

IN THE HEART OF THE FINGER LAKES

Cayuga

COUNTY



Exploring
Rural
Museums

WWW.TOURCAYUGA.COM

Cayuga County

About Our Destination



Cayuga County is traditional homeland of the **Gayogo hó:nox'** (the Cayuga Nation) of the **Hodinohsó:nih** confederacy. Established in 1799, the county has 23 townships, six incorporated villages, and our County Seat, the historic City of Auburn.

The 864-mile area nestled within the lush Finger Lakes region is a well-kept wonder of natural beauty and

four-season adventure. From beachside bluffs to dense forest land, our destination has charming communities, peaceful countryside, rich cultural heritage, and the most freshwater coastline in New York State.

Where you go matters, and we invite you to discover a place that prioritizes offering diverse authentic experiences.

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From the Director

Welcome to Cayuga County! Whether you're a long-time resident, new to the area, or a visitor exploring the region for the first time, our county has many wonderful people and places waiting to get to know you. In this issue, we're proud to shine a bright light on the amazing rural museums and historical societies off the beaten path that preserve our history and tell our stories. Visiting a local museum provides a personal experience, where museum curators and volunteers work to ensure that everyone learns something new and leaves inspired by their visit. With America's 250th anniversary quickly approaching in 2026, it's important to celebrate and acquaint ourselves with local history and its role in shaping our country. Let's honor our country's upcoming birthday by getting to know the stories of the places we visit. Cayuga County's museums explore agricultural, theatrical, local, social justice, and sports history—bringing us a vast and

vibrant understanding of where we came from and where we can go.

Whether you're seeking a cultural, culinary, adventurous, or pampering experience, you will find it in Cayuga County. In the north, you can visit Lake Ontario to witness its impressive size along the shores of Fair Haven and stop by the brand new Sterling Nature Center. In the center of the county, you will find Auburn, History's Hometown. Nearby, you can immerse yourself in luxury and relaxation at the Spa at the Inns of Aurora. Heading south, we invite you to embark upon an invigorating hike in Fillmore Glen State Park and to kayak in Owasco Lake's inlet. With so much to do, it's easy to craft an itinerary filled with experiences you will cherish. And we're here to help; check out our website or give us a call. We'll help you find what you're looking for.


Karen Kühl
Executive Director,
Cayuga County Tourism

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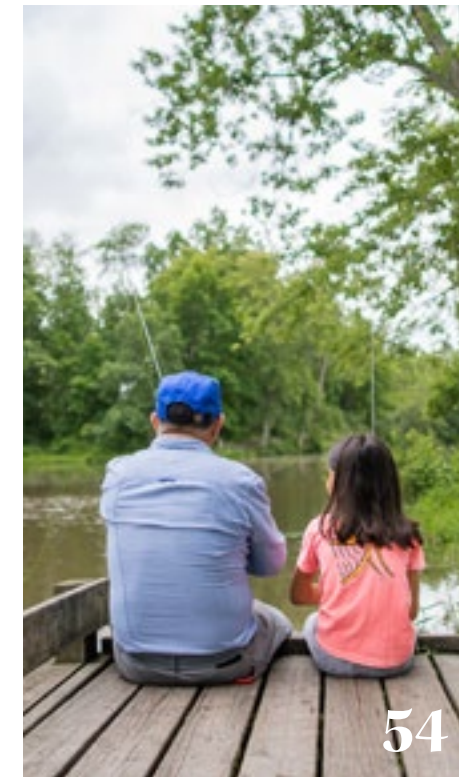
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TOUR CAYUGA in the FINGER LAKES

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On The Cover
The school room exhibit in the Frontenac Historical Society and Museum located in Union Springs, NY. Photograph by Matt Baldelli. (Page 18)

Mission Statement
The Cayuga County Convention and Visitors Bureau Inc. was established in 1995 as Cayuga County's official tourism promotion agency. Our mission is to promote, support, and increase tourism, thereby stimulating economic growth and improving the quality of life for area residents.



On Sacred Land

Tucked away in a bay along glacial Cayuga Lake, there was a thriving 17th-century Indigenous village called Chonodote. This area—now known as Aurora—flourished with peach and apple orchards planted by the traditional *Gayogo hó:nq'* (the Cayuga Nation). In 1779, the 1,500 peach trees were destroyed as part of the Clinton-Sullivan Campaign ordered by General George Washington to displace the original residents during the Revolutionary War.

Now nearing the 250th anniversary of America, we're reminded to honor that Indigenous relationships are place based. And in Cayuga County, there are visible efforts to rematriate the native ecological landscape. The Cayuga Strengthening Haudenosaunee-American Relations through Education (SHARE) Farm and the Wells College community hold an annual peach tree planting ceremony in a part of "Peachtown." This fall event aims to honor the ancestral stewards of the land, because this place matters.

Site of Chonodote

Aurora Village-Wells College Historic District

The developing peach grove is located on the Wells College campus between Thomas House and the boathouse off of Route 90/Main Street in Aurora.

Good News

Highlights and happenings worth sharing

From unique experiences, milestone celebrations, and county-wide campaigns, we're proud to keep you in the know about all things Cayuga County. Get the scoop on our intriguing history, travel suggestions, partner news, downtown doings, and feel-good stories.

Scan to read our blog



Stay Informed



New York State Parks celebrates centennial

In 1924, a statewide system was created to preserve access to public lands. The NYS Parks and Historic Sites now encompasses 360,000 acres of recreational beaches, campgrounds, trails, golf courses, lakeside retreats, and more. Of the 250-plus properties, three state parks reside in Cayuga County: Fair Haven Beach, Long Point, and Fillmore Glen. For its centennial celebration, the agency launched the "Share Your Story" project, the Centennial Challenge, and limited edition merchandise. Featured is an illustration of Long Point State Park in Aurora by Owens Illustration.



Cayuga County's Quaint Lakeside Village Corridor

The villages of Aurora, Cayuga, and Union Springs were awarded Round 7 of the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The joint application included projects like waterfront recreation, retail developments, lakefront brewpub, and electric vehicle chargers. The City of Auburn won a \$10 million DRI in 2018 and Moravia received a 2023 NY Forward grant for \$2.25 million. The tourism office will support tourism and marketing initiatives for the lakeside village corridor. Pictured here is Frontenac Island, a prehistoric limestone base island at the northeast end of Cayuga Lake.



Tour Cayuga receives state-wide recognition

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism was recognized for its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts by the New York State Tourism Industry Alliance (NYSTIA). Tour Cayuga has committed to reframing the destination as the chosen home of Harriet Tubman, supporting diverse suppliers and consultants, and achieving all four levels of Travel Unity certification. Director of Marketing and Sales Claire Dunlap is a certified diversity travel professional, and led the office to receive its DEI certification. During the fall awards program, she was the recipient of the 2023 NYS Tourism Excellence in Young Professional Leadership Award.



Brave Women FLX introduces new trailblazer

Dress reform activist Amelia Jenks Bloomer—yes, the creator of bloomers—is the latest female trailblazer added to the "Which Brave Woman Are You?" online quiz. Brave Women FLX is a project of the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council to promote the Brave Women, women-owned businesses, and historical sites in the birthplace of women's rights. This year, the multicounty campaign added Brave Women Week to its list of inspirational itineraries and events across Cayuga, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Onondaga, and Cortland counties to experience the place "Where Brave Women Winter."

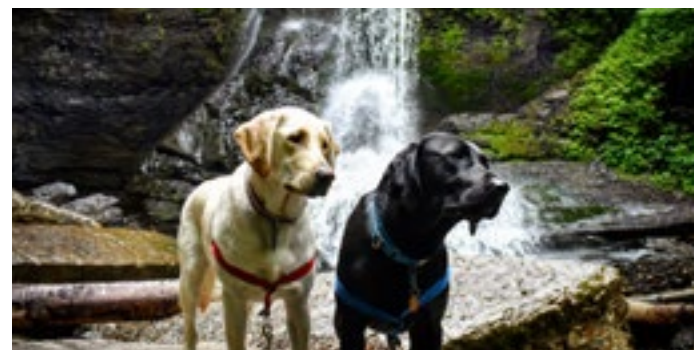


Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Corridor

In collaboration with Tour Cayuga, the Underground Railroad Consortium of New York State (URCNYS) is developing the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Corridor. The grant funded project aims to join the existing scenic Harriet Tubman Byway from Dorchester, Maryland, to St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Part of URCNYS' three-year scope of work is to create a self-guided driving tour, heritage tourism itineraries, and a branded advertising campaign. The cross state corridor will highlight stories of freedom seekers and impact the local communities along the way. Descendants of Harriet Tubman Davis pictured with media representatives.

#TourCayuga

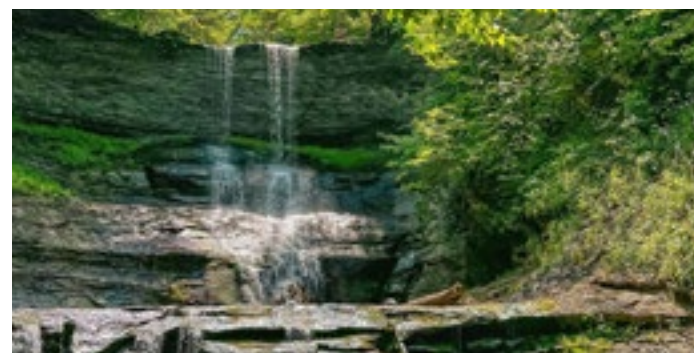
Go chasing these five enchanting waterfalls



Cowshed Falls

@wisco_wasco

Also known as Dry Falls, this 30-foot waterfall is the tallest in Fillmore Glen State Park and has a swimming area.



Angel Falls

@gojiragirl13

Adventure through 100-year-old woodland in Niles to discover the tucked away 62-foot lower falls.



