

MICHIGAN'S BEST

[Michigan's Best]

Stories for foodies, adventurers, business men and women, innovation that uplifts our communities, and the many things that make Michigan a remarkable place to live and thrive.



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WHERE TO FIND MICHIGAN'S BEST CONTENT

Michigan's Best M-22 Road Trip, from Traverse City to Suttons Bay

It's no secret M-22 is one of Michigan's best scenic drives, hands-down. Starting just north of Manistee, the 117-mile road curves along the Lake Michigan shoreline, beckoning you to stop at great beach towns like Frankfort and Empire before sending you through Sleeping Bear Dunes, onto Glen Arbor and northward. After leaving the top curve of Lake Leelanau, the road bends across the Leelanau Peninsula toward Northport, then runs south along the rim of Grand Traverse Bay until it ends in Traverse City, right at the base of West Bay. With this road trip guide, we're focusing on the 17-mile section of M-22 that runs between Traverse City and Suttons Bay. It's one of our favorite spots, and it's packed full of places that should keep you on the road to adventure for days.

BY TANDA GMITER AND AMY SHERMAN



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Traverse City:

Home base for the ultimate M-22 road trip



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You've seen it on vehicles all over Michigan: The M-22 sticker. The image itself is just like road signs on M-routes all across the state. But the combination of that letter and those two numbers communicates something truly special and unique.

M-22 represents natural beauty. It is an emblem of adventure, a symbol of a slower pace that affords you the time to meander and explore. It is magical.

You've seen the bumper stickers. Now, it's time to see scenic M-22 for yourself.



It's time for you to experience the awe-inspiring, waterfront route that winds around the Leelanau Peninsula along the shores of Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay. The route that USA Today readers voted the best scenic autumn drive in the country.

When you do buckle up and hit the road, we welcome you to make your base in Traverse City. Whatever season you visit, TC offers the best of Michigan – a snowy wonderland of

outdoor activity in the winter, brilliant cherry blossoms in the spring and sparkling blue waters in the summer, not to mention a vibrant downtown with extraordinary dining and exciting events throughout the year.

In the fall, with stunning vistas of colorful forests, both M-22 and Traverse City are especially incredible. Here are 8 reasons why:

COLOR TOURS Not only do USA Today readers rave about M-22, but TripAdvisor has ranked Traverse City one of America's top 10 foliage destinations and Readers Digest called a trek from Traverse City along M-22 one of the country's best fall road trips.

Along M-22 you not only see breathtaking colors, but roadside fruit stands offering a slice of life that nourishes your soul, a wealth of wineries with new flavors to discover and quaint small towns with charming galleries and restaurants.

WINE TASTING The Traverse City area is home to more than 50 wineries, each with a unique personality and all within less than an hour's drive of each other. You can make your way along M-22 from one winery on the Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail to the next, with safe, relaxing transportation from one of the area's many tour companies.

Fall is an ideal time to take a vineyard tour and see grapes pressed into wine, or to grab a seat in a tasting room and discover a new favorite.

MICROBREWS In addition to all the wineries, the Traverse City area has one of the country's highest numbers of breweries per capita. You

can explore them on a beer bus tour or get outside in the crisp fall air and go from one brewery to the next on a paddling or cycling tour.

We also celebrate the region's craft brews each fall during Traverse City Beer Week. This year's festivities Nov. 8-15 include lots of food and beer (such as a Flapjack & Flannel Festival that pairs beer with pancakes!) and a 5k Great Beard Run that combines running, beer drinking and, of course, beards.

FARM MARKETS Fall is time for farmers to bring in the harvest, and time for us all to get back in touch with where our food comes from. On Thanksgiving Day, we'll celebrate Michigan's bounty of agricultural goodness. Until then, you can head out to the farm and have a blast picking apples, navigating corn mazes and taking hayrides to the pumpkin patch. Along M-22 there are lots of farmer's markets and U-pick farms to experience the season.

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES Every summer visitors flock to Sleeping Bear Dunes National



Lakeshore, which was voted the "Most Beautiful Place in America." But here's a secret: Many views are even more impressive in the fall.

Throughout the park along M-22 are hiking trails. Iconic sites include Pyramid Point, which is perched high above Lake Michigan and offers an incredible view of the Manitou Islands that are part of the legend that gave Sleeping Bear its name.

