



PRESS RELEASE

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MANISTEE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU OFFERS FALL PLANNING TOOLS PLUS FOUR SELF-GUIDED DRIVING ROUTES TO MAXIMIZE AUTUMN COLOR SEASON

Visitor Tools Include Fall Color Guide, Self-Guided Color Tours and Weekly Fall Color Route Updates, in addition to Seasonal Experiences like Scenic Airplane Rides and Sunset Cruises Plus Fall Concerts

MANISTEE, Mich. – Sept. 9, 2020 – Manistee County offers Midwesterners a perfect Lake Michigan fall getaway to catch the peak of autumn color. And the [Manistee County Visitors Bureau](#) (Visit Manistee County) will help visitors plan a perfect autumn trip with [free fall planning tools](#) and four self-guided fall color driving routes, along with a host of seasonal experiences – from scenic airplane tours and sunset boat cruises, to an outdoor “drive-in” live music concert.

“Fall has always been one of our most popular travel seasons, and with COVID-19 keeping people closer to home, this autumn is going to be even more significant as families look for safe getaways from other parts of Michigan and the Midwest,” said Kathryn Kenny, executive director of Visit Manistee County. “We are giving visitors plenty of planning tools to help them navigate a perfect and safe autumn trip.”

Visitor Fall Planning Tools

Visitors planning a fall trip to Manistee County can go to visitmanisteecounty.com/fallcolor for the following:

- **2020 Fall Color Guide** – This free, downloadable [36-page fall color guide](#) provides top photo spots; four self-guided color tour driving routes ([inland](#), [coastal](#), [downtown Manistee](#) and [M-22 Scenic Highway](#)) with places to stay and must-see stops), unique fall finds, and golf excursions. Visitors also can request a free printed guide in the mail by visiting visitmanisteecounty.com/fallcolor or calling 877-626-4783.
- **Weekly color status updates** – Each color tour features a “current color status” updated weekly, offering a description and user-generated photos detailing the current status, plus a dial showing the leaf color – from green for “still early” or “here and there,” to yellow for “feels like fall” and “good color,” to red for “great color” and “peak color.”
- **Other fall suggestions** – In addition to the four color tour routes, the [Fall Routes and Color Status Page](#) (visitmanisteecounty.com/fallcolor) lists [top trails](#) for experiencing fall color plus [unique ways to experience fall](#) in Manistee County – from paddling a river to taking a scenic flight.

Self-Guided Color Tour Routes

Visit Manistee County created four fall driving routes that visitors can follow as the color changes throughout the county. Routes are mapped out in the [2020 Fall Color Guide](#) and at visitmanisteecounty.com/fallcolor. Tour routes are listed in order from the first region to change color to the last.

1. **Inland Tour** – This 150-plus-mile scenic inland loop takes visitors by 19 points of interest in Manistee County along winding roads and through tunnels of trees.

2. [M-22 Scenic Highway](#) – Manistee County is the gateway to the scenic M-22 highway, which this 120-mile route follows from Manistee County north along Lake Michigan past 13 major attractions in 11 communities, plus dozens of other points of interest and don't-miss stops.
3. [Coastal Tour](#) – This scenic route traversing the entire Manistee County Shoreline along both Lakeshore Drive and the start of the famous M-22 passes through coastal towns like Onkama and Arcadia while offering expansive glimpses of Lake Michigan at vistas like Arcadia Overlook. Seventeen points of interest are mapped out, along with fun facts and diversions.
4. [NEW - Downtown Manistee Tour](#) – New this year, this tour takes visitors past the best shopping, dining and entertainment spots in 11 must-see attractions in the heart of historic downtown. Places to stay and unique fall finds also are highlighted.

Fall Events and Attractions

Manistee County features many fall events and attractions to enjoy the season. Events/attractions below are in Manistee unless otherwise noted. *(Please consult websites or call individual attractions in advance for information related to procedural changes and COVID-19 precautions.)*

Events

- [Manistee Farmers Market](#) - Corner of Memorial Drive and Washington Street, Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. through Oct. 3. The Manistee Farmers Market features a wide variety of fresh, locally grown and produced products (including bread, baked goods, maple syrup, honey, jams, flowers and plants) from area farms such as Z&N Farms and Red Bush Breads, plus entertainment on the Manistee River.
- [NEW - National Theatre Live](#), Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, Sundays and Tuesdays through Oct. 27 at 1 p.m. This new national series brings pre-recorded live performances of the best of British theatre from the National Theatre in the UK to Manistee. Each broadcast is filmed in front of a live theatre audience, and the footage is shared with cinemas around the world such as the Ramsdell for screenings. Screenings range from “Cyrano de Bergerac” and “A Midsummer Night's Dream,” to “Fleabag” and “Frankenstein,” featuring award-winning actors such as Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Benedict Cumberbatch and Sally Field. Tickets sold individually or in packages.
- [MET Opera Series](#), Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, Thursdays and Saturdays at 1 p.m. through Nov. 14. Back by popular demand, the MET Opera ENCORE in HD simulcasts return to the Ramsdell Sept. 10 with Cavalleria Rusticana (Mascagni)/ Pagliacci (Leoncavallo), with simulcasts running weekly. Tickets sold individually or in packages.
- **Old Kirke Museum Public Days**, 300 Walnut St. Open 11 a.m.-2 p.m. the first two Saturdays of the month through October, or by appointment by calling 231-723-2744. Formerly Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Old Kirke is the oldest Danish American Evangelical Lutheran church building in America. On the National Register of Historic Places, this historic structure welcomed Scandinavian immigrants for worship from 1868 until 1970 when the building became a museum. On view through October is “Hats off to the Ladies” commemorating 100 years of women's suffrage, featuring 12 accomplished Manistee women and the hats they wore. Also on permanent display are Earl Madsen's Lumbering Dioramas. The museum and tours are free, though donations are accepted.

