THE NORTH SHORE

Minnesota’s “North Shore” of Lake Superior is like no other place in the Midwest. In a region characterized by flat prairies and rolling farm fields, the North Shore offers deep, dark forests, rugged mountains, and a windswept coastline with crashing waves. Fresh streams tumble through rocky gorges into the ice-cold waters of Lake Superior. The North Shore has a refreshing and invigorating character that is unique in the hot and humid upper Midwest.

The North Shore of Lake Superior is a popular destination for recreational drivers from throughout the United States and Canada. The North Shore Scenic Drive winds its way along the narrow edge of Lake Superior, from Duluth to the Canadian Border. Dramatic views of rocky beaches, jagged cliffs, thundering waterfalls, and sheltering pines are revealed around every bend in the road. Brilliant displays of red and gold erupt during the fall color season.

The Arrowhead region of northeastern Minnesota contains the state’s last significant tracts of old-growth pine and white cedar forest. Wolves, moose, deer, black bear, and birds of prey roam the forests, while salmon and trout swim the crystal clear waters of Lake Superior and its tributary streams.

Eight state parks, three state forests, one national forest, a national monument and several wayside parks provide numerous opportunities to get out and experience the outdoors. The Superior Hiking Trail winds 200 miles along the rocky mountain tops overlooking the North Shore. Every state park has a network of well-maintained trails. Fishing boats, sailboats, kayaks, and tour boats are available for rent and hire along the shore. In winter, hundreds of miles of groomed trails attract cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and snowmobilers. Lutsen Mountain is the Midwest’s largest downhill ski resort.

The North Shore’s rich history is deeply connected to the cultural traditions of its inhabitants. Native Americans have lived on the North Shore since the retreat of the last glaciers 12,000 years ago. French missionaries and fur traders began arriving over 350 years ago. Many place names along the North Shore originate from Ojibway words or their French translations. Scandinavian immigrants arrived to work the mines and settle the land. The charming logging and fishing communities of the North Shore retain their rich ethnic heritage to this day. The Sawbill, Caribou, Arrowhead, and Gunflint Trails lead inland to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Museums and state park interpretive centers help tell the story of the North Shore.
Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
Tettegouche State Park
G. H. Crosby Manitou State Park
Temperance River State Park
Cascade River State Park
Judge C. R. Magney State Park
Grand Portage State Park
Gooseberry Falls State Park