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**THOUSAND ISLANDS-SEAWAY**

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The breathtaking scenery includes nearly 2,000 islands, the shimmering blue bays of Great Lake Ontario, the sparkling St. Lawrence River and hundreds of miles of picturesque coastline. Cultural attractions and boundless adventures range from fairy-tale castles to trophy fishing attracting anglers from around the world. With 28 state parks, the region is a giant playground throughout the year with fantastic boating, swimming, hiking and birdwatching in warmer months as well as wintertime sports like cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Wonderful nature centers are open year-round.

**COUNTIES**

St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Oswego

**MAJOR CITIES & TOWNS**

Alexandria Bay, Canton, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Fulton, Massena, Ogdensburg, Oswego, Potsdam, Pulaski, Sackets Harbor, and Watertown

**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.

**THREE SURPRISING THINGS**

**1.** The region actually has 1,864 islands. To be classified as an island, a land mass must be above water 365 days a year and support at least one tree. Many islands are privately owned, but some can be rented for a weekend, week, month or season. Many others have public and private campgrounds.

**2.** Thousand Island salad dressing was created in this region. The origin is subject to debate: one tale says it was created by a ship’s chef; the other story credits a fishing guide’s wife.

**3.** Two historic island castles are open for tours: the 120-room Boldt Castle, built by NYC hotel executive George C. Boldt, and Singer Castle, the summer home of Frederick Bourne. Both men were self-made millionaires who began their careers at entry level positions.

**SPORTS & OUTDOORS**

**Whitewater Rafting and Kayaking:** The Black River Canyon features class III and IV rapids that offer thrilling adventures and national competitions including the famous Blackwater Challenge.

**Scuba Diving:** Local dive shops provide equipment and training for scuba diving amid shipwrecks in the crystal-clear waters of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

**Fishing:** Anglers come from around the world for trophy-sized catches and fishing derbies on Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and smaller tributaries throughout the region year-round, including great ice-fishing in winter.

**Hunting:** State lands, including wildlife management areas, state forests and state parks are open for hunting during the appropriate seasons. Find information at http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7844.html

**Hiking and Biking:** Six hundred pristine acres on Wellesley Island include miles of scenic shoreline hiking trails.

**Nature Centers:** The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center is one of the largest nature centers in the state park system. Wildlife sightings include Bald Eagles and waterbirds such as osprey that nest in the park.

**Winter Sports:** In the Snowbelt, east of Lake Ontario, lake-effect snow covers the Tug Hill Plateau with an annual average of 300 inches. At its edge, Winona State Forest has over 30 miles of nature trails and unplowed roads ideal for snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and even dog-sledding. Dry Hill Ski Area just outside Watertown has ski and snowboarding trails open day and night, and a fantastic snowtubing center.

**Scenic Byways:**

Named one of the Top 9 Great American Drives by *Budget Travel*, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail leads to historic lighthouses, unique museums and great outdoor activities from bird-watching to scuba diving.

**ART, ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE**

**Boldt Castle** (Alexandria Bay) - Tour a 120-room Rhineland-style castle on Heart Island with a drawbridge, yacht house, Italian gardens, and a dove cote

**Clayton Opera House** (Clayton) - Historic site presents nationally acclaimed artists

**Frederic Remington Art Museum** (Ogdensburg) - Sculpture, paintings, drawings and artifacts of renowned artist of America’s Old West

**Singer Castle on Dark Island** (Hammond) - Tour the 28-room Scottish-style castle built in the early 1900s by the president of the Singer sewing machine company. Enjoy Victorian Tea and stay overnight in a suite by reservation.

**HISTORY**

Historic sites at Fort Ontario, in Oswego, and Sackets Harbor Battlefield come with splendid views of Great Lake Ontario. In Sackets Harbor, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail Discovery Center highlights regional history and attractions along the byway.

**Antique Boat Museum** (Clayton) - More than 100 classic and antique wooden boats

**Fort de la Presentation** (Ogdensburg) - Historic monument at Lighthouse Point

**Fort Ontario State Historic Site** (Oswego) –This star shaped fortress holds reenactments of French & Indian War and American Revolution history by costumed interpreters

**Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site** (Sackets Harbor) - Living history demonstrations at the site of two major battles of the War of 1812

**Safe Haven Museum and Education Center** (Fort Ontario). Dedicated to keeping alive the stories of the 982 refugees from World War II, who were allowed into the United States as “guests” of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Safe Haven Museum housed refugees at Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York, from August 1944 until February 1946.

