



Erie Canalway Map & Guide



North Tonawanda

Start Your Canal Journey Here

Two hundred years ago, the Erie Canal was boldly built to fuel America's expansion. Through extraordinary vision and effort, it connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes by water, transforming New York State and our country forever.

Today, New York's canals offer an unparalleled place to recreate with family and friends while discovering the incredible history and beauty of America's most famous human-made waterway. From boat rentals to multiday bike rides to visiting state and national parks, there's plenty to explore on and off the water.



Amsterdam, Frank Forté

On the Water

The New York State Canal System is the centerpiece of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The 524-mile waterway traverses both land-cut canal and river sections, as well as several large lakes. You can also visit portions of the Old Erie, Oswego, and Champlain canals built in the 1800s. These historic remnants offer an incredibly rich and fascinating look at canal engineering and craftsmanship.



Gail Boulger

Along the Trail

The Canalway Trail is an ideal place for fun, fitness, and adventure. Spend a few hours walking or cycling and seeing the sites or plan a longer cycling trip to really experience all the trail has to offer. The 360-mile east-west Canalway Trail from Albany to Buffalo parallels the Erie Canal and is part of the Empire State Trail, which also extends south-north from New York City to Lake Champlain.



Palmyra

Canal Communities

Explore the many cities, towns, and villages along the waterway. You'll find visitor centers, shops, restaurants, and attractions within walking distance of the canal and Canalway Trail. Be sure to visit local museums to learn about people, places, and innovations along the canals. Choose from hundreds of events on tap each year, from concerts and tours to heritage days to arts festivals.

2024

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In partnership with the National Park Service



Top 5 Ways to Get on the Water

Got water? You bet! Head to the canals for fun and relaxation, both on the water and on shore. Find details at www.eriecanalway.org.



Herkimer



Oswego Canal, Treg Helliwig

3

Paddle the Canal: Explore by kayak, canoe, or stand-up paddleboard. Paddling here is unique and varied as you navigate century old locks; pass stunning stone aqueducts used in the 1800s; paddle alongside tugboats and cruisers; and experience narrow canal channels and wider river segments. There are more than 150 public launches, lots of amenities, and rental outfitters at numerous locations.



Seneca River

4

Rent a Canal Boat: Vacation rentals provide an idyllic way to experience the canal at a relaxed pace. You'll get lessons in steering, docking, and locking before heading out, so you can feel confident on the water even if you're not an experienced boater. Rental boats are well-equipped with sleeping quarters, a galley, and deck space for relaxing; many come with bikes so you can enjoy the Canalway Trail too.



Baldwinsville



Fairport

5

Watch the Boats Go By: Visit canal promenades, parks, and visitor centers or check out one of the NYS Canal System's 57 locks to see their massive gates and mechanical gears. Take a picnic, bring your fishing pole, or enjoy ice cream. Don't be shy about greeting boaters tied up on shore. Many are traveling the canals as part of a 6,000-mile voyage known as the Great Loop (www.greatloop.org). These boaters are eager to meet locals and share their journey.

1

Take a Boat Tour: Get on the water for a scenic ride or enjoy a lunch or dinner cruise on one of the many tour boats along the canals. Specialty cruises, sailing adventures, and wine tours are offered on lake and river sections of the waterway. You'll find tours within an hour's drive of every major city in the Canalway Corridor.

2

Launch Your Own Boat: Enjoy the NYS Canal System for a few hours or a multiday trip. There are more than 80 public boat ramps and many canal communities offer visitor centers with showers, laundry, hook-ups, and other boater amenities right in the center of town. Marinas and public docks also provide services. The NYS Canal System includes Oneida, Onondaga, Cross, Cayuga, and Seneca lakes where you can enjoy other water sports, beaches, and sailing.

About the New York State Canal System

The New York State Canal System includes the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals. These historic waterways connect the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes across the heart of New York State. The canals have been enlarged and improved over the years to accommodate larger boats and more traffic, as well as changing types of boats and uses. Tugboats, barges, pleasure boats, canoes, and kayaks all use the canals today.



Waterford, Frank Forte

Canal Boating Basics

- The NYS Canal System is open daily from mid-May to mid-October.
- Boating is free and no permit is needed to go through a lock.
- Lock tenders are on hand to assist you and make your experience going through locks easy and enjoyable.
- It typically takes 15 to 20 minutes to go through a lock.
- Power boats and paddlers share the canal, so be mindful of speed limits and wakes.
- Check the NYS Canal Corporation website for hours of operation. You can also sign up to receive Notices and Alerts with the latest information about canal opening/closures, water levels, construction, and other elements affecting navigation. www.canals.ny.gov.
- Make boating safety a priority. Consult the **New York State Boater's Guide** for registration, operation, and safety information: <https://parks.ny.gov/boating/>.
- Test drive the new On the Canals Boater App, available from the App Store or Google Play, to help the NYS Canal Corporation pilot an easier way for boaters to travel through locks and under lift bridges.

