



THOUSAND ISLANDS-SEAWAY

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The breathtaking scenery includes over 1,000 islands, the shimmering blue bays of Great Lake Ontario, the sparkling St. Lawrence River and hundreds of miles of picturesque coastline. Cultural attractions and boundless adventures range from fairy-tale castles to trophy fishing, attracting anglers from around the world. With 28 state parks, the region is a giant playground throughout the year with fantastic boating, swimming, hiking and birdwatching in warmer months, as well as wintertime sports like cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Wonderful nature centers are open year-round.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

New Food & Drink

[Alex Bay Juice Co.](#), opening summer 2022 in Alexandria Bay, will feature healthy and clean eating on the menu, including fresh cold press juices, smoothies, bowls, wraps, salads and more. There's indoor seating and a spacious patio for guests.

SURPRISING FACTS

1. The region actually has 1,864 islands. To be classified as an island, a land mass must be above water 365 days a year and support at least one tree. Many islands are privately owned, but some can be rented for a weekend, week, month or season. Many others have public and private campgrounds.

2. Thousand Island salad dressing was created in this region. The origin is subject to debate: one tale says it was created by a ship's chef; the other story credits a fishing guide's wife.
3. Two historic island castles are open for tours: the 120-room [Boldt Castle](#), built by NYC hotel executive George C. Boldt, and [Singer Castle](#), the summer home of Singer Sewing Machine Company President Frederick Bourne. Both men were self-made millionaires who began their careers at entry level positions.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS

Whitewater Rafting and Kayaking: A large variety of rivers, lakes, streams and ponds offers endless opportunity for [paddlers](#) of all skill levels. Look for remnants of the old canal along the Oswego River Canal; watch for bald eagles, osprey and heron along pristine rivers and reservoirs; and don't forget your fishing pole and tackle box for tremendous fishing opportunities. The Black River Canyon near Watertown and the Salmon River near Pulaski feature class III and IV rapids that offer thrilling rafting. [Oswego Expeditions](#) offers guided kayaking tours and sunrise/sunset kayaking tours at a variety of locations.

Scuba Diving: Local dive shops provide equipment and training for [scuba diving](#) amid shipwrecks in the crystal-clear waters of the St. Lawrence River and Eastern Lake Ontario. New York State's first diving preserve in the Great Lakes is in the Lake Ontario waters off Oswego. The New York State [David W. Mills Submerged Cultural Preserve and Dive Site](#) features the shipwreck of the freighter David W. Mills and provides a mooring buoy to allow visiting scuba divers to easily find and access the site.

Fishing: [Anglers](#) come from around the world for trophy-sized catches and fishing tournaments on Lake Ontario, the Salmon and St. Lawrence River, as well as smaller tributaries throughout the region year-round, and great ice-fishing in winter. Anglers seeking that record-breaking salmon or trout, as well as the ever-popular walleye, bass, perch and carp, can expect an exciting and challenging experience.

Hunting: State lands, including wildlife management areas, state forests and state parks are open for [hunting](#) during the appropriate seasons. Find more information at the [Department of Environmental Conservation website](#).

Hiking and Biking: Six hundred pristine acres on Wellesley Island include miles of scenic shoreline hiking trails. Several land trusts in the region have preserved thousands of acres of open space interlaced with trails. [Cycling](#) the shoreline roads of the Seaway Trail is a popular touring activity. [Oswego Expeditions](#) offers guided bicycling and hiking tours. More than 40,000 acres of public lands are accessible in the Lake Ontario and Tug Hill regions of Oswego County. The [Zenda Farms Preserve](#) in Clayton includes the Lois Jean and John MacFarlane Trail, a low-impact, 1.5-mile-long trail for jogging, hiking and cross-country skiing.

Nature Centers: The [Minna Anthony Common Nature Center](#) is one of the largest nature centers in the state park system. Wildlife sightings include Bald Eagles and waterbirds such as osprey that nest in the park.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's [Salmon River Fish Hatchery](#) in Altmar, specializing in raising steelhead, chinook and Coho salmon, brown trout and landlocked salmon, provides most of the fish for the now multi-million-dollar Lake Ontario salmon fishery. Each year this hatchery produces more than 2,000,000 fingerlings (young fish 3-5 inches long) and close to 1,000,000 yearlings.

The [Oneida Fish Hatchery](#) is in the village of Constantia on the north shore of Oneida Lake. The fish-rearing program is focused on walleye and includes experimental culture of rare or threatened fishes, such as round whitefish, lake sturgeon and paddlefish.

