



## BLUE WATER ROUTE GUIDE



CHICAGO • KALAMAZOO • BATTLE CREEK • PORT HURON

We hope you enjoy reading this guide and learning about points of interest along our route. It is written starting from the western terminus of the train in Chicago and proceeds around the southern tip of Lake Michigan to the shoreline of Lake Huron to the northeast, ending in Port Huron, Michigan. If you boarded in Port Huron, just read the guide in reverse, remembering to look in the opposite direction if one is referenced.

AMTRAK STATIONS are shown in all capital letters. The Amtrak System Timetable or the Wolverine Blue Water Pere Marquette wallet card should be consulted for actual station times. While all service presented in this guide was accurate at the time of publication, routes and services are subject to change. Please contact Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), or call your travel agent for the most current information.

Some 12 million people live along the shores of Lake Michigan, sometimes referred to as the "third coast" after those on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The only one of the Great Lakes entirely within U.S. borders, its beaches are known for their soft, off-white, high quartz-content sand, sometimes called "singing sand" for the unique noise it makes when beach-goers walk along it. From the beach grass, sand cherries and Petoskey stones deposited 350 million years ago on the borders of this, the fifth largest lake in the world, to the "blue water" banks of Lake Huron to the east, the Blue Water connects cities, landscapes and waterways on the south end of the lake with Chicago and the city of Port Huron on Michigan's eastern coastline. Punctuating this trip across Michigan eastward to the "Thumb" of the state, the scenery renders this 319-mile trip both beautiful and memorable. You'll want to keep your camera handy as you share your experiences with family, friends and new acquaintances.

[The Blue Water takes its name from the region bordering Lake Huron on the eastern shore of Michigan, 140 miles of coastline with attractions including beaches, parks, golf courses, art galleries and live theater. Amtrak inaugurated the train in 1974. A special inaugural train departed Chicago before sunrise on Friday, September the 13th, with two Amtrak E-8 locomotives and seven rail cars -- all newly painted and spotless. The route followed the right-of-way of the former Penn Central (a marriage of Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central), Michigan Central, Grand Trunk Western and their precursor railroads. Dignitaries present that day included members of the media, the Michigan Department of Transportation and Amtrak management, all greeted by impressive crowds at stations along the route. In 1982, the line was superseded by the International Limited, operated jointly with VIA Rail Canada, between Chicago and Toronto. Delays associated with customs inspections at the border brought about the restoration of the Blue Water in 2004 as it runs today. VIA still operates trains to Sarnia, right across the border from Port Huron. The 97-mile stretch between Porter, Indiana and Kalamazoo, Michigan is the longest segment of track owned by Amtrak outside of the Northeast Corridor. The Blue Water is also under the umbrella of Michigan Services, the moniker describing a group of three routes across the state that constitutes one component of the federal-state jointly planned Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. Its goal is to implement a high-speed rail network using Chicago as a hub, eventually to encompass some 3,000 miles of track.]



# WELCOME ABOARD

- **Port Huron**
- LAPEER, MI
- FLINT, MI
- DURAND, MI
- EAST LANSING, MI
- BATTLE CREEK, MI
- KALAMAZOO, MI
- DOWAGIAC, MI
- NILES, MI
- NEW BUFFALO, MI
- **Chicago**

Relax and enjoy the comfort of train travel as you take in the shoreline of Lake Michigan, scenic landscapes through central Michigan and on to the beautiful “blue water” region on the eastern shore of Lake Huron. From the vibrancy of Chicago to the attractions of Port Huron and vicinity, you’ll enjoy superb service and amenities. We are happy to have you onboard today and want to ensure your trip is everything you want it to be. If there is anything that can be done to make your trip more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to ask any Amtrak employee.

## THE TRAIN STAFF

The staff of the *Blue Water* is here to make your trip a special and enjoyable experience.

**Conductor** is responsible for the On-Board Services staff as well as ticket collection, the safety of passengers and the safe operation of the train.

