



Celebrate the Harvest Season in the Petoskey Area

09/11/23



October is Michigan AgriTourism Month...a colorful and flavorful time to celebrate the state's rich bounty. Michigan is the second most agriculturally diverse state in the country (behind California) and its position in the heart of the Great Lakes creates the ideal "cool climate" conditions to grow more than 200 different commodities. From the tapping of the first maple tree in the spring to the harvest of the 1.05 billion pounds of apples statewide each fall, Michigan is a "Mitten of Plenty" waiting to be savored.

Michigan also boasts a plethora of attractions like farm markets, wineries and breweries, u-pick orchards, farm-to-table restaurants, harvest festivals and so much more. As the days turn cooler and the leaves begin to turn vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow, slip on your favorite boots and flannel shirt, grab a

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mug of hot mulled cider, and get ready to explore the best of the autumn season in the Little Traverse Bay region.

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Coveyou Scenic Farm, Petoskey; Photo Credit: Alex Childress

Coveyou Scenic Farm Market

Just south of Petoskey on US-31 sits the historic centennial 1874 [Coveyou Farms](#), run by the fifth and sixth generations of the Coveyou family. From its perch, you can scan the panoramic countryside ablaze in color including picturesque Walloon Lake to the south. There's even a great upper deck on the majestic white barn, perfect for enjoying an afternoon snack or grabbing a selfie or two. Find plenty of fall décor items—pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks, and mums, as well as seasonal produce like locally-grown apples, organic vegetables artisan jams, salsas, and other specialty foods. This is also a great place to do some early holiday shopping, with a variety of “Up North” gift items.

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Photo credit: Bill's Farm Market

Bill's Farm Market

On the northeastern outskirts of Petoskey, [Bill's Farm Market](#) is a rural gem. Make sure you have plenty of room in your vehicle for all the goodies for sale—pumpkins (more than 15 varieties and colors), corn stalks, hay bales, sunflowers, and other seasonal décor. You'll also find several tasty varieties of freshly harvested apples, a whopping 26 kinds of squash, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, beets, kohlrabi, a selection of fresh herbs, and much more. Stock up on delicious apple cider, maple syrup, honey, sauces, picked vegetables, jams, jellies and marmalades. Bill's is also offering hayrides on Saturdays in late September and throughout October.

Bear Creek Organic Farm

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Also in this area, the [Bear Creek Organic Farm](#) offers up the freshest organic produce, like heirloom tomatoes, six kinds of melons (including the new Korean melons), squash, and pumpkins. Be sure to also pick up a bunch of beautiful sunflowers, as 100% of the profits from these sales benefit the farm's employee insurance program. Bring your appetite because the new Farmside Kitchen food truck serves up tasty fare (Thursdays through Saturdays) with offerings like gazpacho, fried green tomato BLT, tostada wrap, southwest salmon bowl and more, including dessert and there are plenty of picnic tables to sit at. Bear Creek also sells select items at places like Grain Train Natural Foods in Petoskey and Boyne City, Toski Sands Market in Petoskey, and Harbor Springs Market.

While in the neighborhood, make time to visit [Petoskey Farms Winery](#)—with its 60-foot outdoor patio overlooking 22 rolling acres of country vineyards and [Maple Moon Winery](#)—the first maple winery in the country, located on an 80-acre woodland parcel, and sample their latest vintages.



Pumpkin bowling down the vineyard hill. Photo credit: Petoskey Area Visitors Bureau

Pond Hill Farm

At the heart of the M-119 "Tunnel of Trees" sits [Pond Hill Farm](#) a four-season working farm complete with a winery, brewery, café and market. Don't miss their Fall Fest, held every Saturday and Sunday from September 23 through October 29, where bushels of fun are planned. Check out the pumpkin smashing and pumpkin bowling down the vineyard hill, try your hand at the

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apple cannon, enjoy a family hayride, tune into live music on the Waterwheel Stage, and let the kids wear themselves out in the bounce house (on select dates). Indulge in hot cider and donuts, brick oven pizza and of course beer and wine. The youngsters will love the playground, petting farm, trout pond, and the whimsical gnome house hunt. Before you head out, be sure to stock up on giant pumpkins, gourds, and winter squash, along with items like fragrant candles, handmade soaps, mugs, apparel, children’s books, and even items for the pups in the on-site Market.



