

IN THE HEART OF THE FINGER LAKES

# Cayuga

COUNTY



Adventure  
With  
Purpose

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# Cayuga County

ABOUT OUR DESTINATION



Cayuga County is traditional homeland of the **Gayogo hó:nq'** (the Cayuga Nation) of the **Hodínq̃hsq̃:nih** Confederacy. Cayuga means “people of the wetlands.” Established in 1799, the county has 23 townships, six incorporated villages, and our County Seat, the historic city of Auburn. Cayuga County is located 269 miles from New York City, 125 miles from Buffalo, and 175 miles from the capital city of Albany.

The 864-mile area nestled within the picturesque

Finger Lakes region is a well-kept wonder of natural beauty and four-season adventure. Cayuga County's towns and villages offer a great place to base a lakeside getaway. From northern beachside bluffs to southern dense forest land, our destination has charming communities, peaceful central countryside, rich cultural heritage as the home of Harriet Tubman and William Seward, recreation along remnants of the original Erie Canal, and the most freshwater coastline in New York State.

How you spend your time matters—make it count.

-  [tourcayuga.com](http://tourcayuga.com)
-  [CayugaTourism](#)
-  [CayugaCountyTourism](#)
-  [cayuga\\_tourism](#)

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## From the Director

Sustainability isn't just a practice in Cayuga County—it's a way of life. Here, responsible tourism connects visitors and locals with the land, the people, and the stories that shape our region. This year, we celebrate the businesses, farms, and organizations leading the way in mindful stewardship, ensuring that the beauty and bounty of our county endure for generations.

From farm stands to fine dining, our commitment to sustainability is reflected in every bite. True farm-to-table experiences flourish here. As travel writer Corlon Evans put it, “The soil is different here”—noting our region's dedication to the land and its caretakers. Across the county, growers and chefs work together to cultivate a food culture rooted in care for the land.

Beyond the table, our natural spaces invite exploration with purpose. Stroll the ADA-accessible boardwalk at Carpenter Falls or paddle Cayuga Lake from its ADA-accessible kayak launch, ensuring more visitors can experience the region's beauty. Hike through Fillmore Glen State Park or visit the Sterling Nature Center, where conservation and education protect Cayuga County's rich ecosystems. These experiences remind us that sustainability is not only about preserving landscapes—it's about connecting with the places we cherish.

Local businesses embody this spirit of stewardship. The Inns of Aurora, a model of sustainable restoration, integrate geothermal energy and water management practices to minimize environmental impact. Their spa, the first in the U.S. to receive WELL Certification, reflects a commitment to eco-conscious design. White Barn Winery is evolving into a sustainable lifestyle farm, cultivating grapes, herbs, pumpkins, and evergreen trees. In partnership with Windy Ridge Homesteading, they offer workshops in organic gardening, food preservation, and winemaking—giving visitors a chance to connect with the land. These are a few of the incredible businesses in our county dedicated to sustainability and responsible tourism.

As you plan your visit, explore Cayuga County through a sustainable lens. Whether you're here for adventure, relaxation, or culinary delights, we're happy to guide you toward experiences that honor the land and community. Visit our website or give us a call—we look forward to welcoming you.

