

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail: Lake Huron North Channel Mini Guide



Welcome to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail on the Lake Huron North Channel.



You'll travel up to 460km between Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury, connect with 12 heritage rivers emptying into the the "Caribbean of the North" in Lake Huron's North Channel (the area in Lake Huron between the North Shore and the Manitoulin Island chain), touring some of the great Canadian landscape that inspired the Group of Seven.

Visit 26 communities including 3 First Nations, cyclist-friendly marinas and locally-owned restaurants with great food. Enjoy night skies not restrained by city lights. The route is rugged, relaxing, challenging and rewarding. We think you're going to love it.

This route is co-designated as part of Canada's Great Trail. At the western terminus in Gros Cap the Great Trail continues as the Lake Superior Water Trail from Gros Cap to Thunder Bay. Near the eastern terminus on Elgin Street in Sudbury, the route continues as the Voyageur Cycling Route which will connect Sudbury to the nation's capital of Ottawa.

What to Expect:

- **Follow mostly quiet northern roads.**
- **Up to 450km over 5-7 days, including St. Joseph Island**
- **50km on generous paved shoulders of Highway 17:** Where there were no other options, the route follows paved shoulders on Highway 17. This development was an infrastructure project by Ontario's Ministry of Transportation to support a continuous route along the North Channel. The longest continuous stretch on Highway 17 is 23km between Iron Bridge and Bruce Mines, following the lovely Mississagi River.
- **Gravel Grind:** Almost 50km of the route follows unpaved roads and trails. The longest stretch of the route along unpaved roads is 14km (southwest of Iron Bridge). Each day's itinerary and map includes an approximate distance on gravel. Don't get discouraged, with the right tires and a little practice, you can handle it and even have fun in the process!
- **Cell Signal and Emergencies:** Cell signal can be inconsistent when further from the Highway 17 corridor which can affect communication and GPS. 911 remains the emergency phone number.
- **What the Blazes?:** You will follow these blazes during the tour. The GLWT bird-leaf-fish blaze (left) will be your wayfinding blaze. It's also pretty sharp if we do say so ourselves!
Note: The green bike route marker is used primarily on provincial highways.



Tips:

Riding on Highway 17:

- Shoulders on Highway 17 are often separated by a rumble strip and sometimes by a solid white line. Ride on the outside of the white line, further from traffic.
- **Stay on the Signed Route:** It might be tempting to shave some distance off and cycle directly along Highway 17. Many stretches of Highway 17 have minimal paved shoulders or no shoulders at all. This is a provincial highway with a high volume of truck traffic. To assist in your safe journey, we recommend staying to the signed route.

Riding on Gravel:

- Relax your grip, sit up a little to take some of the weight off your handlebars (and hands!), and hold on to the top of the handlebars rather than riding in the drops.
- Look ahead at where you're going, not on the ground in front of your tire. Fun as it may seem, you don't need to avoid every pebble. Cars often clear lines. Find one and ride it out when possible.
- Know when to sit and when to stand. Stay in your seat when climbing a hill, but consider standing up if you hit a washboard to let your legs take more of the shock.
- Try to anticipate turns by braking before you reach them, not while you're in them.
- Take it easy on the downhills. Anticipate a safe speed and ride it out when you can. Brake when necessary, but remember that gravel is dynamic. When you stop on it, it can move with you.
- Use wider tires.
- Have fun. Gravel can be kind of awesome. You'll be a pro in no time.

Welcome to the North Channel

WELCOME PAGE 1

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail: Lake Huron North Channel Mini Guide

Cycling the North:

- **Marinas:** Many marinas on the North Channel are cyclist friendly and include amenities such as washrooms, showers, public wifi and laundry.
- **Wildlife:** They can be big. Please admire, but keep a respectful distance.
- **Enjoy Northern Time:** Don't rush. See the sights. Visit the communities.
There's a lot to love in them!

Additional Resources:

Route Maps: Free to download and print at:

<https://waterfronttrail.org/trip-ideas/cycle-tours/>

Interactive Map: Live GPS positioning. Mobile-friendly. Route planning on-and-off GLWT:

<https://waterfronttrail.org/map/interactive-map-2/>

GPS: On Ride with GPS. Keyword: GWTA19.

Community Mini-Sites: Find more on each community at: <https://waterfronttrail.org/places/>

We envision a Trail that is an integral part of each ecosystem it connects, that contributes to the ecology, economy, heritage and well-being of every community that participates.

About the Trail

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT) is roughly 3000km long, stretching from the Ontario/Quebec border on the St. Lawrence River to Gros Cap, west of Sault Ste Marie connecting over 140 Canadian communities along the shores of Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, St. Clair and the St. Lawrence, Detroit, St. Clair and St. Marys Rivers.

The Trail uses existing infrastructure, meaning roughly 83% of the GLWT is on-road in total (roughly 96% along the North Channel specifically). Our legacy goal is an off-road trail as close to the water's edge as ecologically feasible.

raise funds for Trust efforts, the Tour serves to raise awareness of the Trail, the Trust, its efforts and its partners, and to connect participants with the people, heritage and wonderful assets of the joined together by the Trail.

Maps, itineraries and other materials from each GWTA tour are made available for public use in self-supported touring to print and download for free. This mini-guide was sourced from material from the 2019 GWTA.

Many thanks to our GWTA19 partners:

CAA

Destination Northern Ontario

Greenbelt Foundation

City of Greater Sudbury

Ontario Government

Trans Canada Trail Ontario

The Great Trail

Ontario Trillium Foundation



About the Charity

Didn't know that we're a charity?
Here's what we do:

The **Waterfront Regeneration Trust** coordinates a partnership of over 150 Ontario communities, including First Nations, often working with the support of other trail organizations, groups and higher levels of government to create, expand and promote the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**.

The Trust's mission to implement the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail** serves as the first step toward **Regenerating** the Great Lakes waterfront; to **Protect, Connect and Celebrate** the earth's largest group of freshwater lakes. 157 communities share this vision and participate in the legacy initiative.

How can I help?

