GREATER NIAGARA

DESCRIPTION

From one of the world's most astonishing natural wonders to scenic river gorges, lakes, streams and the historic Erie Canal, the **Greater Niagara** region inspires with breathtaking vistas and a living history and culture all its own. The sheer energy of Niagara Falls – with more than 750,000 gallons thundering over its mighty cataracts every second – is a marvel that has been seen by spectators from around the world. Niagara Falls State Park dazzles visitors in every season, from spring's blooming landscapes to summer's misty rainbows, autumn's vibrant foliage and winter's shimmering ice flows. Visitors can experience the falls in unforgettable ways like riding aboard the iconic Maid of the Mist Boat Tour for an up-close encounter, descending into the spray on the Cave of the Winds walk, or feel the rush on a thrilling Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours through the Niagara River's rapids. The falls are beautifully illuminated in rainbow color at dusk throughout the year, creating a stunning backdrop no matter when you visit. History buffs can check out The Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, a dynamic museum dedicated to sharing the real stories of freedom seekers and abolitionists connected to the Underground Railroad in Niagara Falls. Housed within the historic 1863 U.S. Custom House, the center is now uniquely part of the Niagara Falls Amtrak Station. Through immersive storytelling, visitors learn about figures such as Harriet Tubman and local hero John Morrison, while the museum also draws connections between the fight for freedom in the past and ongoing struggles for social justice today.

Just 20 miles downstream in Buffalo, Canalside offers seasonal fun for all ages. In winter, visitors can ice skate at Ice at Canalside, ride a unique ice bike or try ice bumper cars before relaxing in a heated igloo, while warmer months bring outdoor concerts, kayak rentals, bike paths and waterfront dining.

For those who love the outdoors, Letchworth State Park — known as the “Grand Canyon of the East” — offers breathtaking views all year. Snowmobiling and cross-country skiing reveal a serene winter landscape, while hiking, hot air ballooning, whitewater rafting and waterfall viewing make spring, summer and fall equally memorable.

Buffalo draws travelers with restored architecture, a redeveloped waterfront, plus neighborhoods reinvigorated with new attractions, boutique hotels and dining experiences. Sports fans can visit the 60,108-seat Highmark Stadium in nearby Orchard Park, which opened in 2026 as the new home of the Buffalo Bills. Among bright lights on the cultural scene is the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, expanded to a state-of-the art exhibition space housing a collection built over 150 years. Buffalo’s Theatre District is also not to be missed, with more than a dozen professional theaters serving up innovative productions. Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson,

Jr. Children's Museum brings interactive play to the city's waterfront while sharing the history of Western New York through hands-on exhibits that invite families to explore and engage. Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House, a masterwork hailed by its architect as a "well-nigh perfect composition," has a one-acre campus with three homes, a 100-foot-long pergola and a conservatory joined with other buildings by renowned architects such as H.H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan. History buffs will make note to visit Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site.

Along the Outer Harbor, Wilkeson Pointe Park reopened in July 2025 as part of New York State's $300 million Buffalo Waterfront restoration plan, offering scenic trails, kayak and bike rentals, volleyball courts, a public beach and a new restaurant coming soon.

Only 30 minutes from Niagara Falls and Buffalo, Lockport is home to the famous "Flight of Five" Locks, a series of rehabilitated locks that now function today. Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises offers a two-hour narrated cruise journey through the Erie Canal's rich history. Guests glide past historic sights and five original locks, and can experience being raised and lowered 50 feet in the canal's one and only double lock system.

Elsewhere, the Jell-O Gallery and Historic LeRoy House has interactive tours for all ages dedicated to the history of JELL-O in its hometown, with exhibits including commercials recorded by celebrities such as Jack Benny, Lucille Ball and Andy Griffith. The region's culinary offerings are much more extensive. Take your taste buds to school at the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute featuring the student-focused fine dining restaurant Savor, the European-style café La Patisserie and hands-on cooking classes. Wineries and historical attractions await in the beautiful countryside of the Niagara Wine Trail, which stretches 60-plus miles across three counties and celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2027. Head to Platter's Chocolate Factory in North Tonawanda, where walking tours delve into the history and art of chocolate making. Visitors can interact with chocolate experts, taste their renowned sponge candy and explore the chocolate shop and coffee café featuring local ice cream. For a true taste of Buffalo, embark on the Buffalo Wing Food Trail to sample the city's famous wings at iconic spots like Anchor Bar– the birthplace of Buffalo Wings–while learning about the history and culture behind this beloved snack.

WHERE TO STAY

For an unforgettable luxury stay in the heart of downtown Buffalo, the Curtiss Hotel offers unparalleled elegance and modern amenities. Housed in a beautifully restored historic building, this five-star boutique hotel is known for its sleek design, luxurious spa and the city's only urban hot springs experience. Guests can enjoy gourmet dining at on-site restaurant, Chez Ami, relax with a cocktail at the Vue Rooftop Lounge offering panoramic city views and explore nearby cultural attractions like Canalside and the Theatre District. Also in Buffalo, The Richardson Hotel is a historic landmark originally constructed as a psychiatric hospital in the late 1800s and has been transformed into a boutique hotel. Red Coach Inn, a luxurious Tudor-style retreat nestled just 500 yards from the majestic Niagara Falls, offers a convenient and cozy base for exploring the area's attractions. Recognized as a "Top 10 Weekend Getaway Destination" by *Fortune*

Magazine and boasting AAA Three Diamond and Mobil Three Star Awards, this elegant inn provides an unforgettable experience. Guests can savor the delicious cuisine at the award-winning restaurant and embark on scenic walks to Goat Island to admire the breathtaking scenery. The Giacomo, built in 1929 as the United Office building, is now a 44-room luxury boutique hotel with a unique blend of art deco and Mayan revival motif. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it's located within walking distance of Niagara Falls State Park.

GETTING THERE

- 8 hours from NYC
- 8 hours from Montreal
- 2 hours from Toronto
- Niagara Falls International Airport
- Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport; accessible from I-90 (NYS Thruway) and bus services

COUNTIES

Erie (Buffalo), Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming

MAJOR CITIES & TOWNS

Albion, Arcade, Attica, Batavia, Buffalo, Castile, Darien Center, East Aurora, Lackawanna, LeRoy, Lewiston, Lockport, Medina, Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, Perry, Warsaw, Williamsville, Youngstown.

CLIMATE

The diverse climate of New York State has four distinct seasons. Summers in Greater Niagara are comfortable and warm, with daytime temperatures averaging in the mid-70s to mid-80s (degrees F). The weather is moderately cool and sunny in springtime and autumn, when spectacular fall foliage attracts thousands of visitors. Cold, snowy winters create a wonderland of magnificent scenery, including the spectacle of a frozen Niagara Falls.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more travel ideas and information, visit iloveny.com or the Greater Niagara regional website: greaterniagara.org.

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