

*Chicago Tribune*

**PUMPKIN  
PICKING  
IN AMISH  
COUNTRY**

**GREAT  
MIDWEST  
DRIVES**

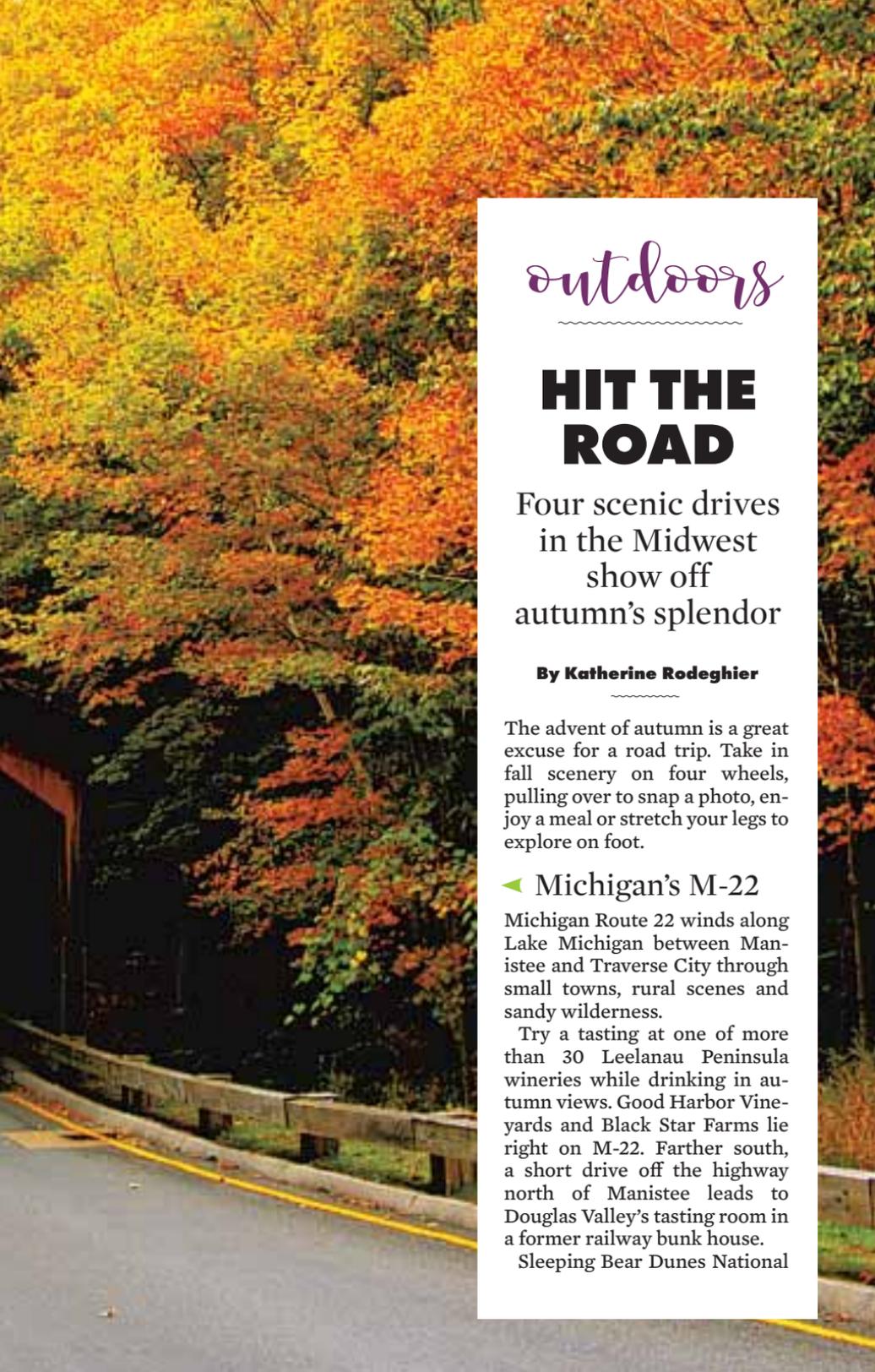
**MUSIC  
FESTIVALS  
WORTH  
THE TRIP**

# FALL TRAVEL

**HIT THE ROAD FOR AN AUTUMN ADVENTURE**



Covered bridge in  
Sleeping Bear Dunes, Michigan.



*outdoors*

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## HIT THE ROAD

Four scenic drives  
in the Midwest  
show off  
autumn's splendor

**By Katherine Rodeghier**

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The advent of autumn is a great excuse for a road trip. Take in fall scenery on four wheels, pulling over to snap a photo, enjoy a meal or stretch your legs to explore on foot.

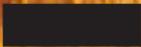
### ◀ Michigan's M-22

Michigan Route 22 winds along Lake Michigan between Manistee and Traverse City through small towns, rural scenes and sandy wilderness.

Try a tasting at one of more than 30 Leelanau Peninsula wineries while drinking in autumn views. Good Harbor Vineyards and Black Star Farms lie right on M-22. Farther south, a short drive off the highway north of Manistee leads to Douglas Valley's tasting room in a former railway bunk house.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National

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Lakeshore claims 64 miles of shoreline and merits a detour on Michigan Route 109 to see giant piles of sand, some 450 feet high, set against a backdrop of forests sporting fall colors. Get a workout on the popular Dune Climb about 5 miles north of Empire. For a less challenging exercise, choose one of the park's shortest hiking trails or just motor along the 74-mile Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive for views of the dunes and Glen Lake.

