

A photograph of the Marblehead Lighthouse, a white cylindrical tower with a red lantern room, situated on a rocky shore. The lighthouse is illuminated from within, and the sky is a mix of blue and orange from the setting or rising sun. Trees are visible behind the lighthouse, and the calm water of Lake Erie is in the foreground.

PORTCLINTONBEACHHOUSE.COM · FREE GUEST GUIDE

The Lake Erie Shores Guide

PORT CLINTON · PUT-IN-BAY · CATAWBA · MARBLEHEAD · SANDUSKY

EDITION

2026 season

FACTS CHECKED

October 22, 2026

BONUS

Kelleys Island

Ferries, beaches, food, wineries, fishing, family days, rainy-day plans, events by month, and nine sample itineraries, for guests of our Lake View House in Port Clinton.

Welcome to the lake

Thanks for staying with us. This guide covers the whole Lake Erie Shores & Islands region around the house: **Port Clinton** (home base), **Put-in-Bay**, **Catawba Island**, **Marblehead and Lakeside**, **Sandusky**, and a bonus chapter on **Kelleys Island**.

The house is a block from Lakeview Park and the city beach, and about 0.9 miles (a 15–20 minute walk) from downtown Madison Street and the Jet Express. **Drive times in this guide are measured from downtown Port Clinton.**

How to read the listings

\$	Counter service, snacks, ice cream, donuts, quick bites
\$\$	Casual sit-down: bar and grill, pizza, most fish houses and patios
\$\$\$	Dinner house or special-occasion meal
CONFIRM	Address or details from a directory listing or search result, not the business itself

Price levels describe the *type* of place, not a quoted price. Fares, admissions and hours shown were published by the operator for 2026 and checked on October 22, 2026. We never estimate prices or invent reviews. Where we couldn't verify something, we say so.

PLEASE CONFIRM DETAILS BEFORE YOU GO

Hours, seasonal dates, fares and menus change, especially before Memorial Day and after Labor Day, and in bad weather. Check the business's website (linked throughout) or call ahead. Ferry trips can be cancelled for weather.

Five things to know

1. **Book the ferry ahead** for summer Saturdays, holidays and festival weekends, and know the last boat back.
2. **The Jet Express Port Clinton route ends October 25, 2026.** The Miller Ferry from Catawba runs to November 25.
3. **Perry's Monument observation deck is closed for 2026–27**, and the African Safari Walk-Thru is closed for 2026. The grounds and the Drive-Thru are open.
4. **Swim smart:** stay away from piers and breakwalls (rip currents), and check Ohio BeachGuard.
5. **In an emergency, call 911.** Magruder Hospital's ER (615 Fulton St, 419-734-3131) is about 2 minutes from downtown.

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PART I

Plan Your Trip

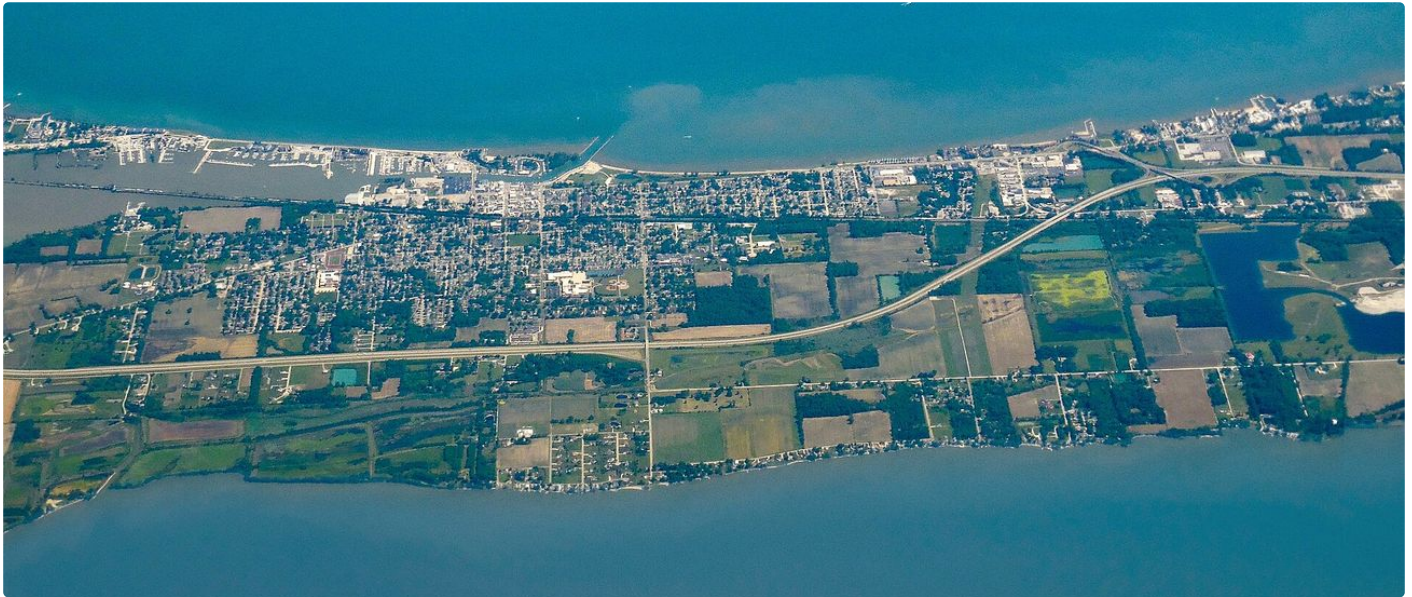
Your orientation: what each town is good for, when things are open, how the ferries work, and what's happening each month.

The Lake Erie Shores at a Glance · Seasons & When Things Are Open · Getting Around: Ferries, Golf Carts & Parking · Events Calendar by Month

CHAPTER 1

The Lake Erie Shores at a Glance

Five towns, a handful of islands, and one home base. What each place is best for, and how far it really is.



Port Clinton from the air, with the Portage River meeting Lake Erie. Photo: Grešla · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

You're staying in **Port Clinton**, on the south shore of Lake Erie in Ottawa County. It calls itself the "Walleye Capital of the World," and it's the closest mainland town to the Lake Erie Islands. Everything in this guide is a short drive, a ferry ride, or both. Most of the region is very seasonal: summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day) is full speed, spring and fall run on shorter hours, and winter is quiet.

The house is a block from Lakeview Park and the city beach. Downtown Madison Street and the Jet Express dock are about 0.9 miles away, a 15–20 minute walk. **All drive times in this guide are measured from downtown Port Clinton.**

Which town is good for what

Place	Best for	Getting there
Port Clinton	Home base: city beach, downtown dining, walleye charters, the Jet Express, Liberty Aviation Museum, African Safari	You're here
Put-in-Bay (South Bass Island)	The classic island day: golf carts, harbor bars, caves, wineries, Perry's Victory memorial, festivals	Jet Express from downtown PC, or Miller Ferry from Catawba (17 min drive)
Catawba Island	A peninsula, not an island. Farm brewery, winery restaurants, the Miller Ferry dock, a small state park	16–18 min drive
Marblehead & Lakeside	Marblehead Lighthouse, East Harbor State Park beach, the gated Lakeside Chautauqua resort, the Kelleys Island ferry	20–25 min drive
Sandusky	Cedar Point, indoor waterpark resorts (Kalahari, Great Wolf, Castaway Bay), downtown restaurants, museums, Firelands Winery	27–37 min drive
Kelleys Island (bonus)	A quieter island: Glacial Grooves, state park beach and trails, bikes and carts	Ferry from Marblehead (21 min drive) or Jet Express from Sandusky

Drive times from downtown Port Clinton

Destination	Distance	Free-flow drive
Jet Express dock (Port Clinton)	0.5 mi	2 min
Magruder Hospital (ER & urgent care)	0.7 mi	2 min
Kroger (Port Clinton)	2.7 mi	6 min
Liberty Aviation Museum	4.8 mi	10 min
Walmart (Port Clinton)	4.8 mi	11 min
Twin Oast Brewing (Catawba)	8.9 mi	16 min
Miller Ferry Catawba dock	9.7 mi	17 min
Catawba Island State Park	8.2 mi	18 min
East Harbor State Park (main entrance)	8.8 mi	19 min
African Safari Wildlife Park	6.9 mi	20 min
Lakeside Chautauqua	11.2 mi	21 min
Kelleys Island Ferry (Marblehead)	11.4 mi	21 min
Marblehead Lighthouse State Park	12.8 mi	24 min
Downtown Sandusky (Jet Express dock)	16.3 mi	27 min
Firelands Regional Medical Center	16.2 mi	27 min
Kalahari Resort	20.8 mi	27 min
Great Wolf Lodge Sandusky	20.9 mi	28 min
Magee Marsh boardwalk	19.0 mi	34 min
Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge visitor center	18.8 mi	34 min
Cedar Point (main gate)	20.3 mi	37 min

HOW TO READ THE DRIVE TIMES

These are free-flow estimates from an open routing service (OSRM), measured from downtown Port Clinton. They don't count traffic, Cedar Point gate lines, drawbridges, or summer-weekend congestion on State Route 2 and Route 53. Add 10–20 minutes on summer Saturdays and event weekends.

How to use this guide

- **Price levels** are a quick guide to the *kind* of place, not a quoted price: \$ = counter service, snacks, ice cream, donuts; \$\$ = casual sit-down, bar and grill, pizza, most fish houses; \$\$\$ = dinner house or a special-occasion meal. Check current menus for real prices.
- Where we list hours, fares or admission, they come from the business's or agency's own 2026 website or brochure, checked on October 22, 2026. **Hours and seasonal dates change, so confirm before you go**, especially before Memorial Day and after Labor Day.
- A small **CONFIRM** tag means we could only confirm that detail from a directory listing or search result, not from the business itself.
- Phone numbers are given as listed. Websites are the business's own where one exists. Some small local spots only have a Facebook page; for those, search the name.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.shoresandislands.com/> · <https://www.portclinton.com/> · [https://project-osrm.org/](https://project-osrm.org/routing) (routing) · <https://www.openstreetmap.org/> (geocoding)

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 2

Seasons & When Things Are Open

The Lake Erie shore runs on a calendar. Know which month you're in before you plan the day.



Sunset over Lake Erie. Photo: Natarajangesan · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

The four seasons, quickly

Season	What it's like	What's open
Spring March–mid-May	Cool, often windy. Walleye fishing and spring bird migration are the big draws. The lake is too cold to swim.	Miller Ferry starts in mid-to-late March. Jet Express and most island businesses ramp up in late April and May. Cedar Point opened May 9 in 2026.
Summer Memorial Day–Labor Day	Peak season. Warm water, beaches, festivals, crowds, the most ferry trips.	Nearly everything. Beach concessions, lighthouse tours, Lakeside's gated season (May 22–Sep 7, 2026), Cedar Point Shores (May 23–Aug 31, 2026).
Fall Sept–Oct (into Nov)	Some of the best weather of the year, warm lake, thinner crowds. Fall walleye and perch fishing. Halloween events everywhere.	Hours shrink after Labor Day. The Jet Express Port Clinton route runs Fri–Sun only late in the season and ends Oct 25, 2026 . Miller Ferry runs through Nov 25. Cedar Point HalloWeekends runs to Nov 1.
Winter Dec–Feb	Quiet, cold, sometimes iced in. Ice fishing when conditions allow. Holiday lights and indoor waterparks.	Indoor waterparks (Kalahari, Great Wolf, Castaway Bay for hotel guests), museums, wineries, downtown restaurants. Ferry service to the islands is limited or weather-dependent.

Key 2026 seasonal dates

What	2026 season (as published)
Miller Ferry (Catawba ↔ Put-in-Bay)	Mar 19 – Nov 25 (reduced trips Mar 19–26 and Nov 2–25)
Jet Express, Port Clinton route	Spring through Oct 25 . Fri–Sun only at the end of the season
Cedar Point	May 9 – Nov 1 (HalloWeekends Sep 17 – Nov 1)
Cedar Point Shores waterpark	May 23 – Aug 31

What	2026 season (as published)
Lakeside Chautauqua gated season	May 22 – Sep 7
Heinemann's Winery & Crystal Cave (PIB)	Apr 21 – Oct 26
Perry's Victory visitor center (PIB)	May 16 – Oct 26 (observation deck closed 2026–27)
Marblehead Lighthouse tower climbs	Saturday of Memorial Day weekend – Labor Day, plus September weekends and the first weekend of October
Port Clinton Lighthouse tours	Saturdays, Memorial Day – Labor Day
Lakeview Park concession (PC)	Memorial Day – Labor Day, 11–5
African Safari Wildlife Park	Drive-thru open; the Walk-Thru Safari is closed for 2026 and reopens May 2027
Kalahari, Great Wolf Lodge (indoor waterparks)	Year-round

AFTER LABOR DAY

Labor Day 2026 was Monday, September 7. After that, assume nothing is on a summer schedule until you've checked: beach concessions close, ferries cut trips, and many island and Catawba patios go weekends-only or close.

Month by month: what to expect

Month	Weather & lake	Good for
Jan–Feb	Coldest months; ice possible on the bays	Indoor waterparks, wineries, museums, Burning Snowman Fest (late Feb)
March	Cold; lake well below swimming temperature	Walleye run, Sandusky Restaurant Week, first Miller Ferry trips
April	Cool, windy days	Walleye, early-season islands, Heinemann's opens Apr 21
May	Mild, chilly evenings	Birding (Biggest Week), Cedar Point opens, Walleye Festival on Memorial Day weekend
June	Warm; the lake starts to warm up	Beaches, RiverFront Live Fridays, festivals, Put-in-Bay events
July–Aug	Warmest water, busiest weeks	Everything. Book ferries, charters and dinners ahead
September	Warm lake, cooler nights	Fewer crowds, festivals, fishing, HalloWeekends starts
October	Crisp; windier	Fall color, Oktoberfest, Halloween events, the last Jet Express trips (Oct 25)
Nov–Dec	Cold and gray	Holiday markets, Christmas at Lakeside and Kalahari, the Walleye Drop on New Year's Eve

Month notes describe typical conditions. They aren't a forecast. Check weather.gov/cle before you go.