Experience the Canalway Trail

Explore New York State's extraordinary people and places along the 750-mile Empire State Trail. The trail includes the east-west Erie Canalway Trail from Albany to Buffalo and south-north trails from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to Lake Champlain. Whether you like to cycle, hike, run, or roll, the trail welcomes people of all abilities, from all walks of life, and all backgrounds.



Little Falls, Frank Forte

The trail is both accessible and varied, so you can head out with friends or family for a few miles, enjoy a full day's journey to see the sites, or have an unforgettable multiday adventure. Lodging, dining, and visitor services are readily available short distances off the trail.

The 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail closely parallels both active and historic sections of the Erie Canal. You'll see unique canal structures like locks and lift bridges, as well as all types of boats, and you'll discover canal communities and historic sites that are intriguing and fun cycling destinations. More than 85 percent is off road. The remaining on-road sections are designated on the shoulders of public roadways, intended for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding adjacent to vehicle traffic.

The 65-mile Champlain Canalway Trail includes a mix of off and on-road segments from Waterford to Whitehall. The trail closely parallels the Hudson River/Champlain Canal through a region rich in Revolutionary War history. Forty percent of the route is off-road trail. At Fort Edward, the 9-mile off-road **Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail** connects to the Glens Falls Bikeway and Lake George. North of Whitehall, the Empire State Trail route is a 110-mile on-road bicycle route running north through the Champlain Valley to the Canadian Border at Rouses Point.

Boating, Cycling, and Trip Planning Resources

Parking areas, restrooms, accommodations, food, and visitor information centers are located all along the waterway. Comprehensive guidebooks, maps, and multiday itineraries are available to help you plan a trip.

- eriecanalway.org
- nycanalmap.com
- canals.ny.gov
- empiretrail.ny.gov
- cycletheeriecanal.org



Making History

Since its grand opening in 1825, the Erie Canal has been widely recognized as an engineering marvel that put New York on the map as the Empire State. It transformed New York City into the nation's principal seaport and served as a major "Gateway to the West" for waves of immigrants coming to America.

Groundbreaking inventions and social movements took place along the canals where a spirit of entrepreneurship and progressive thinking took hold. Prominent and unsung citizens alike made history here and continue to shape the state and nation today.



Discover the lasting legacy of the canals.

Boat, walk, run, or cycle along the canals and you'll be journeying along transportation routes used for centuries. Visit museums, historic sites, and canal communities eager to give voice to people, places, and stories that will inform and inspire you.



Rome, NYS

Native Americans

The lands and waterways along the canals today span the ancestral homelands of many First Nations—The Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Mohican Nation. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy established a blueprint for democracy, which the Founding Fathers later drew upon when framing the U.S. Constitution. European-American settlement, canal construction and subsequent development were devastating to Native peoples. Indigenous nations remain present here today, contributing to our understanding of sustainable land and water stewardship and striving to carry on their rich heritage.



Syracuse, Flashback Photography

Immigrant Communities

Irish, German, Italian, and other immigrants provided critical labor for building and enlarging the Erie Canal. Once opened, the canal served as a preferred route for immigrants arriving in New York City and settling elsewhere in New York or points westward. The influx of these immigrants gave rise to cities from Albany to Buffalo and beyond and created a critical labor force for new industries. Immigrants also brought new foods, music, and traditions which continue to shape the great vibrance of American cultural diversity. New immigrants settling in the Canalway Corridor today are contributing their own labors and unique cultures to the fabric of the nation.



Buffalo, Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor / Stephen Gabris



Path to Freedom

Many African Americans used New York's canals as routes for escaping from slavery. Some sought freedom in Canada, while others settled in canal towns. The African American struggle for freedom and civil rights is shared in stories, events, and Underground Railroad sites throughout the Canalway Corridor. In Buffalo, you can walk in "Freedom Footsteps" along a four-mile route from the historic Michigan Street Baptist Church to Freedom Park where freedom seekers crossed the Niagara River to Canada.



