



FIVE OCEAN-LIKE BEACHES ON WISCONSIN'S GREAT LAKES

Think you need to travel to the Atlantic or Pacific to enjoy an ocean or beachside vacation? Well, think again. Wisconsin is home to a number of "ocean-esque" beaches along its Great Lakes coastlines. All offer a budget- and family friendly alternative to a more expensive vacation requiring air travel and at least a week of vacation time. Here are five of our most impressive beaches that will leave you with no choice but to dive in and head to Wisconsin's coasts!

BIG BAY BEACH AT TOWN PARK, MADELINE ISLAND

Travel north to Lake Superior and the northernmost tip of Wisconsin and visit [Madeline Island](#), the largest of the 21 Apostle Islands. The island's boardwalk provides a guided walk along Big Bay Beach, allowing you to enjoy the sound of the waves while taking in the spectacular view of Lake Superior through the towering trees. With two miles of sand beach, swimming and fishing, this park is both secluded and free, everything a vacation should be.

Places to Stay

Madeline Island offers a variety of lodging options from inns to cottages, including Travel Green Wisconsin certified properties, the [Island Inn](#) and [The Inn on Madeline Island](#). Both of these accommodations offer waterfront locations and views of Lake Superior. Want to sleep under the stars? Camping is also available at [Big Bay Town Park](#).

Things to Do

Try stand-up paddle boarding, a popular activity that combines surfing and paddling. Paddleboards, canoes and kayaks are available at several nearby Madeline Island rental companies.

Enjoy a beer and a sunset at the casual and eclectic [Tom's Burned Down Café](#). This local bar was once damaged in a fire and instead of re-building, they covered the building with a tent and now allow patrons to leave permanent marks by writing on the ruins' walls...trust us, it's cool.



*Tom's Burned Down Café
Courtesy of Madeline Island Chamber of
Commerce*

SCHOOLHOUSE BEACH, WASHINGTON ISLAND

Not a fan of sand in your shoes? Then Schoolhouse Beach is for you. Here, kids make stone castles instead of sand castles by using individual limestone pebbles polished smooth by Lake Michigan's wave action. Excellent swimming is offered in a marked area with a diving raft. The water deepens fairly quickly for great diving, rafting and



*Schoolhouse Beach
Courtesy of Door County Visitor Bureau*

snorkeling. The limestone rocks are beautiful, but don't take one! Part of the beach's charm is the handmade signs reminding patrons to leave the stones behind. The town park and beautiful wooded setting are perfect for picnics and grills.

Places to Stay

Washington Island is accessible from the mainland and Door County by ferry. Accommodations on the island are independently owned inns, cabins and cottages. Try a room at either the main lodge or the farmhouse at [Bread & Water](#). Or go completely rustic and take the ferry over to [Rock Island State Park](#) and pitch a tent.

Things to Do

The Door County Peninsula is surrounded by numerous historic shipwrecks, including wooden schooners and steamers that sank in the mid-1800s. Depths of the ships range from as little as 10 feet to 225 feet. [Shoreline Diving Charters](#) offers guided cruises featuring these shipwrecks and more. Pay a visit to the [Washington Island Art and Nature Center](#), a beautiful combination of art gallery and nature center.

KOHLER-ANDRAE STATE PARK BEACH, SHEBOYGAN

Kohler-Andrae State Park is the home of majestic sand dunes, miles of golden beach, and the shimmering blue Lake Michigan water. This beach has the largest dune complex along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan coastline. The unique wetlands within the dune complex also provide habitat for many rare plants, some of which are only found on Great Lakes shorelines. More than 150 bird species have been spotted within the park, including many species of waterfowl and shorebirds and more than 20 species of warblers.



*Kohler-Andrae State Park
Photo Courtesy of Princely Nesadurai*

Places to Stay

Kohler-Andre State Park offers 135 family campsites and two group sites. If the kids don't want to miss out on Wisconsin's famous waterslides, make your reservations at the newly renovated [Blue Harbor Resort & Spa](#) in Sheboygan. Step out the back door of Blue Harbor's lobby onto the beautiful sand dunes beach of Lake Michigan. Rent one of Blue Harbor's luxury waterfront two- or four-bedroom villas.