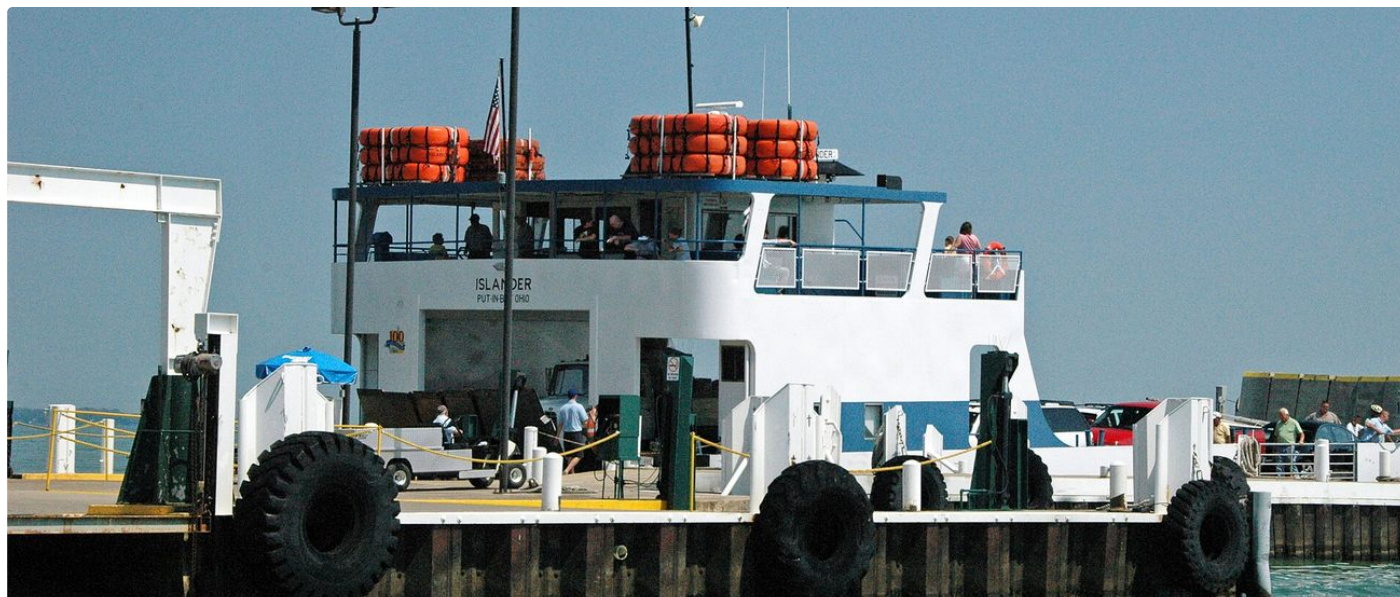
Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://millerferry.com/> · <https://jet-express.com/ferry-schedules/> · <https://www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint> · <https://www.lakesideohio.com/> · <https://heinemannswinery.com/> · <https://www.nps.gov/pevi/planyourvisit/hours.htm> · <https://www.marbleheadlighthouseohio.org/> · <https://portclintonlighthouse.org/> · <https://africansafariwildlifepark.com/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 3

Getting Around: Ferries, Golf Carts & Parking

The boats are the backbone of any trip here. Which ferry to take, what it costs, where to park, and how to get around once you land.



A Miller Ferry boat at the Lime Kiln dock on South Bass Island. Photo: James St. John · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Driving and parking on the mainland

- You'll want a car. Groceries, Catawba, Marblehead and Sandusky are all drives. State Route 2 is the east–west spine. Route 53 runs north from SR 2 through Port Clinton up to Catawba and the Miller Ferry. Route 163 runs along the shore east to Marblehead and Lakeside.
- **Downtown Port Clinton** has street parking that gets tight on ferry days and festival weekends. The Jet Express lots are the paid backup (below). From the house, walking downtown (about 0.9 mi) is often easier than parking.
- **Lakeview Park / City Beach** has its own lot across Perry Street from the beach, with a crosswalk.
- **Lakeside** charges a gate pass for people and an extra Auto Pass for cars in season (see Chapter 8).
- **Cedar Point** charges for parking. Prices vary, so check [sixflags.com/cedarpoint](https://www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint).

Which ferry? The quick decision

	Jet Express	Miller Ferry	Kelleys Island Ferry
Leaves from	Downtown Port Clinton, 3 Monroe St (also Sandusky)	Catawba dock, 5174 E Water St	Marblehead, 510 W Main St
Goes to	Downtown Put-in-Bay (and Kelleys/Cedar Point from Sandusky)	Lime Kiln dock, south end of South Bass Island (and Middle Bass)	Kelleys Island
Cars?	No, passengers only	Yes, cars, bikes, passengers	Yes, cars, bikes, passengers
Crossing	About 30 minutes	Under 20 minutes	About 30 minutes (as listed)
Mainland parking	Paid: \$18/day (max \$54) or \$11/day cash	Free (five lots)	Paid: from \$20

	Jet Express	Miller Ferry	Kelleys Island Ferry
Adult fare	\$41.99 round trip / \$26.50 one way	\$9 each way	From \$26 round trip
Best if...	You want to walk off the boat downtown with no shuttle	You want the cheapest fare, free parking, or your car	You're doing Kelleys Island

Fares are as published for 2026. Fees and taxes can change, so confirm when you book.

Jet Express (Port Clinton ↔ Put-in-Bay)

DOCK	3 Monroe St, downtown Port Clinton (Island Port bar on the dock)
PARKING	49 Jackson St main lot \$18/day, \$54 max, cash or card. Long-term lot at 110 Harrison St \$11/day, cash only
2026 FARES (PC ROUTE)	Adult \$41.99 round trip / \$26.50 one way. Youth 12–16 \$17. Child 6–11 \$8
EXTRAS	Bikes and kayaks \$5.75 each way. Pets ride free (leashed or in a carrier)
RULES	No alcohol brought on board. No swimsuits as outerwear. Boarding starts about 15 minutes before departure
WEATHER	Trips cancelled for weather are refunded
SEASON	Last day of the 2026 Port Clinton season: Oct 25 (Fri–Sun only at the end)
CONTACT	800-245-1538 · jet-express.com

The Jet Express drops you right downtown in Put-in-Bay, steps from DeRivera Park, so you don't need a shuttle. Book online for any summer Saturday, holiday or festival weekend, and know the last boat back. The schedule changes by date and is "subject to change without notice," so download the current Port Clinton schedule from the website.

From Sandusky (dock at 101 W Shoreline Dr), the Jet Express also runs to Put-in-Bay (\$50), Kelleys Island (\$42) and Cedar Point (\$13), plus inter-island trips between Put-in-Bay and Kelleys (\$30). Those are the published 2026 fares; check the Sandusky schedule for which days each route runs.

Miller Ferry (Catawba ↔ South Bass & Middle Bass)

DOCK	5174 E Water St, Catawba Island. From SR 2 take exit 124 to Route 53 north to the end
PARKING	Free, in five parking areas
2026 FARES (EACH WAY)	Adult \$9 · Child 6–11 \$1.50 · 5 & under free · Bike \$2.50 · Car \$23 · Motorcycle \$16
CROSSING	Under 20 minutes
SEASON	Mar 19 – Nov 25, 2026
CONTACT	800-500-2421 · millerferry.com

2026 dates	Departures from Catawba (as published)
Mar 19–26 & Nov 2–25	Limited spring and fall trips; check the schedule
Mar 27 – Apr 23 & Sep 21 – Nov 1	Hourly on the half hour, 7:30a–5:30p, plus a 6:30p trip daily Apr 3 – Oct 25. Extra 7:30p Fridays Apr 10 – Oct 9 and Saturdays Sep 26 – Oct 10
Apr 24 – May 7 & Sep 8–20	Roughly every 30–60 minutes

2026 dates	Departures from Catawba (as published)
May 8 – Sep 7 (summer)	Every half hour, 6:30a–7:30p. Fri–Sun extras at 8:00p and 8:30p. Extra evening trips Jun 12 – Aug 16, with departures as late as 9:30p

- **Cars:** no same-day round trips for vehicles on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays, and you may be asked for proof of island lodging. For a day trip, leave the car in the free lot and rent a cart on the island.
- The Miller lands at the **Lime Kiln dock** at the south end of the island, not downtown. The Lime Kiln bus meets the boats and runs to downtown (kids 5 and under ride free). Several golf-cart rental shops are right at or near the dock.
- Miller also serves **Middle Bass Island**. Between Put-in-Bay and Middle Bass, the **Sonny S** passenger ferry runs daily Memorial Day – Labor Day (sonnysboatline.com).

Kelleys Island Ferry (Marblehead ↔ Kelleys)

DOCK	510 W Main St, Marblehead
FARES	Adult round trip from \$26. Cars, bikes and pets carried. Parking from \$20
SCHEDULE	Weather-permitting. The line posts updates on its website and Facebook page
CONTACT	419-798-9763 · kelleysislandferry.com

Getting around Put-in-Bay

South Bass Island is about 3.5 miles long and 1.5 miles wide, so it's small enough for a golf cart or bike. **A valid driver's license is required to rent and drive a golf cart.** Island rules treat carts like vehicles: drinking and driving laws apply.

- **Golf-cart rentals** (from the official 2026 Put-in-Bay guide): AB Carts (abcartrental.com), The Boathouse (boathousecartrental.com), E's Golf Carts (esputinbaygolfcarts.com), Erie Island Carts (erieislandcarts.com, a block from the Miller dock, with overnight rentals), Island Bike Rental (islandbikeandgolfcartrental.com), Park Hotel, Put-in-Bay Golf Carts (putinbaygolfcarts.com), Golf Cart Depot (putinbaygolfcartdepot.com) and Topsy Turvey's. Rates change by season and day of the week, so get a quote; we don't print them. Book ahead on summer weekends.
- **Lime Kiln bus:** meets the Miller Ferry and runs to downtown.
- **Put-in-Bay Tour Train:** narrated island tour from the downtown depot, with on-and-off stops. 419-285-4855 · putinbaytrans.com.
- **Taxis:** the official guide lists Put-in-Bay Taxi, Checker, Island Club, Condo Taxi and Coop's.
- **Bikes:** rent on the island or bring your own on the Miller (\$2.50) or Jet Express (\$5.75 each way).

Getting around Kelleys Island

Kelleys is about 4.5 square miles. The chamber lists golf-cart and bike rentals from Caddy Shack, Casino Carts, the General Store, Missy Magoo's, R Karts and Seaway Marina, plus Island Ride Taxi. Or bring your car on the ferry. kelleysislandchamber.com

Flying to the islands

Island Air Taxi (islandairtaxi.com) and Griffing Flying Service (flygriffing.com) fly from Erie-Ottawa International Airport in Port Clinton to the islands. Put-in-Bay's airport is 3W2. This is a fun way to go when the lake is rough, but small planes have weather limits too.

What to book first

1. Ferry tickets for any summer Saturday, holiday or festival weekend, plus a golf cart if you're going to Put-in-Bay.
2. Fishing charters, which book up on summer weekends and during the walleye runs.
3. Cedar Point tickets (date-based pricing) and any Kalahari or Great Wolf day passes.

4. Dinner reservations where offered (for example, The Chalet at Gideon Owen).
5. Lakeside passes if you'll visit in season. Buying online saves \$1 on the preservation fee.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://jet-express.com/> · <https://jet-express.com/faq/> · <https://millerferry.com/> · Miller Boat Line 2026 brochure (PDF) · <https://kelleysislandferry.com/> · <https://sonnysboatline.com/> · Put-in-Bay 2026 Official Island Guide (visitputinbay.com) · <https://www.kelleysislandchamber.com/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 4

Events Calendar by Month

Festivals, races, fireworks and markets across the region. 2026 dates as published by organizers and Shores & Islands Ohio.



DeRivera Park in downtown Put-in-Bay, home to many island festivals. Photo: Nyttend · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Dates below are for the **2026 season**. Most events repeat on a similar weekend every year, but organizers set new dates each year. Use this to see what kind of thing happens when, then check the organizer's site. PC = Port Clinton, PIB = Put-in-Bay, KI = Kelleys Island.