Onondaga Audubon's [Derby Hill Bird Observatory](#), located on the southeastern corner of Lake Ontario, is one of the premier hawk watches in the Northeastern United States. On average 40,000 raptors are counted each spring as they migrate northwards, making this site one of the best spring sites in the country.

Winter Sports: In the Snowbelt, east of Lake Ontario, lake-effect snow covers the [Tug Hill Plateau](#) with an annual average of 300 inches. At its edge, [Winona State Forest](#) contains 31 miles of cross-country ski trails, 8.7 miles of snowmobile trails (some designated New York State Snowmobile Corridor Trails), and nearly 10 miles of forest roads.

[Dry Hill Ski Area](#), just outside Watertown, has ski and snowboarding trails open day and night, and a fantastic snowtubing center. Ice climbers love the challenge of the 110-foot ice gorge in the [Salmon River Falls Unique Area](#).

Scenic Byways:

Named one of the Top 9 Great American Drives by *Budget Travel*, the [Great Lakes Seaway Trail](#) leads to historic lighthouses, unique museums and great outdoor activities from birdwatching to scuba diving.

ART, ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE

[Boldt Castle](#) (Alexandria Bay). Tour a 120-room Rhineland-style castle on Heart Island to see its architecture and furnishings as well as the playhouse, yacht house, Italian gardens and a dove cote.

[Children's Museum of Oswego](#) (Oswego). The museum features hands-on, multi-sensory exhibits in a developmentally stimulating environment. Play is a vital activity that children use to learn about and interact with their world.

[Clayton Opera House](#) (Clayton). Historic site presents nationally acclaimed artists.

[Frederic Remington Art Museum](#) (Ogdensburg). Sculpture, paintings, drawings and artifacts of renowned artist of America's Old West.

[Richardson-Bates House Museum](#) (Oswego). One of the most intact house museums in New York State. The 19th century Italian villa contains most of its exotic and opulent original furnishings and offers a unique glimpse at Victorian America's fascination with history, art, education and travel.

[Singer Castle on Dark Island](#) (Hammond). Tour the 28-room Scottish-style castle built in the early 1900s by the president of the Singer sewing machine company. Enjoy Victorian Tea and stay overnight in a suite by reservation.

HISTORY

Historic sites at Fort Ontario, in Oswego, and Sackets Harbor Battlefield come with splendid views of Great Lake Ontario.

[Antique Boat Museum](#) (Clayton). More than 100 classic and antique wooden boats on display.

[Fort de la Presentation](#) (Ogdensburg). Historic monument at Lighthouse Point.

[Fort Ontario State Historic Site](#) (Oswego). This star-shaped fortress holds re-enactments of the French & Indian War, American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War periods through inter-active displays and costumed interpreters.

[Oswego West Pier Lighthouse](#) (Oswego). The lighthouse was built to replace the existing lights of Oswego's harbor in 1934 and is still an active aid to navigation for Lake Ontario sailors. Lighthouse tours are available by boat from the H. Lee White Maritime Museum.

[Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site](#) (Sackets Harbor). Living history demonstrations at the site of two major battles of the War of 1812.

[Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum](#) (Oswego). Dedicated to keeping alive the stories of the 982 refugees from World War II, who were allowed into the United States as “guests” of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Safe Haven Museum housed refugees at Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York, from August 1944 until February 1946.

[Salmon River Lighthouse](#) (Pulaski). The lighthouse was completed and activated in 1838. It is one of three lighthouses along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail that visitors can rent for overnight stays, and only one of three remaining U.S. lighthouses still boasting the original "birdcage" design.

[Tibbetts Point Lighthouse](#) (Cape Vincent). Standing since 1827 at the point where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River, the lighthouse features the only original working Fresnel lens in Lake Ontario. Visitors can enjoy using the provided telescope to survey the lake and river.

FOOD & DRINK

Wineries along the [Thousand Islands-Seaway Wine Trail](#) and [Lake Ontario Wine Trail](#) offer tours and tastings. Many casual and fine dining restaurants have splendid water views. Taste the famous Thousand Island dressing where it was invented. Craft beverage breweries include the [Cape Vincent Brewing Company](#) in Cape Vincent, [Woodboat Brewery](#) in Clayton, and [St. Lawrence Spirits](#) in Clayton, named the New York State Distillery of the Year for three consecutive years (2019-2021).

