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# DISCOVER THE *Unexpected* IN **Northeast Wisconsin**

by Anne Sayers

Northeast Wisconsin is a fantastic destination for those that love natural beauty, friendly people, delicious food and drink, and unexpected adventures. Whether you want to make a day of it on the trails or have a local craft brew, there is something for everyone in this corner of the Badger state.

### Experiencing the Outdoors

When it comes to outdoor fun, the pristine landscapes and diverse wildlife of northeast Wisconsin are ready for exploration. If you want to explore on the water, you can take up a paddle, strap on a life jacket and get ready to kayak in Manitowish Waters. You can rent solo or tandem kayaks at River's Edge, who also provide

expert guidance and advice for a day on the river.

Wisconsin is home to world-class bike manufacturing, which makes sense when we have some of the best bike trails around. A fantastic way to explore Vilas County is on two wheels on the Heart of Vilas Bike Trail, recognized as a National Recreation Trail. The trail offers riders more than 52 miles of paved trails that connect St. Germain, Sayner, Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, and Mercer. Before you go, check out the Wisconsin Trail Report and get updated information on trail conditions.

The Trail Report isn't just for bikers—it also has information for those who want

to take it a little slower and get around on two feet. The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest covers more than 1.5 million acres of Wisconsin's Northwoods and has several great hiking paths. I recommend Cathedral Pines, a 40-acre grove of white pine, hemlock, and red pine, or the Headwaters Wilderness, where you'll find some of the largest and oldest trees in the forest. Both areas are great for birdwatching.

### Fun for the Whole Family

Of course, nature can be explored by all ages, but there are some particularly great places to visit and explore for those who want to bring along the kids or grandkids.

If you're looking for adventure on the high seas, you can set sail in Eagle River at Pirates Hideaway. Take in the scenery while also enjoying the fun of sailing on a pirate ship where kids can take the helm. Back on dry land, the Hideaway has ice cream for everyone and a tiki bar for the grown-ups.

Kids of all ages will really love Sweet Memories Candy Shoppe in Lakewood. Here you can find an old-fashioned player piano, a vintage 1959 Coke machine, gourmet ice cream, and a great selection of treats made right on site: homemade chocolates, fudge, caramel corn, cheese corn, flavored candied corn, and brittles.

### Explore Locally

There are many more options to explore the beauty of the outdoors only found in this part of the world. Take a leisurely drive down the Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway, a drive that's especially perfect in the fall colors. Or take in a relaxing boat ride with Minocqua Pontoon Cruises in the Minocqua Chain of Lakes.

There are also great experiences special to this area. At the Twig's Beverage Company, you can take their museum tour (which includes free samples!). While you're in Shawano, you can also take a barn quilt tour and see more than 300 barn quilts on display on barns throughout the county. In Wittenberg, you can see murals

throughout the village in a Walls of Wittenberg mural tour.

You can also find wineries and breweries throughout the area, a great way to taste some local flavor. For wineries, there is Woodland Trail Winery in Lakewood, Forgotten Fire Winery in Peshtigo, and Three Lakes Winery in Three Lakes (all three located in picturesque vineyards). If a cold beer is what you're looking

for, there's Pigeon River Brewing in Marion, Rhinelander Brewing in Rhinelander, Tribute Brewing in Eagle River, and Some Nerve Brewing in Manitowish Waters.

All the ideas above are just a small taste of what this area of the state has to offer. For more ideas, inspiration, and tips, you can always check out [travelwisconsin.com](http://travelwisconsin.com) or give Travel Wisconsin a call at (800) 432-8747. Happy travels!

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Photographs provided by Travel Wisconsin.