 **Karen Kühl**  
Executive Director  
Cayuga County Tourism



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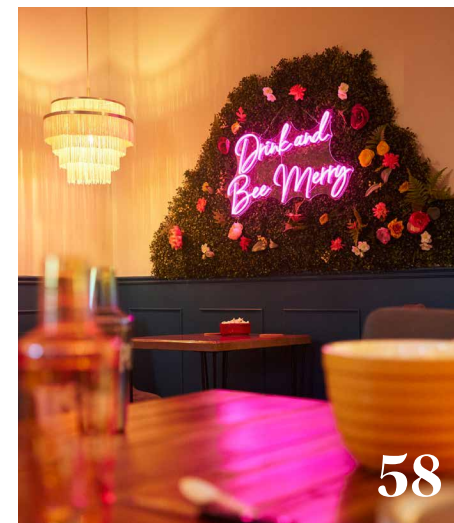
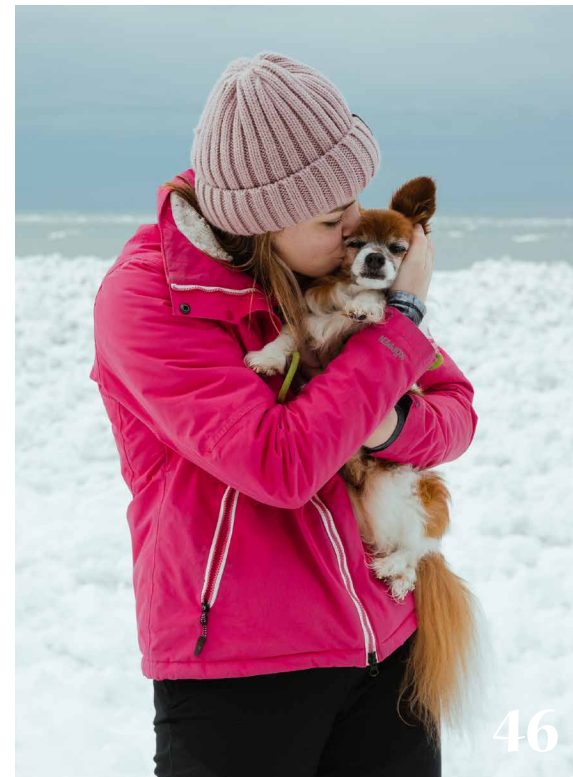
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## TOUR CAYUGA in the FINGER LAKES

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### On The Cover

Go beyond and get outdoors mountain biking in Bear Swamp State Forest in Sempronius, NY, (page 16). Photograph by Reel Inspired.

### 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

On the corner of Lincoln and William Streets in downtown Auburn, there stands a bronze sculpture of a woman atop boulders with outstretched arms to the sky. The public artwork is a tribute to the Haudenosaunee creation story. History tells of a pregnant Sky Woman being dropped through the clouds and caught by swans on her descent. She is then placed on the back of a great turtle patted with mud that becomes North America. The twins birthed by Sky Woman represent the eternal creation battle of light and darkness.

The sculpture was unveiled in July 2024, and revealed Sky Woman holding a gyroscope with rings for the sun, earth, and sky. A ceremony was held by members of the Turtle Clan of the Gayogo hó:ǫ' in support of the art piece. Traditional Cayuga Nation citizens placed a medallion around the sculpture's neck to extend gratitude and friendship to the community for generations to come.

**Sky Woman**  
City of Auburn

The bronze sculpture by artist Audrey Iwanicki is the first piece of public art to honor Native American history in the city of Auburn.



# 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.



*Stay Informed*

**Scan to read our blog.**

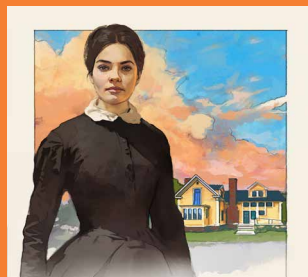
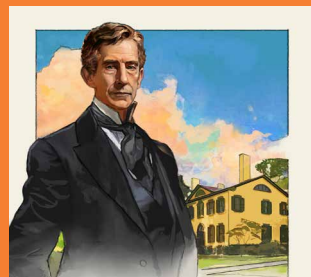
We post new and exciting stories almost weekly.



## State-wide Tourism Excellence Awards

Tour Cayuga was recognized for its public relations and program efforts by state-wide industry peers. During the fall awards ceremony in Saratoga Springs, the office was the recipient of two 2024 New York State Tourism Industry Alliance Awards for Excellence in Tourism Marketing Campaigns, Projects, & Programs. The winning campaign was the International Underground Railroad Month Group Familiarization and Media Event, and Brave Women FLX was the recognized trail and itinerary.