January – February

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Winter at the Oast	Catawba	Holiday light trail and igloos at Twin Oast. The 2025–26 run lasted through Jan 31
Burning Snowman Fest	Region	Feb 27–28

March

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Sandusky Restaurant Week	Sandusky	Mar 5–15
Miller Ferry season opens	Catawba	Mar 19

May

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Twin Oast Sip & Shop	Catawba	May 2 (again Jun 14)
Biggest Week in American Birding	Magee Marsh / Oak Harbor area	May 8–17 (one listing says May 7–17)
Cedar Point opening day	Sandusky	May 9
Blessing of the Fleet	PIB	May 12
Island Garage Sale	PIB	May 16
Walleye Festival	PC, Waterworks Park	May 21–25, always Memorial Day weekend. Free admission
Dog Bowl	PIB	May 29–30
Ohio Bike Week	Sandusky	May 29 – Jun 6

June

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
RiverFront Live	PC, Madison St	Free concerts on Fridays 6–7:30pm, first Friday of June through first Friday of August
Birding by Kayak	East Harbor State Park	Jun 5
Mills Trophy Race	PIB	Jun 5–6
Corvettes at the Museum	PC, Liberty Aviation Museum	Jun 6
Put-in-Bay Pride	PIB	Jun 8
Founder's Day	PIB	Jun 13
Benson Ford Shiphouse tours	PIB	Jun 14 and Aug 9
Island Wine Festival	PIB, Heineman's Winery	Jun 20
Pyrate Fest	PIB	Jun 26–28
Shoreline Pride	Sandusky	Jun 27
Star-Spangled celebration	Cedar Point	Jun 29 – Jul 4

July

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Pier into the Past / Party at the Pier	Sandusky	Jul 2
July 3 fireworks	Oak Harbor	Jul 3
Boom at the Bay	PIB	Jul 4, fireworks at 10pm
National Matches	Camp Perry (PC area)	Jul 9 – Aug 8
Jeep Invasion / World's Largest Rubber Duck	PIB	Jul 10–12
Kelleys Amazing Race	KI	Jul 10–12
I-LYA Junior Bay Week	PIB	Jul 12–16
Tommy Want Wingy	Sandusky	Jul 17
Boardwalk Nights	Cedar Point	Jul 17 – Aug 16
Kelleys Island Fest	KI	Jul 17–19, with parade and fireworks
IRONMAN 70.3 Sandusky	Sandusky	Jul 19
Power Regatta	PIB	Jul 22–26
Amphicar Days	PIB	Jul 27–28
Sail Regatta	PIB	Jul 29 – Aug 2

August

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Declaration 250	PIB	Aug 1–2 (Shores & Islands lists Jul 31 – Aug 2)
ARTS in the Park	PC, Lakeview Park	Aug 1–2, next to the house
Rockabilly Road Trip	PC	Aug 1
Gideon Owen Summer Market	Catawba	Aug 1
Kelleys Film Fest	KI	Aug 1–2
Lake Erie Awareness Day	PIB	Aug 6
MLF Bass Pro Tour	Sandusky	Aug 6–9
Kelleys Homecoming	KI	Aug 8–9
Erie County Fair	Sandusky area	Aug 10–15 (free)
Lighthouse & Maritime Festival	PC, Waterworks Park	Aug 15, 10am–4pm
Halupki Festival	Marblehead	Aug 16
Food & Wine Festival	Kalahari, Sandusky	Aug 29

September

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Perch, Peach, Pierogi & Polka	PC	Sep 4–5
Rally on the Runway	PC, Liberty Aviation Museum	Sep 5
Strongman	Sandusky	Sep 6
Scream Peek	Cedar Point	Sep 10–13
Historic Weekend	PIB	Sep 11–13 (the Miller Ferry calendar lists Sep 12–13)
Art in the Park	PIB	Sep 12
Military Show	PC, Liberty Aviation Museum	Sep 12–13
Treasure Island Day	KI	Sep 12
Road Races Reunion	PIB	Sep 15–17
HalloWeekends	Cedar Point	Sep 17 – Nov 1
Cocktails with Capys	African Safari Wildlife Park	Sep 18–19
Halfway to St. Patrick's / Monarch Fest / 5K	PIB	Sep 19
Coast to the Oast	Catawba	Sep 19
Firelands Great Barrel Fest	Sandusky	Sep 19
Kelleys Restaurant Week	KI	Sep 21–27
Big Day at the Bay	PIB	Sep 26

October

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Oktoberfest	PIB, DeRivera Park	Oct 10–11. Sat 11–7, Sun 12–5. \$6 for one day, \$9 for both
Marblehead Lighthouse Festival	Marblehead	Second Saturday of October (Oct 10, 2026), 9am–4pm
Spooktacular Saturdays	Kalahari	From Oct 10
Skelly Hunt	PIB	Oct 17
Kids Halloween	KI	Oct 17
Downtown Trick or Treat	PC, downtown	Oct 24, noon–3, followed by the Halloween Pub Crawl
Halloween at the Bay	PIB	Oct 24
Whiskey Light turn-off	PIB	Oct 25

November – December

Event	Where	2026 dates & notes
Christmas Market	Sandusky, Schade-Mylander Plaza	Nov 27 – Dec 19
Lakeside Christmas	Lakeside	Dec 4–5
Night of Lights	Perkins Township (Sandusky)	Dec 5
Christmas buffet / Duck Derby	Kalahari	Dec 25 / Dec 26
Walleye Drop	PC, Madison St	New Year's Eve: a 600-lb walleye named Wylie drops at midnight, with a Minnow Drop for kids and fireworks

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.shoresandislands.com/> (monthly event listings) · <https://www.mainstreetportclinton.org/> · <https://millerferry.com/events/> · <https://jet-express.com/put-in-bay-upcoming-events/> · <https://www.eriefair.com/> · <https://www.marbleheadlighthouseohio.org/> · <https://www.kelleysislandchamber.com/> · <https://www.lakesideohio.com/> · <https://www.kalahariresorts.com/ohio/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

PART II

The Towns

One chapter for each place: Port Clinton, Put-in-Bay, Catawba, Marblehead and Lakeside, Sandusky, plus a bonus chapter on Kelleys Island.

Port Clinton: Your Home Base · Put-in-Bay & South Bass Island · Catawba Island · Marblehead & Lakeside · Sandusky: Cedar Point, Waterparks & Downtown · Kelleys Island

CHAPTER 5

Port Clinton: Your Home Base

Walleye Capital of the World. A walkable river-and-lake downtown, a long sandy city beach, and the fast boat to Put-in-Bay.



Madison Street, the heart of downtown Port Clinton. Photo: Nyttend · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Port Clinton sits where the Portage River empties into Lake Erie. Downtown is a few blocks of Madison Street plus the riverfront by the Jet Express. The lakefront runs east along Perry Street (Route 163) past Lakeview Park, where the house is, toward the Catawba Road strip. Most of what you'll want is within 5–10 minutes by car.

Beaches & parks in town

Port Clinton City Beach & Lakeview Park

Free

BEACH · PARK

1100 E Perry St

Your neighborhood beach, a block from the house. The sandy city beach runs about 2,180 feet across Perry Street from the park, with parking, restrooms, an outdoor shower and a crosswalk. Lakeview Park has picnic shelters, grills, paths and an all-abilities nautical playground. The seasonal concession is open Memorial Day–Labor Day, 11–5, weather permitting. The beach, Waterworks Park and the Lakefront Preserve together add up to nearly a mile of public shoreline.

www.portclinton.com

Waterworks Park & Port Clinton Lighthouse

Free / \$3 tour

BEACH · PARK · LIGHTHOUSE

Waterworks Park, 231 E Perry St (lighthouse at 421 E Perry)

Home of the Walleye Festival and the Lighthouse & Maritime Festival. It has a swimming beach, pier, playground, picnic tables and a short paved pond loop. The restored 1896 "pepper pot" lighthouse is open for tours Saturdays noon–5, Memorial Day–Labor Day (\$3). Seasonal kayak and paddleboard rentals have operated here (North Coast Beachfitters, northcoastbeachfitters.com), so confirm for your dates.

portclintonlighthouse.org

Lakefront Preserve

Free

NATURE PRESERVE

East lakefront

A 14.7-acre shoreline preserve with paths and lake views. **No swimming.**

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Things to do

Liberty Aviation Museum & Tin Goose Diner

Adults \$14

MUSEUM · DINER

3515 E State Rd (Erie-Ottawa International Airport) · 419-732-0234

Warbirds, a working restoration hangar and a 1950s diner. **2026 hours:** museum Mon–Fri 10–4, Sat–Sun 9–5. **Admission:** adults \$14, ages 6–17 \$8, 5 and under free, \$2 off for seniors 60+, veterans and first responders. The Tin Goose Diner keeps its own hours (Mon–Fri 8–3, Sat–Sun 7–3), with breakfast all day. Hosts Corvettes at the Museum, Rally on the Runway and a Military Show.

libertyaviationmuseum.org

African Safari Wildlife Park

See site

DRIVE-THRU SAFARI

267 S Lightner Rd · 800-521-2660

Drive your own car through herds of zebra, bison, alpaca and giraffe, and feed them from a cup. **2026 note:** the Walk-Thru Safari is **closed for 2026 and reopens May 2027**, but the Drive-Thru is open. Last admission is one hour before close, and hours change by date. Warm-weather animals like giraffes may not be out on cool or rainy days. Extras include animal encounters (capybara, sloth), pumpkin-smash wagon rides in fall, and Cocktails with Capys.

africansafariwildlifepark.com

The Watering Hole

See site

WATERPARK · GO-KARTS · ZOO

1530 S Danbury Rd · 419-732-6671

Family waterpark with a petting zoo, go-karts, mini golf and an arcade. Seasonal and weather-dependent, so check the calendar.

wateringholeatmonsoon.com

Fast Eddie's Sports Park & Cameo Pizza

\$\$

MINI GOLF · ARCADE · SPORTS BAR

280 SE Catawba Rd · 419-734-7070

Mini golf (year-round), an arcade, seasonal go-karts and bumper boats, and a sports bar serving Cameo Pizza. A good choice when a group splits between kids and the game on TV.

www.fasteddiescatawba.com

Fisherman's Wharf CONFIRM

Varies

BAIT · TACKLE · CHARTERS

83 N Madison St

Downtown on the river. Bait and tackle, Ohio fishing licenses, and a big charter desk. See Chapter 14.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Downtown & the MORA

Free

SHOPPING · NIGHTLIFE

Madison St

Restaurants, bars, Great Lakes Popcorn (60 Madison St, greatlakespopcorn.com) and boutiques. Downtown is an Outdoor Refreshment Area: if you're 21+, participating bars serve drinks in official cups you can carry within the posted boundaries, **noon–midnight**. The district does **not** reach the beach or the house. Free RiverFront Live concerts run Fridays 6–7:30pm in summer.

www.mainstreetportclinton.org

Shores & Islands West Welcome Center

Free

VISITOR INFO

770 SE Catawba Rd · 800-441-1271

Maps, brochures, event calendars and local advice.

www.shoresandislands.com



Liberty Aviation Museum at Erie-Ottawa International Airport. Photo: Mbrickn · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



Looking east along the Lake Erie shore in Port Clinton, with the lighthouse at right. Photo: Chris Rycroft from Madison, Wisconsin, United States · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Breakfast, coffee & donuts

Ala Carte Cafe CONFIRM

\$

BREAKFAST · LUNCH

225 Madison St · 419-734-9939

Big breakfasts: smothered biscuits, omelets, "trash potatoes." Expect a wait on weekend mornings.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Coffee Express CONFIRM

\$

COFFEE · BREAKFAST

128 W 2nd St · 419-734-2089

Local coffee, pastries and breakfast and lunch sandwiches. Opens early.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Lake Donuts

\$

DONUT SHOP

70 Jefferson St

Scratch yeast and cake donuts and fritters. Posted menu prices: glazed \$2.19, specialty \$3.19, coffee \$2.99. Usually Thu–Sun mornings until they sell out, so go early and confirm the days.

lakedonuts.com

Tin Goose Diner

\$

1950S DINER

At Liberty Aviation Museum · 419-732-0234

Breakfast all day. Mon–Fri 8–3, Sat–Sun 7–3.

libertyaviationmuseum.org**Lunch & dinner****Jolly Roger Seafood House**

\$\$

FISH HOUSE

1715 E Perry St · 419-732-3382

Lake Erie perch and walleye, shrimp and po' boys, in the beach neighborhood east of Lakeview Park. Online ordering is available.

jollyrogerseafoodhouseoh.toast.site**Dock's Beach House**

\$\$

WATERFRONT BAR & GRILL

252 W Lakeshore Dr · 419-732-6609

Perch and walleye, beach cocktails and a patio on the sand. The kitchen has been open daily 11–9 in season. No reservations, and no outside food, coolers or pets on their private beach.

www.docksbeachhouse.com**The Brick House**

\$\$

PIZZA · PUB

111 Madison St · 419-315-2887

Pizza (the star), grinders, wings and burgers in a 1900s brick building. Full bar.

www.thebrickhouseoh.com**Clinton House** CONFIRM

\$\$

AMERICAN

106 W Perry St · 419-967-9037

Historic building with walleye bites, lobster bisque, burgers and Sunday brunch. Full bar. Often closed early in the week.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

McCarthy's Restaurant & Pub CONFIRM

\$\$

IRISH PUB

101 Madison St · 419-732-8800

Fish and chips, Reubens and perch baskets. Good for groups.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Poseidon Lounge CONFIRM

\$\$\$

SEAFOOD · COCKTAILS

117 Madison St

Smaller and more dressed-up, for a quieter dinner. Often closed Mon–Tue.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Bistro 163

\$

NONPROFIT CAFÉ

1848 E Perry St, Suite 10 · 419-734-9887

"Pay it forward" lunch café: quiche, soups, salads and homemade desserts. Weekdays 11–2 only.

bistro163.org

Fast Eddie's / Cameo Pizza

\$\$

PIZZA · SPORTS BAR

280 SE Catawba Rd · 419-734-7070

Cameo Pizza for the whole house, with delivery in the area.

www.fasteddiescatawba.com**Bars & nightlife****The Gristmill**

\$\$

BAR · LIVE MUSIC

4 Monroe St

Craft beer, cocktails, a patio and live music on weekends. Next to the Jet Express.

thegristmillbar.com**Three Legged Dog**

\$

GAME BAR

116 Madison St · 419-315-4335

Pool, darts, pinball, cornhole and air hockey. Dog-friendly. Evenings, closed Mondays.

threeleggeddogpc.com**Island Port**

\$\$

DOCKSIDE BAR

Jet Express dock, 3 Monroe St · 800-245-1538

Riverfront bar at the ferry terminal, with a view of the drawbridge.

jet-express.com**Open Container Bar** CONFIRM

\$

CONTAINER BAR

17 Monroe St

Shipping-container venue with live music and food trucks. Seasonal.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

The Bait House River Bar CONFIRM

\$

RIVER BAR

121 E Perry St

On the water, with live music. Seasonal.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Ice cream & sweets**The Ice Shanty**

\$

ICE CREAM

1737 E Perry St · 419-732-1500

Toft's ice cream and sundaes next to Jolly Roger, a short walk from the beach. Seasonal.

theiceshanty.com**RJ's Ice Cream & Desserts** CONFIRM

\$

ICE CREAM

135 E 2nd St

Toft's ice cream, gelato and pies downtown.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Toft's Ice Cream Parlor **CONFIRM****ICE CREAM**

4016 E Harbor Rd (Knoll Crest) · 419-732-8857

A scoop shop from Ohio's oldest dairy. Listed hours vary, so call ahead.

toftdairy.com/scoop-shops

Great Lakes Popcorn Co.**POPCORN · GIFTS**

60 Madison St · 419-732-3080

Watch it pop. Closed Mondays.

greatlakespopcorn.com

HOST TIPS FOR PORT CLINTON

Walk downtown when the weather is good. Grab groceries on the way in (Kroger and Walmart are on E Harbor Rd).