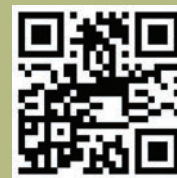
Seneca Falls

Women's Rights

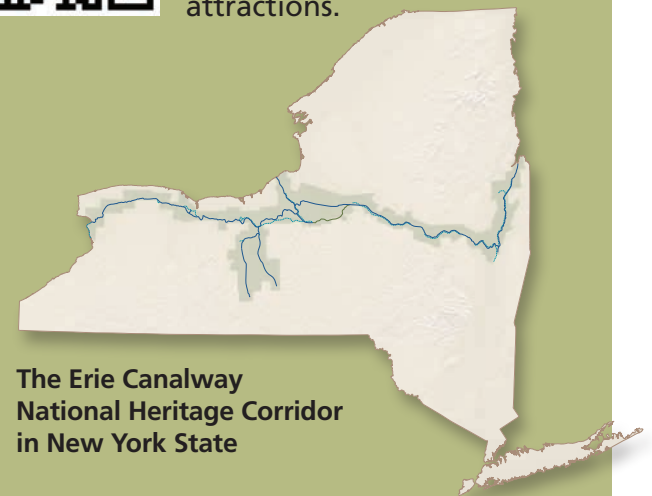
The women's rights movement traces its roots to Rochester and Seneca Falls. In 1848 a handful of women convened the First Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, demanding full and equal rights with men. They drafted the Declaration of Sentiments, denouncing inequities in property rights, education, employment, religion, marriage and family, and suffrage. The Declaration was signed by 100 women and men, and the women's rights movement was born.

TO NEW YORK CITY

Plan Your Trip



Navigate to www.nycanalmap.com to discover historic sites, museums, and other attractions.



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in New York State

Camping Along the Canals



Fort Plain, Phil Scalia

Are you looking to camp along the New York State Canal System? You'll find good options available, but it's important to plan ahead to find overnight stays that fit the distance you want to travel each day. In addition to spots to pitch a tent, there are also hotels, bed and breakfasts, and Airbnbs that are easily accessible from the canal and trail.

Primitive Campsites at Locks

The NYS Canal Corporation offers primitive camping mid-May to mid-October during the canal navigation season, with limited on-site amenities at designated Hiker-Cyclist-Boater campsites. These tent-only campsites offer water views and portable toilets, but visitors should be prepared with their own potable water, food, and camping supplies. Some of these are inaccessible to paddlers as the high walls of the canal do not allow access.

Campsites are first-come, first-serve. Availability can be impacted by weather conditions or emergency maintenance work. Find locations and details at www.canals.ny.gov/trails/camping.html

Canal Amenity Centers, Municipal Parks, & Marinas

Camping for cyclists, paddlers, and boaters is available at several free or low-cost municipal facilities along the waterway. These Canal Amenity Centers, parks, and marinas are often within walking distance to food and other services. Find options in Waterford, St. Johnsville, Little Falls, Ilion, Frankfort, Clyde, Lyons, Newark, Palmyra, Brockport, and Middleport.

NYS State Parks

Several state parks near the canals offer full-amenity tent and RV camping for a modest fee. Cayuga Lake State Park near Seneca Falls, Green Lakes State Park just east of Syracuse, and Verona Beach State Park near Sylvan Beach are closest to the trail and waterway. Reservations are strongly suggested. Call 800-456-CAMP or check www.newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com

Private Campgrounds

Private campgrounds often offer additional amenities like laundry or a swimming pool. There are good options, though some are a few miles from the waterway.

Warm Showers

Warm Showers is a non-profit hospitality exchange for people who are bicycle touring. There are over 50 Warm Showers hosts along the Erie Canalway Trail. It's free, but you must create an account to see host locations. www.warmshowers.org

Map Your Journey

Use the NYS Canals Map to plan your trip. You can filter the map by category to find places of interest, national and state parks, boat tours, canal amenity centers, marinas, boat launches, and more. Filter by Feature allows you to find things like camping, paddling rentals, and heritage sites. You can also calculate distances between sites to figure out best options for spacing your trip. www.nycanalmap.com



Maureen Thompson

Join the Canalway Challenge



Elizabeth Lee

Trace history, track miles, and reap rewards through the Canalway Challenge. Whether you are looking for a new fitness milestone to achieve, recognition for your canal journey, or a little motivation to get active, this free program lets you choose your own personal mileage goal and then walk, hike, cycle, roll, or paddle to achieve it.

Select 15, 90, 180, or 360 miles; kids and people with mobility challenges are welcome to begin with the 1st Mile Challenge. You can complete your challenge in one big trip or many small ones. You'll earn mileage status and a recognition sticker, magnet, and set of postcards when you finish.