Things to Do

Shop and explore downtown Sheboygan. Stop by [Olivu 426](#) and experience the excitement of learning how to create your own beauty products fresh to order, adding your unique touch. [Field to Fork Café](#) serves breakfast and lunch favorites made with wholesome, natural ingredients from local farmers. Swing by the grocery section and buy fixings for lunch (picnic anyone?). Be sure to also take some time and explore the [John Michael Kohler Arts Center](#). The center has 10 galleries, a theater, performance and meeting spaces, studio classrooms, an onsite retail shop named ARTspace and a cafe.

NESHOTAH STATE PARK BEACH, TWO RIVERS

Neshotah State Park Beach is another family friendly beautiful Lake Michigan beach offering several hundred yards of sand beach, bike and walking trails and picnic areas. Concessions are available at the beach house during the summer months. Bring the bicycles to this beach and ride the Rawley Point Recreational Trail – you can ride six miles to the [Rawley Point Lighthouse at Point Beach State Forest](#) or connect with the Mariners Trail in Two Rivers and ride to Manitowoc.

Places to Stay

The [Village Inn on the Lake](#) features a beach view, fire pit, bike rentals and more, or you can stay at the [Red Forest Bed & Breakfast Inn](#) which offers charm and relaxation. [The Historic Norman General Store Bed & Breakfast](#) in the rural community of Norman was first settled by immigrants from Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic. Today, if you stay at this B&B, you will find the best authentic rural and agricultural experiences. Camping is also available at Pointe Beach State Forest.

Things to Do

Visit the [Hamilton Wood Type and Printing Museum](#), the only museum dedicated to the preservation, study, production and printing of wood type. With 1.5 million pieces of wood type and more than 1,000 styles and sizes of patterns, the collection is one of the premier wood type collections in the world. In addition to wood type, the museum, which is often visited by current artists, typographers and designers from across the country, is home to an amazing array of advertising cuts from the 1930s through the 1970s.



*Hamilton Wood Type Museum
Photo Courtesy of Stephanie Carpenter*

NORTH BEACH, RACINE

Selected by *USA Today* this year as one of the “51 Great American Beaches,” North Beach is located on the waterfront of Lake Michigan. This beach sits on 50 acres and has 2,500 feet of shoreline open to the public for swimming, fishing and picnics. North Beach is home to many special events, including EVP Professional Beach Volleyball, the U.S. Grand Prix of Watercross and the Ironman 70.3 Racine Triathlon. The beach has been designated a Blue Wave Beach (America's first environmental certification for beaches) since 2004. The Beachside Oasis is also a part of North Beach, featuring a concession stand, live music, and the Kid's Cove Playground – a gem located right on the beach.



*North Beach
Photo Courtesy of Real Racine*

Places to Stay

Looking for a hotel? Try the [Comfort Inn Racine](#) or [Radisson Inn Harbourwalk](#). Want to camp? Head to Cliffside Park.

Things to Do

You're in America's [Kringle](#) Capital. The Kringle, an oval-shaped, authentic Danish pastry, is produced predominately in Racine County. With 32 layers of flaky dough and filling choices from fruits to nuts, this pastry leaves you satisfied. The Kringle has put Racine County on the food map with food bloggers and critics alike. Visit [O&H Danish Bakery](#) to purchase your own Kringle to take home.

BONUS: GREEN LAKE BEACH, GREEN LAKE

It might not be a true Great Lake, but we still think it's great and it's also the state's deepest! Green Lake's scenic shoreline features bluffs, rock formations and beautiful homes. The lake offers a swimming beach at Dodge Memorial Park, located at the southwest end of Green Lake.

The park features a shallow, sandy bottom, plenty of sand for kids to play, a snack area, a large picnic area, volleyball, a boat landing and more.