Book the Jet Express ahead for Saturdays. For sunset, just walk a block to the beach, no reservation needed.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.portclinton.com/> · <https://portclintonlighthouse.org/> · <https://libertyaviationmuseum.org/> · <https://africansafariwildlifepark.com/> · <https://www.mainstreetportclinton.org/> · ODNR Ohio Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 2 Ottawa–Portage (Apr 2026) · Business websites as linked

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 6

Put-in-Bay & South Bass Island

Golf carts, a harbor full of boats, caves, a 352-foot memorial and the Midwest's best-known island party. It's also a great family day if you go early.



Put-in-Bay harbor seen from Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial. Photo: Eoghanacht · CC0 · Wikimedia Commons

Put-in-Bay is the village on **South Bass Island**, about 3 miles off the mainland. The island is roughly 3.5 by 1.5 miles. The official island guide counts more than 25 restaurants. Daytime is very family-friendly. After dark, downtown Delaware Avenue turns into a loud bar scene, especially on summer weekends and big event weekends. You must be 21 to drink, and you need a driver's license to drive a golf cart.

Getting there: Jet Express from downtown Port Clinton (lands downtown) or Miller Ferry from Catawba (lands at the Lime Kiln dock at the south end, where buses and cart rentals meet the boat). See Chapter 3.

Sights & things to do

Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial

Free entry (2026)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Visitor center, 180 Toledo Ave · 419-285-2184

A 352-foot Doric column honoring Commodore Perry's 1813 Battle of Lake Erie victory and lasting peace between the US, Britain and Canada. **2026–27 note:** the observation deck, plazas and rotunda are closed for the Upper Plaza Rehabilitation, so you can see the monument from the grounds but can't go up. Entrance fees are waived during construction. The visitor center has exhibits and a 15-minute film. **2026 visitor center hours:** May 16–Sep 6 daily 10–6; Sep 7–28 daily 10–5; Sep 29–Oct 26 Fri–Mon 10–5.

www.nps.gov/pevi

Heineman's Winery & Crystal Cave

See site

WINERY · CAVE TOUR

978 Catawba Ave · 419-285-2811

Family-run since 1888. Crystal Cave, found in 1897 while digging a well, is billed as the world's largest geode, lined with blue-white celestite crystals. Combo tours include the cave, the wine cellar and a glass of wine or grape juice. **2026 hours:** Apr 21–May 2 daily 12–5; May 3–Sep 30 Mon–Sat 11–6, Sun 12–6; Oct 1–26 daily 12–5. The wine garden hosts the Island Wine Festival in June.

heinemanswinery.com

Perry's Cave Family Fun Center

[See site](#)

CAVE · FAMILY FUN

Catawba Ave (across from Heineman's)

A limestone cave tour 50 feet underground, plus the Butterfly House, putt-putt, gemstone mining, the Fort aMaze'n maze and more, with combo tickets. DanDee's Snack Shack is on site. We didn't verify prices; check the site.

perryscave.com

Kimberly's Carousel

\$

CAROUSEL

Delaware Ave, downtown

One of the country's oldest operating wooden carousels, right downtown.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Lake Erie Islands Historical Society Museum

[See site](#)

MUSEUM

Downtown (see site) · 419-285-2804

6,000 sq ft of island history: a Ford Tri-Motor, a Hotel Victory display, road-race footage and a 15-minute film. Open daily June–September and weekends in May and October.

leihs.org

South Bass Island Lighthouse

[See site](#)

LIGHTHOUSE

South Bass Island (OSU) · 419-285-1800

Owned by The Ohio State University. Seasonal tours on Fridays and Saturdays, and group tours by appointment. OSU also offers tours of Gibraltar Island, Cooke's Castle and Stone Laboratory (the oldest freshwater biological field station in the US), departing from The Boardwalk.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Aquatic Visitor Center (ODNR)

Free

NATURE CENTER

Near Oak Point State Park · 419-742-0008

Interactive exhibits on Lake Erie fish, wildlife and conservation. Good with kids.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Lake Erie Islands Nature & Wildlife Center

[See site](#)

NATURE CENTER

South Bass Island · 419-285-3037

Trails, exhibits and hands-on programs in season.

lakeerieislandswildlife.com

Put-in-Bay Tour Train

[See site](#)

NARRATED TOUR

Downtown depot · 419-285-4855

Hop-on tour with stops at Perry's Cave, the Butterfly House, Heineman's, the Nature & Wildlife Center, Put-in-Bay Winery and Perry's memorial.

putinbaytrans.com

On the water & in the air

[See sites](#)

ACTIVITIES

Various

Foggy Dew Sailing (419-871-8333, foggydewsailing.com), Put-in-Bay Parasail (419-285-3703, putinbayparasail.com), Fly Heli helicopter tours (312-888-3153, flyhelitours.com), kayak and jet-ski rentals, and a 9-hole par-3 golf course. The Crew's Nest (thecrewsnest.com) is a private club that sells limited weekday day passes to its pool complex and dining.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.



Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial. The observation deck is closed for 2026-27. Photo: MJCdetroit · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



South Bass Island Lighthouse, now owned by The Ohio State University. Photo: Rene Sturgell · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Beaches & parks

- **Public bathing beach** at the east end of Delaware Ave, near downtown.
- **South Bass Island State Park** (419-285-2112): a cobblestone beach, fishing pier and campground (59 electric sites, 10 full-hookup, 57 non-electric, plus cabents) on the site of the old Hotel Victory. A classic sunset spot.
- **Oak Point State Park**: a tiny 1.5-acre park with docks and views. No beach.
- **DeRivera Park**: the downtown waterfront green with the bathhouse (shower tokens \$5 for two), festivals and Oktoberfest.
- **Island Paws** dog park, for anyone traveling with a dog.

Where to eat on the island

Island hours are seasonal, and many places close or cut back after Labor Day. Phone numbers and websites are from the 2026 official island guide.

The Boardwalk

SEAFOOD · SEVERAL VENUES

Downtown waterfront · 419-285-3695

Known for lobster bisque. The Upper Deck is sit-down. The Main Deck has Book's Seafood, the Fish Shak and the Little Galley.

the-boardwalk.com

\$\$

Pasquale's Café

BREAKFAST · ALL DAY

Downtown · 419-285-8600

All-day breakfast.

pasqualescafe.com

\$

The Forge

CRÊPES · BREAKFAST

Downtown · 419-285-0022

Sweet and savory crêpes.

theforgepib.com

\$

Put-in-Bay Winery at the Doller Estate

WINERY · WATERFRONT BREAKFAST

392 Bayview Ave · 419-285-3343

The island's only waterfront winery, now serving waterfront breakfast.

putinbaywinery.com

\$\$

Mossbacks

BAR & GRILL

371 Catawba Ave · 419-285-8888

mossbackspib.com

\$\$

The Boathouse

PATIO BAR & GRILL

Downtown · 419-285-5665

Wraparound patio and po' boys.

theboathousebarandgrill.com

\$\$

Goat Soup & Whiskey

TAVERN · BIERGARTEN

Downtown · 419-285-4628

Perch tacos and a biergarten.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

\$\$

Reel Bar

BOURBON BAR · BRUNCH

Downtown · 419-285-1318

reelbar.com

\$\$

Topsy Turvey's

FAMILY RESTAURANT

Downtown · 419-285-4511

Also rents golf carts.

topsyturveys.com

\$\$

Mr. Ed's / Cameo Pizza

BAR · PIZZA

Downtown, harbor view · 419-285-4444

Patio overlooking the harbor.

mredsputinbay.com

\$\$

The Keys

WATERFRONT BAR & GRILL

Bayview Ave

thekeyspib.com

\$\$

Put-in-Bay Brewery & Distillery

\$\$

BREW PUB

Downtown · 419-285-4677

The island's only brewery and distillery, with West Shore IPA, South Bass Oatmeal Stout and brewery pizzas.

putinbaybrewery.com**Joe's Bar**

\$

BAR

Downtown · 419-285-5637

joesbarpib.com**Chicken Patio**

\$

LATE-NIGHT FOOD

Downtown · 419-285-4595

Late-night bite.

chickenpatio.com**Frosty's Bar & Pizza**

\$

PIZZA · BAR

Downtown

frostys.com**Hooligans**

\$\$

IRISH PUB

Downtown · 419-285-8000

hooliganspib.com**The Round House Bar**

\$

HISTORIC BAR

Downtown · 419-285-2323

A downtown landmark with live music. Red Moon speakeasy is listed at the same number.

theroundhousebar.com**Mojito Bay**

\$\$

TIKI BAR

Downtown

mojitobaypib.com**Ice cream & sweets****Dairy Isle**

\$

BURGERS · ICE CREAM

Downtown · 419-285-3506

dairyislepib.com**Sweet Siblings**

\$

SUNDAES · SHAKES

Downtown

Desserts made with homemade cookies and brownies.

sweetsiblingspib.com

PIB Candy Bar

CANDY · ICE CREAM

Downtown

Homemade fudge-style treats, taffy, scooped and soft-serve.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

DanDee's Snack Shack

SNACKS

At Perry's Cave

Sandwiches, fries, ice cream and frozen drinks.

perryscave.com**Island practicalities**

- **Groceries:** Island General Store (Catawba Ave across from Town Hall), Bell Buoy, and Island Hardware & Market.
- **Cash:** First National Bank of Bellevue (summer hours M/W/F 9:30–3:30). ATMs at the DeRivera Bathhouse, The Boathouse, Edgewater and the Carriage House.
- **Restrooms and showers:** DeRivera Park bathhouse.
- **Last boat:** know it before you order the second round. Missing the last Jet Express means a taxi to the Miller, or a night on the island.

Middle Bass Island

A quiet neighbor, reachable by the Miller Ferry or the Sonny S passenger ferry from downtown Put-in-Bay (daily Memorial Day–Labor Day). Middle Bass Island State Park has a marina and primitive camping. Come for a slow afternoon, not nightlife.

HOW TO DO PUT-IN-BAY WELL

Take an early boat, rent the cart right away, and do the island loop (memorial grounds, Heineman's and Crystal Cave, Perry's Cave, South Bass Island State Park) before lunch. Eat downtown, swim or hit the carousel in the afternoon, and catch a boat back before the evening crowd if you have kids along.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): Put-in-Bay 2026 Official Island Guide (visitputinbay.com) · <https://www.nps.gov/pevi/planyourvisit/hours.htm> · <https://www.nps.gov/pevi/planyourvisit/fees.htm> · <https://heinemanswinery.com/> · <https://perryscave.com/> · <https://leihs.org/> · ODNR Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 3 Lake Erie Islands (Apr 2026) · <https://sonnysboatline.com/>
Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 7

Catawba Island

A peninsula of orchards, vineyards, marinas and lake houses, with the Miller Ferry dock at its tip.



Catawba Island from the air. Photo: Nyttend · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Despite the name, Catawba Island is a peninsula. Drive north on Route 53 (Catawba Road) from SR 2 or from Port Clinton. It's where the Miller Ferry leaves for Put-in-Bay. It's also the easiest "take the cars and wander" afternoon: a farm brewery, a historic stone winery, an orchard restaurant and a small state park on the water.

Twin Oast Brewing

\$\$

FARM BREWERY · RESTAURANT

3630 NE Catawba Rd · 419-573-6126

A brewery on a 60-acre farm with house beer, food, orchards and big family-friendly grounds. In winter there are igloos and a holiday light trail (Winter at the Oast). **Hours:** Sun–Wed 11–9, Thu–Sat 11–10. The kitchen closes an hour before the taproom. Twin Oast also acquired the former Catawba Island Brewing assets.

www.twinoast.com

Gideon Owen Wine Co. & The Chalet

\$\$\$-\$\$\$

WINERY · RESTAURANT

3845 E Wine Cellar Rd · 419-797-4445

A historic limestone winery (the old Mon Ami building) with a tasting room and full restaurant. **Hours (per the winery's site):** Mon–Thu 11:30–9, Fri–Sat 11:30–10, Sun 10:30–8:30, with Sunday brunch until 1:30. Dinner reservations at The Chalet are recommended. Hosts a Summer Market in August.

www.gideonowenwine.com

The Orchard: Bar & Table / Farm Stand

\$\$

FARM RESTAURANT · BAR

Bar & Table 3266 NE Catawba Rd · Farm Stand 3350 NE Catawba Rd

Farm-to-table food and drinks. Established 2014, with live entertainment year-round. The Farm Stand sells seasonal produce.

orchardoncatawba.com

Catawba Galley CONFIRM

\$\$

CASUAL

1871 NE Catawba Rd

Casual spot on the Catawba strip.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Catawba Island State Park

Free

STATE PARK

4049 E Moore's Dock Rd

About 10 acres, day-use only. A large fishing pier, a 4-lane boat ramp, a 400-foot cobblestone beach, a picnic shelter and a playground. Great for sunset and watching the Miller boats come and go.

ohiodnr.gov**Miller Ferry Catawba dock**

\$9 adult

FERRY

5174 E Water St · 800-500-2421

Free parking. See Chapter 3.

millerferry.com**Fast Eddie's Sports Park**

\$\$

FAMILY FUN

280 SE Catawba Rd · 419-734-7070

At the south end of Catawba Road. See Chapter 5.

www.fasteddiescatawba.com**Shores & Islands West Welcome Center**

Free

VISITOR INFO

770 SE Catawba Rd · 800-441-1271

Maps and event calendars.

www.shoresandislands.com**A CATAWBA AFTERNOON**

Lunch at The Orchard, sunset at Catawba Island State Park, then dinner at Gideon Owen (reserve The Chalet) or the lawn at Twin Oast. Have a designated driver. Catawba Road is dark and busy on summer nights.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.twinoast.com/> · <https://www.gideonowenwine.com/hours> · <https://orchardoncatawba.com/> · ODNR Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 2 (Apr 2026) · <https://millerferry.com/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 8

Marblehead & Lakeside

Ohio's best-known lighthouse, a big state-park beach, and a gated Victorian Chautauqua resort on the water.