BEACHES AND LAKES So much of the picturesque beauty of M-22 comes from the waterfront it hugs. It's important to remember that the beaches along the way don't close after Labor Day! With blue lakes and golden sand mixing with the changing colors of leaves, fall presents an incredible setting for romantic picnics on the beach and long walks by the water. Fall is also a great time for fishing, when salmon make their annual run upriver from Lake Michigan, and for getting out on the water in a kayak to take in the gorgeous show of color from a fresh perspective.

GOLF "Up North" golf reaches its peak in the fall, when the courses are still green, the water remains a beautiful blue and the trees come ablaze with colors of scarlet, orange and gold. It almost makes you want to hit your ball into the woods! Some of Michigan's best golf courses live along M-22. And after the round you can settle your bets – or double-down on your winnings – at Leelanau Sands Casino on M-22 near Suttons Bay.

EVENTS You can anchor your M-22 fall experience around one or more of the many events in the Traverse City area. There's something happening every day this fall including Walking Ghost Tours, the Harvest Stompede, Sleeping Bear Marathon, Fall Color Sail, Downtown Traverse City Art Walk, M-22 Art2Art Tour, Traverse City Beer Week and more. Maybe you should celebrate Halloween this year with a Zombie Run. Or run your first marathon. Or go on the wine trail's Hunt for the Reds of October. However you choose to experience the

majesty of M-22, you can make Traverse City your home base. Fab Fall packages including lodging, dining, shopping and spa discounts are available now.

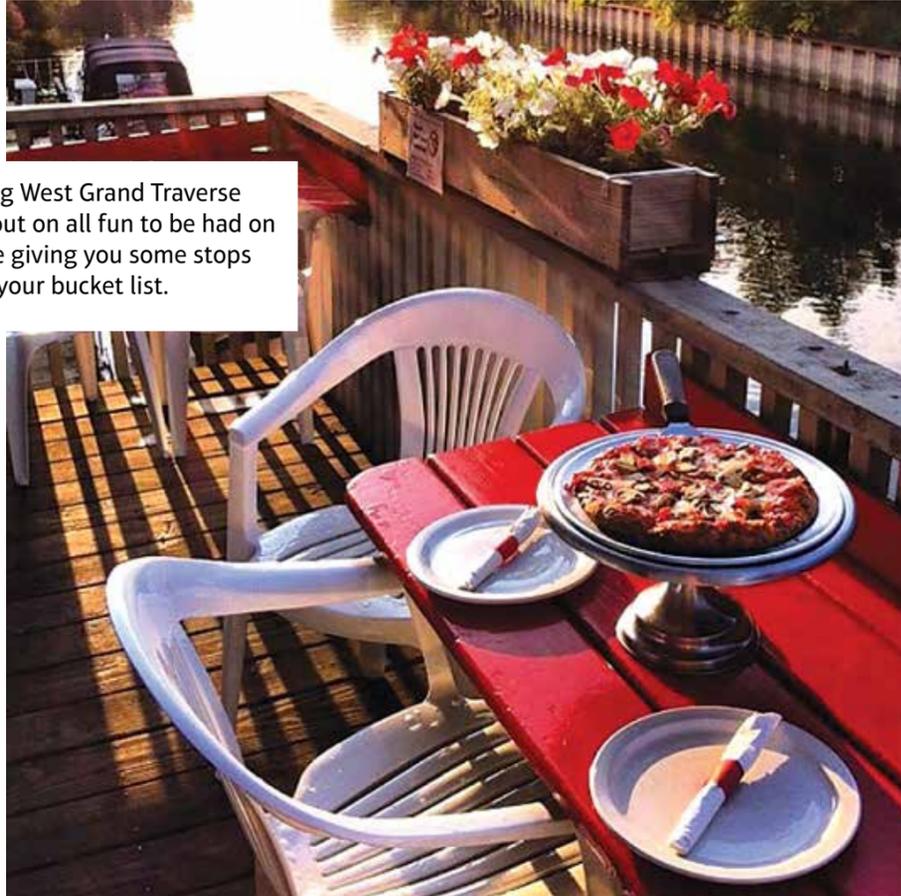
Learn more at TraverseCity.com and come see us for a great Michigan vacation.

A vacation is what you take when you can no longer take what you've been taking.

EARL WILSON

Yes,

we know M-22 officially ends along West Grand Traverse Bay, but it would be a shame to miss out on all fun to be had on nearby Old Mission Peninsula, so we're giving you some stops there first, so you can check them off your bucket list.