**Lead Service Attendant** is responsible for food service on the Café/Business class car.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Coach** seating provides a wide reclining seat with a folding tray table and overhead reading light.

**Business Class** offers additional legroom, 2 and 1 seating with leg/foot rests, complimentary newspaper and non-alcoholic beverages along with the option to purchase sandwiches and snacks.

**Café Car** offers sandwiches, snacks, and non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages for purchase along with some table seating.

**HOST RAILROADS** are the freight and commuter railroads that Amtrak contracts with to operate Amtrak passenger trains. The Blue Water operates between Chicago and Porter over the tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railway, between Porter and Kalamazoo over Amtrak, between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek over Norfolk Southern, and over the tracks of the Canadian National between Battle Creek and Port Huron.

*Information contained in this route guide as well as described amenities and features are subject to change without notice. While gratuities are not required for services provided, it is an appreciated way to convey to an employee that he or she has made your trip more enjoyable.*

**CHICAGO** Vibrant and energetic, Chicago is the industrial core of the Midwest and a major transportation hub. In the heart of America's agriculture belt, it is a leading distributor of farm products. Its many regional food specialties reflect the city's ethnic and working class roots. Its spirit is also exemplified in its unique architecture; here is where the word "skyscraper" originated in 1885. The arts and sciences are also alive here, with an abundance of world-renowned theaters and museums. Most Amtrak long-distance trains originate or terminate here. As we pull out of the covered platforms of the station, watch for an impressive view of the city skyline. Among its magnificent structures are the Sears Tower, Daley Center and John Hancock Building. We soon pass Amtrak yards on the left and Metra commuter rail yards on the right. We then cross the South Branch of the Chicago River, famous for its backwards flow, and where ships ply Great Lakes ports along the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Sanitary engineers reversed its flow in the early 1900s to prevent epidemics. Next is U.S. Cellular Field, home of the White Sox, on the left. Crossing the Dan Ryan Expressway offers a good view of the Chicago skyline from a distance on the left. As we cross the Rock Island Railroad at Englewood, imagine the intense rivalry between the *Twentieth Century* and *Broadway Limited* trains as they raced one another to New York decades ago. Of note is the New Regal Theater, originally an "atmospheric" motion picture palace where the audience sat in an imaginary courtyard under the stars. Today, it is a showcase for live entertainment. The cemetery we pass is where Harold Washington, the city's first African American mayor, is buried.

#### ILLINOIS/INDIANA STATE LINE

**Hammond-Whiting** As we leave Chicago and cross the Indiana border we pass through the towns of Hammond-Whiting, which offers views of several casinos, Lake Michigan, and Whiting Park on the left, and

**Gary**, a city planned by U.S. Steel in 1906. Many famous personalities grew up in the shadow of its furnaces, including the entertainers of the Jackson family, actor Karl Malden and astronaut Frank Borman. The twin domes of Gary City Hall and the Lake County courthouse are on the right.

**Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore** is visible on both sides of the train before we turn in a more northeasterly direction at Porter, Indiana. The dunes we see were formed by winds coming off of Lake Michigan; as the lake's level dropped at the end of the last Ice Age, the shoreline receded and new dunes were formed. Eventually, vegetation and then forests grew over the original dunes. The "blowouts" are where dead stumps were revealed after wind blew away the sand. Its attractions include the "singing sand" mentioned in the introduction, as well as smelt fishing, birding, swimming and sunbathing, hiking, and visiting the Nature Center. The Mittal Steel plant can be seen in the middle of the lakeshore.

**Michigan City** Watch for Lighthouse Place outlet mall on the right as we enter the town. On the left is NIPSCO's coal-fired power plant with what looks like a nuclear plant cooling tower. The marina is on the left; as we cross the drawbridge, a casino is visible on the right hand side.