- [Fall Concert Series](#), Northern Natural Cider House & Winery, Kaleva, Fridays and Saturdays in September and October, 7-10 p.m. Free, live outdoor music by local Michigan bands will be featured on select weekend nights, with cider, wine, sparkling water and root beer for purchase plus tacos and pizza.
- **NEW** - [“Live from the Lot” Drive-In Concert with Sadie Bass](#), corner of Merkey Road and US-31 (old Kmart lot), Sept. 19, 5-8 p.m. Sponsored by Filer Township DDA, the Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts presents Manistee's first drive-in concert – featuring Michigan country music singer Sadie Bass. Tickets are \$50 per car for up to four people (with space for 100 cars), and music will be live plus transmitted through FM radio. Ticket holders can sit in their vehicles or on their lawn chairs beside their vehicles. Advance purchase is required.
- **“The Real Ingredients” in concert**, [Iron Fish Distillery](#), Thompsonville, Sept. 26, 7-9:30 p.m. This free outdoor concert features Petoskey-based acoustic rock duo playing folk-rock, Americana and everything in between.
- **NEW** - [Boston Brass](#), Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, Oct. 18, 8-9 p.m. Sponsored by West Shore Community College, this real-time performance takes place live at the Ramsdell Theatre while it is live-streamed nationally at more than 20 venues across the country. Boston Brass offers an artistically entertaining, “something-for-everyone” program featuring familiar classical works to popular jazz standards delivered with the ensemble’s signature audience interaction and charming rapport. Tickets are limited to 125 patrons to respect social distancing, at \$30 for main floor, \$20 for balcony and \$10 for youth under 18. Patrons also can view the livestream free but must reserve a spot. Tickets go on sale Sept. 21 and can be purchased [online](#) or at 231-398-9770 (limit of five per reservation).
- [Little Manistee River Weir – Tours of Fall Egg Harvest](#), call 231-775-9727, ext. 6072 to check tour dates. The DNR Fisheries Division harvests chinook salmon eggs from the weir that is used to block fish on the Little Manistee River, which are sent to state fish hatcheries, reared and stocked across Michigan and other states. During the fall egg take, visitors can tour the operation and view salmon from a platform.

Attractions

- [Scenic Airplane Tours](#), Manistee County Blacker Airport, October weekends. Enjoy a bird’s-eye view of Michigan’s fall colors on a scenic flight over Manistee County. [Orchard Beach Aviation](#) conducts two 30-minute scenic flights – one over downtown Manistee and the Lake Michigan shoreline, and one of the M-22/Portage Lake area – for \$30 per person (two person minimum).
- [Sunset Cruises](#), Depart from the dock behind Taco ‘Bout It, daily through mid-October. [Inn Fun Cruises](#) offers privately chartered two-hour day and sunset cruises on its 28-foot Bayliner where guests also are treated to snacks and beverages. Guests cruise around Manistee Lake, Manistee River channel, and Lake Michigan (weather permitting). Pricing ranges from \$200 for 1 to 3 people, to \$400 for 5 to 6 people.
- [Chairlift Rides](#), Crystal Mountain, Thompsonville, Sundays in October, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Guests can ride the Crystal Clipper chairlift and enjoy panoramic views of three counties during the fall season. \$5 per person.
- [Manistee Ghost Ship](#), Friday and Saturday evenings in October. The historic 1931 S.S. City of Milwaukee car ferry transforms into the Manistee Ghost Ship, where visitors explore five decks of thrills, scares and ghostly beings. Admission fee. *NOTE: Due to COVID-19, advanced registration is required.*

- **NEW – Direct flights to/from Chicago O'Hare** – Starting Oct. 1, Cape Air operates two daily, round-trip flights between Manistee County Blacker Airport (MBL) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) starting at \$49 each way. The largest commuter airline in the United States, Cape Air enables Manistee to be an American Airlines codeshare destination so passengers connecting with another American Airlines flight in Chicago can book both segments on aa.com, check baggage through, receive connecting boarding passes, and earn American AAdvantage points for the entire itinerary.

#MyManistee

Visit Manistee County encourages visitors this fall to tag their photos and posts on social media with #MyManistee for a chance to be featured in Visit Manistee County's fall campaign.

About the Manistee County Visitors Bureau

Incorporated in 1997, the Manistee County Visitors Bureau (known as Visit Manistee County) is the official destination marketing organization promoting Manistee County to grow the local travel economy. The visitors bureau is a partner in the Pure Michigan campaign and member of the West Michigan Tourist Association, Michigan Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association, Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan and the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce. Information is available at VisitManisteeCounty.com, facebook.com/ManisteePureMichigan, instagram.com/manisteepuremichigan and twitter.com/manisteePureMI.

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