Paesanos Pizza: Delicious pizza and fresh salads with house-made dressings.

Photo | Paesanos Pizza

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OLD MISSION PENINSULA

Wineries of Old Mission Peninsula: This narrow finger of land that divides Grand Traverse Bay into two pieces is crisscrossed with gorgeous vineyards, fruit farms, and Caribbean-blue bay overlooks that will take your breath away. The scenery alone is worth the drive. But be sure to stop for some wine tastings along the way. There are at least 10 wineries on Old Mission. For us, the must-stops include two grande dames.

Chateau Grand Traverse: A wide wine-tasting bar and knowledgeable staff are at the forefront of one of the peninsula's oldest award-winning vineyards. They're known for Rieslings as well as the sought-after ice wine. Right now, we're in love with the Block 12 Riesling, named after the little patch of vineyard where its grapes were grown.

• 12239 Center Road, Traverse City
• (800) 283-0247

Chateau Chantal: Gorgeous views and delicious tastings go hand-in-hand at this French-inspired winery. Known for their spacious B&B as well as their wine dinners, these give you the options for a longer stay on the property. If you're doing a tasting, don't forget to try Beguile, a sweet bubbly.

• 15900 Rue de Vin, Traverse City
• (231) 223-4110

Old Mission Lighthouse Park: Now that you're halfway up the spine of Old Mission, keep driving north on M-37. When you run out of road, you've reached the right spot. The Mission Point

Lighthouse is open seasonally for tours. The beach at the tip of the peninsula offers a great panoramic view of the bay waters flowing into the expanse of Lake Michigan. Also on site is an historic log cabin, decorated to show what life was like for early settlers there. And make sure to try out the trails. Some are right along the stretch of beach, and the sound of the waves becomes the background music to your hike through the woods.

• 20500 Center Road, Traverse City

TRaverse CITY

Back down the peninsula and into the heart of Traverse City is where you'll find a bustling downtown area that's become known as much for its great foodie finds as for its craft beers, beaches and bayfront views. Here's a list of our favorite stops when we're in TC:

Paesano's Pizza: A casual, comfortable and affordable spot to get a nice, hot slice or one of their fresh salads with homemade dressing (try the Greek). They've got a small seating area in back, some arcade games up front, and a lunch special that does a brisk business. Bonus tip: If you're taking your order to go and the weather is nice, walk a few steps down to the small pocket park on Front Street that has a boardwalk and benches along the Boardman River.

• 447 E. Front St., Traverse City
• (231) 941-5740

Trattoria Stella: If you love great cuisine served in a place with Old-World charm, make a reservation at Trattoria Stella. We voted it Michigan's Best Italian Restaurant in 2017. It's part of the unique Grand Traverse Commons development on the site of what used to be the Traverse City State Hospital campus. Start with a hand-crafted cocktail, or ponder the detailed wine list. Michigan's Best



Sparks BBQ Sundae: Creamy coleslaw and sweet jerky made this unique sundae something to remember.
Photo | Amy Sherman



Clinch Park: This city beach has a large swimming area on West Bay, a splash pad, a concession stand and watercraft rentals. Photo | Tanda Gmitter



Folgarelli's: Dozens of different kinds of subs are available at this Traverse City mainstay deli. Photo | John Gonzalez

reporter Amy Sherman offered this in her review: "Everything here is homemade, from dressings, to sauces, to pastas and bread. The kitchen prides itself on butchering all their own meat, and using every part - except the squeal. The chef explained why: It's a salute to the whole animal." And don't miss the charcuterie board.

• 1200 W. Eleventh St., Traverse City
• (231) 929-8989

Spanglish: Inside this small kitchen, traditional Mexican dishes are infused with tasty creativity. The beans and rice plate is a meal in itself, topped with crumbly feta and pico de gallo. If you're ordering the popular tamales, make sure to try the unique Three Sisters version, filled with cubes of butternut squash, corn, beans and red pepper.

• 1333 Yellow Drive, Traverse City
• (231) 943-1453

Left Foot Charley: Just a few steps across the street from Spanglish, you'll find Left Foot Charley. The spacious tasting room has seating inside and on the outdoor patio. Ask to taste some of their award-winning wines, and do yourself a favor and sample the Cinnamon Girl Hard Cider. It is made from apples harvested on two Old Mission Peninsula farms, and steeped with whole cinnamon sticks to add a delicious kick.