South of the park, climb 34 steps up Point Betsie Lighthouse and tour its museum and boathouse. Any strength left? Your 120 steps to the Inspiration Point overlook near Arcadia are rewarded with views of Lake Michigan shoreline.

- **Fuel up:** The Grand Cafe at the original Cherry Republic store in Glen Arbor honors America's "Cherry Capital" by packing plenty of the fruit into its menu. Shelves here and in the Traverse City store contain 150-plus cherry products, from wine to salsa. Free samples, too. 231-226-3014, [cherryrepublic.com](http://cherryrepublic.com)

- **Instagram worthy:** M-22 at the causeway separating Big Glen and Little Glen lakes with views of Sleeping Bear Dunes to the west.

## ◀ Illinois River Road

This national scenic byway loosely follows the Illinois River across north-central Illinois. In Ottawa, Illinois Route 71 — known as Canyon Drive — meanders west through woodlands approaching Starved Rock State Park. Pull over to walk to Council Overhang, a hollowed-out sandstone dome framing autumn scenery like a stained glass window.

Rock formations dot the park's 18 wooded canyons, 14 with waterfalls. Bluffs overlook the Illinois River, including Starved Rock, named for a Native American legend. Fall-colors trolley tours and weekend guided hikes depart from Starved Rock Lodge. The visitor center has maps for self-guided hikes.

Popular Starved Rock may close when parking lots fill. Matthiessen State Park, south on Illinois Route 178, has similar topography and fewer crowds.

Autumn leaves line the Illinois and Michigan Canal, where a replica 19th-century packet boat transports riders back in time as mules walk a towpath and guides share canal history.

Buy tickets at the Lock 16 Visitor Center in LaSalle.

Wildlife Prairie Park, about 10 miles west of Peoria, exhibits bison, wolves and black bear. Lodging options include train cabooses. Farther south, Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge forests and marshes attract birds, such as migrating white pelicans in the fall.

● **Fuel up:** Cajun Connection owner Ron McFarlain ships alligator from his native Louisiana, making it a specialty of the house along with jambalaya, etouffee, gumbo and pecan pie. This unlikely spot for bayou fare occupies a former single-family home along rural U.S. Route 6 near Utica. 815-667-9855, [ronscajunconnection.com](http://ronscajunconnection.com)

● **Instagram worthy:** LaSalle Canyon and waterfall in Starved Rock State Park.

## ► Hocking Hills

Editors at Car and Driver magazine road-test vehicles on the winding pavement of Ohio's Hocking Hills, roughly 40 miles southeast of Columbus. A favored fall route, the Hocking Hills Scenic Byway links Hocking State Forest and the six parcels of Hocking Hills State Park. From Rockbridge, take Ohio Route 374 south, looping around this vivid patch of Appalachia on Ohio routes 664 and 56.

View color-splashed forest from the rim trail along the deep gorge at Conkles Hollow State Nature Preserve, or take short hikes to Cedar Falls, the expansive recessed Ash Cave or Old Man's Cave.

Get your adrenalin flowing by zip-lining through woodlands with Hocking Hills Canopy Tours. Afraid of heights? Ride its Segways instead.

Autumn means apples at the Laurelville Fruit Co., where third-generation owner Robert Bowers Jr. turns out cider worth a stop in Laurelville.

If you're ready to turn over the driving to someone else, let the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway in Nelsonville transport you through autumn scenery on weekend tours. It adds Friday departures in October.

● **Fuel up:** Two 1840s log cabins at the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls house Kindred Spirits for casual fine dining. A favorite

dessert, the mixed berry cobbler, has remained on the menu since the restaurant's beginning. 740-569-5015, [innatcedarfalls.com](http://innatcedarfalls.com)

● **Instagram worthy:** Rose Lake in Hocking Hills State Park mirrors a tapestry of fall colors.

## ► Door County

Roads crisscross this thumb on the map of Wisconsin yielding ever-changing autumn vistas as hardwoods light up in bursts of red and gold. Before crossing the bridge onto the peninsula, drive through Potawatomi State Park. A 75-foot observation tower perches on a bluff; the view of Sturgeon Bay rimmed in fall colors merits the climb.

Driving north, Wisconsin routes 42 and 57 split, one following along Lake Michigan, the other Green Bay, before Route 42 continues to the peninsula's tip. These highways form the Door County Coastal Byway. Make a detour at Peninsula State Park to see Eagle Bluff Lighthouse, where the former keeper's cottage has maritime exhibits. At Cana Island Lighthouse, work out the kinks in your driving legs by climbing 97 steps to the top.

You won't need to leave your car to enjoy the overlook as you drive north into the community of Ellison Bay or to admire the Moravian and Norwegian architecture reflecting the heritage of the village of Ephraim. White clapboard buildings and church steeples resemble New England in this "Cape Cod of the Midwest."

● **Fuel up:** Goats on the turf roof of Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant draw stares. Swedish meatballs and square pancakes served by costumed staff at breakfast and lunch draw raves. Last year the Sister Bay hotspot added Stabbur Beer Garden using a Norwegian building relocated to the site. 920-854-2626, [aljohnsons.com](http://aljohnsons.com)

● **Instagram worthy:** Wisconsin Route 42's crazy zigzags through woodlands ablaze in autumn hues on its final mile at the tip of the peninsula. ■