#### INDIANA/MICHIGAN STATE LINE

**NEW BUFFALO** is situated along the Lake Michigan "gold coast" shoreline and has become a popular resort town due to its refuge harbor, around-the-clock public boat launch, shops, antiques, casinos, restaurants, recreational opportunities, and its proximity to Chicago. Catering to tourists, the city sponsors several festivals throughout the year, many incorporating the town's marine economy. It has some of the best game fishing on the Great Lakes, with boat fishing arranged by charter. It also offers City Beach and Lakefront Park, the Sima nature preserve, the Four Winds Casino, the Turtle Pond Nature Trail, and the New Buffalo Railroad Museum. Note the Oselka Marina with its 1,000 slips on the north (left) side of the train. Summer residents include

Harley-Davidson Chief Executive Officer James Ziemer and character actor Dennis Farina, erstwhile detective Joe Fontana on the TV series *Law & Order*.

**NILES** Just before pulling into Niles, we cross the St. Joseph River – known locally as the "St. Joe" – which drains a rural farming area in the watershed of Lake Michigan. Niles is the larger of the two principal cities in the Niles-Benton Harbor statistical area, established in 1691 and situated on the St. Joseph River. Its downtown area is a mixture of small shops, entertainment and services, with a museum housing indigenous Native American artifacts. Notre Dame University is a short distance across the Indiana border in South Bend. The Niles railroad station on the left, a Romanesque sandstone structure built in 1892, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has appeared in several films, including *Continental Divide* with John Belushi, *Midnight Run* starring Robert DeNiro, and *Only the Lonely* with the late John Candy. Niles is also notable as the one-time home of musician Tommy James, he of the *Shondells*, whose 1966 hit "Hanky Panky" was the top-selling single record in the U.S. The Dodge brothers, John Francis and Horace Elgin, of Niles, were among the most successful automotive pioneers of the twentieth century, having produced early Olds and Ford automobiles before starting their own company. Seasonal events include the Niles Riverfest, Bluegrass Festival, Hunter Ice Festival and Apple Festival Parade. The city has received numerous awards and accreditations for its preservation work on Main Street, including those from the National Trust for Historic Preservations and Michigan Main Street Communities.

**DOWAGIAC** (pronounced d-WAH-jak) takes its name from a Potawatomi Indian word meaning "fishing water." Cass County was founded in 1835. Southwest Michigan is now home to more than 15 wineries, its climate and soil having proved to be a winning combination for fruit production. After the town was established on a railroad line in 1848, settlers established factories in the young village. The Round Oak Stove Company and other manufacturers fueled growth that would last a full 100 years. Surrounding lakes provided one entertainment venue, and downtown offered theater and fairs. Today, nearby Sister Lakes provide summer vacation homes for Chicago-area residents, and Front Street downtown offers numerous popular restaurants and bars. Notable residents include David Adkins – better known as comedian "Sinbad."

**Lawton** As we can reach speeds of 100 mph or higher in Western Michigan, we have a chance only briefly to observe the old stone depot on the left, now used as a meeting hall for a veterans organization. Also here is a Welch's grape processing facility. Native grape varieties have been cultivated commercially in Michigan for more than a century, Concord purple and Niagara white grapes being the principal varieties grown, primarily to produce non-alcoholic grape juices and jellies. More than 12,000 acres are so devoted in Southwest Michigan, under contract to Welch's, and wholly owned by the National Grape Cooperative Association. The grape growing tradition led to the establishment of several wineries in the area.