• 806 Red Drive, Suite #100, Traverse City
• (231) 995-0500

Twilight Tours: If you're up for an adventure, step into the past at Grand Traverse Commons and sign up for one of its historical guided walking tours. We love the "Twilight Tour." The sprawling grounds, closed as a hospital campus in 1989, have been developed into a delightful mix of retail, restaurants, housing, trails and open spaces. During the 90-minute Twilight Tour, a small group is taken into some of the old buildings, and even the underground steam tunnels built in 1885 to heat the old hospital rooms. Your guide will share stories of what life was like for people in the property's asylum days.

• 830 Cottageview Drive, Suite #101, Traverse City
• (231) 941-1900

Folgarelli's: One of our favorite spots to get a sub sandwich in TC, Folgarelli's has been dishing up tasty eats since 1978. Staff serve about four dozen different sandwiches on Italian Ciabatta bread. Our pick? Try the Godfather, packed with capicola, prosciutto, provolone cheese, roasted peppers, pesto tomatoes and a dousing of Italian dressing.



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Find Your Beach: Water is Traverse City's touchstone. Boardman Lake sparkles on one end of town, sending the waters of its namesake river cruising through the city. The east and west halves of gorgeous Grand Traverse Bay draw tourists and locals alike. So whether you want to be in the water, on the water, or just sit beside it, we're sharing some of our favorite ways and places to enjoy it.

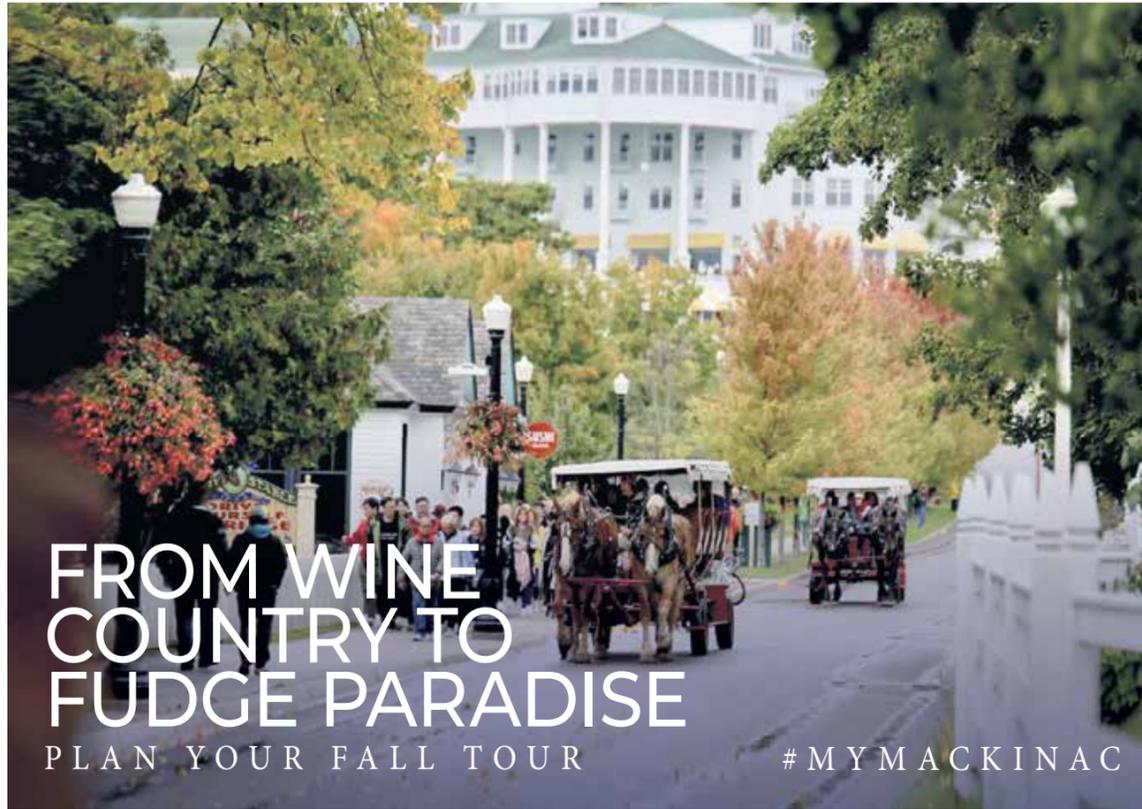
Clinch Park: This city beach has it all, from a large swimming area on the bay to food concessions and kayak rentals in season. It's got a splash pad nearby for little ones, and a cool underground walkway that leads to downtown. Located on Grandview Parkway and Cass Street.

