

Enjoy These Six Activities on Mackinac Island

Horse hoofs clicking on the streets, laughter coming from all directions, bicycles lined up in a row, and bull horn sounds signaling when the ferries are coming and going. Mackinac Island in Northern Michigan is like stepping back in time. No cars allowed; only bicycles and horses. This family and the dog-friendly island is suitable for all ages. There are plenty of activities to do on Mackinac Island while visiting for the weekend. Whether watching the sunrise, biking around the island, or even taking a horse carriage tour, there is something for everyone.

1.

Sunrise Hike

Arch Rock is a short fifteen-minute walk from [Mission Point Resort](#). From the hotel, follow the biking path signs and at the top of the hill, go toward the Arch Rock sign. While walking toward the rock, notice the white Victorian homes with clean-cut grass and gardens. Also, look at the porch ceilings. Many paint the ceilings to resemble the sky to keep the birds out.

Travel tip: Pronounce Mackinac Island like a local: it's mak-in-naw.

After the sunrise, go back down the stairs to head downtown or continue walking on the trail. Guests staying at Mission Point can arrange a sunrise hike with the hotel staff. Speak to the concierge the day before to arrange.

2.

Sunrise Kayak

Begin your morning with a two-hour kayak sunrise tour with [Great Turtle Kayaking](#). This three-mile return trip begins with an introduction to kayaking. Paddlers will have a chance to practice inside the harbor before setting off toward Arch Rock. The water is always calm first thing in the morning.

While paddling the calm water, there are no other sounds which makes this a peaceful and relaxing morning. As the sun starts to rise, behind you, get glimpses of Arch Rock, the Adirondack chairs lined up on the lawn of Mission Point, and the massive green trees. Single and tandem kayaks cost \$100 per person.

3.

Bicycling Around the Island

Eighty percent of the island is a state park. M-185 is just over 8 miles. Along the way, take in views of the lighthouse and the bridge. Biking past the Fort and Victorian homes on top of the hill makes good pictures. Or biking around Main and Market street is another option while going past fudge and souvenir shops.

All the hotels rent bicycles, but there are plenty of bicycle centers downtown if you are on the island just for the day. Most shops and hotels charge anywhere from \$7-\$15 an hour. Many provide singles, doubles, and even trailer-cycle bikes.

4.

Horse Carriage Ride Tour

A visit to Mackinac is not complete until taking a [tour](#) around the island in a horse carriage. One to two-hour tours are available, depending on your time. The one-hour tour will take you through Main Street, then up the hill toward the Grand Hotel. You may get a glimpse of the infamous most extended porch.

The tour continues, passing Victorian homes, the Fort, and the stables. Along the way, do not be surprised when you see tourists attempting to ride their horse carriage since this is also possible. Personally speaking, stick to the tour and let someone else steer the horse!

5.

Butterfly House and Insect Museum

[The Butterfly House and Insect Museum](#) is tucked away up a small hill while walking toward downtown. Make your way inside to see butterflies in various red, blue, white, and yellow colors. At times they will release some butterflies in the enclosed area. The insect museum hosts snakes, turtles, and beetles, to name a few.

5.

Lunch at the Fort

While the Fort Mackinac Tea Room does get busy, take some time to enjoy the harbor views after visiting the Fort. The café offers soup, salads, and sandwiches. To eat at the Fort, you must pay admission for the Fort. They do not take reservations, so it is best to get there early.

6.

Buying Fudge

Who can't resist the urge to buy an abundance of fudge, ranging in flavors such as pecan, peanut butter, and cookies and cream? Murdick's is a famous shop, but Kilwins was a personal favorite because they also sell caramel apples and homemade ice cream. The best part is that most shops will give you samples to try. I expected to buy one slate; however, I ended up buying five from a variety of shops because it was hard to choose just one. They make for great gifts.

Mackinac Island: A Special Place for All Ages, Anytime

Having returned over thirty years later, I am glad I had a chance to remember how fun this place is. The island can keep you busy for one to three days. Mackinac is an excellent place to relax, explore, and feel like a kid again.

Start planning your holiday now. [Shepler's Ferry](#) runs every half hour from Mackinac City or St. Ignace during peak season from May 28 to September 6.

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-All photos by Erin Coyle.