

## GOLF

# See the colors from the greens with fall bargains

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Northern Michigan is beautiful any time of the year, but no more so than in the fall. When autumn's crisp temperatures usher in the fall colors, the region takes on a special glow.

Color tours become a favorite fall pastime with local residents as well as with the many visitors who frequent the region during this colorful season. Some of the best color tours can be found on area golf courses, many of which are carved through northern Michigan hardwood forests.

It's a great time of year to play golf, according to Indianapolis native Mark Johnson.

"I normally try to get up to northern Michigan a couple of times a year," said the avid Hoosier golfer, "once in the summer with the family for a week when I'll play a few rounds, and again in the fall when I come up with a couple of buddies for a concentrated three or four days of golf."

"It's the best time of year to play. The beautiful fall colors, fewer golfers on the course, and lower prices. What more could you want if you're a golfer?"

Golf specials abound this time of year. It's a good time for local golfers to get out and enjoy a few rounds on some of the better links in the region for about half of what they would pay during summer's peak period.

Here are a few options and links to consider for those fall rounds of golf. All the courses are within easy reach, and what could be better than a drive through northern Michigan's colorful landscape to get there? Most courses will remain open through late October, depending on the weather.

A-Ga-Ming golf course offers gorgeous views of Torch Lake, and some of the best opening and finishing holes in the area. The fall colors around Torch are legendary, and all three of the finishing holes overlook the lake.

Daily prices drop to \$30 for an 18-hole round of golf with cart for the remainder of the season. To make a tee time, call 264-5081.

At Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, home of the famed Bear and Wolverine golf courses, prices will drop at both courses

in October to \$80 midweek. Twilight rates, which start at 3 p.m., are currently \$55 and will drop another \$5 per round on the above mentioned date. All prices are for 18 holes with cart. For tee times, call 938-2100.

Across U.S. 31, Lochenheath, which plays along a bluff overlooking East Bay, has multiple fees through the rest of the year, according to golf pro Jeff Cole. Until noon, the fee is \$75 for unlimited golfing for the day. From noon until 2 p.m., the price drops to \$60 for all the golf you can play, and the twilight rate, \$40 for 18 holes, kicks in at 2 p.m. Carts are included in all prices. For more details, call 938-9800.

Nearby High Pointe, with distant views of the bay, has one price that's good for the rest of the season, according to head pro Ben Croftchik.

"It's \$35 for 18 holes with cart every day until the end of the season. We like to keep things simple," he said.

To book a tee time, call 267-9900.

At Bay Meadows in Traverse City, it's \$10 for nine holes plus \$5 for a cart. Call 946-7927.

Elmbrook, a classic walking course and one of the oldest in the Traverse City area, offers 18 holes of midweek golf Monday through Thursday for \$25, which includes the cart, according to GM Roger Putman. The price on Friday through Sunday is \$39. It also has distant views of both bays. Call 946-9180 for tee times.

The Crown, another classic Traverse City course, also has a \$35 daily rate for 18 holes with cart, and also offers a twilight rate of \$29 that begins at 3 p.m. There's also an after-lunch senior discount for the 60-plus crowd of \$10 off the listed rates, according to head pro Dave Taberski. For tee times, call 946-2975.

In Leelanau County, the Leelanau Club at Bahle Farms is promoting the Fabulous Fall Foursome on Monday and Wednesday for the remainder of the season. It's \$99 for four golfers with carts for an 18-hole round.

"It's been a terrific autumn season for us so far with bookings slated well into October," said golf pro and part-owner Chuck Olson, who also manages the nearby Arnold Palmer course, The King's Challenge.



Scenes like this one at Bay Meadows Golf Course near Traverse City are common in the fall, with golfers enjoying lower autumn rates for golf against a colorful backdrop.

King's Challenge, which is located near the old Sugar Loaf ski resort, is offering a \$39 steak and play package from Sunday noon through Thursday for the rest of the season. It's good for 18 holes with cart and a steak dinner in the clubhouse afterward. The rate on the weekends — no steak dinner included — is \$49 for the golf and cart.

For tee times at the Leelanau Club, call 271-2020 and for King's Challenge, 228-7400.

A little farther south in Benzie County, Crystal Mountain is also offering a foursome special, which includes 18 holes with cart on their Betsie Valley course for \$99. The Mountain Ridge course is \$139 for 18 holes with carts included. The offer is good every single day of the week through the rest of the season, according to spokesperson Joan O'Neill.

To book a tee time on either course, call (800) 968-7686.

"It's a great time of year to be

out and playing," she said. "The views of the fall colors from our Mountain Ridge course lighting up the Betsie River Valley are fantastic. It doesn't get much better."

In Antrim County, play Shanty Creek's top two courses The Legend and Cedar River Golf Club for just \$70, which is about half the summer rate. The offer is good seven days a week, according to marketing manager Dave Nyquist.

The Legend overlooks Lake Bellaire and the Cedar River course overlooks the beautiful Cedar River Valley. For tee times on either course, call (800) 678-4111.

Meanwhile, play the nearby The Chief and the new Hawk's Eye golf course for as little as \$39 and \$49 respectively, according to head pro Dave Hill. He suggested calling ahead to determine which price is in effect at the time. Both courses have received rave reviews in

recent golf publications and offer fabulous views of Antrim County's spectacular fall colors.

For tee times at The Chief, call 533-9000; at Hawk's Eye, call 533-4295.

Packages with lodging can also be attractive at this time of the year. You can spend a night at Boyne Mountain for \$77 per person, or Boyne Highlands for \$81 per person, which includes overnight accommodations, a breakfast buffet and unlimited green fees for the day. Second and third rounds have a \$19 cart fee per person. Call (800) GO-BOYNE for more details. The offer is good through the end of the season.

In Lewiston, Garland Resort — one of the Midwest's only AAA four-diamond resorts — is offering a \$73 package. That includes an overnight stay and an 18-hole round of golf on any of their four courses.

For more details, call (877) 4-GARLAND.