Marblehead Lighthouse, in continuous use since 1822. Photo: Chris "Mr. Pants" Landis · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

The Marblehead Peninsula is the stretch of land east of Port Clinton between Lake Erie and Sandusky Bay. Route 163 runs out along it through Lakeside to the village of Marblehead at the tip, where the Kelleys Island ferry leaves. From downtown Port Clinton: East Harbor State Park is about 19 minutes, Lakeside about 21, and Marblehead Lighthouse about 24.

Marblehead Lighthouse State Park

Free park · \$5 tower

LIGHTHOUSE · PARK

110 Lighthouse Dr, Marblehead · 419-798-6175

The oldest lighthouse in continuous operation on the Great Lakes (since 1822), on a limestone shore. The park is open 24/7.

Tower climbs and buildings: summer (Saturday of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day) noon–4, last tour 3:40. **Tower tickets are \$5 (age 6+), sold at the tower only, in limited numbers.** In fall, the tower opens September weekends and the first weekend of October. The Keeper's House Museum and a replica lifesaving station are on the grounds. The Lighthouse Festival is the second Saturday of October.

www.marbleheadlighthouseohio.org

East Harbor State Park

Free

STATE PARK · BEACH

Main entrance 1169 N Buck Rd · 419-734-4424

Ohio's big lakeshore park: 1,831 acres and nearly 2.5 miles of shoreline, including a 1,500-foot sandy swimming beach. **South Beach** is the dog-friendly beach (no dogs on the main swim beach). Six miles of trails, wetlands birding, disc golf, a 586-site campground and a marina (2188 N Buck Rd).

ohiodnr.gov

Lakeside Chautauqua

Gate pass in season

HISTORIC RESORT

Lakeside (gated)

A gated Victorian summer community with a long dock, a lakefront park, Hotel Lakeside, summer programs, shops and cottages. **2026 gated season: May 22–Sep 7.** Everyone entering needs a pass. Daily: ages 0–5 free, 6–14 \$5, 15–21 \$18, adults 22–89 \$34 Mon–Thu or \$40 Fri–Sun, 90+ free. There's also a 4-hour partial-day pass (\$15 at the gate, bought before 5pm) and a **free 2-hour Shopping/Dining Pass** (must be stamped). Preservation fee: \$2 online, \$3 at the gate. Cars need an Auto Pass. Lakeside Christmas is Dec 4–5.

www.lakesideohio.com

Kelleys Island Ferry

From \$26 RT

FERRY

510 W Main St, Marblehead · 419-798-9763

Passengers and cars. See Chapter 10.

kelleysislandferry.com

Mazurik Fishing Access

Free

SHORE FISHING

8957 N Shore Blvd

ODNR lakeshore access for fishing and views.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.



Hotel Lakeside, on the waterfront inside the Lakeside Chautauqua gates. Photo: David Wilson from Oak Park, Illinois, USA · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Eat & drink

Marblehead Galley

\$\$

FAMILY RESTAURANT · LOUNGE

113 W Main St, Marblehead · 419-798-5356

Restaurant and the Freighters Lounge near the Kelleys ferry.

marbleheadgalley.com

Rocky Point Winery

\$\$

WINERY

111 W Main St, Marblehead

Tasting room in Marblehead village. Listed hours vary, so check the site.

rockypointwinery.com

Red's Lakehouse

\$\$

RESTAURANT & BAR

9268 E Bayshore Rd · 419-702-7047

On the bay side of the peninsula.

redslakehouse.com**Netty's Chili Dogs**

\$

CHILI DOGS · ICE CREAM

9410 E Harbor Rd · 419-798-5050

A summer-season location of the Toledo favorite.

nettys.com**The Patio Restaurant** **CONFIRM**

\$

BREAKFAST · DONUT WINDOW

182 Walnut Ave, Lakeside · 419-798-9144

Inside Lakeside. Known for its donut window.

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

LIGHTHOUSE TIMING

Arrive before noon on summer days if you want to climb the tower. Tickets are limited and sold only at the tower.

Combine it with a swim at East Harbor, or with the Kelleys ferry a few minutes away.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.marbleheadlighthouseohio.org/> · <https://www.lakesideohio.com/visiting-lakeside/passes/> · ODNR Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 2 Ottawa–Portage (Apr 2026) · <https://kelleysislandferry.com/> · Business websites as linked

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 9

Sandusky: Cedar Point, Waterparks & Downtown

The roller-coaster capital, a cluster of indoor waterpark resorts open all year, and a revived downtown on Sandusky Bay.



Millennium Force at Cedar Point. Photo: Coasterman1234 · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Sandusky is across Sandusky Bay from the Marblehead Peninsula, about 27 minutes from downtown Port Clinton to downtown Sandusky and about 37 minutes to the Cedar Point gate (free-flow). Take SR 2 east over the bay bridge. Sandusky works year-round: Cedar Point in season and the indoor waterparks every day.

Cedar Point & Cedar Point Shores

Cedar Point

AMUSEMENT PARK

Cedar Point peninsula, Sandusky

A world-famous roller-coaster park on a 364-acre peninsula with a mile-long Lake Erie beach. **2026 season: May 9 – Nov 1.** Daily in summer, then weekends for **HalloWeekends** (Sep 17 – Nov 1, with a Scream Peek Sep 10–13). Summer extras: Star-Spangled celebration (Jun 29 – Jul 4) and Boardwalk Nights (Jul 17 – Aug 16). Ticket and parking prices change by date, so buy online and check that day's hours. 2027 dates weren't announced when we checked.

www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint

Date-based pricing

Cedar Point Shores

OUTDOOR WATERPARK

Next to Cedar Point

2026 season: May 23 – Aug 31.

www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint

Separate ticket

Jet Express to Cedar Point

FERRY

From the Sandusky dock, 101 W Shoreline Dr · 800-245-1538

Skip the causeway: ride from downtown Sandusky to the Cedar Point Marina. Cedar Point parking fees apply if you park at Cedar Point and aren't a resort guest.

jet-express.com

\$13



Schade-Mylander Plaza in downtown Sandusky. Photo: Andre Carrotflower · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Indoor waterpark resorts (rain or shine, year-round)

Kalahari Resort

Day passes available

INDOOR/OUTDOOR WATERPARK RESORT

7000 Kalahari Dr · 1-877-525-2427

More than 250,000 sq ft of indoor and outdoor waterparks. The indoor park is kept at 84°. **Day passes** are sold, so you don't have to stay overnight. The Safari Outdoor Adventure Park runs Memorial Day–Labor Day. Also mini golf, laser tag, an arcade, an animal park, a spa and restaurants. Seasonal events include Spooktacular in October, the Food & Wine Festival in August, and holiday buffets.

www.kalahariresorts.com/ohio

Great Wolf Lodge Sandusky

See site

INDOOR WATERPARK RESORT

4600 Milan Rd · 800-641-9653

A 33,000 sq ft indoor water park kept at 84°F. Opened in March 2001. Check the site for day-pass availability. Waterpark access is generally tied to a room stay.

www.greatwolf.com/sandusky

Castaway Bay

Overnight guests

INDOOR WATERPARK RESORT

2001 Cleveland Rd

Cedar Point's Caribbean-themed resort: a 38,000 sq ft indoor waterpark at 82° with a wave pool and 10 slides, included with your stay. Six Flags offers bundles with Cedar Point admission.

www.castawaybay.com

Downtown, museums & other fun

Merry-Go-Round Museum

See site

MUSEUM

301 Jackson St · 419-626-6111

Opened in 1990 in the historic former Sandusky post office: hand-carved carousel figures, vintage band organs and a restoration workshop. Confirm hours (listed 11–4 on the day we checked).

www.merrygoroundmuseum.org

Maritime Museum of Sandusky[See site](#)

MUSEUM

125 Meigs St · 419-624-0274

Boats, ice harvesting and Lake Erie shipping history.

sanduskymaritime.org**Sandusky State Theatre**[Varies](#)

HISTORIC THEATER

107 Columbus Ave

Shows and concerts in a restored theater.

sanduskystate.com**Goodtime I island cruises**[Adults \\$33](#)

SIGHTSEEING BOAT

Downtown Sandusky · 419-625-9692

Lake Erie island cruises **Thu–Sat, Jun 25 – Aug 22, 2026**. Adults \$33, seniors \$30, 12 and under free. Friday sunset cruises (21+) \$30.goodtimeboat.com**Ghostly Manor Thrill Center**[See site](#)

HAUNT · SKATING · MINI GOLF

3319 Milan Rd · 419-626-4467

Opens daily at noon, year-round: a 7,000 sq ft haunted attraction, Skateworld roller rink and mini golf. A good rainy-day pick.

www.ghostlymanor.com**Firelands Winery**[\\$\\$](#)

WINERY

917 Bardshar Rd · 419-625-5474

Winery with an 1880 cellar, open year-round. **Hours:** Mon 11–6 (kitchen closed), Tue–Sat 11–8, Sun 11–6. Hosts the Great Barrel Fest in September.www.firelandswinery.com**Sandusky Christmas Market**[Free](#)

HOLIDAY MARKET

Schade-Mylander Plaza

Nov 27 – Dec 19, 2026.

sanduskychristmasmarket.com

The Merry-Go-Round Museum in downtown Sandusky. Photo: WeaponizingArchitecture · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



The Sandusky State Theatre on Columbus Avenue. Photo: Nyttend · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Eat & drink

Addresses below were confirmed from business sites where linked. Others came from directory listings.

Shore House Tavern

TAVERN

306 W Water St

A popular downtown spot to eat and drink.

shorehousetavern.com

\$\$

Landmark Kitchen & Bar

AMERICAN

101 E Water St

landmarksandusky.com

\$\$

Volstead Bar

SPEAKEASY · COCKTAILS

316 E Water St

Craft cocktails. Listed hours: closed Tuesdays, open evenings on other days.

volsteadbar.com

\$\$

Bait House Brewery

BREWERY

223 Meigs St · 419-502-4677

Handcrafted beer and live events.

baithousebrewery.com

\$\$

Crush Wine Bar CONFIRM

WINE BAR · DINNER

145 Columbus Ave

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

\$\$\$

J Bistro CONFIRM

BISTRO

129 W Market St

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

\$\$\$

Tony's CONFIRM

PUB

115 W Water St

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

\$\$

Lyman Harbor

WATERFRONT DINING · MARINA

1615 1st St · 419-625-9626

Restaurant and marina on the bay.

lymanharbor.com

\$\$

Cameo Pizza CONFIRM

\$\$

PIZZA

702 W Monroe St

The original of the regional pizza favorite.

cameopizza.com**Danny Boy's** CONFIRM

\$\$

ITALIAN

6207 Milan Rd

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Sandusky Bay Pancake House CONFIRM

\$

BREAKFAST

4710 Milan Rd

No official website verified. Search the name or Facebook.

Toft's Ice Cream Parlor CONFIRM

\$

ICE CREAM

3717 Venice Rd

Ohio's oldest dairy. A second shop, Toft's on 250, is on the Route 250 strip.

toftdairy.com/scoop-shops*No longer listed: Zinc Brasserie (closed) and Dockside Cafe (closed for 2026).***CEDAR POINT DAY, THE EASY WAY**

Buy tickets online for your date. Leave Port Clinton at least 45 minutes before opening on summer weekends, or park in downtown Sandusky and take the Jet Express across (\$13). Bring a refillable water bottle and sunscreen. The lakefront beach inside the park is a good break from the lines.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint> · <https://www.kalahariresorts.com/ohio/> · <https://www.greatwolf.com/sandusky> · <https://www.castawaybay.com/> · <https://www.merrygoroundmuseum.org/> · <https://sandusky-maritime.org/> · <https://goodtimeboat.com/> · <https://www.ghostlymanor.com/> · <https://www.firelandswinery.com/> · <https://www.cityofsandusky.com/> · Business websites as linked

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 10 · BONUS

Kelleys Island

The quiet island: glacial grooves, alvar trails, a state park beach, and a whole island on the National Register.



The Glacial Grooves on Kelleys Island, carved into limestone by glaciers. Photo: James St. John · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Kelleys Island covers about 4.5 square miles. The entire island is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's slower and quieter than Put-in-Bay, and a great day for bikes, hiking and a swim. **Getting there:** the Kelleys Island Ferry from Marblehead (cars welcome; about 21 minutes' drive from downtown Port Clinton to the dock) or the Jet Express from Sandusky (\$42) to the Casino Marina dock downtown.

Glacial Grooves State Memorial

Free

GEOLOGIC SITE

Division St & Titus Rd

A massive glacial groove about 400 feet long, 35 feet wide and up to 15 feet deep, carved into limestone during the last Ice Age. There's a walkway and viewing area.

ohiodnr.gov

Kelleys Island State Park

Free

STATE PARK

North side of the island

677 acres with a 100-foot sandy beach, a 127-site campground and more than 11 miles of trails, including the North Shore Alvar Loop through rare lakeshore alvar habitat. The North Pond State Nature Preserve has a boardwalk through coastal wetland.

ohiodnr.gov

Inscription Rock State Memorial

Free

HISTORIC SITE

E Lakeshore Dr & Addison Rd (south shore)

A limestone boulder with weathered Native American petroglyphs, under a protective shelter with a viewing platform (built in 1969). Open daily in daylight hours.

www.ohiohistory.org/visit/browse-historical-sites/inscription-rock-petroglyphs

Kelleys Island Chamber of Commerce

Free

VISITOR INFO

Downtown · 419-746-2360

Maps, rentals and the events calendar (Island Fest, Film Fest, Homecoming, Restaurant Week).

www.kelleysislandchamber.com



Inscription Rock, under its protective shelter. Photo: LeeG7144 · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



A Kelleys Island Ferry boat approaching the island. Photo: Mbrickn · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Eat & drink

The Village Pump

\$\$

ISLAND RESTAURANT

103 W Lakeshore Dr · 419-746-2281

An island landmark known for Lake Erie perch and its Brandy Alexander. Generally open mid-March to mid-December, so confirm hours.

villagepumpkiokh.com

Caddy Shack Square

\$

FOOD · RENTALS

115 Division St

Food and ice cream, plus golf cart and bike rentals.

caddyshacksquare.com

The chamber also lists Captains Corner, Dockers, The Groove, Island House, KI Cantina, The Casino, Kelleys Island Wine Co., Sand Tap, 19th Hole, The Villa and West Bay Tiki, with ice cream at Dipper Dan's, Unc'l Dik's and Papa T's. Groceries: Island Market. Hours are seasonal, so check the chamber's "Places to Eat" page.