Great Gully

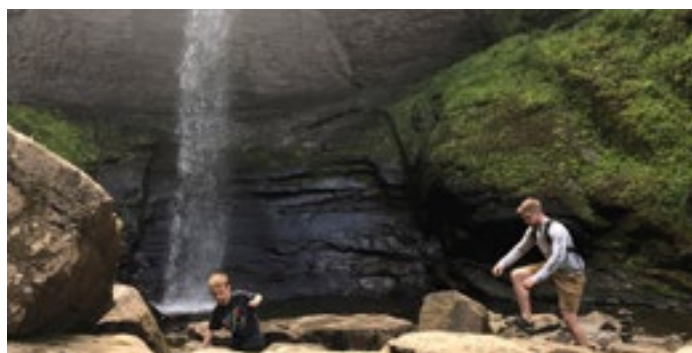
@tombraider926

In a heavily forested area of Springport, the serene ravine features upper and lower falls cascading over limestone.

Scan to follow us



Get Social



Carpenter Falls

@young_bacon

The designated unique area has an elevated boardwalk for accessible views of the 90-foot plunging upper falls.



Bear Swamp Cascades

@shovelbum7

The 50-plus acre Bahar Nature Preserve treats hikers to views of a cascading creek along the 100-foot-deep gorge.

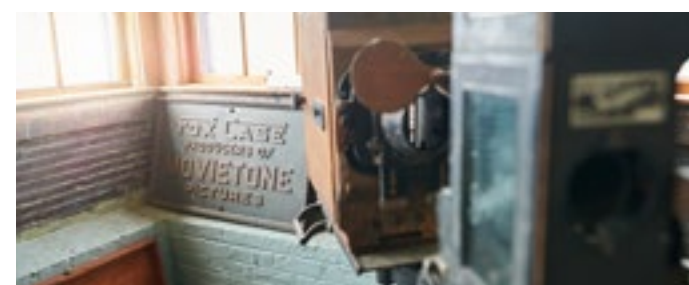
Best Rated

Must-see museums reviewed on Tripadvisor



William H. Seward House Museum

This one house with many stories was the former home of Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State William Henry Seward and his family. Guided tours let visitors experience the historic South Street mansion and its expertly preserved original collection of pieces from Seward's global travels. The gardens and specialty tours are not to be missed.



Cayuga Museum of History and Art

Founded in 1936, this cultural museum was once the prominent estate of Theodore Willard Case—the creator of sound on film. Visitors can tour the Italianate mansion and Case Research Laboratory, plus events in the Carriage House Theater. The museum has a permanent collection that includes the Auburn Correctional Facility. It's ginkgo tree is one of the largest in the state.



Old Erie Canal Heritage Park

Located at the former site of Lock 52 in Port Byron, this accessible and dog-friendly facility is part visitor information center and part living history. Take a trip back to 1800s Erie Canal life touring the Erie House Complex that features a tavern, hotel, mule barn, and blacksmith shop. The site offers interactive displays, walking trails, rest areas, and a gift shop.



Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural and Country Living Museum

Located near Emerson Park, the Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural and Country Living Museum has an extensive collection of antique farm equipment. This Path Through History site showcases American life during periods of industrial revolution. It offers free admission, self-guided audio tours, and annual events like Festival of Trees.



Willard Memorial Chapel

The Tiffany Treasure of the Finger Lakes is an example of 19th century architecture. A designated national historic place, the chapel's signature attraction is its luminous chandeliers and glass-art windows designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The campus was once the Auburn Theological Seminary followed by WWII veteran housing. Don't miss concerts on the Steere and Turner organ.



Check List

Mark your calendar for these annual events

Scan to for the full list



Events Calendar



Spring

The county comes to life when **First Friday** returns, **Made in NY** opens, and Egg Hunts abound. **Memorial Day Weekend** is full of celebrations, street festivals, and parades, plus the **Sterling Stage Folkfest** at the Kampitheater “back in the pines.” Early June celebrates **LGBTQIA+ Pride** with rallies, art exhibitions, and special events. The annual **Juneteenth Parade & Celebration** has been named one of the top 12 destinations to commemorate Black and African American freedom and achievements. And a new season of **Broadway in the Finger Lakes** opens at The REV Theatre.



Summer

July 4th Fireworks, **Sterling Renaissance Festival**, and the **NY Lavender Festival** start summer. Treasure hunt the 50-mile **Route 90 Garage Sale**. Meet the makers at **Artisan & Farmers Markets**. Enjoy family fun in parks for **Summer Movie & Concert Series**. **Auburn Founder’s Day**, the **Great Race**, **Fillmore Days & Bathtub Races**, and **Porchfest** offer live music. Taste local at **Lake Ontario Food, Wine, and Jazz Festival**, **Fair Haven’s BayFest: Paella on the Bay!**, **Lunktoberfest**, and the **Italian Heritage Festival**. Cap the season with **CNY TomatoFest**, **Art in the Park**, and **Riot Run 5K**.



Autumn

This is the season for leaf-peeping and harvest time **Fall Festivals**, **Trunk-’R-Treats**, and **Haunted History Tours**, and juried arts events like the **Cayuga Film Festival** and internationally known **Quilts=Arts=Quilts** exhibition. The latest addition is the **Crow Fest**, an homage to this bird’s annual roosting in Auburn. Usher in the seasonal spirit with **Holiday Parades & Tree Lightings**, **Festival of Trees**, and **Holiday Vendor Markets**, and the annual **Holiday Traditions Open House** at local attractions. Or take part in **Path Through History** distinguished speaker series and cheerful festivities like **SantaCon**.



Winter

Cold weather comfort comes during **Restaurant Week** at participating county-wide establishments. Delight in Cayuga Lake Wine Trail’s **Sweet Treats for your Sweetheart**, **Bacon on the Lakein**, and **Wine & Herb Festival**. Women’s History Month is welcomed with **Brave Brews Week** featuring **Brave Brews Festival**—recently voted the number five best beer festival in the country. The passing of Harriet Tubman is observed on **Harriet Tubman Day** each March 10, followed by a week of programming and the **You Matter Women’s Conference**. Tap into **NYS Maple Weekend** for syrup-making education and tastings.

Shop Local

Take pride in products made right here

From the northern to the southern region, travelers and residents can support the talented artisans, creative makers, and enterprising entrepreneurs within our communities. Support Cayuga County's many retail shops, pop-up markets, and established businesses for memorable and authentic retail therapy experiences.



Black Leather Mary Janes

A *New York Times* holiday gift guide selection, Aurora Shoe Company in King Ferry has been hand making simple, sustainable shoes since the 1990s.



Short-Sleeve Graphic Tee

Find this custom Fillmore Glen T-shirt at Glenview Graphics retail shop in downtown Moravia for a state park centennial celebration souvenir.



Mill Quality Pancake Mixes

Since 1823, New Hope Mills has been producing baking mixes for at-home enjoyment. The family owned operation also makes gourmet jams, dips, dressings, and sauces.



Winter Warmer Craft Beer

Our collaboration brew Hiber-cation Vanilla Porter with local craft brewery Prison City Brewing gives the staycation feels during the winter months.



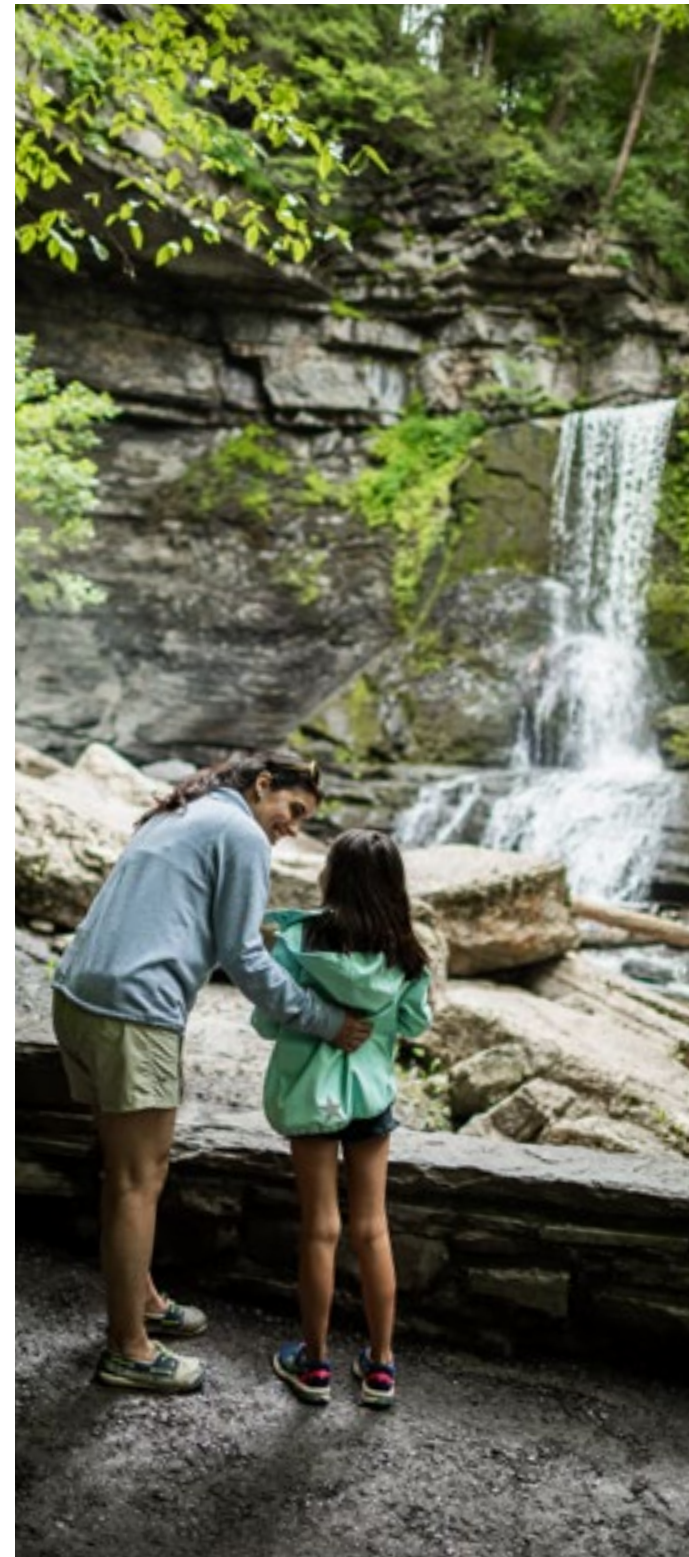
Pure New York State Maple Syrup

For a true taste of New York, locally made maple syrup is a must. Family owned Smokey Hollow Maple Syrup makes classic products and some Bourbon barrel-aged.

