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**FINGER LAKES**

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Named for eleven pristine lakes that spread like fingers across the land, this region features natural beauty and captivating attractions. Rivers and streams connect each Finger Lake to Great Lake Ontario, creating a haven for swimming, fishing and boating. Magnificent state parks are ideal for hiking, biking and camping. Scenic wine trails around the lakes showcase some of the nation's premier vineyards. Complementing the scenery are charming towns and vibrant cities. Racing fans come from far and wide to watch NASCAR’s biggest names at Watkins Glen International Raceway.

**COUNTIES**

Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Yates

**MAJOR CITIES & TOWNS**

Auburn, Canandaigua, Corning, Cortland, Elmira, Geneseo, Ithaca, Lyons, Owego, Penn Yan, Rochester, Seneca Falls, Skaneateles, Syracuse, Watkins Glen.

**CLIMATE**

The diverse climate has four distinct seasons. Summers are comfortable and warm, with daytime temperatures averaging in the mid 70s to mid 80s (degrees F) and cooler evenings. The weather is moderately cool and sunny in springtime and autumn, when spectacular fall foliage attracts thousands of visitors. Cold, snowy winters create a wonderland of magnificent scenery in villages, resorts and ski centers.

**3 SURPRISING FACTS**

**1.** In January 2012, Hammondsport was voted America’s Coolest Small Town by readers of *Budget Travel* magazine. In the final round, Hammondsport and Beaufort, NC tied for first place until a high volume of voting crashed their website and *Budget Travel* called a tie between the two cool towns.

**2.** The first light bulbs were blown by hand in Corning for Thomas Edison’s company in the 1890s. Corning developed the automated production of light bulbs, and in 1926 began producing 15,000 bulbs an hour.

**3. Keuka Lake, one of the eleven Finger Lakes, is believed to be the only “Y” shaped lake in the US, and one of only a few in the world.**

**SPORTS & OUTDOORS**

**Beaches:** Pristine lakes throughout the region and Great Lake Ontario offer beautiful sandy beaches ideal for picnicking, swimming and other water sports.

**Boating/Fishing:** With many rivers, streams and canals connecting each Finger Lake to Great Lake Ontario, the region is a haven for boating and sport fishing. Kayaking is popular as well. The Chemung River is part of a recreational waterway called the Chemung Basin River Trail, which links with a network of water trails that ultimately flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The New York State Fish Hatchery in Bath produces close to 1,000,000 fish each year, specializing in brown trout, rainbow trout, and lake trout.

**Hunting:** Private preserves and game farms are found throughout the region. Finger Lakes National Forest and State lands are open for hunting during the appropriate seasons. Find license and other information at The Finger Lake’s regional website and http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7844.html.

**Winter Sports:** Downhill ski areas include Bristol, Greek Peak and Labrador Mountain resorts as well as Brantling, Four Seasons, Hunt Hollow, Song and Toggenburg ski centers. Many cross-country ski and snowshoe trails are found throughout the region in resorts and parks such as Beaver Lake and Cumming nature centers, Greek Peak Mountain Resort and Highland Forest County Park.

**Nature Centers:** Nature lovers have many choices including the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Seneca Falls, the Lime Hollow Nature Center in Cortland, the Sapsucker Woods Bird Sanctuary at Cornell University in Ithaca, and the Cumming Nature Center in Naples.

**State Parks/National Forest:** State parks ideal for hiking, biking and camping include Watkins Glen, with its deep gorges and 19 waterfalls; Taughannock, where the waters drop 400 feet; Letchworth, known as the Grand Canyon of the East; and Chimney Bluffs, towering above Lake Ontario. Finger Lakes National Forest, on a ridge between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, offers many recreational activities.

**Scenic Byways:** The picturesque Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway runs from Ithaca to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge near Seneca Falls. The Great Lakes Seaway Trail runs through this region, along Lake Ontario, offering many activities from bird-watching to waterskiing.

**ART, ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE**

**Clemens Center for the Performing Arts** (Elmira) - The restored Vaudeville-era palace features music, dance and theater, including a *Best of Broadway* series.

**Corning Museum of Glass** (Corning) - Watch hot glassblowing shows and explore 3,500 years of glass art in the world's largest glass museum. Exhibits range from Egyptian tombs to Tiffany vases and space shuttle windows.

**Everson Museum of Art** (Syracuse) - The distinctive I.M. Pei-designed structure houses two centuries of American paintings and sculpture as well as a renowned ceramics collection.

**George Eastman House/International Museum of Photography** (Rochester) - Tour the mansion and gardens of the founder of the Eastman Kodak Company’s home; the museum features one of the world’s best photography and cinematic collections.