On your tour? Share your experiences with others and tell them about the Trail. Use the #WaterfrontTrail hashtag and those of our partners in the mini-guide to help show the value of the Trail. Follow us on social media, and lend your constructive voice to the growing Great Lakes Waterfront Trail community. Let others like your local government officials know about the work of the Trust, the importance of the Trail and cycling in Ontario.

You can also [make a donation on our CanadaHelps page](#).

About the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure

The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA) is an annual cycle tour organized and supported by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. Rather than



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DAY 01

Sault Ste. Marie

Up to 50km

Sault Ste Marie

Don't be in too big a hurry to leave! Begin your journey with a trip around Sault Ste Marie and out to Gros Cap for a dip in Lake Superior.

Travelling the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail/Great Trail from downtown Sault Ste Marie to Gros Cap is a roughly 50km round trip. You can also experience the Soo via the 23km John Rowswell Hub Trail, which connects many key services and assets throughout the city.

Heritage Hookup:

Sault Ste Marie was named after the nearby St. Marys Rapids and was incorporated first as a town in 1888 and then as a city in 1912. The city has an extensive history in steel and shipping. Large tankers will often be visible in the St. Marys on their way to or from Lake Superior.

Tip: When travelling on the GLWT passed the Sault Ste Marie municipal office, stop and give it a good look. Doesn't it look like the back of a large shipping tanker?

Recommended rides today:

Lake Superior: 50km (25km one way)

Ride out to Lake Superior at Gros Cap following the Great Lakes Waterfront. Round Trip – Approx. 2.5 hours

Ride the 23km John Rowswell Hub Trail

A great circuit route that guides you to some of Sault Ste. Marie's lovely attractions including Fort Creek Conservation Area, the [Canadian Bush](#)

[Plane Heritage Centre](#) where you can take the pilot's seat in a passenger plane's cockpit, and climb into the cargo holds of a real waterbomber. Be sure to stop by the [Northern Superior Brewing Co.](#) They have a great tap room and patio where you can enjoy one of Sault Ste. Marie's favourite craft beers. Round Trip – Approx. 1.5 hours



Overnight Options:

Delta Hotels by Marriott Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront Hotel

208 St Mary's River Dr, Sault Ste. Marie
ON P6A 5V
Phone: (705) 949-0611

Located right on the GLWT!

Algoma's Watertower Inn

360 Great Northern Road, Sault Ste Marie, ON
P6B 4Z7
Phone: 1-800-461-0800

Located near a stretch of the Hub Trail.

Local Bike Shops:

[Algoma Bicycles](#) – 360 Queen St East, Sault Ste Marie ON

[Velourion](#) – 162 Old Garden River Rd, Sault Ste Marie ON

Off-Bike Activities in Sault Ste Marie

[Whitefish Island National Historic Site](#) – Located right on the GLWT. Heritage and hiking with views of the St. Marys Rapids.

[Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site](#) – Located along the GLWT near the Bushplane Museum.

Ernie's Coffee Shop – 13 Queen St East, Sault Ste Marie ON. Home of locally famous (with good reason) pie.

[Art Gallery of Algoma](#) – 10 East St, Sault Ste Marie, ON
Premiere art gallery in the Sault.

[Agawa Canyon Tour](#) – Looking to tack something special onto your trip? Take the train to Agawa Canyon.

Beavertails! – Sure, they may be called "bear claws" or "elephant ears" elsewhere, but we Canadians know their true name! Grab one of these treats on your way along the waterfront. Located near the Roberta Bondar Pavilion, directly across from the Delta.

GWTA 2019 Route Available on Ride with GPS

Download the GWTA 2019 route! The GPS complements rather than replacing the printed itineraries. Visit www.ridewithgps.com → Find → Keyword: GWTA19

Sault Ste. Marie → Prince Township → Lake Superior

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DAY 02

Sault Ste. Marie to Bruce Mines optional side trip to St. Joseph Island:

73km - 118 km

On today's **Great Waterfront Trail Adventure**, you'll cruise the shores of the St. Marys, follow the shoreline curve of Garden River First Nation, visit the home and monument honouring the designer of the Canadian Looney, visit a Mennonite market, the site of the first copper mine in Canada and visit St. Joseph Island, the sixth-largest lake island in the world, and home to some excellent cycling and some of the top maple syrup producers in Ontario.

Short Ride

73km Sault Ste. Marie to Bruce Mines

Gravel Grind: 10km

Optional Side trip to St. Joseph Island

95 km Sault Ste. Marie to visit Richard's Landing and/or Hilton Beach for, a 105-118 km ride.

Stay for a Day?:

The proposed Great Lakes Waterfront Trail on St. Joseph Island isn't signed yet, but offers some great cycling, forming an 80km loop around the island. Consider staying for a day of island living in either Hilton Beach or Richards Landing.

Trail Note: *The WRT is working with the communities on St. Joseph Island and the Ministry of Transportation to have Great Lakes Waterfront Trail signs installed along the island and establish a connector route on the Island to Desbarats.*

7:00am to 8:00am

Breakfast - Delta Hotels by Marriott Sault Ste.

Marie Waterfront Hotel: [Map1]

208 St Mary's River Dr. Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5V4

8:00 am

Gather and Group Photo - Roberta Bondar Pavilion [Map1]:

65 Foster Dr, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5N1

We did it! Why don't you? Please ride slowly and in single-file since you will be starting along a multi-use path.

11 km At the end of River Rd, please dismount to use the paved boulevard, as the route uses 400m of unassumed roadway and a narrow trail that runs parallel to Trunk Road, a busy regional road.

① 9:00am to 10:30am

26 km – Biish Noonktan (Water Stop) Ojibway Park, Home of Laughing Water Beach [Map 2]:

2628 Highway 17B East. Garden River, Ontario P6A 7B2

Watch for the Anishnaabe style-moccasin stencils on the road guiding you to the glinting water and beautiful beach on the shores of Lake George in Ojibway Park.

Ojibway Park, Home of Laughing Water Beach, was set aside for the women and children of Garden River First Nation to gather traditional medicines during the early 1950s. Today it is a successful Indigenous owned and operated park and campground with cabins for rent.