Make It Count

Tips on being a responsible traveler and resident

We all make choices when visiting a destination. Monitor your impacts to help maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects because preserving this place matters.



#1 Pledge to commit to purposeful action.

At the heart of our work lies a commitment to inclusivity and diversity. We value the richness of unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that residents and visitors bring to our region. We believe celebrating differences creates a stronger, more vibrant community that fosters understanding and connection. We actively promote and support the best practices of belonging within our tourism partners to ensure that all feel welcome and respected—including the outdoors. We encourage you to make every action one with purpose.

#2 Support entities with sustainable initiatives.

According to the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism "takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities." The first step, research the place, and once there, actively contribute. Stay at certified accommodations with vendor and supplier standards. Patronize small businesses and services with a commitment to locally made. For the most authentic cultural experience, ask residents for their recommendations.

#3 Leave a place better than you found it.

With our many acres of public lands, campgrounds, and recreational trails, we ask you to be part of the solution. Participate in a public clean-up day. The New York State Canal Corporation, Parks & Trails New York, New York State Parks, and the Department of Environmental Conservation hold annual themed stewardship days to help protect and preserve outdoor spaces. Volunteers clean up parks, historic sites, and public lands. Pick up litter, plant native plants, and practice carry in and carry out.

Fillmore Glen State Park

Village of Moravia

The 50-foot high Cowsheds Falls is the most well-known waterfall in the park.

Cover Story

Preserving the Past

Go beyond our urban core and explore a portal to the past. Our rural museums and historical societies take pride in protecting and sustaining our shared heritage—because history matters.



Frontenac Historical Society & Museum

The Frontenac Museum is the place to learn more about, understand, and celebrate the rich history of the towns of Aurelius, Fleming, Ledyard, and Springport.

When visitors arrive at the 1840 Greek Revival former Presbyterian Church that is the home of the Frontenac Historical Society and Museum, one will feel like they have stepped back in time. The six graceful white pillars beckon guests to climb the stairs to see the treasures inside, including dollhouses, war memorabilia, and the cell doors from the village's first jail.

The Historical Society was founded in 1976, when the town of Springport, where Union Springs is located, were preparing to celebrate the United States' Bicentennial. The town's bicentennial committee wanted to ensure that the area's history is remembered, and within a year, the group was collecting artifacts, researching local genealogy, and hosting speakers. In 1994, the Historical Society was gifted the former church and added museum to its name as it began turning its collection into exhibits. Volunteers change over the exhibits every three years; most recently, tackling the main room and school room.

The Thomas Eldred Military History Room contains exhibits that range from the Civil to Korean Wars, including uniforms, ribbons, and profiles

of hometown heroes. The main room is being slowly turned into a women's history room and highlights area women who were key to the suffrage movement like Zobia Alleman.

The lake room features Indigenous artifacts, while the Union Springs room highlights the early industries and events that shaped the village, including a 1902 fire that damaged the village's downtown. Step into the recreation of the Mersereau General Store, which includes a painting of the owner himself.

In the center of the room is an exhibit dedicated to the July 27, 1907, fire that destroyed the steamship Frontenac just a few hundred feet off Dill's Cove near the village. Nearly 10 people lost their lives, many of them women hampered by rough water and the weight of their skirts. The front hall features artwork by local artists like William Henry Yates, Robert Doremus, and a Frank Barney landscape.

Make sure to attend one of the museum's many free public programs that vary on subjects from forgotten history to water wildlife to gardening lectures, and Civil War music.

Museum Collection
178 Cayuga Street, Union Springs

The 1840 Greek Revival gathering place is a treasure trove of artifacts to discover.



Blacksmith Exhibit
6880 E. Lake Road, Auburn

This country living museum features a collection of tools and items forged by metalworkers.

Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural Museum

Step back into life in the 1800s in a museum that displays much more than just agricultural machinery and tools.

An interest in old farm equipment led to the creation of the Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural Museum in Owasco. Ward W. O'Hara was a farmer and John Deere implement dealer who came across old equipment as he delivered new ones to area farms.

He would buy the old equipment and restore it, filling his and his neighbors' barns with the restored pieces. He also entered abandoned homes and falling down buildings to salvage what he could: old household furniture, store equipment, and more. Eventually, his hobby grew too large to house, and he reached out to Cayuga County government to donate it all to create a museum.

An agricultural museum opened in 1975 in unused 4-H pavilions south of Auburn at Emerson Park, which is owned by the county. The pavilions were enclosed, and the museum has expanded over the years to fill 18,000 square feet. In 2011, it added the Joseph Karpinski Education Center, where it holds educational programs year-round and features country living exhibits.

The mission of the museum is to interpret the agricultural history of the region from 1800 to 1930

for a modern audience. Practices like ice-cutting, manufacturing sleighs and buggies, and raising thistles for combing and carding wool have vanished but were an essential part of life at the turn of the 20th Century.

The museum is organized with rooms featuring different facets of small-town life, including a general store, one-room schoolhouse, veterinarian's office, dairy room, blacksmith shop, kitchen, and others. Many rooms have videos on demand that explain how to use the items in the exhibit. The walls are covered with posters, documents, and signs from times past. Of course, there are tractors and other farm implements, many manufactured locally like the D.M. Osborne Company, as well as old handheld tools and toy versions of farm equipment. Among the more unusual displays is an entire room of miniature model circuses and figurines.

The museum holds annual holiday events, including an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt, Martha Shaw Harvesting History Series, Cheese Festival, Old Fashion Halloween, and a Festival of Trees. There's something for everyone at the Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural Museum.



Howland Legacy
Route 34B, Sherwood

The legacy of abolition, women's suffrage, and education for all lives on in Sherwood.

Howland Stone Store & Opendore Museums

Visit the jewels of the nationally recognized Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District where citizens played a pivotal role in social reform.

The hamlet of Sherwood, located in the southwest corner of Cayuga County's town of Scipio, was a hotbed of social activism in the 1800s and early 1900s. The area was settled by Quakers who arrived from Massachusetts to build a community based on their beliefs of equality and education for all people.

Slocum Howland built his general store, now the Howland Stone Store Museum, in 1837. It quickly became a stop on the Underground Railroad, as Howland used his shipping connections to move Black freedom seekers north to safety.

His daughter Emily was raised with the same beliefs, and she became a teacher and founded or supported more than 50 schools around the United States for freed African Americans. She is credited with convincing Ezra Cornell to admit women to his college in Ithaca, where her niece Isabel Howland graduated in 1881.

Most importantly, Emily Howland was a pioneer and leader in the women's suffrage movement. Beginning in 1858, she worked with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to organize women's rights lectures and meetings. She lived

long enough to see the fruits of her labor, voting in elections before her death in 1929.

In 2008, the Howland Stone Store Museum purchased the dilapidated former home of Isabel Howland and began a lengthy restoration project—all done by community volunteers—to create additional space for exhibits, storage, lectures, and meetings. The work on the building, called Opendore after Isabel's practice of opening her home to the public, was completed in 2022.

Visitors to the sites can learn about the area's abolitionist history at the Stone Store Museum, while Opendore exhibits focus on the fight for women's rights. The second floor at Opendore offers a rotating exhibit of posters, political cartoons, drawings, and ephemera from the suffrage movement. The Stone Store Museum's Cabinet of Curiosities offers onlookers hours of viewing opportunity. Both Emily and Isabel Howland traveled extensively and brought back a vast collection of artifacts. Among the curiosities are sea grass from the Sandwich Islands—now Hawaii—a Confederate \$2 bill, and a piece of Susan B. Anthony's birthday cake from 1898.



Railway Caboose

1294 State Route 104A, Sterling

A restored 1917 New York Central Caboose #19216 was dedicated on campus in 2023.

Sterling Historical Society & Heritage Park

This town grew out of the presence of rail lines and its location on Lake Ontario now celebrates its railroad history with unique exhibits.

Like many small towns throughout the country, the 1976 United States bicentennial prompted many communities to begin gathering stories of their past. In Sterling, a committee formed a historic society and began gathering items for an exhibition on the second floor of the Little Red Schoolhouse in the hamlet of Sterling.

The town was named after American Revolutionary War General William Alexander Sterling and founded in 1812. The first industry, a grist and sawmill, was built the following year. And when the railroad came through in 1871, it gave the area an economic boost.

Coal from Pennsylvania was transported by rail to Fair Haven Bay and loaded on ships for delivery throughout the Great Lakes. Return trains carried milk to Philadelphia and New York City. Two major rail lines, Lehigh Valley Railroad and New York Central, crossed in Sterling Station nearby.

So, it was natural for the Sterling Historical Society to focus on the impact the railroad had on the area. In 2005, the group moved a railway signal tower

from Sterling Station to its campus with the help of a state grant. In 2011, they added a station-style building adjacent to the signal tower to house additional exhibits and features a hand-pump railcar that visitors can operate themselves.

In 2023, the historical society dedicated a restored 1917 New York Central caboose that once ran on the Hojack line of New York Central's St. Lawrence Division from Rochester to Oswego, passing through Sterling. The caboose was donated by the Ukleya family. With the addition of the signal tower and Raymond Waldron Exhibit Building, the Sterling Historical Society showcases a blacksmith shop, old time kitchen, Indigenous artifacts, documents, military and industrial items, and decorative arts as well as train exhibits and a railway display of the area set in the late 1800s.

