

## Photo Itinerary...

### The Spectacular Autumn of Michigan's Upper Peninsula

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The forest of Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees that are interspersed with 4000 lakes, 12,000 miles of picturesque streams, and over 150 waterfalls. Birch, maple, beech and aspen dominate the deciduous trees and create a fall landscape that is rich in red, orange, yellow and gold. These colors are in vivid contrast to the evergreens and the clear blue of the lakes and sky. Early morning and late evening light heightens the richness of the colors.

The peak of the color season is late September to early October with the earlier peak time in the northern region in the Keweenaw Peninsula and the later peak time farther south. Just south of Munising, in the central part of the Upper Peninsula along Lake Superior, the peak color is usually the first week of October. The peak color of the coastal regions will lag the inland regions due to the tempering effect of the Great Lakes, Superior, Michigan and Huron.

The area near and around Munising, Michigan in Alger County is my favorite area. The southern part of Alger County (and extending eastward into Schoolcraft County) is dotted with small kettle lakes that are rimmed with colorful trees that grow right up to the edge of the lakes. In early morning or late evening the water surface is often like glass providing beautiful reflections of trees and sky. Snow is not unusual in October, which can provide an opportunity for photographing the colored leaves with white snow. These lakes are very accessible, often being adjacent to the main roads through the counties.

US Highway 2 runs east and west across the lower part of the Upper Peninsula and Michigan Highway 28 traverses the northern part. There are many roads running north and south to connect the two roads. It is best to get maps that show the county road systems so that all of the connecting roads and lake-access roads will be available to you. You will be in Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests and Lake Superior State Forest most of the time.

East of Munising is another picturesque region that includes five significant waterfalls in addition to the two that are just south of Munising. Three of the falls (Alger, Wagner and Munising Falls) are very close to Munising and the other four (Miners, Mosquito, Chapel and Sable Falls) are in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore that extends from Munising to Grand Marais, Michigan. Highway H58 is the connecting road through the region from Munising to Grand Marais. It is a gravel or dirt road for much of the journey passing through wooded terrain. The shoreline begins in the western end with an exposed sandstone cliff that rises as high as 200 feet above Lake Superior. Several unique and colorful rock formations with colorful names (Miners Castle, Lovers Leap, Rainbow Caves, Painted Coves, and Battleship Rock) mark the coastline. The shoreline changes to sandy beach for about 12 miles beyond the cliffs and then ends in the eastern end as huge sand dunes, Grand Sable Dunes. From September 1 to October 10, there are two cruises that depart from Munising to give you a waterside view of the Pictured Rocks.





Lodging may be obtained at numerous motels and cabins as well as in campgrounds, private and public. Having reservations ahead of time is a good idea if you can get access to directories or to the Internet. I usually plan to be on the color tour for two weeks or more. For further information and details, I recommend Photo Traveler's Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, (c) 1992, 1994 Photo Traveler's Publications, P.O. Box 39912, Los Angeles, CA 90039; (213) 660-0473.

Travelling north through Michigan, take Interstate 75 to the Mackinaw Bridge. Over the bridge, take US 2 west, go north on Michigan 77 to Grand Marais. To go to Munising, turn off of Michigan 77 onto Michigan 28 going west to Munising.

All images Olympus OM-4, Fuji Velvia, no filters, Velbon CX-690 tripod with 3-way head.

*Editor's Note* - View more of John's work at his web site, [www.photosforyouonline.com](http://www.photosforyouonline.com).

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