② 9:00am to 10:30am

28 km – Photo Stop - Loon Dollar Monument and Lake George Marsh Boardwalk [Map 3]:

Take a group photo at the Loon Dollar Monument—an iconic landmark, created to honour local artist Robert R. Carmichael, who designed the first Loonie (Canada's dollar coin). The entrance of the George Marsh Boardwalk is

nearby, providing excellent views of the provincially significant wetlands if you'd like a quick break from the saddle.

Public Washrooms & Water Refills available at Environmental Centre adjacent to Boardwalk and Loonie Park.

In Echo Bay, visit Village Bakery, Danielle's Country Market, Lucey Loo's and Bucci's Place.

Tip: Top up your water bottle, as there are no stops between Echo Bay and either Desbarats or St. Joseph Island.

As you ride through Laird, you'll see many century farms. A herd of elk is rumoured to live near Neebish Road. These farmlands also serve as gathering areas for Sandhill Cranes. If you're lucky, and travelling in the fall, you may see a flock of these birds rising into the air on a column as they depart to migrate south.

③ 11:30am to 1:00pm

56 km – Lunch Stop – Johnson Township Community Centre [Map 3]:

1 Cameron St, Desbarats, Ontario P0R 1E0

During GWTA19, The Greenbelt Foundation hosted a lunch featuring a selection of local food from the Farmer's Market, including: a variety of excellent salads, wraps, sandwiches, and a fresh citrus punch.

Sault Ste. Marie→Garden River First Nation→ Macdonald Meredith Aberdeen→Laird→Tarbutt→ Johnson→Plumber→Bruce Mines

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DAY 02

Sault Ste. Marie to Bruce Mines optional side trip to St. Joseph Island:

73km - 118 km

Housed in a beautiful Mennonite constructed timber frame pavilion, the **Johnson Farmers' Market** is a celebration of what's local.

Participants enjoyed traditional music by members of The O'Schraves including championship fiddler Aine Shryer-O'Gorman.

The Farmer's market location is open:
June to September: Saturdays, 9am-2pm
Sept 22 to Thanksgiving: 10am-2pm

Lunch Alternative: Not passing by on a Saturday? Try visiting *Desbarats County Produce* at 4378 Government Road, located right along the Trail.

Optional Ride to St. Joseph Island-

St. Joseph Island is renowned as one of Algoma's favourite cycling destinations and one of the top producers of maple syrup in Ontario. Sample some of the Island's 80 km cycling loop with a visit to Hilton Beach—take the direct or winding route.

Visit Hilton Beach for a little retail therapy, a quick dip into the lake followed by a drink (ask for Northern Superior's Red Maple) or ice-cream. Shop for puddingstone jewelry, pick up a bottle of the famed Gilbertson's maple syrup.

Summer, 2019: There is construction on the bridge over the causeway reducing the road to one lane. Exercise care and obey the signals.

⑦ 4:30 pm- Hilton Beach Marina [Map 4]:

Stretch your legs, or visit the Tilt'n Hilton Restaurant for a bite.

79km – Bruce Mines [Map 5];

Overnight Options

Camping

Bruce Mines Township Campground and RV

Park: 1-15 William St, Bruce Mines, ON, P0R 1C0

1C0 [Map 4]

Inexpensive accommodations in a lovely forested area near the heart of town.

Hotels

Bruce Bay Cottages & Lighthouse

P.O. Box 58, Bruce Mines, ON, Canada, P0R 1C0

Phone: (705) 785-3473

Offering a number of overnight options including waterfront, wood-stove-heated cottages, a farmhouse or apartment in town, and even a lighthouse.

Bavarian Inn—

9181 Hwy 17 West, Bruce Mines ON P0R 1C0

Phone: (705) 785-3447

The Bavarian Inn is a two-star basic motel, located close to the centre of Bruce Mines with an attached restaurant.

Note: Bobber's Restaurant also has some modest, inexpensive accommodations.

Off-Bike Activities in Bruce Mines

- Bruce Mines Historic Mines Hiking Trail
- Tour the Simpson Mine Shaft historic site
Tues-Sat: 11am-4pm
Entrance from the Remedy's RX parking lot on Hwy 17.
- Tour the Bruce Mines Museum (**closes at 4:00pm**)

- Have a great meal or sample a small mountain of amazing pie at Bobbers
- Home-made ice cream from the Red House
- Grab a coffee from Copper Bean Cafe featuring locally roasted coffee beans from Superior Roasters and Copper Country Coffee Roasters. Order the Bruce Mines Fog— a Georgian Bay tea blend with vanilla and steamed milk.
- Foster's Fresh mart and the LCBO, both on Robinson Dr (**both close at 6:00pm**)
- Moments of Algoma--Group of Seven -- at the waterfront in Bruce Mines. The art installation promotes the legacy of the famous Group of Seven paintings inspired by the landscape of Algoma.

Heritage Hookup:

Copper mining in the mid-1800's established Bruce Mines as one of the region's most significant towns. In 1857, Bruce Mines' population (500) was larger than Sault Ste Marie's (400).

Settlers were drawn to the area by the stories of 'native copper' used and worn by the First Nations People, which caught the attention of the mining industry. In 1847, the first Canadian commercial shipment of copper was exported from Bruce Mines. By 1876, mining was in decline and locals who stayed turned to farming and lumber. Take in a section of the Bruce Mines Historic Hiking Trail to see what is left of the mines. For a guide to the trail (online only), see:
<http://www.brucemines.ca/mine%20trail.html>

Sault Ste. Marie→Garden River First Nation→ Macdonald Meredith Aberdeen→Laird→Tarbutt→ Johnson→Plumber→Bruce Mines

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DAY 02

Sault Ste. Marie to Bruce Mines optional side trip to St. Joseph Island:

73km - 118 km

St. Joseph Island: Optional Overnight

Note: For those choosing to spend an extra day on St. Joseph Island, we recommend making your next overnight in Thessalon.