**Tibbetts Point Lighthouse** (Cape Vincent) - Standing since 1827 at the point where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River. Stay in keeper's quarters by reservation

**FOOD & DRINK**

Wineries along the **Thousand Islands-Seaway Wine Trail** and **Lake Ontario Wine Trail** are open year-round for tours and tasting. Many casual and fine dining restaurants have splendid water views. Taste the famous Thousand Island dressing in Clayton, where it was invented.

**SHOPPING**

Explore shops in the Seaway villages of Alexandria Bay, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Oswego, Potsdam and Sackets Harbor

**Pickens General Store** (Heuvelton)

**LODGING**

Hotels, motels and Bed & Breakfasts: 93

Campgrounds (public and private): 30

Cottages (public and private): 46

**UNIQUE LODGING**

Unique places to stay include historic Singer Castle on Dark Island and the Victorian-era lightkeeper's quarters at Tibbetts Point Lighthouse, standing where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River.

**OTHER SELECTED ATTRACTIONS**

Some of the most popular attractions are scenic cruises—from paddle-wheel riverboat tours to a vintage-speedboat ride at Clayton’s Antique Boat Museum, home of the largest collection of antique and classic boats in North America. Watch for waterfowl and songbirds on a nature cruise with Clayton Island Tours. Uncle Sam Boat Tours stop at Heart Island’s magnificent 120-room Boldt Castle, a “must see” for any visitor.

**Black River Whitewater Rafting Tours** (Watertown) - A challenging adventure in the world-famous Black River canyon

**Champagne Balloon Adventures** (Alexandria Bay) - Hot-air balloon rides float above Alexandria Bay

**Great Lakes Seaway Trail Discovery Center** (Sackets Harbor) - Highlights the 454-mile national scenic byway that parallels Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River, leading to quaint villages, beaches and more than 25 lighthouses

**Old McDonald’s Farm Village** (Sackets Harbor) - Musical hayrides and trolley tour of the dairy at a 1200-acre working farm

**Salmon River** (Oswego County). Located in Oswego County, the Salmon River stretches 17 miles from the Lighthouse Hill Reservoir in Altmar to where it empties into Lake Ontario at Port Ontario. There are 12 miles of Public Fishing Rights along the river. The Salmon River offers some of the finest sportfishing in the country. Two major fish records have been set in the Salmon River: the Great Lakes record Chinook salmon (47 lbs. 13 oz.) and the world record Coho salmon (33 lbs. 4 oz.).

**1000 Islands Diving Adventures** (Clayton). The clear waters of the St. Lawrence River and Seaway are known for some of the world’s best shipwreck diving

**Uncle Sam Boat Tours** (Alexandria Bay). Narrated cruises stop at Singer Castle, Boldt Castle; also Millionaires' Row sightseeing tours, twilight tours, and lunch/dinner cruises

**Wellesley Island State Park** (Fineview). 2,630 acres on the St. Lawrence: trophy fishing; boat launches and marinas; sandy beach for swimming, and camping, cabins and cottages are all throughout the park. Wellesley Island State Park is also home to the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.

**MAJOR ANNUAL EVENTS**

Massena Winter Carnival (January-February)

Bluegrass River Festival (June)

French Festival (July)

Oswego Harborfest (July)

Clayton Antique Boat Show (August)

Bill Johnston’s Pirate Days (August)

St. Lawrence International Junior Carp Tournament (August)

Candle Light Ghost Tour at Fort Ontario (October)

Alexandria Bay Oktoberfest (October)

Thousand Islands Museum Festival of Trees (November-December)

Christmas in Cape Vincent (December)

**CONVENTION CENTERS**

Although the region doesn’t have a formal convention center, hotels in the city of Watertown and resorts in the town of Alexandria Bay are suited for meeting planners.

Two of Watertown’s largest properties are Hilton Garden Inn, with 4,350 sq ft and banquet seating for 450, and the Best Western Carriage House Inn, with 3,000 sq ft and seating for 300.

Alexandria Bay waterfront properties include The Edgewood Resort, seating 650 for a banquet, and The Riveredge Resort seating 220.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Land:**

7 hours from NYC

4 hours from Niagara Falls

3 hours from Montreal

Accessible from route I-81

The Thousand Islands International Bridge provides easy access to Ontario Highway 401

**Air:**

Air Service from Syracuse, Watertown, Ogdensburg, Massena and Ottawa, Canadian Airports

For more ideas and information, see Thousand Islands-Seaway’s regional website: <http://www.visit1000islands.com/visitorinfo> or [www.ticouncil.com](http://www.ticouncil.com/)

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