Getting around

Bring your car on the ferry, or rent a golf cart or bike from Caddy Shack, Casino Carts, the General Store, Missy Magoo's, R Karts or Seaway Marina. Island Ride Taxi also runs. A bike loop of the island is very doable for most adults.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.kelleysislandchamber.com/> · <https://kelleysislandferry.com/> · ODNR Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 3 Lake Erie Islands (Apr 2026) · <https://jet-express.com/tickets/sandusky-route/> · <https://villagepumpkiokh.com/>
Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

PART III

By Interest

Beaches, food, wine, fishing, kids, rainy days and birding,
organized by what you want to do.

Beaches & State Parks · Eating & Drinking: Quick Picks · Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries ·
Fishing & Charters · Family & Kids · Rainy-Day Plan B · Nature & Birding

CHAPTER 11

Beaches & State Parks

Sand, cobble and limestone. Every public shore worth knowing, from the beach a block from the house to the islands.



East Harbor State Park, the region's biggest public beach. Photo: Analogue Kid · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Beach / park	Type	Swimming	Good to know	From downtown PC
Port Clinton City Beach (Lakeview Park)	Sand, ~2,180 ft	Yes	Restrooms, outdoor shower, seasonal concession 11–5, playground, parking. A block from the house	~1 mi
Waterworks Park, PC	Sand	Yes	Pier, playground, lighthouse, festivals	Downtown
Lakefront Preserve, PC	Natural shore, 14.7 acres	No	Paths and views	Short drive
Catawba Island State Park	400-ft cobble beach	Cobble shore	Fishing pier, ramp, shelter, playground. Day use	18 min
East Harbor State Park	1,500-ft sand beach	Yes	1,831 acres, trails, campground. South Beach is dog-friendly	19 min
Marblehead Lighthouse SP	Limestone shore	No beach	Lighthouse, open 24/7	24 min
Put-in-Bay public beach	Small beach	Yes	East end of Delaware Ave, downtown	Ferry
South Bass Island SP	Cobble beach	Cobble shore	Campground, sunset views	Ferry
Kelleys Island SP	100-ft sand beach	Yes	677 acres, 11+ miles of trails	Ferry
Cedar Point beach	Mile-long sand beach	Check park rules	Inside the Cedar Point area	37 min

"Swimming: yes" means it's a designated public swim beach. There are generally no lifeguards at Ohio state park beaches, so always check posted signs. Distances are approximate.

Other parks & preserves

- **Oak Point State Park** (South Bass Island): 1.5 acres with docks and views. No beach.
- **Middle Bass Island State Park**: marina and primitive camping.
- **Mazurik Fishing Access** (8957 N Shore Blvd, Marblehead): shore fishing and lake views.
- **Magee Marsh** and **Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge**: see Chapter 17.

BEFORE YOU SWIM

Check the water advisory on **Ohio BeachGuard** (publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/BeachGuardPublic) and the NWS Cleveland beach forecast (weather.gov/cle), especially after heavy rain or on windy days. See Chapter 19 for rip currents.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): ODNR Ohio Coastal Public Access Guide, Ch. 2 Ottawa–Portage and Ch. 3 Lake Erie Islands (Apr 2026) · <https://www.portclinton.com/> · <https://www.sixflags.com/cedarpoint>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 12

Eating & Drinking: Quick Picks

The full listings are in each town chapter. Here are the shortcuts by craving.

Price levels describe the type of place: \$ counter or quick, \$\$ casual sit-down, \$\$\$ dinner house. They are not quoted prices. Hours are seasonal everywhere, so check before you go.

Lake Erie perch & walleye

Where	Town	Level
Jolly Roger Seafood House	Port Clinton (beach neighborhood)	\$\$
Dock's Beach House	Port Clinton (west lakefront)	\$\$
McCarthy's (perch baskets)	Port Clinton downtown	\$\$
Clinton House (walleye bites)	Port Clinton downtown	\$\$
Goat Soup & Whiskey (perch tacos)	Put-in-Bay	\$\$
The Boardwalk (Book's Seafood, Fish Shak)	Put-in-Bay	\$\$
The Village Pump (perch)	Kelleys Island	\$\$

Breakfast & coffee

Where	Town	Level
Ala Carte Cafe	Port Clinton	\$
Coffee Express	Port Clinton	\$
Lake Donuts (Thu–Sun, until sold out)	Port Clinton	\$
Tin Goose Diner (breakfast all day)	Port Clinton (airport)	\$
Pasquale's Café (all-day breakfast)	Put-in-Bay	\$
The Forge (crêpes)	Put-in-Bay	\$
Put-in-Bay Winery (waterfront breakfast)	Put-in-Bay	\$\$
Gideon Owen Sunday brunch	Catawba	\$\$
The Patio (donut window)	Lakeside	\$
Sandusky Bay Pancake House	Sandusky	\$

Ice cream

Where	Town	Level
The Ice Shanty (Toft's), walkable from the house	Port Clinton	\$
RJ's Ice Cream & Desserts	Port Clinton downtown	\$
Toft's Ice Cream Parlor (E Harbor Rd)	Port Clinton	\$
Lakeview Park concession (Toft's, in season)	Port Clinton	\$

Where	Town	Level
Dairy Isle · Sweet Siblings · PIB Candy Bar	Put-in-Bay	\$
Netty's (summer)	Marblehead	\$
Dipper Dan's · Unc'l Dik's · Papa T's	Kelleys Island	\$
Toft's (Venice Rd, and on 250)	Sandusky	\$

Pizza & feed-the-whole-house

Where	Town	Level
The Brick House	Port Clinton	\$\$
Fast Eddie's / Cameo Pizza (delivers locally)	Port Clinton / Catawba	\$\$
Mr. Ed's / Cameo Pizza	Put-in-Bay	\$\$
Frosty's Bar & Pizza	Put-in-Bay	\$
Cameo Pizza (W Monroe St)	Sandusky	\$\$

Date night

Where	Town	Level
Gideon Owen / The Chalet (reserve)	Catawba	\$\$-\$\$\$
Poseidon Lounge	Port Clinton	\$\$\$
The Ørchard: Bar & Table	Catawba	\$\$
Crush Wine Bar · J Bistro	Sandusky	\$\$\$
Volstead Bar (cocktails)	Sandusky	\$\$

On the water / sunset

Where	Town	Level
Dock's Beach House (on the sand)	Port Clinton	\$\$
Island Port (river, at the ferry)	Port Clinton	\$\$
The Keys · The Boardwalk · Put-in-Bay Winery	Put-in-Bay	\$\$
Lyman Harbor	Sandusky	\$\$
Red's Lakehouse (bay side)	Marblehead	\$\$

Late night

Downtown Port Clinton's bars (the Gristmill, Three Legged Dog) and, on the island, Chicken Patio, the Round House and the Delaware Avenue bars. On Put-in-Bay, remember the last boat.

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 13

Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries

The Lake Erie Islands have grown grapes since the 1800s. Here's the modern trail, mainland and island.



Crystal Cave, beneath Heineman's Winery on South Bass Island. Photo: Analogue Kid at English Wikipedia · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Name	Where	Type	Notes
Gideon Owen Wine Co.	Catawba	Winery + restaurant	Historic limestone cellars, The Chalet dining, Sunday brunch
Twin Oast Brewing	Catawba	Farm brewery	60-acre farm, food, events, winter igloos
The Ørchard	Catawba	Bar & table	Farm-to-table, live entertainment
Heineman's Winery	Put-in-Bay	Winery + Crystal Cave	Since 1888. Season Apr 21 – Oct 26, 2026
Put-in-Bay Winery (Doller Estate)	Put-in-Bay	Winery	Waterfront, serves breakfast
Put-in-Bay Brewery & Distillery	Put-in-Bay	Brewpub + distillery	The island's only brewery and distillery
Shiphouse Vodka / Noble Cut	Put-in-Bay	Distillery	Vodka with a maritime theme
Rocky Point Winery	Marblehead	Winery	Tasting room in the village
Kelleys Island Wine Co.	Kelleys Island	Winery	Listed by the island chamber
Firelands Winery	Sandusky	Winery	1880 cellar, open year-round
Bait House Brewery	Sandusky	Brewery	Downtown, 223 Meigs St

DESIGNATED DRIVER

Catawba Road, Route 2 and the island roads are busy, dark at night, and patrolled. Pick a driver, use a taxi on the islands, or take the ferry and walk. Golf carts count as vehicles for drinking-and-driving laws.

Wine-and-food events to plan around: Twin Oast Sip & Shop (May 2, Jun 14), the Island Wine Festival at Heineman's (Jun 20), Gideon Owen Summer Market (Aug 1), Kalahari Food & Wine Festival (Aug 29), Coast to the Oast and Firelands Great Barrel Fest (both Sep 19), and Put-in-Bay Oktoberfest (Oct 10–11).

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 14

Fishing & Charters

This is the Walleye Capital of the World. Here's how to get on the fish, legally.



Walleye (*Sander vitreus*). Photo: USFWS Mountain Prairie · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Western Lake Erie is famous for **walleye** and **yellow perch**, with smallmouth bass and white bass too. The spring walleye run and the fall bite are the headline seasons, and summer can be excellent when the weather cooperates. Charters run from Port Clinton, Catawba, Marblehead and the islands.

Licenses (Ohio, 2026–27)

License	Resident	Nonresident
1-day	\$14	\$27.04
3-day	n/a	\$52
Annual	\$25	\$76.96

- Anglers **16 and older** need their own Ohio fishing license, **even on a charter**. Under 16 needs no license.
- Buy online at wildohio.gov, in the HuntFish OH app, or at authorized bait shops such as Fisherman's Wharf downtown.
- **Lake Erie walleye**: 15-inch minimum. The daily bag limit was 6 for Mar 1 – Apr 30, 2026, and ODNR announces the limit for May 1, 2026 – Feb 28, 2027 each spring. Yellow perch limits vary by Lake Erie management zone. **Check current rules at wildohio.gov before you fish.**

Finding a charter

- **Fisherman's Wharf**, 83 N Madison St, downtown PC: bait, tackle, licenses and a charter desk.
- **Lake Erie Charter Boat Association**: 800-535-2210.
- **North Coast Charter Association**: 866-995-9930 · northcoastcharter.com.
- Individual captains, for example Mark 1 Sportfishing (mark1sportfishing.com). The Port Clinton travel site keeps a list at portclinton.org/fishing.html.
- Ask each captain what's included (tackle, bait, cleaning), the group size limit, the deposit and weather policy, and whether they clean and bag the catch. Prices vary by boat, so we don't list them.

Shore fishing

Try the Waterworks Park pier and the Portage River in Port Clinton, the big pier at Catawba Island State Park, Mazurik Fishing Access on the Marblehead Peninsula, and the South Bass Island State Park pier. A license is still required.

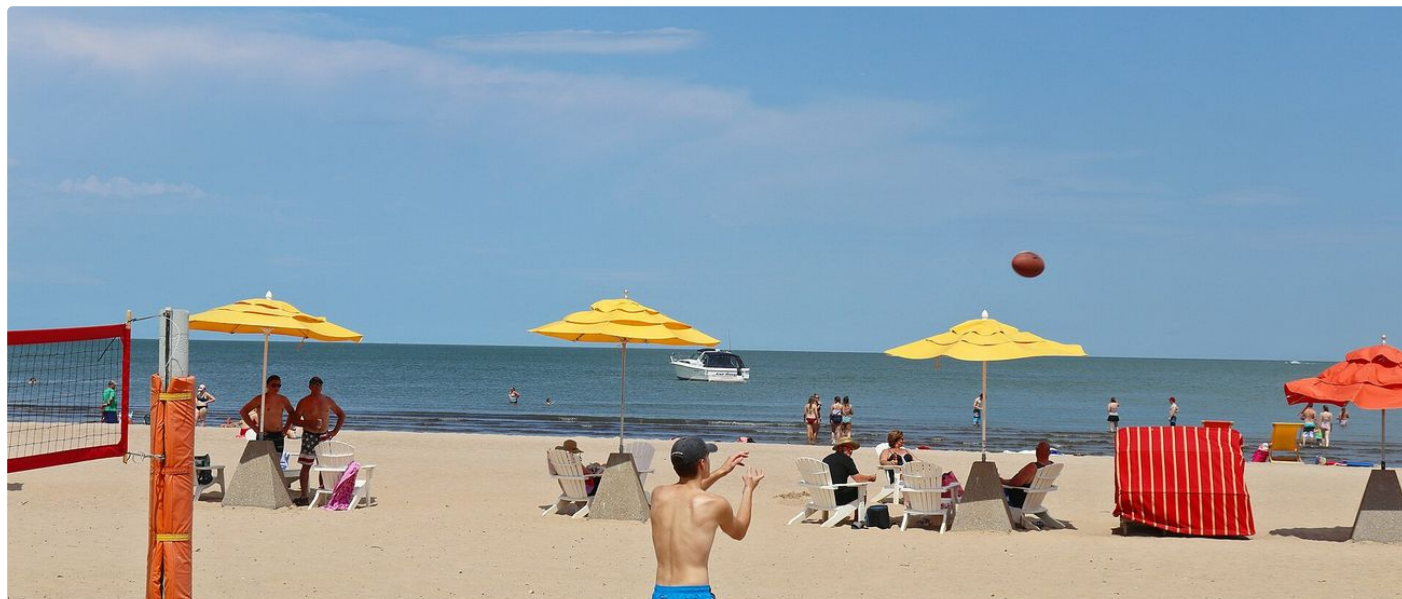
Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): Ohio Fishing Regulations 2026–2027 (ODNR Division of Wildlife) · <https://wildohio.gov/> · <https://northcoastcharter.com/> · <https://portclinton.org/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 15

Family & Kids

Big days and easy hours, by age and energy level.