Richard's Landing:

Camping

Fred's Tent & Trailer Park

1595 C Line Road, Richards Landing, ON

Phone: (705) 246-2572

Motel

Clansmen Motel:

Richard St, Richards Landing

Phone: (705) 246-2581

Hilton Beach:

Busy Beaver Campground

2233 Hilton Rd, Hilton Beach, ON

Phone: (705) 246-2636

Hilton Beach Inn

3117 Mark St, Hilton Beach, ON

(705) 257-5235

Off-Bike Activities on St. Joseph Island

- Swimming (Richards Landing and Hilton Beach)
- Richards Landing Historic Jail: Located on Gore Street, behind the historic Town Hall.
- Try a meal at Camillas or La Terrazza Franzizi
- Black Bear Bakery & Café – 2389 D Line Rd, Richards Landing ON, directly across the road from Mom's Restaurant
- St. Joseph Island Museum – 2395 I Line, Richards Landing ON
- Tilt'n Hilton Restaurant – 3120 Marks St, Hilton Beach, ON
- St. Joseph Island National Historic Site – 185 Fort Road, Hilton Beach ON
Plan for some extra time, this site is located at the extreme south of the Island.

Partner Focus: About the Greenbelt

Great Lakes to Greenbelt to Great North: The Waterfront Regeneration Trust is proud to partner with the Greenbelt Foundation. Together we are creating a network of cycling routes throughout the Greater Toronto Bioregion and watershed to promote the protection and conservation of our Great Lakes coast and Ontario's protected countryside.

The Greenbelt Route and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail provide over 3600km of exceptional cycle tourism and give us an opportunity to appreciate two iconic landscapes.

The Greenbelt Foundation is the steward of over 2 million acres of farmland and environmentally sensitive forests, green spaces, watersheds, urban river valleys and the moraines that provide clean water for over 6 million Ontarians.

Sault Ste. Marie → Garden River First Nation → Macdonald Meredith Aberdeen → Laird → Tarbutt → Johnson → Plumber → Bruce Mines

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Bruce Mines to Blind River: 96 km

Two Heritage Rivers. Two First Nations.

On today's [Great Waterfront Trail Adventure](#), you'll find long stretches of gentle rollers, have the opportunity to travel along the shores of two heritage rivers (the Thessalon and the Mississagi) and pass through two First Nations (Thessalon and Mississauga). You'll see idyllic farmland, given new life by the infusion of Mennonite families from Southern Ontario and a string of communities, each with nearly two centuries of history.

Today's Gravel Grind: 19 km Approx.

Travel Tip:

Today's trip includes the longest consecutive stretches of both gravel riding and travel along the shoulders of Highway 17. For those new to gravel riding, try not to place as much of your weight on your handlebars. Your control should improve, and your hands will thank you. The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail between Iron Bridge and Blind River [\[Maps 6 & 7\]](#) follows 23km of generous paved shoulders on Highway 17 and skirts the shores of the beautiful Mississagi River. There will be truck traffic.

① 7:00-8:00am

Breakfast In Town:

We recommend Bobbers.

② 22 km – Suggested Stop - Little Rapids

General Store [\[Map 2\]](#):

A great place to grab a few items and fuel up.

Tip: If you like cheese, they stock over 30 flavours. If you like sausage, theirs is considered one of the best around. If you're a messy eater, buy a shirt and save your jersey!

③ 23 km – Turn off for Side Trip to Thessalon - Highly Recommended (+10km return) [\[Map 2\]](#)

Turn **right** at the intersection of [Little Rapids Road](#) and [Highway 129](#) for a trip to Thessalon. *The side trip into Thessalon is 5km each way. Plan for a little extra time and consider the extra distance travelled when referring to event mapping.*

You'll cruise along the banks of the Thessalon River, past the scenic red bridge into the heart of this nearly two-century old community with roots in the lumber industry.

There are several amenities in Thessalon including a local grocer, Sunset Beach Family Restaurant and Carolyn Beach Inn and Restaurant. Spending the night at Carolyn Beach Inn or Thessalon Lakeside Park Campground are both a great overnight options.

In Thessalon you can also enjoy local beaches, and a scenic (cyclist-friendly) marina facility at the end of Algoma St.

④ 8:30am to 10:30am

28 km – Thessalon Marina:

[56 Algoma Street East](#) [\[Map 2\]](#)

Visit the water station for a water refill and ideas where to stop for a dip at the beach

⑤ 10:00am to 11:30am

33 km - Brownlee Lake Park

[\[Map 2\]](#) 136 Ingram Road, Thessalon, ON

Nestled in the corner of Ingram and Brownlee Road you'll find the entrance to this resort and campground with serene views of Brownlee Lake, a beach and a small restaurant.

⑥ 11:30am to 2:00pm

60 km – Iron Bridge Historical Museum.

Suggested Lunch Stop [\[Map 3\]](#): 1 James St.

Heritage Hookup:

Originally named "Tally-Ho," this town, with its history steeped in farming and lumber, was renamed in 1886 in honour of the iron bridge that spans these quiet shores of the Mississagi River, the first iron bridge constructed in Ontario. That bridge was eventually replaced after almost a century of use, but its spirit lives on in the Veterans Bridge that connects to nearby Tally-Ho park, and which you'll cross on today's journey.

During your visit to Iron Bridge, you'll find 3 restaurants and a convenience store. Public restrooms are also available at the local arena.

Restaurants: [\[Map 3\]](#). Reserve ahead of time where possible or be prepared to wait:

• **Red Top Motor Inn** – 705 843 2100

(vegan/vegetarian options available)

• **Three Aces Restaurant** – 705 843 2135

(Chinese/Canadian)

• **Village Inn Diner** – 705-509-2010

(new diner location on the Eastern side of town – lots of seating).

Bruce Mines → Thessalon → Huron Shores → Iron Bridge → Mississauga First Nation → Blind River

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Bruce Mines to Blind River: 96 km

Take some time to visit **The Iron Bridge Historical Museum**. It is open to the public at no charge though they accept donations. There is a wide range of artifacts displayed in the log cabin, including local wedding gowns, WWII military uniforms, 1950's era baseball uniforms.

Cycling into Blind River

The final 20km of today's ride are along the generous paved shoulders of Highway 17. When riding along the shoulders it is important that you ride in single file. Should you need to stop please DO NOT stop in the shoulder but continue riding until you come upon one of the off Highway stopping areas labelled as "snow circles" or the MTO Parkette.