Bryant Park: Tucked into the base of Old Mission Peninsula, this park has a nice swim area and plenty of sandy beach to set out your blanket or chairs. Located at the intersection of Garfield Avenue and Peninsula Drive.

Kayak, Bike and Brew: Feeling adventurous? Check out the different tour offerings that get you on the water in a kayak, riding a bike around town, and stopping in to sample craft beer at local brew pubs.

• 229 Garland St.
• (231) 760-8828

Nauti-Cat Cruises: When you step aboard the Nauti-Cat, you'll be cruising on the largest commercial sailing catamaran on the Great Lakes. The staff offers a variety of sailing options, from day sails where you catch the breeze and sway to some beachy music, or sunset cruises that can cap a great day. It docks at 615 E. Front St. (231) 947-1730



FROM WINE
COUNTRY TO
FUDGE PARADISE
PLAN YOUR FALL TOUR

#MYMACKINAC



Downtown Suttons Bay: This shop featuring handcrafted garden ornaments is just one of the eclectic shops lining Suttons Bay's downtown. Photo | Tanda Gmitter



Hop Lot Brewing: Brothers Steve and Drew Lutke turned a hobby into an expanding craft beer business. Photo | Amy Sherman



SUTTONS BAY

As M-22 stretches north from Traverse City, you are just a short drive from the postcard-perfect Suttons Bay. Here are a few of our favorite places to visit:

Hop Lot Brewing: Their slogan of "Two Brothers, One Dream, and a Lot of Beer," says it all. Brothers Steve and Drew Lutke took their homebrewing hobby to the masses, and with delicious results. Try the Bayshore Brown, or the Highway Robbery blond ale with Leelanau-grown hops. They also have rotating wines, meads and ciders on tap. And they put cozy igloos in their outdoor beer garden when the weather turns cold. What could be better than that?
• 658 S. West Bay Shore Drive, Suttons Bay
• (231) 866-4445

Boone's Prime Time Pub: We gave this place a big hat-tip during our search for Michigan's Best Bloody Mary in 2016. We loved the rim served with "everything bagel" flavor, and the base blend of tomato and V-8 juice. Ours came with a spectacular "garnish" of lemon and lime wedges, olives, blue cheese olives, celery, hand-dipped onion rings and pickle chips, a burger slider and a buffalo chicken slider. And a sidecar of beer. Bonus: Boone's has a rooftop deck with a great view.
• 102 N. St. Joseph St., Suttons Bay
• (231) 271-6688

Martha's Leelanau Table: This little red house with its tree-shaded patio never disappoints. We know people make a beeline here for dinner, but their breakfasts are just as divine. We love the Happy Rooster open-faced breakfast sandwich on soughdough bread.
• 413 N. St. Joseph St., Suttons Bay
• (231) 271-2344

Grand Traverse Bike Tours: Offering guided and self-guided tours as well as bike rentals, the staff at Grand Traverse Bike Tours and Suttons Bay Bikes give you ways to explore the area on two wheels. Their winery and vineyard tours are popular. They'll hook you up with a good bike, an itinerary showing you where to stop and sample, and on some tours they can even arrange to bring any of your winery purchases back to you at the end of the ride.
• 318 N. St. Joseph St., Suttons Bay
• (231) 421-6815

Tandem Ciders: If you're up for a quick jaunt off M-22, stop by Tandem Ciders. Ask for a flight of their delicious ciders, take them to one of the picnic tables in the tree-shaded grove outside and sip until you find your favorites. We love the honeyed taste of Bee's Dream, the bright Smackintosh, and the jewel-colored Damson made with plums.
• 2055 N Setterbo Road, Suttons Bay
• (231) 271-0050



Tandem Ciders: Just a short jaunt west of M-22 finds you at the doorstep of Tandem Ciders, north of Suttons Bay. Photo | Tanda Gmitter



TRAVERSE
city



FRESHWATER
COAST WHERE



YOU CAN COAST
FOR MILES

It's where everything just comes together. Where the view ahead is just as sweet as the one at your side. And no matter what turn you take, you'll find yourself in a pretty great place.

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