The Little Red Schoolhouse Museum is on the National and State Historical Registers and has exhibits on early American and the Age of Railway filling both floors. It serves as the headquarters for the group, and where regular public programs and lectures are held that dive into the area's rich history.



Motorsport Memorabilia
1 Speedway Drive, Weedsport

See classic cars and hall of fame inductees of Big Block Modified dirt racing.

Northeast Dirt Modified Museum & Hall of Fame

This museum is where the racing community celebrates the cars, drivers, owners, builders, mechanics, promoters, media, and memorabilia of the Northeast DIRT track racing sport.

The need for speed has led many a young person to test their driving limits, but only a select few have gone on to make it a career. And the best of those are honored at the Northeast DIRT Modified Museum and Hall of Fame in the village of Weedsport.

Dirt track racing is the most common form of auto racing in the United States, with more than 700 dirt oval tracks in operation. The sport began in 1876 in Cranston, Rhode Island, when eight vehicles raced on a horse track. But it didn't become popular in this country until the 1920s and 1930s.

Locally, dirt track racing became a national phenomenon soon after Glenn Donnelly purchased the Weedsport Speedway in 1970, catapulting it into prominence with the creation of Super DIRT Week at the New York State Fairgrounds.

A gritty alternative to NASCAR racing, DIRT (Drivers Independent Race Tracks) motorsports are more affordable and exciting, as the cars slide and skid around turns on the loose surface. The clouds of dust that the cars unleash are something to behold, leading many regulars to don masks and goggles to

protect themselves.

In 1992, Donnelly founded the Northeast DIRT Modified Museum and Hall of Fame on the grounds of the Weedsport Speedway. The museum commemorates the rich and storied history of Big Block Modified dirt racing on Northeastern oval dirt tracks: the cars, drivers, owners, mechanics, builders, promoters, media members, and memorabilia of the sport.

Visitors to the museum can see the cars that made dirt racing into the popular sport that it is, ranging from the 1950s to today. Walls are decorated with plaques highlighting the people who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame and rare photographs of people who participated in the sport. The museum also celebrates local dirt tracks, including some that no longer exist, with photos and memorabilia.

Those interested in dirt track racing—or any type of auto racing, really—must include a visit to the Northeast DIRT Modified Museum and Hall of Fame. The knowledgeable staff and volunteers will make it worth your while.



Saving History

Safeguarding history is the law in New York State. The first and only of its kind in the United States, the Historians Law of 1919 was born out of a need to protect original documents and mandates that every village, town, and municipality in the Empire State designate an official historian. Cayuga County's group of almost 30 historians stay connected through the History Coalition of Cayuga County (H3C). As the official historian for the county, Ruth Bradley believes that her part-time role is a civic duty that "connects the dots" of the past.

While a typical workday for a historian can include research, writing, presentations, and sifting through donated items, it also means assisting public departments with statistics. Like searching the collection of legislature reports to deduce how many cases of polio were reported in the county from 1955 to 1965, or reading historical maps to provide the exact location of former bridges and culverts. "We are government employees, and the charge is we are collecting and preserving and interpreting the materials and documents that pertain to the history of

the municipality," says Bradley. "Historians are the official guardians." But the position does not come without its set of challenges.

Bradley notes that "while there are a lot of [historical] discoveries, there are also a lot of dead ends" and that the "harsh parts of history, no one wants to talk about." One project she is working on with a nine-county consortium of historians is how to best promote the upcoming America 250th and anniversary of the Clinton-Sullivan Campaign of 1779, which is not "happy history." There is also constant conversation about how to best digitize precious artifacts and engage younger generations. An idea to tackle several issues: programming statue talkbacks that use new technology to tell the "other side of the story" via QR code signs. Above it all, Bradley views her responsibility as essential to preserving the past and "gathering material for the future that may have an impact on decisions," she says. "You don't know where to go if you don't know where you've been."

Ruth Bradley Cayuga County Historian

Ruth Bradley is a Cayuga County native born in Auburn and raised in King Ferry. She attended nearby Wells College, and earned a Ph.D. in American culture from the University of Michigan. Before moving back to the area in 2015, she was a film history professor at Ohio University and was hired for the historian position in 2017.

Photo by Kevin Rivoli, The Citizen



The History House Moravia

The Cayuga-Owasco Lakes Historical Society is the official Millard Fillmore Presidential Museum.



Cayuga County Historian's Office

10 Court Street, Auburn

Established in February 1969, the Cayuga County Historian's Office holds and preserves a wide array of county-related documents dating from the 1750s to the present day. The office provides academic, historical, and genealogical research to local and world-wide researchers through in-person visitation and mail requests.

Old Mentz Heritage Center

73 Pine Street, Montezuma

Old Mentz Heritage Center is the recently merged historical society for the communities of Mentz, Montezuma, Port Byron, and part of Throop. The combined organization will continue the mission to serve as the "community's attic" and maintain the common thread of history shared within the region.

CIVIC Heritage Historical Society

11256 South Street, Cato

CIVIC Heritage is a historical society serving the towns of Cato, Ira, Victory, and Conquest as well as the villages of Cato and Meridian. The history center features two main exhibits on the school system and vintage farm equipment, plus other rare historical items.

Old Brutus Historical Society Museum

8943 North Seneca Street, Weedsport

The Old Brutus Historical Society Museum houses displays of the Erie Canal, agriculture, transportation, and household artifacts. It has an event hall and a rotating collection of mannequins depicting local life from bygone eras in the town of Brutus and village of Weedsport.

Cayuga Museum of History and Art

203 Genesee Street, Auburn

With its executive director appointed as History's Hometown historian, the collection of the Cayuga Museum includes a wide variety of three-dimensional objects, photographs, and archival records dating from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, and is Cayuga County's largest repository of cultural artifacts.

Village of Aurora Historical Society and Village History Center

371 Main Street, Aurora

The Aurora Historical Society hosts permanent and changing exhibits relating to the history of the village of Aurora and local history programs in its history center. Formerly housed at Wells College, the historical society is now located behind the Aurora Arts and Design Center with events also at the Patrick Tavern.

Genoa Historical Association and Rural Life Museum

920 State Route 34B, King Ferry

The Genoa Historical Association was formed in 1987 with the purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Genoa. The Rural Life Museum offers a hands-on one-room schoolroom experience, rotating agricultural life displays, and annual events like the Wheat Harvest Festival.

Cayuga-Owasco Lakes Historical Society

14 West Cayuga Street, Moravia

The oldest historical society in the county, the "History House" exhibits the life of local resident Millard Fillmore, the 13th president of the United States, and has more than 1,000 family files in the Luther Research Center and Archives, plus a "Mecca of Spiritualism" display.



Journey the Canalway



Canal Communities
Canalway Heritage Sites

The canal legacy lives on through the visitable ruins, murals, trails, and museums.

Erie Canal Bicentennial

Opened in 1825, the Erie Canal was the driving economic force for New York State. The waterway linked the Hudson River downstate to the west along Lake Erie. Traditional trading posts became booming towns, immigrant populations created a new workforce, entrepreneurship fostered groundbreaking inventions, and progressive thinking paved the way for African American freedom seekers and the women's rights movement.

While this engineering feat served



as a major “Gateway to the West” for the Empire State and forever changed America, “Clinton’s Big Ditch” was made possible as a result of the Clinton-Sullivan Campaign under General George Washington. The scorched-earth operation that removed the Indigenous natives of the land during the American Revolutionary War is an important part of history to remember as the 250th anniversary of America approaches in 2026.

The 524-mile canal system was designated as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000, and today, visitors can run, cycle, walk, paddle, horseback ride, snowmobile, or boat along the designated recreational trails like the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail.

Launched through the Cayuga County Office of Tourism, a self-guided application will take travelers on a 60-mile tour of historic canal treasures from Macedon to Camillus. Highlights include the Montezuma Heritage Park, Centerport Aqueduct Park, Lock 51, Lock 52, Jordan Aqueduct, and the Liz and Dave Beebe Erie Canal Park.

The legacy of the Erie Canal is sustained by many partners working together to enhance, preserve, and celebrate the state-wide system, including the NYS Canal Corporation, National Park Service, and the Canal Society of New York State, among others.

The date of October 6, 2025, will officially mark the grand opening of the historic waterway from Buffalo to Albany. To commemorate, the Canal Society of NYS created the Erie Canal 2025 group to collaborate with communities along the canalway, including the Camillus Erie Canal Park, the historical societies of Jordan, Weedsport, and Port Byron, and Montezuma, and the Erie Canal Museum. Stay tuned for programming held in Cayuga County at the Samuel Center for Canal History, Old Erie Canal Heritage Park, and the Lois McClure replica sailing canal boat, plus other exciting events across the state like the World Canals Conference in Buffalo.

Scan for the tour



Treasures Along the Erie Canal



Erie Canal Murals

Local artist preserves the waterway history through paintings that give a glimpse into life on the canal

Painted along the Erie Canal pathway are scenes depicting life on the historic canalside. Since 2004, the majority of the outdoor canvases were created by local artist Dawn Jordan using exterior wood panels and exterior paint for seven approximately 30-foot-wide murals.

The community artwork is based on historic photographs or paintings and include: Yesterday on the Erie Canal in 1910, Jordan; Exchange Hotel on the Erie Canal, Montezuma Heritage Park; Erie Canal 1910, Weedsport; Summer Afternoon on the Erie Canal, Port Byron; Sunny Canalscape with a Traditional Barge, Macedon; and The Richmond Aqueduct: Now and Then, Montezuma, which won the Viewers’ Choice Award at the 2016 Global Mural Conference.

The seventh mural is of the Four Freedoms articulated by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1941 State of the Union address. The four train cars—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—are painted on an abandoned railroad abutment in Weedsport. For a unique connection, the artist sold “train tickets” to have a personal portrait painted as one of the 50 train passengers.