Cedar Point's Lake Erie beach. Photo: Sean Philip Villegas · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Idea	Where	Ages	Notes
Lakeview Park playground + city beach	PC, a block from the house	All	All-abilities playground. Do this every day
Waterworks Park + lighthouse	PC	All	Lighthouse tours Saturdays in summer (\$3)
African Safari Drive-Thru	PC	All	Walk-Thru closed in 2026. Feed cups for the animals
Liberty Aviation Museum + Tin Goose	PC	5+	Planes up close. Adults \$14, ages 6–17 \$8
The Watering Hole	PC	All	Waterpark, go-karts, petting zoo (seasonal)
Fast Eddie's	PC/Catawba	All	Mini golf year-round, go-karts in season
Jet Express boat ride	PC → PIB	All	Kids love the boat
Perry's Cave + Butterfly House + gem mining	Put-in-Bay	All	Combo tickets
Kimberly's Carousel	Put-in-Bay	Little ones	One of the oldest wooden carousels
Aquatic Visitor Center	Put-in-Bay	All	Free Lake Erie exhibits
Crystal Cave at Heineman's	Put-in-Bay	All	Grape juice for kids on the combo tour
Marblehead Lighthouse climb	Marblehead	6+ (ticketed)	\$5, limited tickets, summer and fall weekends
East Harbor beach	Marblehead	All	Big sandy beach, trails
Glacial Grooves	Kelleys Island	All	Ice-age geology you can walk around
Cedar Point / Cedar Point Shores	Sandusky	Height-based rides	Plan a full day

Idea	Where	Ages	Notes
Kalahari / Great Wolf / Castaway Bay	Sandusky	All	Indoor waterparks, year-round
Merry-Go-Round Museum	Sandusky	All	Rainy-day pick
Goodtime I island cruise	Sandusky	All	12 and under free (summer)

FAMILY TIMING ON PUT-IN-BAY

Go early on a weekday if you can, eat lunch downtown, and head back by late afternoon. Avoid big party weekends with little kids (check the events chapter: Pyrate Fest, the Jeep Invasion and July 4 get very busy).

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 16

Rainy-Day Plan B

Lake weather turns fast. Here's what still works when it does.



A vintage postcard of the “Wishing Well” in Perry’s Cave, Put-in-Bay. Caves are a classic rainy-day stop. Photo: Unknown authorUnknown author · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Plan B	Where	Drive
Liberty Aviation Museum + Tin Goose Diner	Port Clinton	10 min
African Safari Drive-Thru (you stay in the car; some animals hide in rain)	Port Clinton	20 min
Fast Eddie's arcade + Cameo Pizza	Port Clinton / Catawba	~10 min
Three Legged Dog games (adults)	Downtown PC	Walk
Brewery or winery afternoon: Twin Oast, Gideon Owen, Firelands	Catawba / Sandusky	16–30 min
Kalahari day pass (84° indoors)	Sandusky	27 min
Great Wolf Lodge (check day-pass availability)	Sandusky	28 min
Merry-Go-Round Museum + Maritime Museum	Sandusky	27 min
Ghostly Manor: haunt, roller skating, mini golf (daily from noon)	Sandusky	~25–30 min
Perry's Victory visitor center film + Heineman's Crystal Cave	Put-in-Bay	Ferry, if boats are running
A movie and board-game night at the house, with a Kroger run	Port Clinton	6 min

Storms: if there's thunder, get off the beach and out of the water. Ferries may delay or cancel, so check the line's website, social media or phone line before driving to the dock.

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 17

Nature & Birding

One of North America's great spring migration stopovers is about 34 minutes away.



A yellow warbler on the Magee Marsh boardwalk in May. Photo: lwolfartist · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Magee Marsh Wildlife Area boardwalk

Free

BOARDWALK · BIRDING

West of Port Clinton on SR 2

A famous boardwalk through woods on the lakeshore, where warblers pass through at eye level in May. Open year-round, sunrise to sunset. The **Biggest Week in American Birding** was May 8–17 in 2026. Expect crowds on spring weekends.

ohiodnr.gov

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

Free

WILDLIFE REFUGE

West of Port Clinton on SR 2

Marsh trails, dawn to dusk. The visitor center is open Thu–Sun 10–4. The Wildlife Drive opens for driving on select dates (for example, during May and on summer weekends), so check the refuge calendar.

www.fws.gov/refuge/ottawa

East Harbor State Park

Free

WETLANDS · TRAILS

Marblehead Peninsula · 419-734-4424

Six miles of trails through wetlands. Birding by Kayak in June.

ohiodnr.gov

Kelleys Island alvar & North Pond

Free

TRAILS · BOARDWALK

Kelleys Island

The North Shore Alvar Loop and North Pond boardwalk.

ohiodnr.gov

Lake Erie Islands Nature & Wildlife Center

[See site](#)

NATURE CENTER

Put-in-Bay · 419-285-3037

Exhibits and trails.

lakeerieislandswildlife.com



The entrance to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Mbrickn · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



The entrance to Kelleys Island State Park. Photo: Mbrickn · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Ticks and mosquitoes are common in the marshes, so wear long pants and bug spray. Stay on boardwalks and trails.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): ODNR Ohio Coastal Public Access Guide (Apr 2026) · <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ottawa> · <https://www.shoresandislands.com/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

PART IV

Practical

Groceries and medical care, staying safe on the lake, nine sample itineraries, and budget notes.

Groceries, Pharmacy, Urgent Care & Hospital · Safety: Lake, Weather & Ferries · Sample Itineraries · Budget & Accessibility Notes

CHAPTER 18

Groceries, Pharmacy, Urgent Care & Hospital

The boring stuff that saves a vacation. For an emergency, call 911.

EMERGENCY

Call **911**. The nearest emergency room is **Magruder Hospital**, 615 Fulton St, Port Clinton: 24/7 ER, 419-734-3131, about 2 minutes from downtown.

Medical

Where	What	Address	Phone	From downtown PC
Magruder Hospital	24/7 emergency department	615 Fulton St, Port Clinton	419-734-3131	0.7 mi · 2 min
Magruder Urgent Care	Walk-in urgent care, daily 9am–8pm	615 Fulton St, Port Clinton	419-732-4017	0.7 mi · 2 min
Firelands Regional Medical Center	Emergency department	1111 Hayes Ave, Sandusky	419-557-7400	16 mi · 27 min

On the islands, call 911 too. Island trips to a mainland hospital take time, so carry any medicines you need.

Pharmacies

Pharmacy	Address	Phone	Notes
Kroger Pharmacy	2028 E Harbor Rd	419-732-6452	The store is listed 7am–11pm. Pharmacy hours are shorter, so call
Walmart Pharmacy	2826 E Harbor Rd	419-732-3866	Listed Mon–Sat 9–7, Sun 10–6
Magruder Pharmacy at Bassett's Market	3994 E Harbor Rd	See magruderhospital.com	Opened Feb 2025

There's no CVS in Port Clinton, and the Port Clinton Rite Aid closed in 2024.

Groceries & supplies

Store	Address	Drive	Notes
Kroger	2028 E Harbor Rd	2.7 mi · 6 min	Full grocery, beer/wine, fuel
Walmart Supercenter	2826 E Harbor Rd	4.8 mi · 11 min	Grocery plus beach chairs, towels, coolers. 419-732-3369
Bassett's Market	3994 E Harbor Rd	Short drive	Local grocery. bassettsmarket.com
Northcoast Ace Hardware	E Perry St corridor	Short drive	Charcoal, propane, beach odds and ends
Bassett's Do it Best	3994 E Harbor Rd	Short drive	Bigger hardware store

Store	Address	Drive	Notes
Fisherman's Wharf	83 N Madison St	Downtown	Bait, tackle, licenses
Island General Store · Bell Buoy · Island Hardware & Market	Put-in-Bay	Ferry	Island groceries
Island Market	Kelleys Island	Ferry	Island groceries

Visitor information

- **Shores & Islands Ohio**, West Welcome Center, 770 SE Catawba Rd, Port Clinton · 800-441-1271 · shoresandislands.com
- **Put-in-Bay Chamber & Visitors Bureau**, 148 Delaware Ave · 419-285-2832 · visitputinbay.com
- **Kelleys Island Chamber** · 419-746-2360 · kelleysislandchamber.com
- **Port Clinton Chamber** · portclintonchamber.com · City: portclinton.com

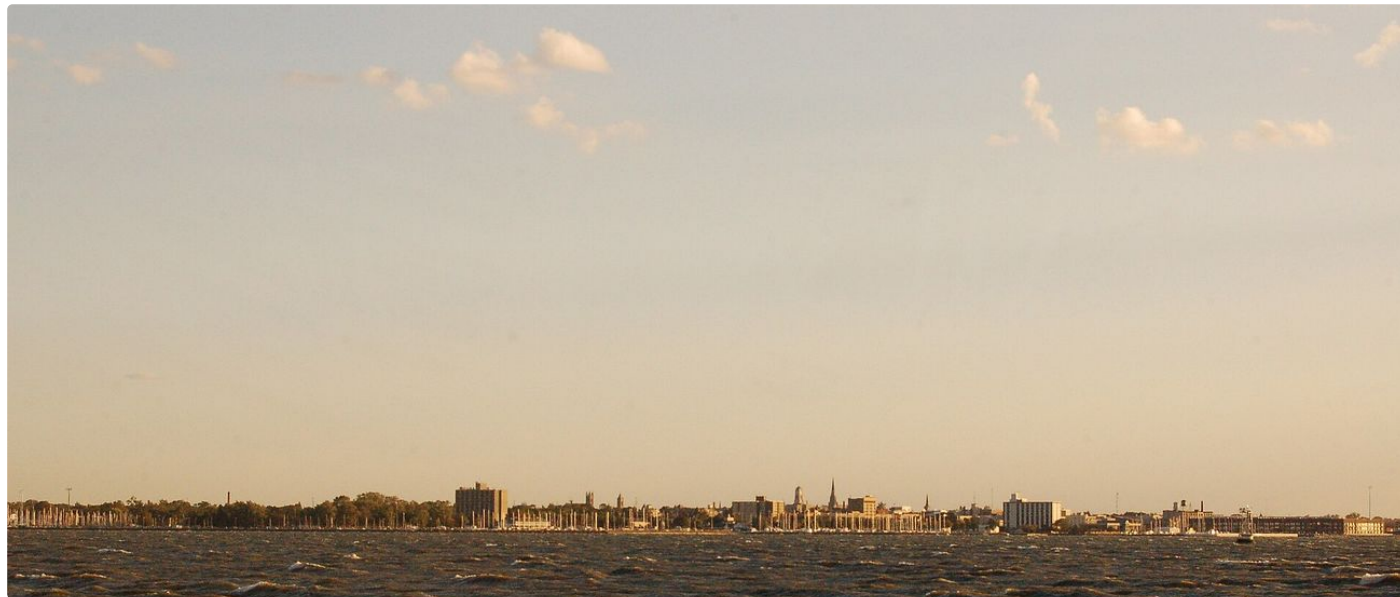
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Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 19

Safety: Lake, Weather & Ferries

Lake Erie is the shallowest Great Lake, so it can go from calm to rough in an hour. Respect it.



Wind on Sandusky Bay. Photo: Eric Marshall · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Rip currents and structural currents

The National Weather Service in Cleveland warns that rip currents on Lake Erie form at **breaks in sandbars** and next to **piers, jetties and breakwalls (groins)**, where currents run straight out along the structure. Those are also the places people like to swim.

- **Don't swim near piers, jetties or breakwalls.**
- Check the NWS Cleveland **beach hazards forecast** before you swim: weather.gov/cle. High-risk days often come with strong onshore wind and big waves.
- **If you're caught:** stay calm and don't fight the current. Swim parallel to shore until you're out of it, or float and signal for help. Then swim back at an angle.
- **If someone else is caught:** call 911 and throw them something that floats. Don't swim out after them without flotation.
- Most beaches here have **no lifeguard**, including Ohio state park beaches, where you swim at your own risk. Swim in designated areas, and watch kids within arm's reach. Use life jackets for weak swimmers.

Water quality

Ohio tests public beaches in season. Check **Ohio BeachGuard** (publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/BeachGuardPublic) for bacteria advisories, especially after heavy rain. Western Lake Erie can have harmful algal blooms in late summer. Avoid water that looks like green paint or scum, and keep dogs out of it.

Weather and the ferries

- Ferries run in most weather but **can delay or cancel for high wind, waves, fog or storms**, and the last trips of the day are the most likely to be pulled. Check the ferry line's website, social media or phone line before you drive to the dock.
- The Jet Express refunds trips it cancels for weather. Miller (800-500-2421) and the Kelleys Island Ferry (419-798-9763) post service updates.
- If weather is coming, take an earlier boat back. Being stuck on an island means finding a room on short notice.

- Check the NWS marine forecast for western Lake Erie ([weather.gov/cle](https://www.weather.gov/cle)) if you're boating or chartering. Small-craft advisories matter.

On land

- **Golf carts** are vehicles: driver's license required, seat belts where fitted, no drinking and driving. Island roads have hills, blind corners and lots of traffic.
- **Sun and heat:** the lake breeze hides sunburn. Bring sunscreen, hats and water.
- **Cold water:** the lake is cold in spring and fall even on warm days. Bring a windbreaker for the ferry.
- **Thunderstorms:** when thunder roars, go indoors. Get off the beach, the pier and the water.
- **MORA cups** stay inside downtown Port Clinton's posted boundaries, noon–midnight, 21+.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): <https://www.weather.gov/cle/> · <https://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/BeachGuardPublic> · <https://jet-express.com/faq/> · <https://millerferry.com/> · <https://kelleyislandferry.com/schedule/>

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 20

Sample Itineraries

Nine ready-made plans: a weekend, four days and a full week, each for couples, families and groups. Written for summer (Memorial Day–Labor Day). See the shoulder-season swaps at the end.