Photo credit: Uncle Frank’s Apple Town

Uncle Frank’s Apple Town

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Get lost in the monster corn maze (including the use of night vision goggles for an extra scary experience), head out for a hayride, and enjoy a fresh (not pasteurized) cider mill experience at [Uncle Frank's Apple Town](#) on US-31 in Brutus. Visit the 1890s historic barn, where fresh apples are pressed into delicious cider and fresh apple donuts are made (perfect for dunking in cider). You'll also find pies and other bakery items like the melt-in-your-mouth peanut butter cookies, a variety of apples and pumpkins, local honey, pickled goodies like asparagus, dilly beans, and bread-and-butter pickles, along with other tasty treats and snacks. Be sure to head out to the patch in search of the perfect pumpkin. Open 10 am to 4 pm, Thursday through Sunday, until October 29.



Photo credit: Pumpkin Barn

Pumpkin Barn

Established in 1937, the third-generation [Pumpkin Barn](#) in Levering has welcoming families since 2001 and is sure to become a favorite fall destination. Stock up on local Michigan apples and of course colorful pumpkins of all shapes and sizes. The barn is also loaded with everything from crafts and quilts to Michigan Amish cheese, maple syrup, cider, jams and so much more. Be sure to make time to tackle the corn maze and even grab some corn stalks from the market to decorate at home. Open daily, mid-September through October, just west of US-31 on W. Sturgeon Bay Trail.

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**Consult the farms' respective websites or Facebook pages for days/hours of operation during the fall season.*



Families gather for fall activities at The Highlands Harvest Festival. Photo credit: The Highlands

AREA AUTUMN EVENTS:

- September 15 **Petoskey Wine Region Harvest Showcase** | *The area's 14 wineries invite you out to sample their best wines, along with an appetizer pairing. \$40 per person presale (\$50 day of).*
- September 16 **Sunflower Festival at Lavender Hill Farm** | *The entire family will enjoy this colorful event featuring live music, lawn games, guided farm tours, pumpkin painting, food vendors and the Barn Market with crafts and handmade items from local northern Michigan artists.*
- September 24 **3rd Annual Walloon Lake Chili Cook-off for Charity** | *Bring your appetite and sample some of the finest chilis around, with proceeds benefitting The Manna Food Project.*
- September 30 **Boyer City Harvest Festival** | *A culmination of the summer Farmers Market season, featuring a cornucopia of local produce, decorations, children's games and fall fun.*
- October 6-7, 13-14 **Harvest Hues: North Peak Fall Dinner Series at The Highlands of Harbor Springs.** | *Featuring a four-course rustic menu served at North Peak, with stunning views of the colorful countryside in the distance. \$135 per person, reservations required.*
- October 7 **Highlands Harvest Fest** | *The Highlands of Harbor Springs is the*

... full of fun, with face painting, cookie decorating,



burlap sack races, keg bowling, pumpkin ring toss, yard games, cider and donuts, s'mores, live music and so much more. (11 am-4 pm)

- October 7 [14th Annual Skitoberfest](#) | *This Oktokerfest-style party at Boyne Mountain in Boyne Falls features a unique twist—the burning of skis as a sacrifice to a good snow season. The event also features keg bowling, stein hoisting, pond pedaling, live music, and a Michigan Bier hall. Be sure to make time to check out the new SkyBridge while you're there.*
- October 7 [Rotary Club of Petoskey's Fall Festival](#) | *Head to Petoskey's Winter Sports Park for a free family celebration with pumpkin painting, pumpkin rolling, lawn games, magician Jania Taylor, a cornhole tournament, live music, and more. Rotary members will be serving cider and donuts as well as their "world-famous" brats. Food trucks will also be on-site with a variety of tasty foods.*
- October 28 [Halloween Fun in Downtown Petoskey](#) | *The day starts with a parade and downtown trick-or-treating, and then later in the day it is the 4th Annual Jack O'Lantern Walk through Pennsylvania Park. The public is invited to bring already-carved or decorated pumpkins to be judged between 1 and 6 p.m.*

REGIONAL FARMERS MARKETS:

- [Boyne City](#) — Wednesdays and Saturdays (8 am to Noon) in Veterans Park through mid-October (then in the pavilion during the winter months).
- [Harbor Springs](#) — Saturdays (9 am-1 pm) on Main Street downtown through October 14.
- [Petoskey](#) — Fridays (8:30 am-1 pm) on Howard Street downtown through September 29.



About the Author: [Dianna Stampfler](#) is the president of [Promote Michigan](#) and the author of the best-selling books "[Michigan's Haunted Lighthouses](#)" and "[Death & Lighthouses on the Great Lakes](#)." She loves traveling around the Great Lakes state, with Hemingway country being among her favorite destinations.