Pride of Place



Chosen Hometown

City of Auburn

Visit sites connected to Tubman's life in Cayuga County: Home for the Aged, Fort Hill Cemetery Gravesite, Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

Harriet Tubman's Legacy

Abolitionist. Civil War hero. Underground Railroad conductor. Entrepreneur. Humanitarian. Land owner. Philanthropist. Suffragist. Educator. An ordinary woman who did extraordinary things is how the descendants of Harriet Tubman Davis describe their famous relative. And even though the Moses of Her People has been immortalized in literature and film, and commemorated on postage stamps and coin sets, most know very little about Tubman's life beyond the Underground Railroad.

Cayuga County was a hotbed of abolition activity with stations operating since the 1830s and included more than 100 documented connections. Its central geographic location and an interracial group of local families the Freemans, Wrights, Sewards, and Howlands made it a



welcoming safe haven for freedom seekers.

Tubman emancipated herself from slavery in 1849, and settled in Auburn in 1859. She purchased seven acres of land from Frances Seward for \$1,200 and would eventually bring her family to the village of Fleming right outside Auburn's city limits. Surrounded by her family and a supportive community, Tubman flourished in her chosen free home of 54 years. Here, she built a life among the familiar seasons and connected with other families from the eastern shore of Maryland in the free black community of New Guinea.

The self-taught naturalist established a successful farming operation on her property with orchards, pigs, and other crops. She found love again, marrying Civil War veteran Nelson Davis who was a master bricklayer and laid the bricks on their family residence that still stands. She continued her social justice work for equal voting rights by co-founding the National Association of Colored Women. And she never retired from generously promoting her causes that were often supported by selling her story to autobiographers and traveling for paid speaking engagements.

A woman with a deep connection to faith, Tubman became a lifelong member of the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church and pledged \$500 for the expanding congregation to build in 1891. She paid tribute to friend and anti-slavery leader John Brown by laying a coin with his profile inside the new building's cornerstone. Most notably, profits from her second biography allowed for the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged to become a reality with the purchase of the neighboring 25-parcel lot. With the help of the A.M.E. Zion Church, the business woman created one of the earliest nursing and assisted living facilities for African Americans in the country.

Resting under a Norway Spruce planted by her family, Tubman's headstone in Fort Hill Cemetery is engraved with the dedication, "Servant of God, Well Done." Her legacy lives on through her descendants, the historical sites, the residents, the small businesses, the artistic dedications, and the community itself.

"I would make a home for them in the North, and the Lord helping me, I would bring them all here."

Scan to watch videos



Proud to Live



Hallowed Ground

The National Park Service restores the historic church on Parker Street

The National Park Service determined that restoration of the Thompson African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to its 1913 appearance was the best course of action to preserve this portion of Harriet Tubman's legacy.

During Tubman's life, the classic Queen Anne style church had a typical vibrant façade of orange and green and colorful pink interior walls decorated with red stenciling. The floors and wainscoting were a rich red stain and yellow textured window glass added warmth to the natural light.

The project broke ground in 2022 with interesting developments along the way: the historic steeple now restored was struck by lightning; the original bell in place since 1891 was too fragile to remain in the belfry (it will be on exhibit); and the AME Zion Church loaned the site three pendant light globes likely in place during Tubman's funeral.

This soon-to-open national historical park will provide an accessible space for communal reflection, programming, and ultimately, to honor the contributions of an American hero in the place where she worshiped.





Scan for the video

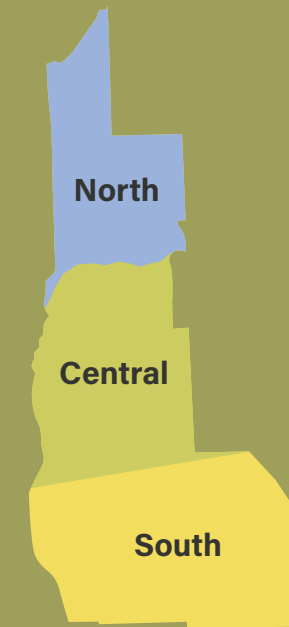
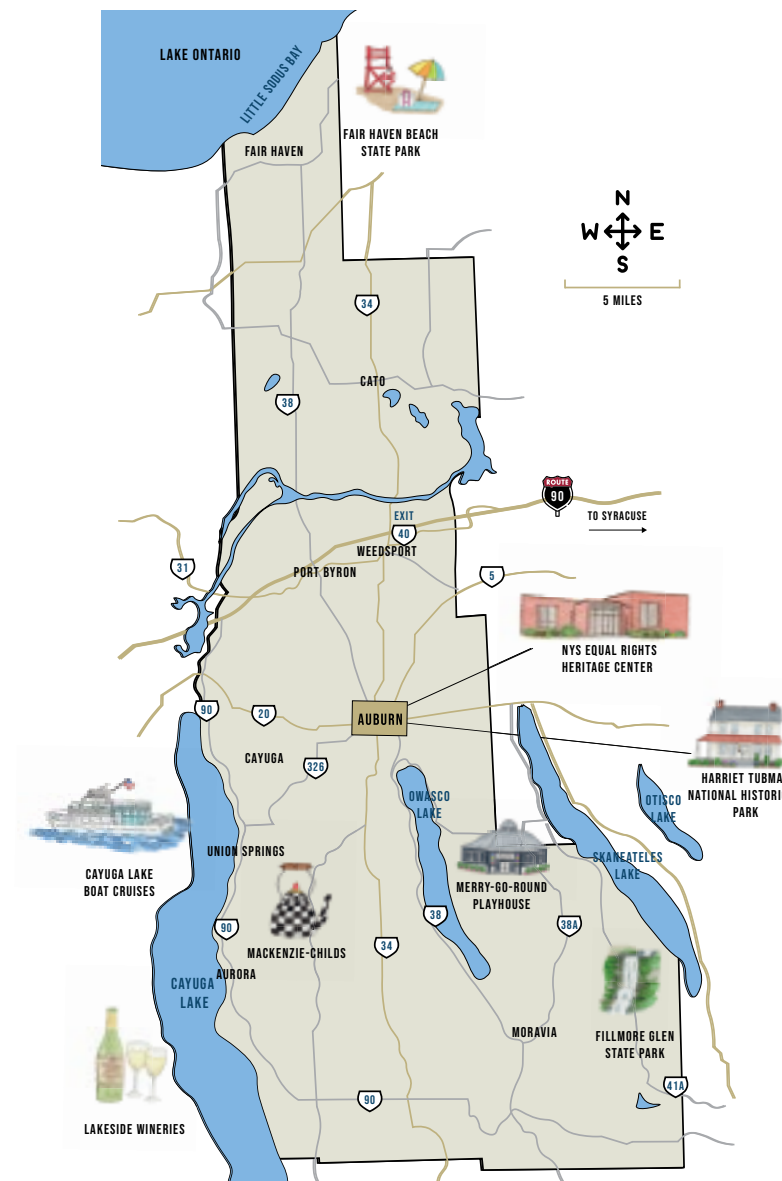


Experience Cayuga County

Tour Cayuga

Find Your Way Through Three Regions

From Lake Ontario sunrises to Finger Lakes sunsets, our historic urban core to quaint village charm, rolling hillside farmland to rejuvenating bucolic escapes, we invite you to Visit Cayuga to experience our laidback waterfront lifestyle. The following pages will introduce you to each of our three distinct regions and the special communities tucked within. Get to know the places, people, experiences, and history that make this place matter.





Lake Ontario

Fair Haven

The scenic landscape of northern Cayuga County offers adventure on the land and water.

Northern Region

Fair Haven, Sterling, Ira, Victory, Cato, Meridian, Conquest, Montezuma

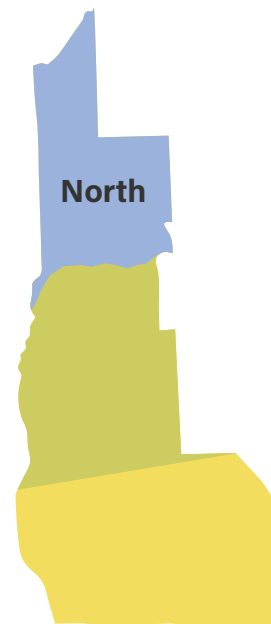
Bordered by the 14th largest lake in the world, northern Cayuga County gives access to Lake Ontario, an ecological wonder and one of the five Great Lakes of North America.

From sandy beaches to shoreline bluffs and scenic woodlands, the once bustling port turned resort community of Fair Haven offers a charming getaway for prime recreation, world-class fishing, and relaxation.

Whether you're searching for main street shopping, unique eateries, must-see attractions, and coveted annual events, this lakeshore village in the town of Sterling is sure to please. Spend the day relaxing in the ocean-like setting of Fair Haven Beach State Park with 1,141 acres of outdoor playground for swimming, boating, paddling, picnicking, camping, and grilling. Sterling Pond offers a serene space for birding, kayaking, and fishing. The nearby Sterling Lake Shore Park and Nature Center

provides more than 1,400 acres for outdoor enthusiasts to explore with 10 miles of hiking trails. The new onsite visitor center provides education about the diverse species of wildlife that can be spotted throughout the preserve. During the winter season, these sites are great for ice fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

Take a break from the outdoors and participate in a workshop, class, or program at the Fair Haven Arts Center, enjoy a glass of wine at Colloca Estate Winery or cider at Sterling Cidery, treats at Sweets by Sarah Bakery, and dine at Stick and Rudder, Brandon's, The Village Grill, to name a few. For local goods and gifts shop South Shore Artisans, Screwy Louie's Sport Shop, The Front Porch Gift Shop, and The Hardware Cafe & General Store. Self-care awaits at the Bayview Wellness Center or pick-your-own lavender at the Ol'Factory Lavender & Herb Farm. Book a stay at the Pleasant Beach Hotel or



Fair Haven Village Park
Village of Fair Haven

A central community gathering space for fairs, markets, concerts, movies, and events like Pirate Festival.



Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge

Montezuma
Birdwatch for great blue herons nesting in the woods adjacent to the Main Pool.

Turner's 1816 House to attend annual events like the Sterling Renaissance Festival and Porch Fest. For a sense of adventure, journey the Seaway Trail, sleep under the stars at one of the many campgrounds and cabins, or play a round at the Springbrook Greens State Golf Course.

The remainder of this region is rural, residential, and rife with agriculture. Cato is surrounded by some of the best-formed drumlins with water paths moving north to Lake Ontario and south to the Seneca River. This pattern accounts for its beautiful small lakes and ponds and abundant leisure opportunities. These include the Cato-Meridian Recreational Center, North Trail, and Cato Golf Club.

With many marinas and boat charters available, anglers will find the northern part of the county prime for all-season fishing. Located near Meridian, the 14-foot deep Otter Lake and 65-foot deep Cross Lake are brimming with walleye, panfish, bass,

black bullhead, and northern pike. The 20-foot deep Duck Lake in the town of Conquest is where fisherpeople can catch pickerel, panfish, tiger muskie, and northern pike.

The Seneca River Crossing Canal Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is located along the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and it features the 165-acre Montezuma Heritage Park that connects 11 nature trails. Explore the remains of historic canal sites like the famous Richmond Aqueduct, second largest aqueduct on the Erie Canal, plus natural resources along today's Seneca River/NYS Barge Canal. The park can be accessed directly from the NYS Canalway and Empire State Trail that runs across-state on Route 31.

The Cayuga-Seneca Canal is the gateway to the Finger Lakes, connecting the Erie Canal at Montezuma to 92 miles of canalized *Text is cut off.*

Things to Do
Northern Region

Rent a water bike on Little Sodus Bay, hike the Richmond Aqueduct, and taste local wine.





Central Region
Auburn and Owasco Lake

The historic Seward House Museum, shopping in downtown Auburn, and lakeside lounging at Emerson Park.



Central Region

Auburn, Owasco, Cayuga, Sennett, Throop, Port Byron, Weedsport, Fleming, Niles, Union Springs

Home to Cayuga County's seat, the city of Auburn, the central region was a historic hotbed of equal rights activity, leading industrial innovation, and manmade marvel the Erie Canal.

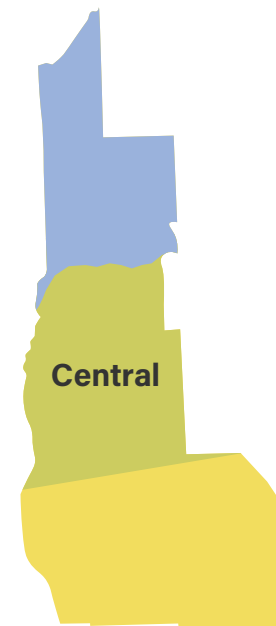
From President Lincoln's Secretary of State William H. Seward to one of the greatest freedom fighters Harriet Tubman to the inventor of sound on film Theodore Case, there is much to uncover in the urban core.

Must-see attractions: NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center, Harriet Tubman Home, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, Seward House Museum, Cayuga Museum of History & Art, Case Research Lab, Willard Memorial Chapel, Fort Hill Cemetery, Schweinfurth Art Center, Auburn Public Theater, and Falcon Park for Auburn Doubledays baseball. Admire the South Street Area Historic District architecture, see the emerging Auburn Public Art Trail, and experience Harriet Tubman's

Lantern Trail wayfinding exhibit in this walkable city.

Downtown is the business and entertainment hub with a plethora of retail therapy, food and beverage, and live music at Moondog's Lounge and A.T. Walley. Find creative goods at Artistic Impressions, Reuse Refuge, Regenerations, and Melody's. Self care awaits at The Browtique, Zen Den, Adonia Salon & Spa, Crystal Clear Health & Wellness, and The Center.

Sample award-winning beer at Prison City Brewing, Shep's Brewing Company, and Next Chapter Brewpub. Try unique libations at Combgrown Mead, Roast & Toast, Cellar & Folly Whiskey Company, and the Underground Bottle Shop, plus 3 Leaf Tea and Simple Roast. Foodies love Moro's Table, Refinery Modern Fare, and Elderberry Pond Restaurant. For breakfast, Auburn Bagel Co., Cafe 108, Cameron's Bakery, and New Hope Mills. Locals also recommend



Erie Canal Heritage Corridor
Village of Weedsport

Take a walk or bike ride along the 3.1 mile-path of the Erie Canal Trail.



Balloons, Lasca's, Parker's Grille, Reese's Dairy Bar, Swaby's, and Michael's, to name a few. Venture to the Finger Lakes Mall for Bass Pro Shops. Find local produce at Morgan's Half Acre and Strawberry Fields Hydroponic Farm.

Hit the links at Highland Golf Course or Dutch Hollow Country Club, relax in Hoopes Park, and recreate at Casey Park skatepark and pickleball courts. Nearby Emerson Park grants access to pristine Owasco Lake for sunbathing, boating, fishing, or renting watercraft from Owasco Paddles. Play disc golf, enjoy a park picnic, ice cream at Seb's Green Shutters, and visit the Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural Museum. See the REV Theatre Company in the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse and large groups can enjoy dinner at the Springside Inn.

Weedsport, or "Weeds Basin," was the site for the early development of the Erie Canal. Known for the Weedsport Speedway and the DIRT Museum &

Hall of Fame, other village highlights include Lunkenheimer Craft Brewing Co. and White Rabbit Roasting Company. When in season, Giancarelli Farm Greenhouse & Winery for u-pick blueberries and Owen Orchards for apple picking, cider, and donuts.

Port Byron is situated on the Owasco Lake Outlet and former Erie Canal near the town of Mentz. Visitors can experience past canal life at the Old Erie Canal Heritage Park before grabbing a bite to eat at Potters Farm to Fork.

The village of Cayuga is located on the northeast end of Cayuga Lake that extends into the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, while Union Springs is on the eastern shore and offers accessible kayaking in Frontenac Park. Visit the Frontenac Museum, golf at Indian Head Golf Course, and taste wine at CJS Vineyards, Izzo's White Barn Winery, Apple Station Winery, Quarry Ridge Winery, or Heart & Hands Wine Company.

Things to Do

Central Region

Apple picking at Owen Orchards, musicals at The REV Theatre Co., and beer tasting at Lunkenheimer Craft Brewing.



Harriet Tubman Statue

City of Auburn

A bronze statue of Harriet Tubman at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center.





Southern Region

Aurora

Taste local wines at Long Point Winery and shop whimsical artisan ceramics at MacKenzie-Childs.

Southern Region

Aurora, Niles, New Hope, Scipioville, King Ferry, Genoa, Locke, Moravia, Sempronius, Summer Hill

The southern region is a pastoral paradise with dense forestland, rich farmland, and the number one resort in New York State on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake.

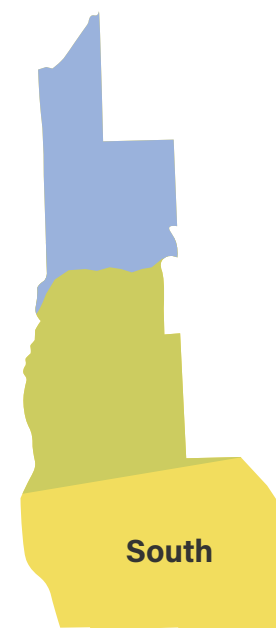
Located in the charming village of Aurora, the Inns of Aurora Resort & Spa was named America's Best Small Spa and Wellness Town by Travel + Leisure. The collection features luxury accommodations in restored historic homes, farm-inspired spa campus, 1833 Kitchen & Bar, Aurora Cooks!, Fargo Bar & Grill, the Village Market, and an activities calendar chock-full of adventure. Think: archery, yoga, kayaking, chef's table dining, hiking, birdwatching, painting, and stargazing.

Shop the high-end home accessories company MacKenzie-Childs, LLC. for whimsical ceramics, furniture, and enamelware and make sure to tour the fully outfitted farmhouse. See an intimate performance at the Victorian Morgan Opera House located on the

second floor of the Tudor-style Aurora Free Library building.

The nearby hamlet of Sherwood is a designated Equal Rights Historic District with 28 properties tied to the stories of the Underground Railroad, women's rights, and education. Visit the Howland Stone Store and Opendore Museums to see historical memorabilia of the Quaker abolitionist family, Slocum, Emily, and Isabel Howland. The Howland Farm Museum offers hands-on educational experiences and community events like the annual Women's Suffrage March and Tea Party. Stop at Dugan's Country Grill for homemade comfort food, including the famous Friday fish fry.

Located on a serene peninsula, Long Point State Park offers a relaxing atmosphere with gorgeous views of Cayuga Lake—a prime lake for largemouth bass fishing. Local tip: be on the lookout for the coveted lucky stones.



Second Empire Architecture

Village of Moravia

This village boasts many noteworthy examples of 19th century architecture.



Fall Scenery

Village of Moravia

The changing of the leaves are a sight to see throughout the Cayuga County landscape.

Just south of Aurora, King Ferry and Genoa form the agricultural heart of the county. Attractions include the Rural Life Museum, Northville Arts Center, King Ferry Corner Store, King Ferry Golf Club, and the Aurora Shoe Company. Go libation tasting at Long Point Winery, Bright Leaf Vineyard, Treleven Wines, and Aurora Brewing Co. before heading east to Grisamore Cider Works, Summerhill Brewing, Kelloggsville Farm Cidery & Winery, and Owasco Lake Brewing.

Immerse in agritourism in the rural community of Locke at the family-run Grisamore Farms and the Finger Lakes Nut Farm dedicated to growing chestnuts, hazelnuts, and heartnuts. In Moravia, visit the female-led Little Yard Farm, Ripley Family Farm Hillcrest Dairy, and Frozen Ocean Apiaries. Find Schoolyard Sugarbush maple business and the historic New Hope Mills water-powered grist mill in New Hope.