Delaware Avenue in downtown Put-in-Bay. Photo: Analogue Kid · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Every plan starts and ends at the house in Port Clinton. Times are suggestions. Check ferry schedules for your date, book the first boat on busy days, and know the last one back.

Weekend (Fri–Sun)

Weekend · Couples

Easy pace, good food, one island day

- Fri** Arrive and do a grocery run (Kroger). Sunset walk on the city beach. Dinner downtown at the Brick House or Clinton House, then a drink at the Gristmill.
- Sat** Coffee Express, then the morning Jet Express to Put-in-Bay. Rent a cart and do the loop: Perry's memorial grounds, Heineman's and Crystal Cave, South Bass Island State Park. Lunch at the Boardwalk. Back on an afternoon boat. Dinner at Gideon Owen's Chalet (reserve).
- Sun** Lake Donuts (if it's open), then Marblehead Lighthouse (climb from noon) and a walk at East Harbor. Late lunch at Twin Oast before heading home.

Weekend · Families

Beach, boat and animals

- Fri** Arrive, grocery run, Lakeview Park playground and beach. Pizza night: Cameo from Fast Eddie's, plus a round of mini golf.
- Sat** Jet Express or Miller to Put-in-Bay. Perry's Cave and the Butterfly House, Kimberly's Carousel, ice cream at Dairy Isle, a swim at the public beach. Catch a mid-afternoon boat back, before the evening crowd.
- Sun** Breakfast at the Tin Goose Diner and the Liberty Aviation Museum, or the African Safari Drive-Thru. A last beach hour before you go.

Weekend • Groups

Ferries, patios and downtown nights

- Fri** Arrive, stock the house, sunset on the beach. Downtown PC: Three Legged Dog games, the Gristmill and the MORA (21+, noon–midnight).
- Sat** Big island day. Book the Jet Express and carts ahead. Lunch at Mossbacks or Goat Soup & Whiskey, the Brewery & Distillery, Round House music. **Know the last boat.** Have a designated cart driver.
- Sun** Recovery breakfast at Ala Carte Cafe, then an afternoon at Twin Oast before you head out.

Four days

4 days • Couples

Two islands, the winery trail and a lighthouse

- Day 1** Arrive, beach, dinner at Dock's Beach House at sunset.
- Day 2** Put-in-Bay by Jet Express: the island loop, Put-in-Bay Winery, dinner on the island, last boat back.
- Day 3** Marblehead Lighthouse in the morning, then the Kelleys Island Ferry. Bike to the Glacial Grooves and Inscription Rock, with perch at the Village Pump. Back to the mainland for a quiet night.
- Day 4** Catawba: lunch at The Ørcharð, sunset at Catawba Island State Park, farewell dinner at Gideon Owen.

4 days • Families

One big park day, one island day, plenty of beach

- Day 1** Arrive, groceries, Lakeview playground and beach, ice cream at the Ice Shanty.
- Day 2** Cedar Point (or Cedar Point Shores, May 23 – Aug 31). Buy tickets online and arrive early.
- Day 3** Put-in-Bay via the Miller (cheapest fares, free parking). Lime Kiln bus or a cart, Perry's Cave, the Aquatic Visitor Center, the carousel, a swim.
- Day 4** African Safari Drive-Thru in the morning, Waterworks Park (lighthouse tours on Saturdays), and a last swim.

4 days • Groups

Fishing, islands, a coaster day and a brewery lawn

- Day 1** Arrive, stock up, sunset, downtown PC night.
- Day 2** Half-day walleye charter from Port Clinton (book weeks ahead; licenses for everyone 16+). Fish fry at Jolly Roger. Night at the Gristmill.
- Day 3** Put-in-Bay: carts, bars, the Round House. Last boat back.
- Day 4** Cedar Point for the coaster fans or Kalahari for the waterpark crowd, then Twin Oast on the way back.

A full week

Week · Couples

Slow travel along the whole shore

- Day 1** Arrive, beach, downtown dinner.
- Day 2** Put-in-Bay: Heineman's, Perry's visitor center, sailing with Foggy Dew or a parasail ride.
- Day 3** Beach morning, Liberty Aviation Museum, Poseidon Lounge dinner.
- Day 4** Kelleys Island by ferry from Marblehead, with bikes and the alvar trail. Village Pump.
- Day 5** Lakeside (free 2-hour shopping/dining pass, or a day pass), Marblehead Lighthouse, Red's Lakehouse.
- Day 6** Sandusky: Merry-Go-Round and Maritime museums, Firelands Winery, Volstead cocktails.
- Day 7** Catawba: The Ørcharð, then sunset at the state park and a final dinner at Gideon Owen.

Week · Families

A different kind of fun each day

- Day 1** Arrive, groceries, playground and beach.
- Day 2** Put-in-Bay day (Perry's Cave, carousel, Crystal Cave).
- Day 3** Easy beach day. Waterworks Park and the Watering Hole.
- Day 4** Cedar Point.
- Day 5** African Safari Drive-Thru and the Liberty Aviation Museum with lunch at the Tin Goose.
- Day 6** East Harbor beach and Marblehead Lighthouse (kids 6+ can climb). Netty's for chili dogs.
- Day 7** Kalahari day pass, or a final beach day plus Fast Eddie's mini golf.

Week · Groups

Pick-and-mix with a big night in the middle

- Day 1** Arrive, stock the house, downtown PC.
- Day 2** Walleye charter, then a fish fry.
- Day 3** Put-in-Bay (time it for an event weekend if the crowd wants one: Pyrate Fest, Boom at the Bay or Oktoberfest).
- Day 4** Beach and recovery day. Dock's Beach House at sunset.
- Day 5** Cedar Point or Kalahari.
- Day 6** Kelleys Island by bike or cart.
- Day 7** Winery and brewery trail with a designated driver: Gideon Owen, Twin Oast, The Ørcharð.

Shoulder-season swaps (spring & after Labor Day)

- After Oct 25, 2026 the Jet Express Port Clinton route is done for the year, so use the **Miller Ferry** (runs to Nov 25) for Put-in-Bay, and expect many island businesses to be closed.
- Swap Cedar Point Shores for Kalahari or Great Wolf. Swap beach time for Magee Marsh (May) or fall walleye.
- Cedar Point runs weekends for HalloWeekends (Sep 17 – Nov 1, 2026). The African Safari Drive-Thru runs into late fall. The Marblehead Lighthouse tower opens on September weekends and the first weekend of October.
- Check every restaurant's hours. Many island and Catawba spots go weekends-only or close.

Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

CHAPTER 21

Budget & Accessibility Notes

What the fixed costs look like, and how to plan for mobility needs.

Published 2026 prices for common outings

We only list prices published by the operator. Food, golf carts, charters and Cedar Point tickets vary by day, so check before you go.

Item	Published price
Jet Express PC ↔ PIB, adult round trip	\$41.99 (youth 12–16 \$17, child 6–11 \$8)
Jet Express parking, Port Clinton	\$18/day (max \$54) or \$11/day cash (long-term lot)
Miller Ferry, adult each way	\$9 (child 6–11 \$1.50, car \$23). Parking free
Kelleys Island Ferry, adult round trip	From \$26. Parking from \$20
Jet Express Sandusky ↔ Cedar Point	\$13
Marblehead Lighthouse tower	\$5 (age 6+)
Port Clinton Lighthouse tour	\$3
Liberty Aviation Museum	Adults \$14, ages 6–17 \$8
Lakeside daily pass (adult 22–89)	\$34 Mon–Thu / \$40 Fri–Sun, plus a \$2–3 preservation fee
Goodtime I island cruise	Adults \$33, seniors \$30, 12 and under free
Put-in-Bay Oktoberfest	\$6 for one day / \$9 for both
Ohio fishing license, nonresident	1-day \$27.04, 3-day \$52, annual \$76.96
Perry's Victory memorial	Free (fees waived during construction)
State parks, beaches, Glacial Grooves, Magee Marsh	Free

Money-saving ideas

- Take the Miller instead of the Jet Express to Put-in-Bay if you don't mind the 17-minute drive. The fare is lower and parking is free.
- Use the free stuff: the city beach, state parks, lighthouse grounds, Glacial Grooves, birding, RiverFront Live concerts and the Walleye Festival.
- Lakeside's free 2-hour Shopping/Dining Pass gets you inside the gates for lunch.
- The Shores & Islands welcome center has current coupons and a savings card. Ask there.

Accessibility

- Lakeview Park's playground is an all-abilities design.
- The Glacial Grooves site has a walkway and ramp (photographed on Wikimedia Commons), so confirm current conditions.
- If you use a mobility device, call the ferry line ahead (Jet Express 800-245-1538, Miller 800-500-2421) to ask about boarding, ramps and assistance, especially at low water.
- On the islands, a golf cart or the Put-in-Bay Tour Train can cut down on walking.

- The Marblehead Lighthouse tower and the Perry's memorial deck (closed 2026–27) involve stairs. Lighthouse grounds and visitor centers are easier.
- Each venue's accessibility varies, so call ahead with specific needs.

Sources for this chapter (checked October 22, 2026): Operator websites and 2026 brochures as cited in each chapter
Facts in this chapter checked October 22, 2026. Confirm hours and dates before you go.

APPENDICES

Sources & Credits

Where every fact came from, and who took the photos.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

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2	Aerial view of Port Clinton, Ohio.jpg	Grešla	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aerial_view_of_Port_Clinton,_Ohio.jpg
3	Sunset by Lake Erie.JPG	Natarajangesan	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunset_by_Lake_Erie.JPG
4	Miller Ferry (South Bass Island, Lake Erie, Ohio, USA) 2 (48634027632).jpg	James St. John	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miller_Ferry_(South_Bass_Island,_Lake_Erie,_Ohio,_USA)_2_(48634027632).jpg
5	Perry Park in Put-in-Bay.jpg	Nyttend	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Perry_Park_in_Put-in-Bay.jpg
6	Madison south of Perry in Port Clinton.jpg	Nyttend	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madison_south_of_Perry_in_Port_Clinton.jpg
7	Liberty Aviation Museum.jpg	Mbrickn	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Liberty_Aviation_Museum.jpg
8	Panorama looking east along the shore of Lake Erie, with Port Clinton Lighthouse on the right - Flickr - chris.rycroft.jpg	Chris Rycroft from Madison, Wisconsin, United States	CC BY 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panorama_looking_east_along_the_shore_of_Lake_Erie,_with_Port_Clinton_Lighthouse_on_the_right_-_Flickr_-_chris.rycroft.jpg
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10	Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial .JPG	MJCdetroit	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Perry%27s_Victory_and_International_Peace_Memorial_.JPG
11	South Bass Island Lighthouse (Ohio).jpg	Rene Sturgell	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_Bass_Island_Lighthouse_(Ohio).jpg
12	Catawba Island from the air.jpg	Nyttend	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Catawba_Island_from_the_air.jpg
13	Marblehead Lighthouse (3529346115).jpg	Chris "Mr. Pants" Landis	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marblehead_Lighthouse_(3529346115).jpg
14	20200807 57 Hotel Lakeside, Lakeside, Ohio (50552951027).jpg	David Wilson from Oak Park, Illinois, USA	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:20200807_57_Hotel_Lakeside,_Lakeside,_Ohio_(50552951027).jpg
15	Millennium Force (Cedar Point) 06.JPG	Coasterman1234	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Millennium_Force_(Cedar_Point)_06.JPG

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16	Sandusky, Ohio - 20201212 - 04 - Downtown Christmas Tree @ Schade-Mylander Plaza.jpg	Andre Carrotflower	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sandusky,_Ohio_-_20201212_-_04_-_Downtown_Christmas_Tree_@_Schade-Mylander_Plaza.jpg
17	Merry Go Round Museum, Sandusky Ohio.jpg	WeaponizingArchitecture	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merry_Go_Round_Museum,_Sandusky_Ohio.jpg
18	Schine State Theatre.jpg	Nyttend	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schine_State_Theatre.jpg
19	Glacial Grooves State Park, Kelleys Island OH.jpg	James St. John	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Glacial_Grooves_State_Park,_Kelleys_Island_OH.jpg
20	Inscription Rock.jpg	LeeG7144	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inscription_Rock.jpg
21	Shirley Irene approaching Kelleys Island.jpg	Mbrickn	CC BY 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shirley_Irene_approaching_Kelleys_Island.jpg
22	East Harbor Lake Erie View.jpg	Analogue Kid	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:East_Harbor_Lake_Erie_View.jpg
23	Crystal Cave Ohio.JPG	Analogue Kid at English Wikipedia	CC BY 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crystal_Cave_Ohio.JPG
24	Walleye (Sander vitreus).jpg	USFWS Mountain Prairie	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Walleye_(Sander_vitreus).jpg
25	Lake Erie Beach at Cedar Point (42109972950).jpg	Sean Philip Villegas	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lake_Erie_Beach_at_Cedar_Point_(42109972950).jpg
26	Postcard of the "Wishing Well" in Perry's Cave, Put-In-Bay, Ohio.jpg	Unknown authorUnknown author	Public domain	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Postcard_of_the_%E2%80%9CWishing_Well%E2%80%9D_in_Perry%E2%80%99s_Cave,_Put-In-Bay,_Ohio.jpg
27	Yellow warbler magee marsh boardwalk 5.17.23 DSC 1790-topaz-denoiseraw-sharpen.jpg	Iwolfartist	CC BY 2.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yellow_warbler_magee_marsh_boardwalk_5.17.23_DSC_1790-topaz-denoiseraw-sharpen.jpg
28	Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge entrance.jpg	Mbrickn	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottawa_National_Wildlife_Refuge_entrance.jpg
29	Kelleys Island State Park Entrance.jpg	Mbrickn	CC BY-SA 4.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kelleys_Island_State_Park_Entrance.jpg
30	Sandusky across the bay - panoramio.jpg	Eric Marshall	CC BY 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sandusky_across_the_bay_-_panoramio.jpg
31	Delaware Ave on South Bass.JPG	Analogue Kid	CC BY-SA 3.0	commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Delaware_Ave_on_South_Bass.JPG

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