

Leelanau Peninsula Day Trip

We have put together a fantastic self-guided tour itinerary to help you experience the essence of Leelanau Peninsula. The larger of the two peninsulas forming beautiful Grand Traverse Bay, the Leelanau Peninsula is home to famed Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, voted “Most Beautiful Place in America” by Good Morning America. The peninsula is also home to breathtaking views, wineries, shopping, dining, and more. Most of your journey will snug the peninsula’s spectacular coastline on M-22, rated one of America’s most scenic highways. Since this tour is self-guided, you can experience the attractions at your own pace; however, plan at least 4-5 hours as each stop offers something slightly different.

Note: If you take this day trip on Saturday, you could start your trip at the [Sara Hardy’s Farmers Market](#), which takes place on Saturdays, 7:30AM – 12PM in downtown Traverse City (Parking Lot B, Corner of Cass and Grandview Pkwy) before venturing on to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Also, please note the Leelanau Peninsula tour can be driven in either direction.

Stop 1: Drive to the Philip A. Hart Visitors Center at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

9922 W Front St, Empire, MI 49630; <https://www.nps.gov/slbe/index.htm>

Option 1: Start from The Grand Traverse Resort and drive to the Visitors Center (~50 mins).

Option 2: Start from The Sara Hardy’s Farmers Market (Saturday mornings; 7:30AM – 12PM) in Downtown Traverse City and drive to the Visitors Center (~30 mins).

Upon arrival at the Visitor’s Center, purchase a park entrance pass to the National Park, get additional info from Park Rangers, and watch a short video about the Sleeping Bear Dunes. Bathroom facilities and limited retail are available in the Visitor’s Center. *Note: Make sure you buy your park entrance pass here, (\$25 for standard entrance pass).*

Stop 2: Drive to Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive (Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore)

8500 Stocking Drive, Empire, MI 49630; <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/pierce-stocking-scenic-drive.htm>

For the perfect overview of Sleeping Bear Dunes (45-60 minutes), drive the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive. “The 7.4 mile drive loops through the Beech-Maple forest and sand dunes and provides insight to the history of the area, a sampling of the vegetative communities found within the park and, best of all, spectacular overlooks of the Glen Lakes, the Sleeping Bear Dunes, and Lake Michigan.” While the scenic drive includes 12 stops, a stop at #3 Dune Overlook (seen to the right) is a must for a spectacular panoramic view. But please heed the signs and do not risk the steep climb down the dune.



Stop 3: Visit the Charming Town of Glen Arbor

<https://www.visitglenarbor.com/>

After leaving Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive, take a left onto M-109 N and head up the peninsula until you reach Glen Arbor, about 8.6 miles or ~15 minutes.

Glen Arbor is a quaint artsy town featuring jewelry shops, art galleries, a tea shop and more. Be sure to visit Cherry Republic’s family tasting room with “wine for the tall, [and] pop for the small,” the Olympic size cherry pit spitting arena, and the deli/ice cream shop if you are hungry. For an elegant upscale dining experience, the Blu restaurant’s award-winning wine and cuisine is further complimented by its spectacular waterfront setting. Reservations highly recommended. Blu is open for dinner only at 5PM on Tuesday-Saturday. <https://www.glenarborblu.com/>

Stop 4: Visit Historic Fishtown (aka Leland)

203 W River St, Leland, MI 49654; <https://www.lelandmi.org/>

Follow- M-22 N out of Glen Arbor and continue north along Leelanau peninsula 18.6 miles or ~30 minutes. (Note: If you are running short on time, skip Leland and continue directly to Suttons Bay by turning off at M-204 E.)

This is a small but charming Fishtown with active historic shanties, shopping and art. The shanties, many of which are still the original weathered fishing shanties, now house small shops and restaurants. If you are looking for a quick bite, the locals recommend the Village Cheese Shanty, especially one of their popular pretzel bread sandwiches. Along Main, River, Lake and Pearl Streets you will find more shops, an ice cream parlor, and local art.



Photo credit: <http://www.lelandmi.com/anager/547/>

Stop 5: Visit the Suttons Bay Art Festival

Follow M-22 S back towards Glen Arbor until you reach a turn for M-204 E (2.2 miles), take M-204 7 miles to M-22 N at Suttons Bay, ~15 minutes. <https://www.suttonsbaychamber.com/suttons-bay-art-festival>

Suttons Bay is another waterfront town featuring a “traditional main street” filled with shops, art galleries and restaurants worthy of visiting. The Annual Sutton’s Bay Arts Festival will be taking place on Saturday, August 2nd and Sunday, August 3rd. This festival includes a juried art show featuring artists in fine arts and crafts from around the country. The festival also includes community groups, a community library book sale, food vendors and a children’s area.