The nominated media event was held at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center during September International UGRR Month and featured remarks from Ally Spongr, president of the UGRR Consortium of NYS; Ahna Wilson, superintendent of Women's Rights and Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks; and Karen Kuhl, executive director of Tour Cayuga. The FAM trip was attended by national travel writers to honor Tubman's legacy and the county's UGRR history.



## Historical Figures Poster Series

The destination worked with Owens Illustration to develop a series of posters honoring historical figures of national importance from Cayuga County. The four illustrations spotlight: Conductor of the Underground Railroad Harriet Tubman, shown in front of the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, now part of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park; sound-on-film pioneer Theodore Case and the Cayuga Museum of History & Art, which houses his original research lab; President Lincoln's Secretary of State William H. Seward, illustrated alongside his South Street mansion, now a historic home museum; and women's suffrage pioneer Emily Howland and her family's legacy at the Howland Stone Store Museum. These vibrant illustrations celebrate local icons and serve as visual invitations to explore the rich, layered history rooted in the heart of the Finger Lakes. Each poster was designed to educate, inspire, and deepen appreciation for the region's powerful contributions to American history and civil rights.



## Cayuga County Annual Meeting Honorees

Each year, the destination recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations striving in promoting local tourism. The meeting held at 10-10 BBQ in Moravia acknowledged partners focused on social inclusion and community-mindedness, especially those creating accessible experiences. The 2024 honorees were: Union Springs for its ADA-accessible kayak launch; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for its ADA-accessible boardwalk and waterfall viewing platform; and the Cayuga Museum for its Creative Explorers program and quiet hours.



## Sweet Treat Trail Takeover

The Sweet Treat Trail is an award-winning self-guided tour featuring more than 20 partners from May through October. While 2024 focused on the professional home bakers and a takeover at the Downtown Auburn Saturday Market, the 2025 trail will spotlight Farm to Sweet Treat, encouraging visits to the farms where the products and ingredients come from for our partners along the trail. The destination will host another Sweet Treat Trail Saturday Market takeover in downtown Auburn on June 28. Check out the Sweet Treat Trail on Instagram at @fl.sweet.treat.trail or Facebook at @SweetTreatTrailFLX.



## Path of Totality Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024, Cayuga County was in the path of totality for a once-in-a-lifetime solar eclipse event. Week-long celebrations were planned across the county to mark the historic occasion, and the destination experienced an influx of visitation both domestic and international. To assist visitors, Tour Cayuga launched a webpage calendar of viewing parties and educational events. The office also provided the public with free eclipse viewing glasses to promote safe eclipse viewing and worked with Owens Illustration to design a commemorative poster.

In an effort to reduce needless waste, Cayuga County businesses and organizations teamed up to host drop-off sites and recycle the thousands of pairs of eclipse viewing glasses. The destination worked in partnership with Reuse Refuge—Auburn's low waste shop and refillery—to collect undamaged eclipse glasses and worked with national agencies to donate the glasses to communities at the next eclipse site.



# #TourCayuga

## Instagram-worthy spots to capture in our destination

We love to see your snaps of sites around Cayuga County. Show us what inspires you to stop and take a photo around the Finger Lakes region. Tag us on social media for a chance to be featured in the magazine. Use a smartphone to scan the QR code for a direct link to our page. Picture yourself enjoying these locations and start planning your next visit.



*Follow Us*

**Scan to connect socially.**

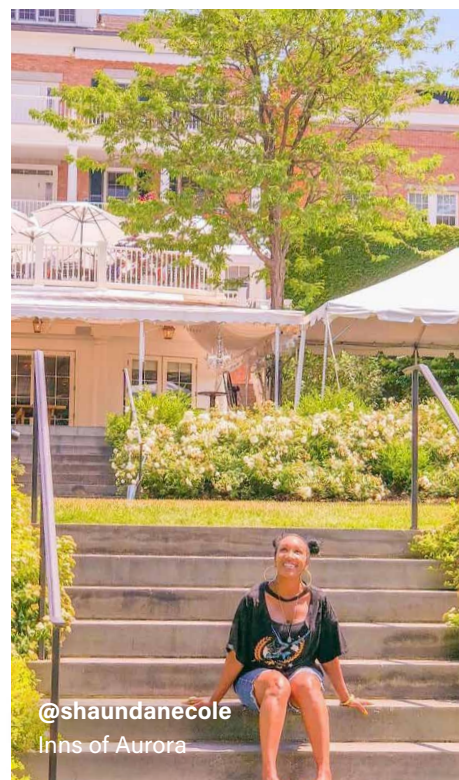
Link directly to our social media pages.