⑦ 12:00pm to 3:00pm

72 km – Suggested Rest Stop - MTO Parkette [Map 4]:

MTO has created this parkette and picnic area with a stellar view of both the Mississauga and nearby Woman Island. Washroom facilities available.

80 km – Alternate Route - Mississauga, Blind River Connector [Map 4]:

El Dorado Road (dotted line on the map)
This is a wonderful hiking connection and only recommended as a single-track mountain biking experience. This scenic trail meanders through forest, marshlands and scramble-worthy rocky balds, a collaborative effort between Mississauga First Nation and the Town of Blind River with funding from the Great Trail.

1:00pm to 4:00 pm

83 km – Recommended Stop - Pier Seventeen Restaurant [Map 4 & 5]:

Looking to stop for a late snack on your way into town, or a celebratory pint to commemorate a day well-traveled? Pier Seventeen has a lovely lakeside patio and serves some local brews including Stack.

84 km – Blind River [Map 5]:

Blind River's history is cradled in the fur trade and logging and mining industries. The Town has several restaurants and amenities, and some great river and lake views.

Tip: If you're looking a bank or groceries, visit the plaza at 105 Causley Ave. For LCBO or convenience take a short walk to Woodward Ave. Most businesses close by 6pm, so make your stops early! Pubs and restaurants are open later.

Off-Bike Activities in Blind River [Map 5]

- Swim at Fourth Sand Beach (71 Oak Rd, east of the Eldo Inn)
- Hike or go trail riding (including lookouts and secluded beaches) on the Boom Camp Trails
- Visit the Timber Village Museum
- Head into downtown for pint at the **Iron Horse Inn and Bar** on Woodward Avenue.
- Get an ice cream cone at Video Movie House II, 12 Woodward Ave
- Grab a Tim's: You love it. You hate it. You love that you hate it or hate that you love it. If you're from Southern Ontario you have an opinion about Tim Horton's. You've been without it for a day but. Now. It's. Back!

86 km - Blind River Marine Park [Map 5]:

1 Hagger Road, Blind River ON
Cyclist-Friendly marina facility with washrooms, showers, wifi, laundry and stellar views of Lake Huron.

Feel like a nightcap? Head over to Woodward Avenue and visit the Iron Horse Inn and Bar.

Overnight Options:

Hotels

Lakeview Inn

143 Causley St, Blind River, ON P0R 1B0

Phone: (705) 356 0800

Store bikes in your room. Luggage will be in your room.

Pier Seventeen

1 Causley St, Blind River, ON, P0R 1B0

Phone: (705) 356-1717

Store bikes in your room. Luggage should be in your room or securely stored at the front reception.

Auberge Eldo Inn

3 White Drive, Blind River, ON P0R 1B0

Phone: (705) 356-2255

<http://eldoinn-on.ca/>

Store bikes in your room.

Luggage should be in your room or securely stored at the front desk.

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Bruce Mines to Blind River: 96 km

Trail History:

Signing Huron Shores:

During today's journey you pass through the Municipality of Huron Shores, the first Great Lakes Waterfront Trail community to sign their route exclusively via a municipally led and volunteer driven work bee, giving a window into the heart of this stellar community and making the Trail uniquely their own.



Infrastructure on Highway 17:

The stretch of trail on the shoulders of Highway 17 represents a historic partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, which shouldered over 50 km of Highway 17 in order to achieve connectivity between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. The shoulders on the highway and the signs installed along it are a reminder of this partnership and the efforts by the Province to achieve this, the first long-distance cycling route in Northern Ontario.

Partner Focus: About Destination Northern Ontario

Destination Northern Ontario funded the initial feasibility study for the route and saw the potential for cycle tourism in Northern Ontario. In addition to the route development, they have funded bike-friendly business workshops in the region and helped to bring the popular Crank the Shield, an ultimate backcountry mountain bike race, to Algoma.

Destination Northern Ontario is an organization leading economic growth in tourism for the region. They were formed at the direction of the northern Ontario tourism industry and funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Crank the Shield: August 16 to 18.
<http://www.cranktheshield.com/>

Bruce Mines → Thessalon → Huron Shores → Iron Bridge → Mississauga First Nation → Blind River

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Blind River to Espanola: 115km Approx.

During today's [Great Waterfront Trail Adventure](#) you will travel along Bootlegger's Bay to lounge in prohibition history, visit the Caribbean of the North, travel three more heritage rivers (The Serpent River, Spanish River and Aux Sables River) and enter the LaCloche Foothills.

Today's Gravel Grind: 19 km Approx.

Travel Tip:

Today's ride is the longest of the week. There are a number of smaller stretches of gravel and intermittent travel along the paved shoulders of Highway 17 (distances between 3 and 13kms).

For those wishing to break up today's distance, we recommend an overnight in Massey.

7:00 to 8:00am

① Breakfast in Town

There are a number of excellent local eateries you can nosh at before continuing on your way including 17 Restaurant and a local Tim Hortons.

② 8:00am to 9:30am

16km – Algoma Mills Causeway Pavillion

Interpretive panels at the Causeway Park relate the local history and a locomotive replica created by a local artist commemorates our past.

Heritage Hookup:

Algoma Mills became the Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR's) major coal delivery port for the Algoma District with 200,000 tons of coal moving across the docks during a single season.

Historically the Causeway was the site of a large dock use by companies in the late 1800s to transport freight to southern Ontario. Now the Causeway Pavillion is the location for Canada Day festivities, fireworks and a major public access point to the North Channel of Lake Huron.

③ 16km – Bootlegger's Bay - Highway 538

[Map 2]:

Located along quiet Highway 538 is the lengthy beach of Bootlegger's Bay, where, during the 1920s prohibition era, boaters would stash good liquor to avoid local revenue watchers. While you're unlikely to uncover any buried treasures, you can still stop for a dip with lovely views of the islands of the North Channel.

④ 8:30am to 10:30am

32km – Suggested Stop – Spragge [Map 3]:

Those wishing to stop for a refuel or a quick snack should keep their eyes open for Serpent River Campground which has a gift shop and variety store.