**Johnson Museum of Fine Art** (Ithaca) - With stunning views of Cayuga Lake, Cornell University’s art museum designed by I.M. Pei is considered a masterpiece in itself.

**1928 Landmark Theater** (Syracuse) - The ornate palace wows audiences with its grand staircase, chandeliers, plush furnishings and top performances.

**Livingston Arts Center/New Deal Art Gallery** (Mt. Morris) - Exhibits include paintings created through a WPA depression-era program. The gallery is part of the Greatest Generation Trail.

**Lukacs Pottery Studio** (Sodus Point) - Visitors can tour the workrooms to see how pottery is created by hand from durable stoneware.

**Memorial Art Gallery** (Rochester) - Journey through more than 5,000 years of art history, from the relics of antiquity to contemporary works.

**The Mulroy Civic Center Theaters/Oncenter** (Syracuse) - Fully-staged productions include the Syracuse Opera and touring Broadway shows.

**Rockwell Museum of Western Art** (Corning) - The large collection of American Western and Native American art includes classic masters like Russell and Remington.

**Smith Opera House** (Geneva) - On Seneca Lake just southeast of Rochester, the theater is applauded for its great productions and near-perfect acoustics.

**Syracuse Stage** (Syracuse) - Bold new plays, classic musicals and drama are presented in Syracuse University’s stunning theatre.

**HISTORY**

**Camillus Erie Canal Park** (Camillus) - Simms Store Canal Museum is part of this canalside park where visitors can view wildlife along walking and bike paths.

**Ganondagan New York State Native American Historic Site** (Victor) - A traditional Seneca longhouse, granary and nature trails mark the site of a major 17th-century Seneca town.

**Genesee Country Village** (Mumford) - Just outside Rochester, step into the past at one of the nation’s largest living history museums.

**Glenn H. Curtiss Museum** (Hammondsport) - Family-friendly interactive displays honor the Father of Naval Aviation, who held the first US Pilot’s License #1. Exhibits highlight Curtis’s early aviation experiments.

**Harriet Tubman Home** (Auburn) - Tour the home of the conductor on the Underground Railroad known as The Moses of Her People. Tubman also championed education and women’s rights.

**National Soaring Museum** (Elmira) - Hands-on aviation exhibits tell the history of motorless flight. Highlights include the world’s largest collection of sailplanes and gliders, flight simulators, and an active soaring field at Harris Hill, the Soaring Capital of America.

**Seward House Museum** (Auburn) - Tour the home of the former NYS Governor who served as US Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln and promoted the purchase of Alaska.

**Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park** (Canandaigua) - Tour one of America’s most extensively preserved estates from the Victorian era*—*with nine formal gardens decorated with marble statues, fountains and reflecting pools, and a crystal palace-like greenhouse.

**Women’s Rights National Historical Park** (Seneca Falls) - Explore the site of the first Women’s Rights Convention (1848), Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s home, and Wesleyan Chapel.

**FOOD & DRINK**

Finger Lakes is one of the country’s top wine producing regions known for its Rieslings, Gewurztraminer and Ice Wine. Many wineries are included on [wine trails](http://www.fingerlakestrails.com/feature.asp?cat=Wine&featured=n) surrounding Seneca, Cayuga, Canandaigua and Keuka lakes with regularly scheduled events, trail-wide tasting passports, locavore restaurants and scenic views, a true Finger Lakes wine and food experience can be found here.

[*The Finger Lakes Cheese Trail*](http://flcheesetrail.com) is made up of 13 small, family farms throughout the Finger Lakes region. They offer a full selection of artisanal cheeses from Gouda, Colby, Cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss, Brie and Jack to unique cheeses like Irish washed-rind cheese, a variety of goat cheeses and Kefir cheese. The difference in farm-fresh cheese is palatable, with most of the creameries producing their cheeses from raw milks and in small batches, making them more flavorful and creamy. Many of the creameries have production facilities, farm stores and tasting rooms right on their farms and welcomes visitors to stop by and experience the process first hand. The Trail hosts [*Open Houses*](http://flcheesetrail.com/Trail_Open_House_Dates.html) throughout the year, where they fling open the gates of their farms for tours, tastings and family activities at each farm. The Trail hosts the Finger Lakes Cheese Festival the last Saturday in July.

Explore Canandaigua’s New York Wine & Culinary Center, where chefs create fine cuisine with farm-fresh produce, artisan cheeses, wines and beers--all from New York State. Taste regional specialties like Rochester’s garbage plates, and don’t miss the original Dinosaur Bar-B-Que in Syracuse. A visit to the Finger Lakes Beer Trail showcases the growing craft beer industry with 26 microbreweries and brewpubs located along the Trail and dozens more planned to open soon,

**SHOPPING**

Waterloo Premium Outlets, in Waterloo, offers great savings on fashion, gifts and home furnishings in more than 100 famous-brand stores.

