



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Mackinac  
Island Loop  
(State  
Highway 185)**  
*Michigan*



## Mackinac Island Loop (State Highway 185)

Michigan

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Mackinac Island is truly deserving of its status as one of the most popular tourist destinations in Michigan. Although small—less than 4 square miles—the island offers an abundance of natural and cultural treasures. With more than 80% of the land protected in a state park, you'll find dozens of scenic hiking and mountain biking trails through dense boreal forests in the island's interior.

No less beautiful is the island's coastal pathway around the perimeter, offering breathtaking views of Lake Huron, dramatic limestone bluffs and colorful wildflowers in the spring and summer. The trail is actually State Highway 185, the only such highway in the country that doesn't allow motorized vehicles. In fact, the entire island is car free, so expect to see heavy traffic by walkers, bikers and horse-drawn carriages along the way. Inline skates are

also allowed everywhere except the downtown area.

Most visitors to the island will arrive by ferry. Bikes can be taken on the boats for a small fee, or you can easily rent one downtown (saddle horses are also available for rent). A good place to begin your journey is at the Mackinac Island Visitor's Center, only a short distance from the ferry docks on the south side of Main (Huron) Street. The center is housed in the large white building across from the open expanse of Marquette Park. Adjacent to the visitor center is the intersection of Main and Fort streets, the official starting point of M-185. From there, you'll travel east along Main Street passing charming boutiques, restaurants and resorts through the historic downtown. Be sure to look for shops selling the island's famous fudge!

Not long after rounding the southeast corner of the island, the roadway becomes known as Lake Shore Drive. Soon you'll approach the spectacular Arch Rock, one of the most photographed spots on the island. The rock formation rises nearly 150 feet above the water and spans 50 feet.

You'll continue north along the picturesque route, reaching Point aux Pins on the island's northern tip at the halfway point of your journey. After rounding the bend, you'll come to British Landing, a battle site in the War of 1812. The successful British invasion there led to the surrender of Fort Mackinac by the U.S. Army. History buffs can explore Fort Mackinac on the island's southern end, only a short distance north of your starting point. The popular attraction, built during the American Revolution, offers interactive exhibits, costumed interpreters and reenactments of life there during the 1800s.

As you approach the end of your journey, reward yourself with a stop at another iconic landmark, the Grand Hotel. When the hotel first opened in 1887 (just 50 years after Michigan became a state), room rates were \$3 to \$5 a night! Notable guests have included five U.S. Presidents, Thomas Edison and Mark Twain. And, if the Victorian-era resort looks



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Mackinac

Length: 8.3miles

**Trail end points:** Mackinac Island to Mackinac Island

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Greenway/Non-RT

**Trail activities:** Bike, Fishing, Horseback Riding, Inline Skating, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible, Cross Country Skiing

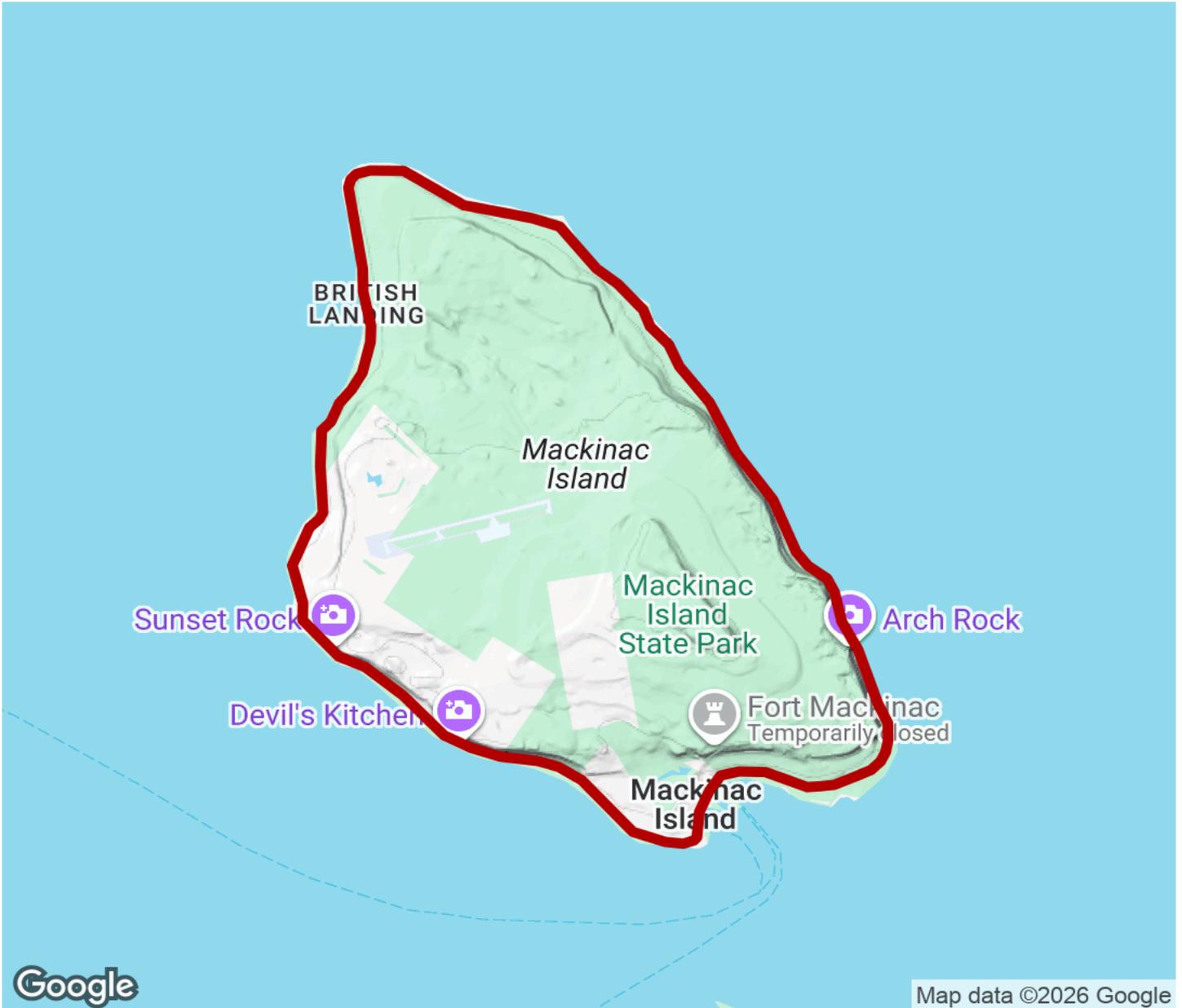
## Parking & Trail Access

The island is located in Lake Huron between Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas. Ferries are available from either side: St. Ignace (to the north) and Mackinaw City (to the south). Interstate 75 will bring you to the ferry docks of both cities and the boat trip will take about 15-20 minutes.



# Mackinac Island Loop (State Highway 185)

Michigan



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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