Heritage Hookup: Spragge. Founded around a prominent mill and originally named Cook's Mills, the Spragge you see today is a child of the original community, and somewhat removed in location. The original town site was lost to two successive fires in the early 1930s, which consumed the town and then the mill that supported it. The community bloomed again with the later discovery of both copper and uranium in the area.

Tip: Want to stretch your legs? Give the Wagoosh Hiking trail at the Spragge Recreation Area on Old Hydro Road a try. The trail can be accessed from the east side of the parking area.

⑤ 35 km – Suggested Stop Deer Trail

Tourism Information Centre [Map 3]:

Highway 108 and Highway 17 Intersection

Tip: The info centre is on the north side of Highway 17. **Those wishing to stop here will need to make a crossing. Make sure to wait for a sufficient gap or make your stop at Serpent River park 5km down the road.**

Available at this tourist information centre:

- Public Washrooms
- Picnic area
- Nature Trail

⑥ 9:30am to 11:00am

40 km – Rest Stop - Serpent River Park [Map 3]:

Located directly on Highway 17, just before the bridge across the Serpent River, this MTO operated rest stop has restrooms, a picnic area, hiking trails and views of both Serpent River Falls and Kennebec Falls. Those wishing to get out of the saddle for a stretch can stroll the short-but-lovely Kennebec Trail, which begins on the west side of the parking area.

Blind River → North Shore → Serpent River First Nation → Spanish → Sables-Spanish Rivers → Espanola

Instagram: @Waterfront_RT

Twitter: @WaterfrontRT

Blind River to Espanola: 115km Approx.

⑦ 9:30am to 11:30am

45 km - Serpent River First Nation [Map 3]:

Serpent River First Nation Pow Wow Grounds: 195 Village Road, Cutler, ON

Aaniin! In Serpent River First Nation Pow Wow grounds, you'll find a handful of eateries and a traditional craft store.

*Tip: A path connecting the Waterfront Trail to the Serpent River Trading Post (located on Highway 17) will be completed. The Trading Post is an excellent place to pick up supplies and enjoy a little retail therapy at the gifts and art and crafts store. There also are public **washrooms and a picnic area**.*

⑧ 11:30am to 1:00pm

54km – Water Stop - Four Seasons Waterfront Complex and Spanish Municipal Marina [Map4]

40 Garnier Rd, Spanish, ON

Before heading into Spanish proper, make sure to stop by the lovely and cyclist-friendly Spanish Municipal Marina.

Available at the facility are:

- Washrooms
- Showers
- Wifi
- Laundry
- Sauna welcoming both cyclists and boaters

Using the stairs just south of the marina building, you can climb to the summit of the bluffs where there you'll find a lookout on the Whalesback Channel, as well as the beginning of the Shoreline Discovery Trail. Follow the trail for a short but engaging hike with more great views of the

Channel. You'll see firsthand why they refer to the area as the Caribbean of the North.

Just north and east of the Marina are the fire-hollowed remains of St. Joseph Residential School for Girls. Directly opposite the remains of the school is a monument dedicated to residential school survivors.

⑨ 11:30am to 1:00pm

55km – Suggested Lunch Stop - Spanish

[Map 4]:

Some restaurants in Spanish along located Highway 17 include:

- Dixie Lee – excellent soups, sandwiches and a great fruit bowl!
- Spanish River Inn – Walleye!
- Pizza 17 – What's here? Use your imagination!
- Lucky's Snack Bar – The Snow Drift!
- Nibbler's Fish & Chips (with award-winning chip gravy)

Tip: If you're a fan of both soft serve and slushies you might the Snow Drift at Lucky's combines both.

Want to overnight in Spanish? Try the Spanish River Inn, Mitchell's Camp or Brennan Harbour Resort.

Heritage Hookup: Located at the mouth of the Spanish River, Spanish is a community deeply connected to the river that shares its name and is known as the Gateway to the North Channel. The town rose up as a service centre for the

expanding railway at the turn of the 20th century and is now home to approximately 700 residents.

①⑩ 1:30pm to 3:30pm

83km – Heritage Park Water/Recommended Lunch Stop [Map 5]:

Hwy 17 and Imperial Rd.

***Note: turn north onto Imperial Road South from Government Road.**

At heritage park there are washroom facilities, benches and picnic tables for residents and visitors to enjoy.

We're sure you're going to love Massey. There's a lot packed into this small community that's sure to make your day.

Note:

- Grab a meal or a snack at any one of the areas four restaurants:
 - Dragonfly Ristorante
205 Imperial St. S.
Good food. Longer wait.
 - Poirier's Confectionery
355 Imperial St. S.
 - Back Home Bistro
340 Sable St.
 - Chutes Confectionery and Chip Stand 595 Imperial St. N.
- Visit the **Massey Area Museum:** Filled with exhibits, artifacts and stories from the earliest native settlement of the Sagamok Anishnawbek, early exploration and the first white settlement leading to the founding of Sables-Spanish Rivers. Exhibits also show the

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history of the timber, railway and mining industries.

- Grab your lunch and picnic at **Mouth Park**: This Public Park, at the end of Carl Albert Street in Massey, is situated at the mouth of the Aux Sables River where it empties into the Spanish River. The park features a beautiful natural sand beach, natural clay embankment slide and a picnic area.
- Visit **Chutes Provincial Park** 660 Imperial St. North, Massey, ON. You will fall in love with Aux Sables River when you see the spectacular falls and Seven Sisters Cataracts. A viewing platform gets you up close to the falls, while a swimming area exists not far from their base. Hike the Twin Bridges Trail (6km/2hr return) to follow the shores of the Aux Sables. The entrance to the park is about 650m north of Highway 17 on Route 553. The trip to Chutes is the worth the 5km it adds to the trip. Follow the GLWT signage to exit the route at Imperial Street.

Tips: Poirier's is known for its generous scoop of ice cream, and if you are considering pizza just one day out of the tour, this is the place.