Walk along tree-lined streets to more than 100 visitor-friendly shops, outlets, galleries and hot glass studios in Corning’s Gaffer District or the charming antique shops and artisan studios at Historic Owego Marketplace, beside the Susquehanna River. Antique Revival in Big Flats is New York’s largest antique store. Main Street shops and galleries offer relaxed browsing in Canandaigua, Hammondsport, Homer, Skaneateles and Watkins Glen, and the Erie Canal villages of Brockport, Fairport and Pittsford.

MacKenzie-Childs in Aurora is famous for whimsical furniture and artisan-made ceramics in vibrant colors and patterns. Visit the gardens that inspire the designs and browse the 19-room Victorian farmhouse showroom. Near Penn Yan, the Windmill Farm & Craft Market is a premier tourist attraction, with 200 shops and a weekly attendance of 8,000 to 10,000.

**UNIQUE LODGING**

A host of unique places to stay includes the Allegiance B&B in Mount Morris; the historic Aurora Inn, on Cayuga Lake; Cayuga Sunrise Holistic Haven in Romulus; Hill Top Ranch in Jamesville; Elmira’s Painted Lady; The Inn at Glenora in Dundee; Geneva on the Lake, in Geneva; Hope Lake Lodge & Indoor Waterpark, in Cortland; LaTourelle Resort & Spa in Ithaca; The Parker House in Avoca; The Pumpelly House in Owego; Vintage Gardens B&B, in Newark; Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, in Watkins Glen; and The Woodcliff Hotel & Spa in Fairport.

**OTHER SELECTED ATTRACTIONS**

**Buttermilk Falls State Park** (Ithaca) - Buttermilk Creek descends more than 500 feet in a series of ten cascades and rapids through a ¾-mile gorge. There’s a swimming hole at the base of the falls as well as hiking trails and a campground.

**Finger Lakes Casino & Racetrack** (Farmington) - Gaming and Thoroughbred horseracing with some of the world’s top jockeys and horses.

**Finger Lakes National Forest** (Hector) - 16,032-acres: mountain biking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing; more than 30 miles of nature trails; scenic driving route with views of free-ranging cattle and wildlife. Campground.

**Greek Peak Mountain Resort** (Cortland) - **Four-season fun includes d**ownhill skiing and boarding in New York’s famous Snow Belt, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snow tubing and Hope Lake Lodge’s spa and indoor waterpark.

**Harris Hill Soaring Center** (Elmira) - Flights over the scenic lakes and countryside in sailplanes with FAA-certified pilots.

**Hill Cumorah Historic Sites & Visitor Center** (Palmyra) - Tours of historic sites include the family farm of Joseph Smith, an 1830 log home, a chapel and an 1820 print shop.

 **Museum of Science and Technology** (Syracuse) - Hands-on exhibits, over 300 displays, a planetarium and an IMAX theater.

**New York State Fair** (Syracuse) - Held annually since the 1800s, the giant 12-day fair features a circus, horse show, parade, celebrity entertainment, and hundreds of exhibits and competitions highlighting art, crafts, cooking, farming, technology and wine.

**New York Wine & Culinary Center** (Canandaigua) - Wine tasting, culinary classes, demonstrations by renowned guest chefs, and a gourmet restaurant highlight New York State produce, specialty foods, beers and wines.

**Seabreeze Amusement Park** (Rochester) - Family amusement and water park with over 75 attractions, rides and slides, shows and games.

**Strong-National Museum of Play** (Rochester) - A rainforest butterfly garden, hands-on exhibits and a vast collection of toys, dolls, games and other items celebrate play. Home of the National Toy Hall of Fame.

**Taughannock Falls** (Trumansburg ) -One of the highest in the Northeast, the 215-foot waterfall drops into a rock amphitheater with walls 400 feet high, an easy ¾ mile trail with interpretive signs leads to the falls.

**Tioga Downs Casino & Racetrack** (Nichols) - Casino gaming and live racing in some of the top harness stake races in the country, combine with concerts, dining and a sports bar to make Tioga a premier entertainment destination.

**Watkins Glen International Raceway** (Watkins Glen) - Fans come from far and wide to see world-class auto racing with classic cars and NASCAR’s biggest names. The US Vintage Grand Prix, held in September, is the largest vintage racing event in the country. The three-day celebration of racing history includes a festival in the village.

