



RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in
Wisconsin

Speed limits, towing rules, Door County loops, Apostle Islands access,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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RV travel in Wisconsin

Wisconsin packs a lot of variety into one state: Lake Michigan's Door County peninsula (with limestone bluffs, cherry orchards, and 250 miles of shoreline), Lake Superior's Apostle Islands (a 22-island National Lakeshore famous for winter ice caves and summer sea-kayaking), the rolling Driftless Area in the SW corner (unglaciated farmland with deep river coulees), and the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest covering most of the north. The state-park system is strong, hookups are common, and the dairy-belt road network is excellent. The catch is summer-weekend density: Door County's high season (mid-June through Labor Day) books out state parks 11 months in advance, and Lake Michigan ferry crossings to Madeline Island need RV reservations weeks ahead. Plan shoulder-season (mid-May or September) for room to breathe.

Wisconsin by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	374
Established campgrounds	213
Dump stations	36
Propane refills	21
Potable water fill-ups	83
Laundromats	14
RV showers	27
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	28

Source: iOverlander community database (68% of Wisconsin spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	70 mph
Interstate (trucks + towing)	70 mph
US/State highway (cars)	55-65 mph (posted)
US/State highway (towing)	55-65 mph (posted)
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
RV passenger seatbelts	Required for all front-seat occupants (primary enforcement)

Cell phone use while driving	Texting banned; hand-held legal for voice calls; school zone hands-free only
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Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-94	East-west spine: Illinois border to Minnesota via Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire. Big-rig easy, freight-heavy.
I-90/I-39	South-north via Janesville, Madison, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah. Joins I-94 at Tomah and again at Madison.
I-43	Milwaukee to Green Bay along Lake Michigan. Big-rig friendly.
US-2	East-west across the far north via Hurley, Ashland, Superior. Two-lane but RV-friendly to 40 ft.
US-41 (now I-41)	Milwaukee to Green Bay and on to the Upper Peninsula. Big-rig easy.
WI-42/WI-57 (Door County)	Two-lane peninsular loops. RV-friendly to 35 ft but tight in the villages -- park at the edges and walk. Bigger rigs use the spinal WI-57 only.
WI-13 (Bayfield Peninsula)	Ashland to Bayfield. Two-lane, scenic, RV-friendly all the way to the Madeline Island ferry.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
Madeline Island Ferry (Bayfield to La Pointe)	Madeline Ferry takes RVs but with strict size limits (call ahead). No bridge -- ice road in winter is car-only.
Peninsula State Park internal roads	Tight in places. Class A and 40+ ft fifth-wheels should use the main loop sites only.
County backroads in the Driftless	Many are narrow, with steep coulee descents. Stay on US-14, US-18, and WI-35 with any RV.
Forest roads in Chequamegon-Nicolet NF	Many are gravel/dirt, narrow, with low overhangs. Stick to numbered through-routes.

Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Penokee Range (US-2 east of Hurley)	1900 ft	Modest grade, RV-friendly. Highest sustained climb along Wisconsin's Lake Superior shore.

Timms Hill (Co Rd RR)	1951 ft	Highest point in Wisconsin. RV access to the tower trailhead lot only -- the spur road is paved but tight.
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National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore	Free entry; cruise/tour fees vary	No drive-in NPS campgrounds (boat-in/paddle-in only on the islands). Mainland Big Bay State Park (on Madeline Island) takes RVs to 40 ft. Bayfield and Washburn have private RV parks.
Saint Croix NSR	Free entry	Day-use river corridor. NPS canoe-in primitive sites along the river. Nearest RV camping at Interstate State Park (Taylors Falls) and Wild River State Park.
Ice Age NST	Free entry	Day-use trail crossing the state. Hikers' resource; many state parks along the route accept RVs.
North Country NST	Free entry	Day-use trail across the north. Hikers' resource; threads through Chequamegon-Nicolet NF.

State parks

Wisconsin State Parks operate 49 parks plus state forests with camping. Standouts for RV camping: Peninsula (Door County), Newport, Devil's Lake, Mirror Lake, High Cliff, Wyalusing, Pattison, Copper Falls, Big Bay (Madeline Island). Reservable via wisconsinstateparks.reserveamerica.com 11 months in advance. Vehicle admission \$11-13 daily or \$28-38 annual. Camping \$20-35/night depending on hookups.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Wisconsin has essentially no BLM-administered land. Free dispersed camping options come from USFS (Chequamegon-Nicolet NF) and Wisconsin DNR state forests, several of which permit primitive backcountry camping with a free permit. Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest has some of the best primitive lake-shore sites in the state.

National Forest: Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (1.5M acres in two units across the north) permits free dispersed camping along most numbered forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. Popular dispersed areas: the Cable/Hayward area, the Eagle River district, and around Glidden. Established USFS campgrounds reservable via recreation.gov; fees \$14-22. Fire restrictions common Jul-Sep. Many NF roads gated or unplowed Nov-Apr.

Stay limit: 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

Tribal lands

Wisconsin contains 11 tribal nations including the Menominee, Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, Ho-Chunk (six communities scattered statewide), Forest County Potawatomi, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Red Cliff, Bad River, Mole Lake (Sokaogon), and St. Croix Ojibwe. Tribal lands are sovereign; state laws do not apply on reservation. Menominee Reservation is notably the only completely forested reservation in

the lower 48 -- Menominee Tribal Enterprises runs sustainable forestry tours by appointment. Several tribes operate casinos with RV parking. Respect signed restrictions and wild rice harvest areas.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Wausau, Superior, and most county-seat towns. Adequate in the Northwoods but check hours. U-Haul, Tractor Supply, Ferrellgas, and AmeriGas all common. Most KOA and Good Sam parks fill on-site.

Dump stations: Excellent density statewide. Most Wisconsin state parks have free dump stations for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot along I-94, I-90, and I-43 have fee dump stations. Most Wisconsin Dells RV resorts have free dumps. Northwoods density thinner but adequate with planning.

Fuel: Diesel and gas plentiful along all interstates and US highways. Few fuel gaps over 30 miles. Long-ish stretches on US-2 between Ashland and Hurley, and on forest roads in Chequamegon-Nicolet NF. Fuel typically cheapest along I-94 at the Wisconsin Dells, highest in Door County tourist villages.

Weather windows

Best months: Mid-May through mid-October. Summer 75-85 F, nights 55-65 F. Fall colors peak late September in the north, early October statewide.

Avoid: December through March -- subzero windchills, ice storms, and most NF dispersed sites and many state parks closed. April brings mud season. July-August can hit 90+ F with high humidity in the south, especially along Lake Michigan in the Milwaukee/Kenosha corridor.

Climate caution

Black bears are present throughout the Northwoods and along the Lake Superior shore. Hard-sided RV doors close them out fine, but anything outside (coolers, BBQs, garbage, recently-grilled clothes) needs to be in a locked compartment or hung in a bear bag. Wisconsin DNR posts current bear-activity warnings at established NF and state forest campgrounds.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial *77 from a cell phone or 911 for emergencies
Road conditions	https://511wi.gov

How RV TripGen helps

Door County shoulder-season routing

RV TripGen flags mid-June to Labor Day Door County overnights as 11-months-ahead bookings, and pushes mid-May, September, and early October alternatives where state parks have walk-up availability.

Apostle Islands ice-cave windows

RV TripGen pulls NPS ice-cave access advisories for Bayfield-area winter trips, since the caves are only accessible by foot over solid lake ice -- and that window is rare and short-notice.