84 km – Lee Valley and LaCloche Foothills

[Maps 5 & 6]:

Crossing the bridge over the Spanish River you'll be treated to an incredible view as you enter the Lee Valley and travel the final stretch to our overnight in Espanola. Don't worry about "foothills" the last stretch is not very hilly and affords views of stark bluffs.

115 km – Espanola Regional Recreation

Complex [Map 6]:

175 Avery Dr, Espanola, ON

- An amazing, cyclist-friendly facility with washrooms, showers and...a waterslide!

Overnight Options:

Camping:

Lake Apsey Resort

400 Lake Apsey Rd, Espanola, ON

Phone: (705) 869-1718

Located on the GLWT Manitoulin-Bound, about 5km south of town off of Highway 6.

Hotels

Pinewood Motor Inn

378 Centre Street, Espanola, ON P5E 1G3

Phone: (705) 869-3460

<http://www.pinewoodmotorinn.ca/index.html>

Off-Bike Activities in Espanola

- Visit any one of the 13 restaurants, pubs and eateries for something to eat. Make reservations if you're going to Cortina (vegan pasta available)!
- Visit the Espanola Heritage Park for a window into local history (Located at Barber and Main)
- Travel the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail / Al Secord Fitness Trail to Clear Beach for a swim. Just don't go too far or you'll be well on your way to Manitoulin Island.

Heritage Hookup: Espanola, a town with a city feel, was founded in the early 1900s as a company town for the Spanish River Pulp and Paper Company. Today, the Domtar's Espanola Mill and dam provide an impressive view from the bridge spanning the Spanish River just north of town.

Trail History:

Espanola is the first major northern hub on the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, created during the first and second phase GLWT expansion efforts to circumnavigate Georgian Bay.

It's roughly 50km from the junction on Barber Rd to Little Current on Manitoulin Island!

Sacred Celebrations and the Legacy of the Water Walker

Pow Wows are sacred celebrations of Indigenous tradition, dance and song that bring together many different tribes and communities. Thousands are held every year across North America. Check <http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019PowWowGuide.pdf> for a listing of events and a wonderful tribute to the late Water Walker Josephine Mandamin.

Grandmother Josephine began the water walk movement to bring attention to the need to change our relationship with water. She passed on February 22, 2019, having walked an estimated 17,000 km around the Great Lakes in her lifetime. Her niece Autumn Pelltier carries on her water advocacy legacy.

During today's [Great Waterfront Trail Adventure](#), you'll set out from Espanola past an impressive view of the Domtar Dam, have the opportunity to meet some alpacas, and parallel the Spanish River in Nairn. As you near Sudbury you'll follow a tributary of the Spanish, and the road will open up for a terrific ride towards Whitefish with some awesome scenery and rock cuts. You'll pass the Vermillion River and ramble into Sudbury, grind some gravel on Gibson Road and travel past Kelly Lake before directly passing the locally famous Stack Brewery. You'll finish your ride along the Junction Creek trail, through downtown Sudbury and finally to scenic Bell Park on Ramsey Lake, with its Blue Flag Beach.

Today's Gravel Grind: 3.3 km Approx.

Travel Tip:

There is one final 7km section of Highway 17 between Jacklin Road and Old Nairn Road, including a 200m bridge crossing the Spanish River. **Make sure to check for a sufficient gap before proceeding across the bridge.** Almost 5km after the bridge crossing, you'll need to cross to the north side of the highway to continue on Old Nairn Road. We recommend stopping on the paved shoulder of the highway and crossing the highway directly. Do not pull into traffic to make a left-hand turn. Please use care when crossing the highway.

7:00am-8:00am

Breakfast in Town [Map 1]:

We recommend Roger Rabbit's for a local spot with a diner feel.

92 Park St, Espanola, ON

① 8km – Dare2Dream Alpaca Farm [Map 2]:

210 Jacklin Rd, McKerrow, ON

Ever wanted to get up close to an alpaca? Or just see how they're raised? Dare2Dream Alpaca farm raises alpacas, operates as a storefront for alpaca fiber products, and produces eggs and organic vegetables for local use. You can also join them for a tour.

Tip: While riding along Jacklin Road, keep your eyes open for the shoe tree. Why is it here? What's its purpose? What possesses people to throw perfectly good shoes into a perfectly good tree? We have no answers, but you have the day to ponder the relationship between foliage and footwear. As one GTWAer so eloquently put it: "Pourquoi?"

Take some time and think about it. You can help build the legend.

② 10km – Final Travel along Highway 17 and Spanish River Bridge [Map 2]:

Per the [Travel Tip](#) adjacent, the final stretch of Trail along Highway 17 includes a 200m bridge crossing the Spanish River. Please check for a sufficient gap and use care when proceeding. The route continues on Old Nairn Road on the north side of the highway roughly 5km after the bridge.

Please pull off to the right and wait to cross the road when it is clear rather than making a left-hand turn from the road.

③ 8:30am to 9:30am

20km – Suggested Stop - Nairn Centre [Map 2]:

Travel Tip: If you're looking for a place to stop on route, the community centre has a rest area and [washrooms](#). Though the scenery along the route is lovely, there are **no facilities until Whitefish**, so you may want to make use of them now.

Heritage Hookup:

Nairn Centre got its start in 1896 in the lumber industry on the Spanish River, which is just north of the town site. The connection to lumber is still alive and well today with the nearby Eacom facility. There is a small beach on the Spanish River to the west of Ferry Street for those who want to get out of the saddle for a quick dip. There is also a restaurant and convenience store located on Front Street at Highway 17 (exit the Trail at Smith Street and turn right on Front) if you'd like a quick bite or an early lunch.

24km – Scenic Bridge / Goodbye Spanish River [Map 2]:

A narrow wood-decked bridge spans a small tributary emptying into the Spanish River. This local fishing spot affords a lovely view of the water, wooden pilings, and your final view of the Spanish River on the GWTA.

⑤ 10:30am to 12:00pm

48km – Rest Stop – Centennial Park - Whitefish [Map 3]:

Centennial Park, 400 Graham Rd, Whitefish, ON P0M 3E0

Centennial Park is a municipally run campground located at the bend in Graham Road, before leaving Whitefish. The pavilion area has a spectacular view of chutes on the Vermillion River, a tributary of the Spanish River. Washrooms and a concession are on site.