[Oswego Food & History Tours](#) offers a 3-hour walking tour view of historic Oswego's landmarks with tastings at a micro-brewery and several restaurants.

UNIQUE LODGING

Unique places to stay include historic [Singer Castle](#) on Dark Island, standing where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence River, as well as entire private islands with vacation homes, which can be rented in the Alexandria Bay and Clayton areas. Island rentals in the region include [Whiskey Island Lodge](#) in Clayton and [Belle Island](#) in Alexandria Bay.

OTHER SELECTED ATTRACTIONS

Some of the most popular attractions are scenic cruises—from paddle-wheel riverboat tours to a vintage-speedboat ride at Clayton's [Antique Boat Museum](#), home of the largest collection of antique and classic boats in North America. Watch for waterfowl and songbirds on a nature cruise with [Clayton](#)

[Island Tours](#). [Uncle Sam Boat Tours](#) stop at Heart Island's magnificent 120-room [Boldt Castle](#), a "must see" for any visitor.

[Black River Whitewater Rafting Tours](#) (Watertown) – Enjoy a challenging whitewater adventure in the world-famous Black River canyon.

[Old McDonald's Farm](#) (Sackets Harbor) – Hundreds of farm animals, musical hayrides and trolley tour of the dairy at a 1200-acre working farm.

[Salmon River](#) (Oswego County). Located in Oswego County, the Salmon River stretches 17 miles from the Lighthouse Hill Reservoir in Altmar to where it empties into Lake Ontario at Port Ontario. There are 12 miles of Public Fishing Rights along the river. The Salmon River offers some of the finest sportfishing in the country. Several major fish records have been set in the Salmon River: the Great Lakes record Chinook salmon (47 lbs. 13 oz.) and the world record Coho salmon (33 lbs. 4 oz.).

[1000 Islands Dive Excursions](#) (Clayton). The clear waters of the St. Lawrence River and Seaway are known for some of the world's best shipwreck diving.

[Wellesley Island State Park](#) (Fineview). 2,630 acres on the St. Lawrence: trophy fishing; boat launches and marinas; sandy beach for swimming, and camping, cabins and cottages are all throughout the park. Wellesley Island State Park is also home to the [Minna Anthony Common Nature Center](#).

CONVENTION CENTERS AND MEETING SPACES

[Lake Ontario Event and Conference Center](#) (Oswego) offers a state-of-the-art facility accommodating up to 600 guests. The [Barn at the Tailwater Lodge](#) (Altmar) can accommodate 300 guests inside, while the covered outdoor space can grow the group to 450.

Hotels in the city of Watertown and resorts in the towns of Alexandria Bay and Clayton are suited for meeting planners. Two of Watertown's largest properties are [Hilton Garden Inn](#), with 4,350 sq ft and banquet seating for 450, and the [Best Western Watertown Fort Drum](#), with 3,000 sq ft and seating for 300.

Alexandria Bay waterfront properties include the [Edgewood Resort and Conference Center](#), seating 650 for a banquet, and Riveredge Resort seating 220. Clayton's four-star [1000 Islands Harbor Hotel](#) has conference capacity for 300.

For more regional convention centers and meeting spaces visit <https://visit1000islands.com/meetings-conferences/>.

TRANSPORTATION

Land:

6 hours from NYC

4 hours from Niagara Falls

3 hours from Montreal or Toronto

Accessible from route I-81

The Thousand Islands, Massena and Ogdensburg International Bridges provide easy access to Ontario Highway 401

Air:

Air Service from Syracuse (SYR), Watertown (ART), Ogdensburg (OGS), Massena (MSS) and Ottawa (YOW), Airports

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more travel ideas and information, visit loveny.com or the Thousand Islands-Seaway's regional websites at www.seawayregion.com or <https://visit1000islands.com>.

COUNTIES

St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Oswego

MAJOR CITIES & TOWNS

Alexandria Bay, Canton, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Fulton, Massena, Ogdensburg, Oswego, Potsdam, Pulaski, Sackets Harbor and Watertown

CLIMATE

The diverse climate has four distinct seasons. Summers are comfortable and warm, with daytime temperatures averaging in the mid-70s to mid-80s (degrees F.) and cooler evenings. 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.

SHOPPING

Explore shops in villages with thriving traditional downtowns, including Alexandria Bay, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Oswego, Potsdam and Sackets Harbor. Look for antiques and flea markets along the region's rural highways.

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