

## Day trips

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town that is home to a number of stores and a summertime event known as Evenings on River Street, a community block party in the flavor of Friday Night Live.

If you travel farther north for another 90 minutes, you will encounter Charlevoix and Petoskey, cities that also offer access to the beach and water, walkable downtowns, marinas and parks, and a full slate of events through the summer months that includes art and craft fairs, music in the park concerts, community fundraisers and more.

Traveling east of Traverse City leads in the direction of Antrim County, home to the Chain of Lakes and Torch Lake, in particular.

Heralded once by National Geographic as one of the 10 most beautiful lakes in the nation, Torch Lake provides a myriad of options for a day spent on, in or near the water. Local businesses can provide everything from pontoon boats to jet

ski rentals to make the day a memorable one.

Small towns such as Bellaire and Mancelona make for pleasant stops to dine, refuel or pick up needed supplies.

Checking out calendars of events can sometimes serve as an anchor for a trip, as does having an overall game plan for the day, such as going out for an afternoon of shopping, traveling to a small town you've never spent much time in or going to the beach.

Many others, though, like Patti Ackerman and her daughter, Stephanie, of Traverse City, said they like to just "get in the car and go."

"We've had some of our best days and trips just heading out with no particular plan or agenda," said Ackerman. "We usually just decide on a direction to go in and then be completely spontaneous from that point on. There's so much to do in this area that we keep coming up with great new discoveries, and even though there are things we want to do again at some point, we haven't repeated ourselves yet."



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