Summerhill is the birthplace of Millard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States. Enjoy the town's public park and pavilion, high elevation, and natural assets of Lake Como and Fall Brook. A replica of Fillmore's log cabin birthplace is in Fillmore Glen State Park, home to five waterfalls, swimming pools, camping, and picnic areas.

Nature lovers will find a peaceful experience getting outdoors in this region. Visit the Fillmore Golf Club, Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary, Bear Swamp State Forest, Summer Hill State Forest, Owasco Flats, Frozen Ocean State Forest, Owasco Bluffs Nature Preserve, and the accessible Bahar Preserve & Carpenter's Falls. For the more adventurous, check out the Frozen Ocean MotorSports Facility, Empire Haven Nudist Park, and Southern Tier Stables. Stop in the quaint village of Moravia for main street dining and shopping at 10-10 BBQ, The Hamilton Salon Apothecary, and Glenview Graphics.

Things to Do

Southern Region

Visit the luxurious Inns of Aurora Resort and Spa and Millard Fillmore's replica birthplace cabin.





A Year-Round
Destination

Scan to watch the video



Adventure Awaits

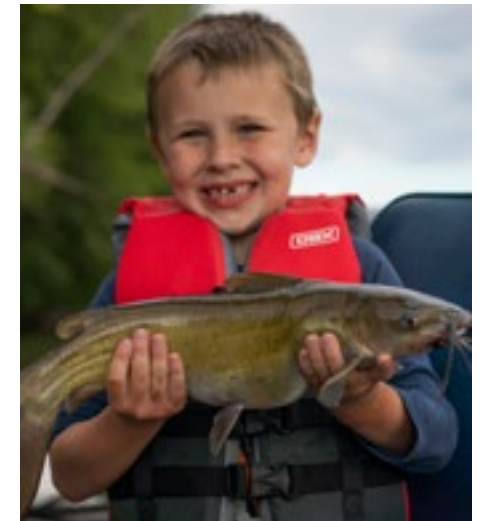
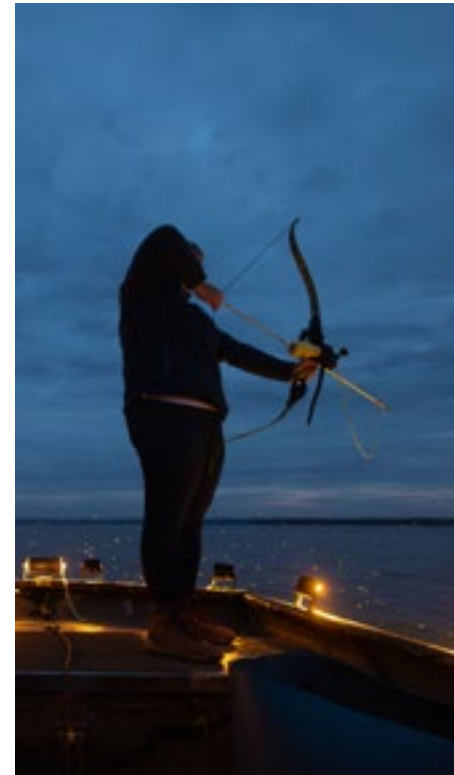
Four Seasons Of Fun

Where you go matters, make it count in Cayuga County. More than 800 square miles of four-season adventure awaits in our destination. Start with a healthy dose of the great outdoors. Uncrowded and scenic, our county touts eight lakes—perfect for springtime fishing and summer boating—numerous hiking and biking trails, waterfalls, and birding opportunities. Follow recreation excursions or a night of performing arts with seasonal dining at local eateries. Flock to the Finger Lakes for the fall changing of the leaves and pick-your-own apples straight from the tree. Scout the rolling landscape for craft beverage tours and tastings, or find restorative relaxation at a worldclass lakeside spa. And be sure to visit us during the winter for a quiet getaway full of fresh air, holiday cheer, and find the kid in you with a snowball fight or two.

On the Water

Dive into Cayuga County's abundant waterways

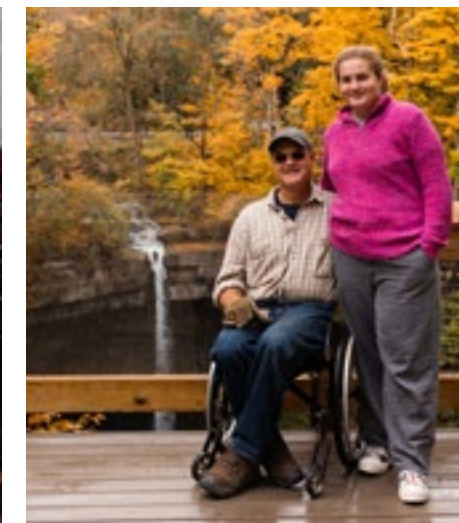
Cayuga County contains the most freshwater coastline in all of New York State, making it the perfect getaway for anyone interested in aquatic activities. With eight lakes, the Erie Canal, plus numerous streams, ponds, and tributaries, our county is home to some of the finest fishing in the northeast for bass, salmon, and trout. Whether you're into fishing, swimming, boating, or paddling—you're sure to make waves here.



On the Land

Go beyond your comfort zone in the great outdoors

We believe in outdoor recreation for all. From tranquil shores to dense woods to gorge trails, adventure awaits in our four-season destination. Cayuga County's diverse landscape offers opportunities to unwind or thrill seek in the wild. With three state parks, nature preserves, and three state forests, it's a paradise for hikers, sports enthusiasts, bikers, horseback riders, and skydivers—or for camping under the stars.

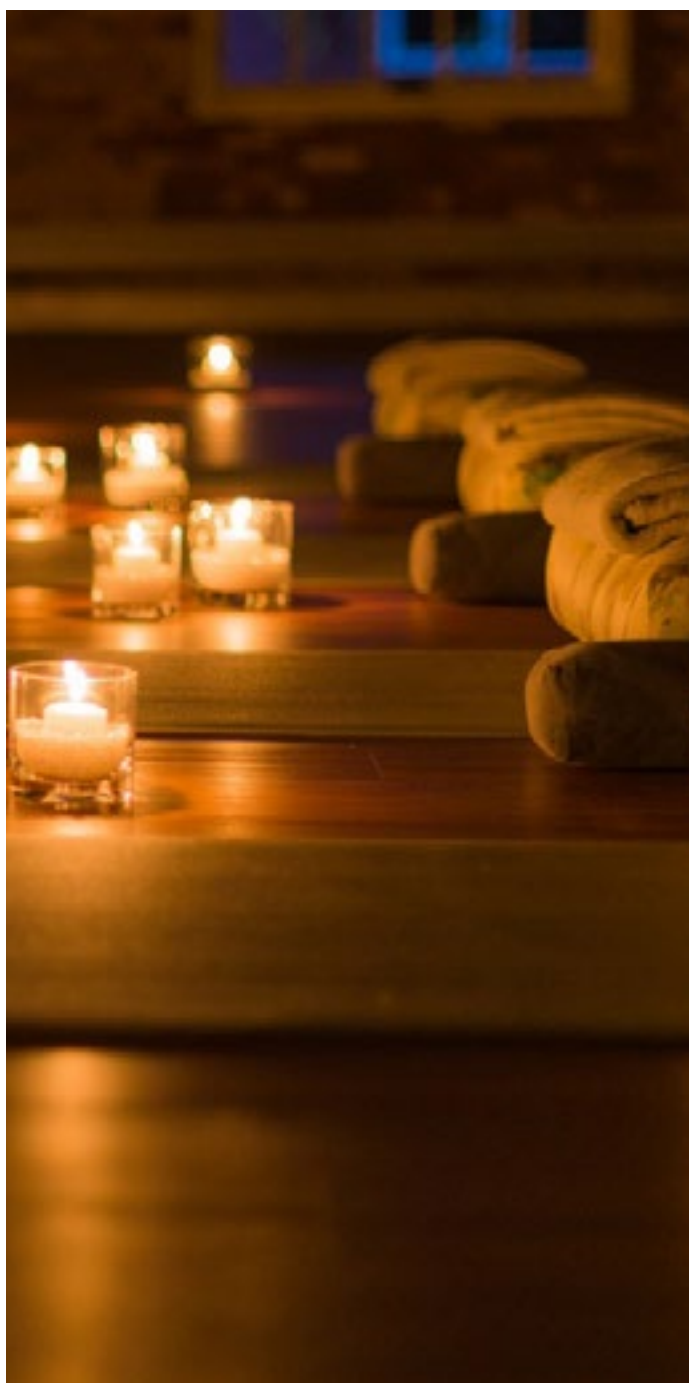
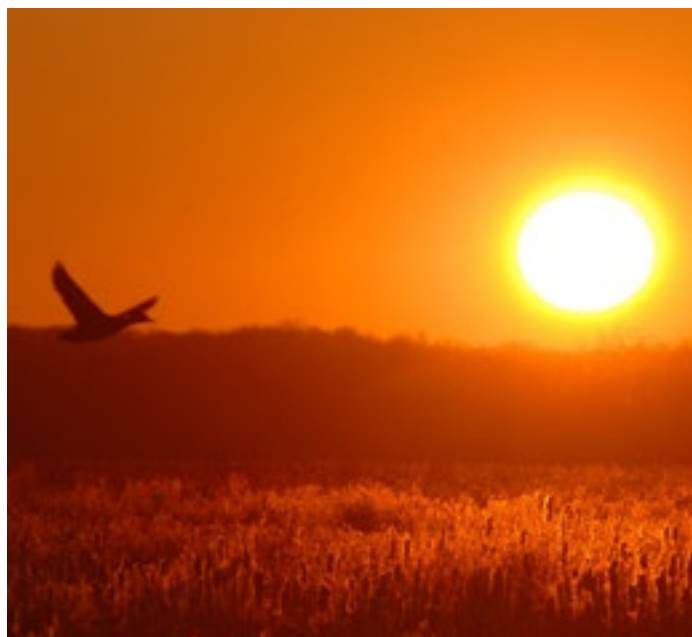


The Three R's

Come rest, relax, rejuvenate in natural beauty

Self-care is defined in the dictionary as “the practice of taking an active role in protecting one’s own well-being and happiness.” Engaging in a self-care routine has been clinically proven to impact mental health. It can also improve concentration, increase happiness, and improve energy. Declare this the year to treat yourself to well-deserved R&R in the Finger Lakes region.