**KALAMAZOO** Just prior to our arrival in Kalamazoo, we pass through Western Michigan University's campus. The Waldo sports stadium is on the south side of the train. Its College of Aviation is one of the largest such programs in the U.S. Ironically, there is no zoo in Kalamazoo. But there is Western Michigan University, Pfizer, Eaton Corporation, and Checker Motors – an automotive subcontractor that was once maker of the famed and iconic Checker taxi cab that plied the streets of major American cities in huge numbers. The city's name is thought to have originated in the language of a Native American people and has served to enter it into the pop culture with phrases like "from Timbuktu to Kalamazoo" and songs like "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo" by Glen Miller. The Kalamazoo Mall, begun in 1962 with the closing of a downtown street to auto traffic, became the first outdoor pedestrian shopping mall in the U.S. Today, the city is a notable center for the arts. Its Farmer's Market offers a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and flowers from area

growers. Due to the generosity of anonymous donors, every resident graduate of the Kalamazoo Public Schools is provided a scholarship for up to 100% of tuition and fee costs at any public university or community college in the state through the Kalamazoo Promise. Several local breweries cater to the tastes of locals and tourists with a variety of beer styles. The A.M. Todd Company, a lead producer of flavorings, at one time supplied 90% of the world's peppermint oil. The Gibson Guitar Corporation was founded here, its products highly sought after by professional musicians and collectors alike. The Kalamazoo Animation Festival International is one of the top 20 such events in the world. Its Institute of Arts houses more than 3,600 works, and the Valley Museum is aimed at children with its Challenger Learning Center. The All Ears Theater invites listeners to return to the days of live radio with twelve recorded performances per year. The Gilmore Car Museum encompasses eight historic barns, a re-created 1930s service station and a small-town railroad station in addition to a classic auto collection. New York Yankees all-star shortstop Derek Jeter was a standout player at Kalamazoo Central High School, inducted into its Athletic Hall of Fame in 2003.

**BATTLE CREEK** is best known as "cereal city," world headquarters of the Kellogg Company, as well as the home to Post Cereals; note cereal plants on the right. Historians say the city's name has its origins in a skirmish between two Native Americans and a government land survey party in 1823. The city celebrated its anniversary in July, 2009, with the World's Longest Breakfast Table – actually, 150 tables, or one for each year of its history. Other events include its Festival of Lights and Field of Flight Entertainment Festival. Michigan's oldest symphony orchestra calls the W.K. Kellogg Auditorium home. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, inventor of the cold breakfast cereal in 1906, was the superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. His fictionalized story was featured in a 1993 novel by T.C. Boyle called *The Road to Wellville*, which spawned a movie of the same name in 1994. After our departure, note the former Grand Trunk train depot on the north side of the tracks. We now follow the Battle Creek River for several miles on both left and right. Between Bellevue and Charlotte to the north, watch out for deer alongside the tracks in early morning and at dusk.

**Lansing/EAST LANSING** As we approach Lansing, we see the Grand River on the right, longest river in the state. Before roads, canals, and railroads, the river was important as a navigational route. Today, a 500-passenger dinner cruise ship plies the river in Lansing. The State Capitol in Lansing, visible in the distance on the left, is a National Historic Landmark housing the legislature and ceremonial offices of the governor and lieutenant governor. The building was dedicated in 1879 and restored in 1992. Nearby Thomas M. Cooley Law School boasts the most attendees of any law school in the U.S. The Old Town area has been revitalized into a center of arts and entertainment. Just prior to our arrival at the East Lansing station, the Potter Park Zoological Gardens are visible to the right, home to over 100 species of animals on 85 acres. The city is situated around downtown's Grand River Avenue, a wide boulevard that began as a 19<sup>th</sup> century "plank" road to Detroit. Among its many superlatives, it claims Michigan State University, the largest educational institution in the state -- and the eighth largest in the U.S. Its Wharton Center for the Performing Arts is the largest such venue in Michigan. Located less than five miles from the State Capitol, the city is also home to the W.J. Beal Botanical Garden, the oldest in the nation. East Lansing features eclectic restaurants and shops and several annual events, including an acclaimed Art Festival, a Jazz Festival, and a Folk Festival. Its many art galleries, artisan co-ops and public displays gave rise to its nickname as "City of the Arts." Favorite sons include director and Emmy Award-winning actor Timothy Busfield, best known for his roles on television's *thirtysomething* and *The West Wing*. After departing East Lansing, we pass through the Michigan State University campus and an area flanked by gardens. One of America's "Public Ivy" universities, its alumni includes six Pulitzer Prize winners. Its study-

abroad program is the largest of any single-campus university in the U.S with 200 programs in 60 countries.