**Watkins Glen State Park** (Watkins Glen) - The hiking trail offers thrilling views as it winds over and under 19 waterfalls and between 200-foot cliffs. The park is ideal for camping, swimming, and picnicking.

**MAJOR ANNUAL EVENTS**

Wine on Ice, a weekend of Finger Lakes wine tasting in Chemung County (January)

Corning GlassFest (May)

Red, White & Blue Balloon Fest at Letchworth State Park (May)

Rochester’s Lilac Festival (May)

Celebrate Commemorate Memorial Day in Waterloo (May)

Ithaca Festival & Spring Craft Show on Cayuga Lake (May – June)

Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival (June)

Owego Strawberry Festival & Parade (June)

Keuka Arts Festival at Penn Yan (June)

Syracuse Arts & Crafts Festival (July)

Geneseo Airshow, the “Greatest Show on Turf” (July)

Finger Lakes Grassroots Festival of Music and Dance (July)

Hill Cumorah Pageant Spectacular at Palmyra (July)

Finger Lakes Wine Festival at Watkins Glen International Raceway (July)

Trolley into Mark Twain Country Tours at Elmira (July-August)

Sterling, N.Y. Renaissance Festival (July-August)

NASCAR at Watkins Glen International road course (August)

Garlic Festival at Fox Run Vineyards (August)

Steuben County Fair (August)

Cortland Art & Wine Festival (August)

14th Annual National Broadway Truck Show in Cortland County (August)

Finger Lakes Riesling Festival (August)

Great New York State Fair in Syracuse (August-September)

Naples Grape Festival (September)

Finger Lakes Cork & Fork (September)

TomatoFest (September)

Tioga County Apple Festival (October)

Wayne County Apple Tasting Tour (October)

**CONVENTION CENTERS**

**Rochester**

Conveniently located in the heart of Rochester, New York, the Rochester Riverside Convention Center enjoys a scenic setting on the Genesee River plus enclosed walkway connections to major hotels and parking garages. Award winner year after year of the Facilities and Destinations Prime Site Award, RRCC is a leader in overseeing their own food and beverage service with an Executive Chef and Pastry Chef. With 100,000 square feet of flexible exhibit and meeting facilities, 25 meeting rooms and banquet facilities for up to 3,500. [www.rrcc.com](http://www.rrcc.com)

**Syracuse**

The Oncenter, located in downtown Syracuse, features the Convention Center which includes a 65,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose exhibit hall, 15,000 sq. ft. grand ballroom,  10 breakout meeting rooms, and a 1,000 space parking garage.  There is also a covered underground walkway to the Oncenter War Memorial Arena, a 7,000 seat multi-functional venue perfect for large assemblies and sporting events.   The adjacent Civic Center features three performance-ready theaters – the largest of which seats 2,117.  These venues are ideal for on stage presentations, meetings and workshops.     <http://www.visitsyracuse.org/meet>

**Ontario**

While we do not have a convention center, we do have other unique meeting spaces that are worth mentioning.

The Gell Center – The Center offers a chance to have a meeting in a tree house or in the Gleason Lodge, located on a secluded hill side with stunning views of the surrounding area.

<http://www.wab.org/gell/facilities.shtml>

Canandaigua Lady – Meet while cruising Canandaigua Lake on a 19th century paddlewheel boat.

<http://www.steamboatlandingonline.com/>

Bristol Mountain Winter Resort – Have your next meeting in the lodge of the ski mountain with the highest vertical drop between the Rockies and the Adirondacks, 1200 feet. Or, meet in the slope-side waffle hut, but you’ll have to ski or snowboard to get there!

[www.bristolmountain.com](http://www.bristolmountain.com/)

Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park – Meet at a 50 acre historic estate with 9 formal gardens in varying styles.

[www.sonnenberg.org](http://www.sonnenberg.org/)

New York Wine & Culinary Center – Have your next meeting on the grounds of the New York Wine & Culinary Center and then explore NY State wine and cuisine with a wine tasting, dinner or cooking class with your entire group.

[http://www.nywcc.com](http://www.nywcc.com/)

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Land:**

5-6 hours from NYC

1-3 hours from Niagara Falls

5-6 hours from Montreal

**Air:**

Elmira-Corning Regional Airport, accessible from route I-88, I-86, and bus service

Syracuse International Airport , accessible from route I-90 (NYS Thruway) and bus service

Rochester International Airport, accessible from route I-90 (NYS Thruway) and bus service

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For more ideas and information, visit iloveny.com or the Finger Lakes’ regional website:

[www.fingerlakestravelny.com](http://www.fingerlakestravelny.com)

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