



DISCOVERIES

Waterfront Charms

From its get-away-from-the-crowds location along the eastern shore of Lake Charlevoix, Boyne City offers visitors a vibrant small town to explore

BY
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It was more than 25 years ago when I first learned about Boyne City, thanks to the then director of the local chamber of commerce, Scott MacKenzie. He often waxed poetically about how his roughly 4,000-resident community was thriving with distinct businesses and events, and touted it as a great place to live and visit.

Years later, when I finally made my way to Boyne City, I instantly understood the allure and it quickly became one of my favorite Michigan destinations. From personal experiences, here's what I've come to enjoy about this charming getaway tucked on the eastern end of Lake Charlevoix, about 15 miles south of Petoskey.

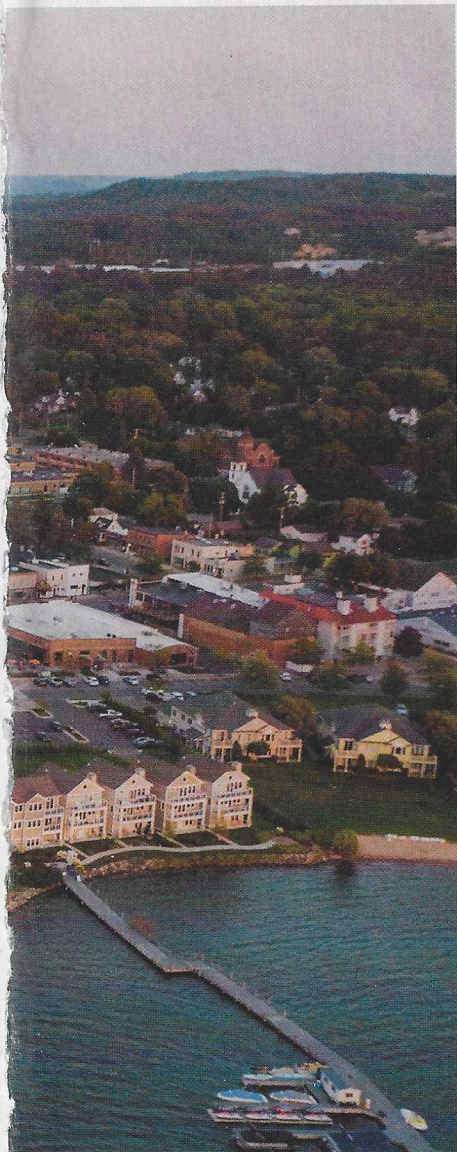
Within its downtown area, Boyne City boasts more than 10 unique restaurants serving up flavorful fare, including Red

Mesa Grill, the Boyne River Inn, Stiggs Brewery & Kitchen, and Lake Street Market.

Café Santé, a European-inspired waterfront bistro, offers an impressive wine book, Belgian beers, and even an absinthe fountain for mystical drinks sure to prompt questions and conversation. Croque madame, mushroom tartine, and quiche Lorraine are brunch favorites, while evening diners savor delicacies such as escargot and pâté Maison, along with woodfired pizzas, pasta, rotating seasonal entrées, and decadent desserts.

In the heart of downtown, Provisions Wine Shop & Market offers anything and everything you might need for a beach, boat, or cottage picnic. A curated selection of wine, beer, and spirits is found alongside gourmet snacks, soup, hot and cold deli sandwiches, and even culinary-themed gifts.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PURE MICHIGAN, ABOVE, AND BOYNE CITY MAIN STREET, INSET



from local artists. Both children and adults can take classes in a variety of mediums such as painting, stitching, jewelry-making, pottery, needle-felting, and smartphone photography.

Since 2009, the Freshwater Art Gallery & Concert Venue on South Lake Street has collectively been highlighting the works of hundreds of Michigan artists. Inside the once-abandoned hardware store, the walls and aisles are adorned with distinctive wood carvings, steam punk pieces, sculptures, furniture, blown glass, and more. Live music is a hot ticket in Boyne City, and Freshwater hosts some of the best shows around. The combination of décor and ambience creates a harmonious listening room experience, drawing performers and audiences from near and far.

Visitors can explore the rural side of Boyne City — a nationally recognized Monarch City — at Avalanche Mountain Preserve, where hiking and biking trails meander through the 300-plus acres of picturesque woodlands. Climbing the 462 steps to the top platform delivers great views of the downtown area and Lake Charlevoix, especially in the fall when the treetops are ablaze with color.

Nearby, Kiwidinok Farm — a Tibetan yak and petting farm — invites visitors to interact with sheep, alpacas, miniature ponies, and other exotic animals.

On the northern outskirts of town, Young State Park has welcomed visitors since the early 1920s to explore its sandy Lake Charlevoix beaches and miles of trails. As

the main road on the eastern side of the lake winds along farther north, it passes through the unincorporated town of Horton Bay, where a teenaged Ernest Hemingway and his fictional alter ego, Nick Adams, once gallivanted.

Less than 10 miles from downtown Boyne City, Lavender Hill Farms is one of the largest attractions of its kind in the state. With more than 30 varieties of lavender, this certified naturally grown farm hosts garden tours that showcase how lavender is turned into oils, mulch, and more. Summer visitors can pick bunches of lavender from a couple of its fields. And be sure to sample goodies such as the lavender shortbread cookies, made nearby. Live musical performances, workshops, yoga, and events like the Sunflower Festival, which takes place the first Saturday in October in its restored century-old barn, also are on tap.

Every Saturday morning, year-round, the bustling Boyne City Farmers Market sets up along the waterfront. The market is held in Veterans Memorial Park from May through October, and in the adjacent pavilion during the colder months.

Hopefully you, too, will have an opportunity to discover all the creativity, vibrancy, and charm of this quintessential small lakefront town. It just might become one of your northern Michigan favorites. ≈

Plan It!

Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce
boynechamber.com

Adjacent to the market, Provisions operates a trendy lounge space with small plates, salads, burgers, and entrées, in addition to a variety of beverages.

Muskrat Distilling serves pre-Prohibition-era craft cocktails, mocktails, and small-plate shareables inside its restored 1890s historic building. The name is a nod to the aquatic creatures commonly seen navigating the currents of the Boyne River, which flows through the city and is the second-largest tributary to Lake Charlevoix. Muskrat also hosts a monthly free book club, with themed cocktails and the occasional author visit.

Tucked on the second floor above the Alpine Chocolat Haus and Café Santé, the 2,000-square-foot Boyne Arts Center encompasses a reception area, classrooms, a gift shop, and a gallery showcasing works

This page:
 Miles of hiking and biking trails meander through colorful woodlands across the Boyne City region.

Opposite page:
 Tucked away on the eastern end of Lake Charlevoix, about 15 miles south of Petoskey and less than 30 minutes from Charlevoix, Boyne City offers great art, dining, pubs, and beaches.

Inset: Pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly Boyne City.