Participation is open to individuals, teams, and organizations. Invite your friends, family members, or coworkers and join the community of Canalway Challenge enthusiasts today.
www.canalwaychallenge.org

ERIE CANAL
200 YEARS
LET'S GO!

The Erie Canal turns 200 in 2025!
 We are gearing up to commemorate 200 years of the canal's continuous operation, 200 years of growth and change, and 200 years of the canal's influence on the state and nation. Special events, tours, educational forums, concerts, and the 2025 World Canals Conference in Buffalo September 21-25, 2025 are all on tap.

Learn more and plan to experience this momentous anniversary in 2025!
www.eriecanalway.org/bicentennial

On THE CANALS

With over 30,000 participants in On the Canals adventures so far, the program is entering its fifth year offering free recreational adventures and cultural heritage experiences across upstate New York.

FREE Accessible and Welcoming Recreation for All

On the Canals offers something for everyone—kayaking, cycling, boat tours, birding, wildlife hikes, painting, and more. The adventures are short in duration and provide a great opportunity to learn something new, whether it's how to use an adaptive kayak or hear stories about Underground Railroad freedom seekers who traveled through the Canalway Corridor.

In 2024, On the Canals aims to increase participation by marginalized and under-represented communities and provide greater opportunities for accessible and inclusive recreation, ensuring people with and without disabilities can participate together. This emphasis is a natural fit with the program's goals of supporting communities with more outdoor fun, increasing visits to various Canal communities, supporting local organizations, and showcasing all that the NYS Canal System has to offer.



**Get Outside.
 Get On the Canals!**

For more information, visit
www.onthecanals.com



ENJOY. RESPECT. PROTECT.

Take the Erie Canalway P.L.E.D.G.E.



While enjoying New York State's canals and trails, we pledge to respect & protect these natural treasures.

- ✓ **P**lease treat it like home: Hundreds of thousands of visitors enjoy the Erie Canalway each year, but it's also home to people and wildlife. Please take garbage, recyclables, and fishing gear with you, disposing of them properly when you reach a town or return home. Don't forget to clean up after your pets!
- ✓ **L**et's share the trail: Be mindful of fellow cyclists, hikers, and runners. Always keep right, except to pass. Let people know you're coming with a friendly "On your left!" And watch your speed near towns, parks, and points of interest, where the trail gets more use.
- ✓ **E**njoy & respect the locals: Locals love out-of-towners and patronage of their businesses. Be sure to eat, drink and shop the local flavor! When mooring or camping near homes or communities, be mindful that sound carries over water. Watch the volume of music and conversations, especially at night.
- ✓ **D**on't forget to clean, drain & dry: Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by cleaning your boat and gear after every takeout or before your next trip in a new body of water. Never release fish, animals, or plants from one body of water to another.
- ✓ **G**ive a friendly wave! Travelers from around the world have been enjoying the canal for two centuries. Carry on a long tradition of hospitality by waving to passing boats, cyclists, and paddlers—and showing respect for fellow Erie Canalway travelers.
- ✓ **E**xpress thanks to volunteers: Volunteers are the backbone of canal museums, historic sites, and visitor centers. They also help keep the trail and waterway safe and tidy. Thank any volunteers you meet on your journey and get involved. Lend your time and talent to help keep the canal a vibrant and sustainable destination!

The NYS Canal Corporation is Hiring

SEASONAL & FULL-TIME JOBS.
Engineers, Heavy Equipment Operators, Lock Staff, Groundskeeping & More. Work Outdoors. Great for Active Retirees.

Apply at
recruitment@canals.ny.gov
or 518-449-6003.



In partnership with the National Park Service

The New York State Canal System's exceptional scenery, history, culture, and natural resources earned the 524-mile waterway and the communities along its shores Congressional designation as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000. The designation recognizes the significance of New York's canals to the state and nation.

518-237-7000
erie_canal@nps.gov
www.eriecanalway.org

Many thanks to our generous tourism supporters:



The New York State Canal System is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.

1-800-4CANAL4
public.info@canals.ny.gov
www.canals.ny.gov



Dolgeville, NY
www.sprucecreekcampground.com



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ENTER THE Erie Canalway Photo Contest



Fairport, Karen Millsbaugh

Submit up to three photos of your favorite places, views, and people enjoying the canals for a chance to win a spot in the special 2025 bicentennial edition of the Erie Canalway calendar. **Images must be horizontal format.** Enter today! www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest

Deadline: **August 30, 2024**