cozy up to a fieldstone fireplace, and sit in Santa’s chair. Visit with Santa, be on the lookout for his reindeer, and return time and again to experience the merriment of the season!

All aboard The Northern Star Train, tickets are free and the memories are priceless! Running throughout the Midland Santa House season, take a magical 20-minute ride through town on a festive train decked out in holiday sparkle.

Keep the Christmas spirit alive with a visit to the Nate & Mary Ida Doan Santa House in Bay City. Bring the young and young-at-heart to this cozy log cabin with fascinating displays, and have your photo taken with Santa himself!

Bronner’s CHRISTmas Wonderland – Frankenmuth, MI



Santa's Reindeer Farm – Frankenmuth, MI



Santa's Reindeer Farm – Frankenmuth, MI



Midland Santa House – Midland, MI

Wenonah Park Tree Lighting – Bay City, MI



The Northern Star Train – Midland, MI

Family Holiday Events

Channel your family’s Christmas spirit at Holidays in the Heart of the City. Hop on for a free pony ride and visit Santa & Mrs. Claus in Borchard Park. Sing along with carolers and enjoy cookies & hot cocoa while visiting holiday open houses — and take in free horse-drawn wagon rides, holiday concerts, and the finale fireworks show!

Sing along with carolers as you stroll a gently candlelit pathway through a winter wonderland during the Dow Gardens Christmas Walk. Sip steaming hot cocoa while enjoying merry melodies, and say hello to Santa’s reindeer (one weekend only).

Bring the family to experience the magic of Tis the Season Weekends at Frankenmuth River Place Shops. Meet Santa Claus and his North Pole team, sing along with strolling carolers, and celebrate Christmas in the elaborately decorated Santa’s Workshop. Each weekend is slightly different, all provide holiday cheer and joy.

Family Holiday Light Shows

Sing along to the sounds of Christmas at the magical, 40-foot tree that is the centerpiece of Frankenmuth’s Spectacular Musical Tree Show! Enjoy a seven-minute interlude through popular Christmas tunes while colorful lights dance about to each song.

Fill your mugs with hot cocoa, set the radio to holiday tunes, and head out for the self-guided Little Bavaria’s “Little” Driving Light Tour! With a special holiday poem to guide you, travel along festive streets to brilliant light displays — and end your “little” drive at the 17-foot-tall towering Santa!

Cruise along a half-mile drive known as 25 Christmas Lane, as it winds its way past Bronner’s CHRISTmas Wonderland. Watch the kids’ faces as they experience a dazzling display of more than 100,000 bright, twinkling lights! With animated decorations adorning everything in sight, enjoy this short-but-sweet burst of Christmas beauty.

Discover your new favorite family tradition at The Freeland Lights free show at Hayes Park. Tune your radio to 93.9 FM, and listen to the sounds of the season while thousands of lights dazzle and dance to the classics!