In Cayuga County, we are lucky to have many holistic options to help renew your body, mind, and spirit. Soothe your soul connecting with nature. Navigate the calming waterways via kayak or canoe. Take a walk through the forests and listen to the birds and the wind in the trees. Cozy up with a cup of hot cocoa and stargaze by crackling fireside. Slow down and pamper yourself at an area spa—indulge in the mood shifting hot-cold contrast bathing. Drop in to an essential oil-blending workshop or restorative yoga session to balance your chakra. It’s easy to be still and find solace in this serene sanctuary we call home.



Scan to watch the video



Sounds of Nature



Global Eats

Embracing our international cuisine

Our destination's rich landscape provides a four-season trip to the bountiful for farm-fresh dining. The local restaurateurs, bistros, and cafes create multiseason culinary dishes—and some with a cross-cultural twist. Over at the Inns of Aurora demonstration kitchen, Chef Lou Ruscitto-Donato of Aurora Cooks! shares her love of multicultural cooking to expand diners' palates. Her carefully curated immersive experiences have featured multi course dinners unique to Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean.

In addition to farm-to-table, we have diverse offerings of authentic Italian, Jamaican, New American, and Asian cuisine. Cayuga County has recently experienced an increase in Hispanic-owned establishments. Since 2020, two new Mexican restaurants have opened in the county, plus the first and only Latin grocery store in the urban core. While we invite you to embrace the rich agricultural heritage of our region, we encourage you to take your tastebuds off the beaten path to explore our many international restaurants.



Scan for the list



Dining Guide

Scan for the tour



Tasty Updates



Sweet Treat Trail

Find your way through home baked goodness

Launched in 2003, the Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail has been a sweet success voted as a top trail by readers of USA Today and 10Best. Each year, Tour Cayuga tempts tastebuds with a unique seasonal campaign. Past themes have featured Harriet Tubman's land of milk and honey, inclusive goodies for restricted diets, and up next, professional home bakers.

While these talented home-based bakers might not have a physical location, their sweet treats can be enjoyed at local farm markets, partner retailers, and pop-up events. Other stops will include several new businesses in addition to longtime trail members like New Hope Mills, Strawberry Fields Hydroponics Farm, XL Cookie Co., Reese's Dairy Bar, and Morgan's Half-Acre Produce. This self-guided experience offers something for all cravings. Indulge in locally made ice cream, jams, jellies, fresh-picked fruit, pies, cookies, sweet rolls, Italian ice, and more—plus win the coveted Sweet Treat Trail raffle basket.



Drink Up

Raise a glass to craft beverages for all

Featuring the oldest wine trail in the country, internationally renowned Cabernet Francs and Rieslings rule the scene in our Finger Lakes wine region. But the land's farm-to-glass experience does not just produce award-winning wines. In addition to a variety of grapes, our microclimate produces local grains, hops, corn, orchard fruits, and even dairy cow's milk that are crafted into tasty beverages.

In fact, prior to Prohibition, New York State led the country in hops production, distilling, and cider making. Independent brewing has become big business again in our state, ranking first in the nation east of the Mississippi for cider and distilling. The Empire State also ranks third in wine production, second for number of craft breweries, and fourth for dairy production in the nation. And in Cayuga County alone, cow's milk is one of the most profitable agricultural goods, making it 37th in America for milk and dairy products production, including the easy-to-digest Guernsey golden milk.

Our county boasts more than 30 libation destinations offering an array of unique craft drinks. Here, you can find ice wines; hazy beers, fruited sours, and barrel aged experimental styles; hard apple ciders and fermented honey; and distilled spirits like coffee liqueur and java rye whiskey—plus non-alcoholic options like artisan roasted coffee, blended Japanese matcha, cream ales, and flavored premium whole milk. Drink your way through Cayuga County and enjoy our agritourism by the glass, can, cup, or tasting flight.

Scan for the list



Beverage Trail



Unsung Heroes

Engaging the community with history and arts

One visit to Cayuga County and you will understand its rich culture and historical significance. Our sites and attractions bridge our past to the present and our art centers provide access to big-city arts experiences for all. Dig a little deeper into the communities and you will find collaborative partners with the shared mission to engage the next generation.

From award-winning summer camps to passport through history class trips and after-school community center programs, our county's cultural sites, performing arts institutions, public schools, and nonprofit organizations work together to provide youth with arts education, regardless of socioeconomic background. Case in point, the REV Theatre Company was founded as Auburn Children's Theatre in 1958, and today, the organization is one of the nation's foremost professional touring youth theatres.

The REV On Tour reaches more than 60,000 students across 65-plus school districts statewide with its affordable curriculum based multi-discipline dramatics program. The company also teaches musical theater intensives, trainings, and playshops for grades first through 12 and takes its family friendly productions on the road to community hubs each summer. These types of accessible outreach programs available in our county empower creative growth in future leaders through cultural storytelling, hands-on teamwork, and—the often backstage—positive guidance.



Arts Education

City of Auburn

From left to right: The REV Theatre Co.'s *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*; Auburn Public Theater musical theater summer camp; Schweinfurth Art Center Juneteenth Celebration activity



Fair Haven Beach State Park

Town of Sterling

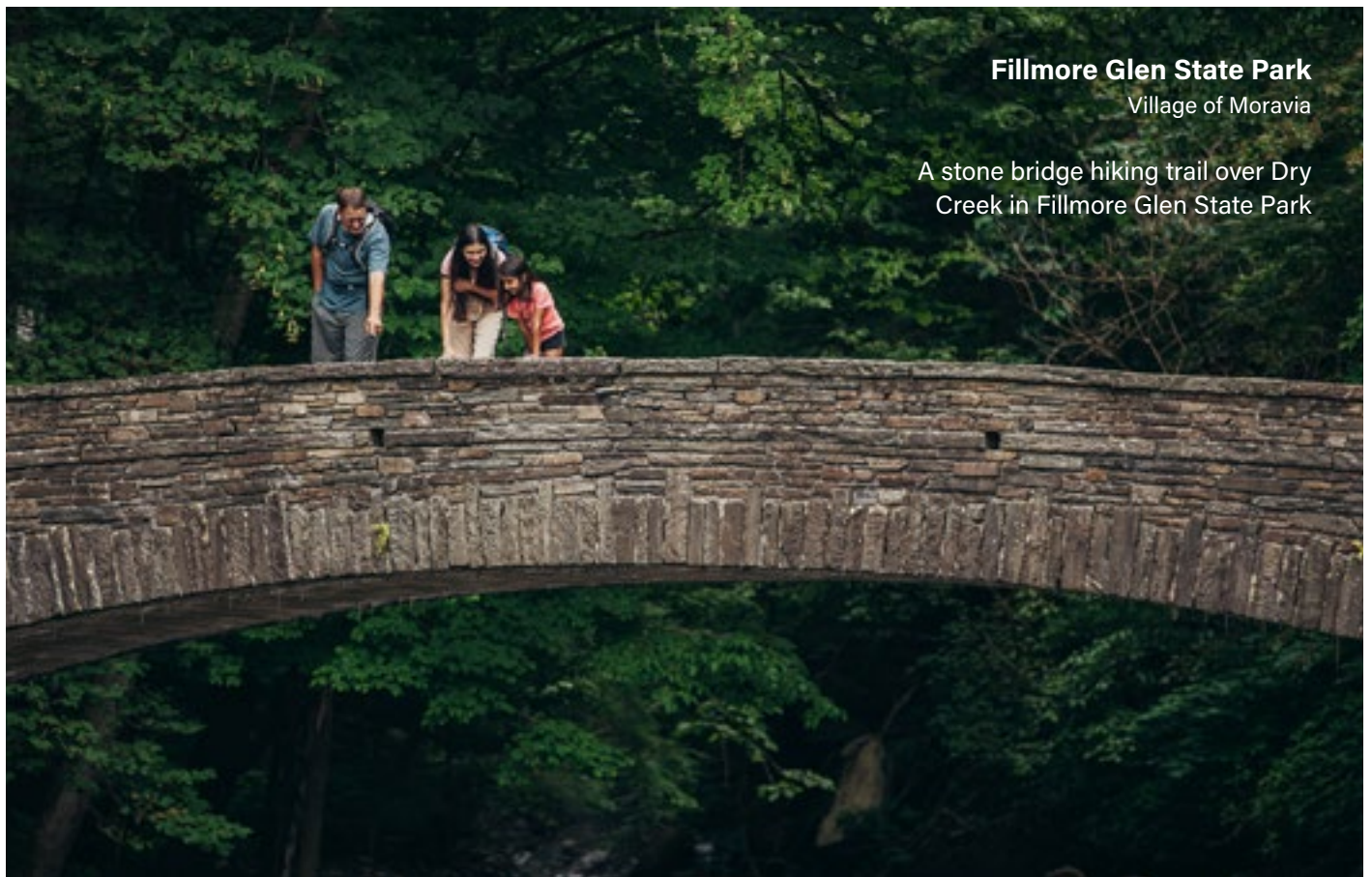
On the shoreline of Lake Ontario, the Fair Haven Beach State Park offers 1,141 acres of public access to the outdoors for beachside swimming, woodland camping, and four-season adventure. The park is located on the east side of Little Sodus Bay, northeast of the village of Fair Haven.



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Fillmore Glen State Park

Village of Moravia

A stone bridge hiking trail over Dry
Creek in Fillmore Glen State Park