**DURAND** Railroads have always played an important part Durand's history and economy, a city of some 4,000 inhabitants in central Michigan's Shiawassee County. Its 1903 Chateau Romanesque style, 239-foot long railroad station on the right bears testament to the city's importance to the former Grand Trunk Railroad that once served it. Note the tile roof, cut stone exterior and twin conical towers. In addition to an interior with oak woodwork, marble wainscoting and terrazzo tile floors, its former mail and storage room houses a model railroad layout depicting the Grand Trunk between 1940 and 1960, including a 360-degree roundhouse razed in 1961. Its Michigan Railroad History Museum houses a library and archives for study and research.

**FLINT** The lights of Bishop Airport are visible on the right, followed by the General Motors Flint Assembly plant. Flint is the largest city in the U.S. with a one-syllable name. But it is undoubtedly best known as the birthplace of General Motors, led by the charismatic William C. "Billy" Durant. The Buick nameplate was for decades almost synonymous with the city, and all Buicks and Chevrolets were at one time built here. As a convenient stopover on the route between Detroit and Saginaw and as a fur trading post, Flint grew into prosperity as a lumber center and, eventually, as a wagon- and carriage-making locale -- an industry that soon gave way to automobiles. The radio market in Flint has a rich history: it's where the legendary disc jockey Casey Kasem had his first job. Today, Flint is a major educational center, home of Kettering University and the University of Michigan. Visitors can trace the beginnings of General Motors and the United Auto Workers Union at the Sloan Museum, the Buick Research Gallery and the Flint Cultural Center. The city offers rides on the Huckleberry Railroad at its historic Crossroads Village, golf courses, beaches and parks. Notable natives include Academy Award winning filmmaker Michael Moore and All-Star Major League Baseball pitcher Jim Abbott.

**LAPEER** is situated on the Flint River and owes its name to an Americanization of the French *la pierre*, meaning "flint" or "flint stone." Designated as a Tree City USA, its many parks include a two-mile paved foot path winding through parks, wooded areas and ponds. Adjacent to its business and downtown areas is the Piety Hill Historic District consisting of 29 nineteenth-century dwellings, a significant number of which are of the Greek Revival style dating from the 1830s through 1850s. The county courthouse, built in 1846, is the oldest functioning courthouse in the state. In August, the Lapeer Days Festival hosts a parade, carnival attractions, agricultural and craft displays, a classic car show, music and food – over a span of five days. Many Detroit-area "hot rodders" are attracted to Lapeer Dragway to compete in contests of acceleration.

**PORT HURON** lies at the southern end of Lake Huron and on the easternmost point of land in Michigan, or its so-called "Thumb." Established in 1814 as Fort Gratiot, Port Huron grew rapidly from the 1850s as its lumber and shipbuilding trades prospered. The Fort Gratiot Lighthouse, built in 1829 and extended to its present height in the 1860s, was the first lighthouse in the state. The Grand Trunk Railroad Depot at the Port Huron Museum is where Thomas Edison, at age 12, convinced the railroad to let him sell sundries on board the daily trip to Detroit. He used the proceeds to buy chemicals and experimental materials. The Grand Trunk Western Railroad Tunnel, opened in 1891 linking the city with Canada, was the world's first international tunnel. Today, the Blue Water Area Transit system provides a one-hour tour of various local points of interest on its Blue Water Trolley. The city also owns and operates 17 waterfront areas, three public beaches and six parks with picnic facilities. Its municipal marina system is the largest in the state. Attractions include the Great Lakes Maritime Center, the Carnegie Center and Thomas Edison Depot Museum. Port Huron High School's Big Red Marching Machine is the self-proclaimed "best band in town."

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