⑥ 48km - Course Change 1 - RR 55 / Old Highway 17 [Map 3]:

Heading out of Whitefish, the route follows an off-road track that includes sand-and-gravel and soft sand surfaces, as well as a steep incline with loose rocks and is used primarily as an ATV and snowmobile track. Since 2016, Sudbury has expanded the shoulders of roughly 3 of the 10 km between Whitefish and Old Soo Road. **To avoid the more challenging sections of this track, we recommend remaining on RR55 until Horizon Road (53km, point ⑦ [Map 4].)**

⑧ 11:00am to 1:00pm

54km – Recommended Stop - Simon Lake Park [Maps 4]:

West intersection of Simon Lake Road and RR 55
This park offers restrooms, a scenic view of Simon Lake and a small beach for a quick swim.

⑨ 56km – Course Change 2 – Multi-Use Path paralleling RR 55 / Old Hwy 17 [Map 4]:

At the eastern intersection the multi-use path and paved shoulders on the south side of RR 55/Old Highway 17. You will rejoin the permanently signed route at Santala Rd in roughly 2km (point ①⑩ [Map 4]). The Trail follows a rugged off-road trail best suited to ATV and mountain bike use in this area.

①① 12:00pm to 2:00pm

60km – Suggested Lunch Stop - Lively [Map 4]:

Intersection of Old Soo Road and RR 24

At the eastern end of Old Soo Road, you'll enter Lively, the first urban area in your foray into Sudbury. Immediately on your left will be a commercial area including:

- Tim Hortons
- Subway
- Grocery Store

Travel Tip:

The intersection of 24 and 55 is very busy, and there are train tracks immediately before the intersection, so use care. When crossing to the south side of 55, the Trail will be immediately on your left. **The easiest way to reach it is to use the crosswalk to cross to the east side of RR 24.** The trail does become rural again after departing Mikkola/Lively, so making a restroom stop here or at the Kinsmen Park facility (washrooms marked on your map) is recommended.

①② 12:00pm to 2:30pm

69km – Highway 17, Southview Road Crossing [Map 5]:

This final crossing of Highway 17 is busy and crosses 4 lanes of traffic. Wait for a gap before proceeding and use EXTREME CAUTION.

①③ 12:00pm to 3:00pm

73km – Suggested Stop - Kelly Lake [Map 5]:
1350 Kelly Lake Road, Sudbury, ON

Sudbury's growing craft brewery scene is right along the route. Stop in for a sample or make a purchase from Stack Brewing, Crosscut Distillery or 46 North Brewing, but ride responsibly!

Junction Creek Trailhead

Watch on your right hand for the entrance to the Junction Creek path. You may have to dismount to manage the sharp turn and change to natural surface. This is a beautiful pedestrian/cycling path that winds along with creek.

①④ 78km – Downtown Sudbury [Map 5]:

Elgin Street Area, Sudbury

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail follows Elgin Street on the outskirts of downtown Sudbury. Here you'll find the Laughing Buddha, possibly the best patio in Sudbury. Other restaurants can be found on nearby Romanet, Minto and Shaughnessy. Laughing Buddha is in the area and worth checking out.

①⑤ **80km – Recommended Stop - Bell Park**

[Map 5]:

Paris Street, Sudbury ON

Bell Park is a gem of a city park with exceptional views of Ramsey Lake, once the world's largest lake contained within the limits of a single city. From the shore, you'll be able to see Science North, the official terminus of the GLWT c. 2019, crouched on the rocks to the south. The park contains washrooms and changing facilities, a concession, and a blue flag beach.

Note: Keep in mind that the waterfront route is pedestrian-only, so make sure to dismount when you visit the lake. The cycling route follows a multi-use trail a little further inland.



2:00pm to 4:00pm

81km – The Finish Line - Science North

[Map 5]:

100 Ramsey Lake Rd, Sudbury, ON

This is it. Welcome to the end of a great tour. Take in the view of Ramsey Lake, have a rest and pat yourself on the back. You've earned it – be proud! If you've got some time, visit Science North and be sure to check out the Vale Cavern Room, where the GWTA19 celebratory dinner was held. It will blow you away.

Overnight Options

82km - [Travelodge Hotel](#) [Map 5]:

1401 Paris St, Sudbury, ON, P3E 3B6

Phone: 1-800-578-7878

The Travelodge is located slightly further south on Paris Street. Use the bi-directional cycle path on the west side of the road to reach it.

81km – [Travelway Inn Sudbury](#)

1200 Paris St, Sudbury, ON

Phone: 1-800-461-4883

Located directly across the road from Science North and a convenient distance from the local hospital if you have been too big a fan of ice cream and poutineries.

Spare Change Please? Visit the Big Nickel

Dynamic Earth 122 Big Nickel Mine Dr, Sudbury, ON

Consider taking a quick shuttle to visit Sudbury's iconic Big Nickel a 30-foot replica of a 1951 Canadian nickel and designated the world's largest coin located at Dynamic Earth. Though it's not far from the junction of Kelly Lake Rd and the Junction Creek Trail, you may want to hail a cab. There is no cycling infrastructure on the section of RR34 necessary to reach dynamic earth. Nevertheless, if you've seen the loonie and you're in Sudbury...

Where Do We Go From Here?

Travelling South? As of now there is no legal way to cycle from Sudbury south along Highway 69 to Highway 522, a gap of roughly 80km.

Some good news: [The Waterfront Regeneration Trust](#) is currently working with the Ministry of Transportation and local and regional partners to move forward with an expansion of the Trail that

would connect Collingwood and Sudbury along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay via communities such as Wasaga Beach, Midland, the Muskokas and Parry Sound, including regional loops around Lakes Muskoka and Rosseau.

Travelling East? A sister organization, [Discovery Routes](#), is working with 29 northern and rural communities between Sudbury and our nation's capital in Ottawa to implement the over 645km [Voyageur Cycling Route](#) (VCR). The VCR connects with the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail on Elgin Street in Sudbury. Some sections of the VCR are also co-designated as the Great Trail.