Stop 6: Enjoy A Sweet Treat at Moomers Creamery

7263 N. Long Lake Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685 (~25 minutes); <http://moomers.com/>

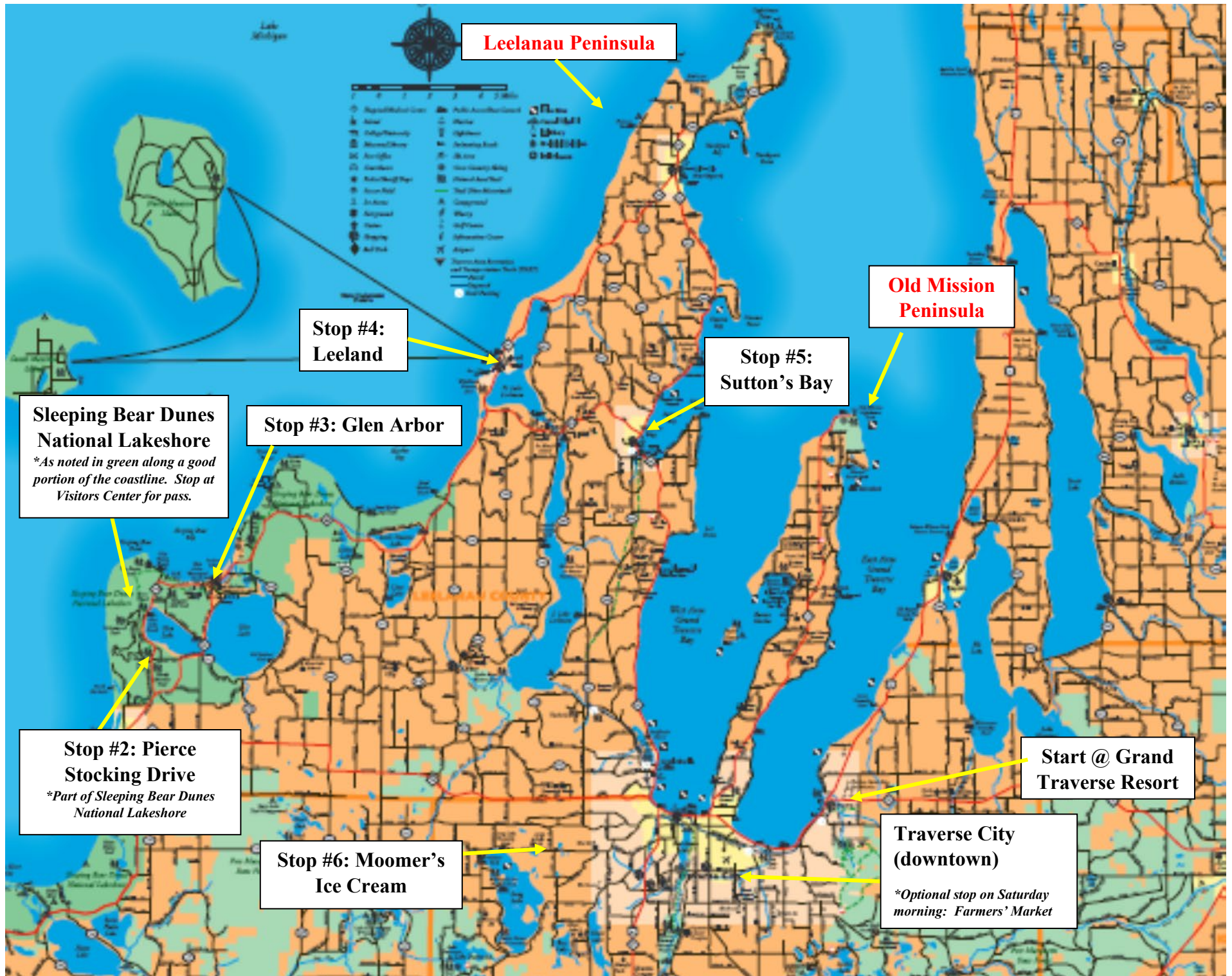
For the perfect ending to this Michigan day trip, stop at Moomers Creamery for delicious homemade ice cream. Located just 5 minutes from downtown Traverse City, this small family business overlooking the family dairy farm began in 1998 and is a local’s favorite. They offer more than 160 flavors of premium ice cream at the store, as well as ice cream treats. And since you are in the Cherry Capital, be sure to try the local’s favorite flavor ... black cherry.

Along the Way ... Enjoy Wine Tasting on the Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail

The Leelanau Peninsula boasts more than 20 wineries. Plan to stop in several as you travel around the peninsula. For a listing of the Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail, visit <https://www.lpwines.com/> A few recommendations:

- **45 North Vineyard and Winery**, 8580 E Horn Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653. <https://fortyfivenorth.com/>
Located directly on the 45th Parallel, this winery offers wines and ciders in their red barn tasting room. They also offer bocce ball and a photo-op with the “Wine on the Line” sign on the 45th parallel. Reservations are recommended. *Note: This winery is located between the Leland and Suttons Bay stops.*
- **Black Star Farms**, 10844 East Revold Road, Suttons Bay. <http://www.blackstarfarms.com/>
This popular winery offers classic varietal wines and fruit brandies of high character and balance. Their Leelanau location offers a complex of activities including a larger tasting room, a café, and an Inn. *Note: This winery is located inland and would be an optional stop between Suttons Bay and Moomers.*
- **L. Mawby**, 4519 S. Elm Valley Rd, Suttons Bay, MI 49682. <http://lmawby.com>
With 50+ years of making Sparkle, L. Mawby offers a large variety of sparkling wines in their “fun and funky” tasting room. *Note: This winery is located inland and would be an optional stop between Suttons Bay and Moomers.*

****End****



Leelanau Peninsula

Old Mission Peninsula

**Stop #4:
Leeland**

**Stop #5:
Sutton's Bay**

**Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore**
**As noted in green along a good
portion of the coastline. Stop at
Visitors Center for pass.*

Stop #3: Glen Arbor

**Stop #2: Pierce
Stocking Drive**
**Part of Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore*

**Start @ Grand
Traverse Resort**

**Stop #6: Moomer's
Ice Cream**

**Traverse City
(downtown)**
**Optional stop on Saturday
morning: Farmers' Market*