@heather.april  
Grisamore Farms



@cocomindemann  
Long Point Winery



@shaundanecole  
Inns of Aurora



@kathreck  
MacKenzie-Childs Headquarters



@fbhidy  
Howland Island Wildlife Area

# Best Rated

## Top dining spots as reviewed on Tripadvisor

While our destination boasts many top-notch eating experiences, we searched Tripadvisor for the highest ranked restaurants spanning the county. The Finger Lakes area has something for everyone—creative flavor, casual cafes, fine farm-to-table, waterside dining, local BBQ joints, and brewpubs that reflect the regional cuisine. Learn more about our unique Cayuga Cuisine offerings on page 54.



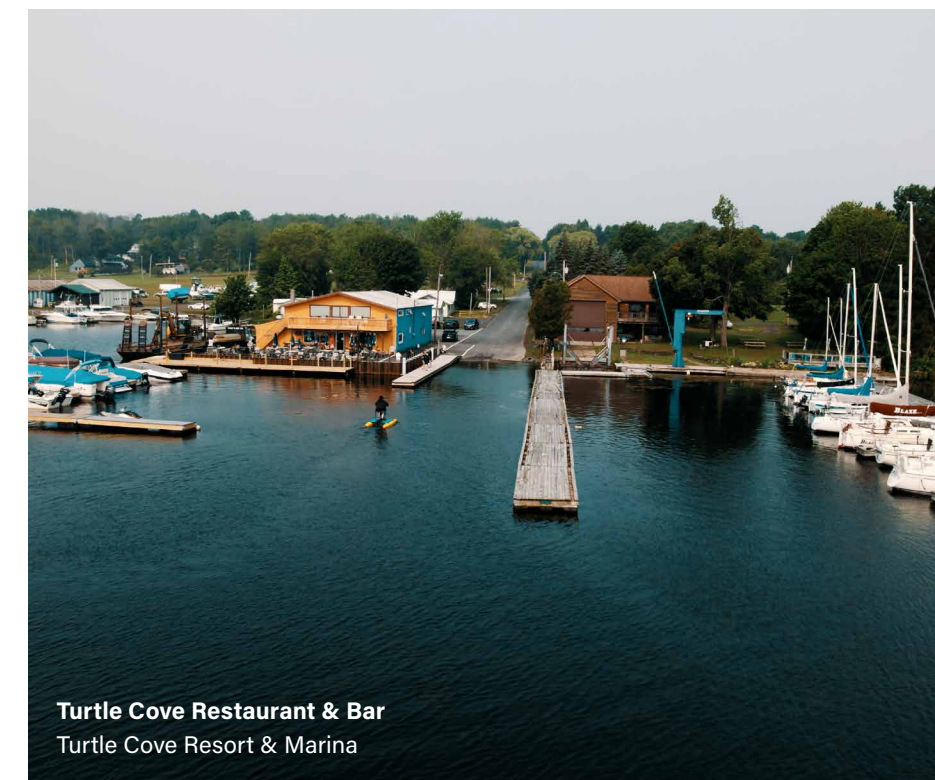
Moro's Table  
City of Auburn



Elderberry Pond Restaurant  
Town of Sennett



10-10 BBQ  
Village of Moravia



Turtle Cove Restaurant & Bar  
Turtle Cove Resort & Marina



1833 Kitchen & Bar  
Inns of Aurora



# Check List

Mark your calendar for these annual events.



*Events Calendar*

**Scan for the full list.**

The Finger Lakes region hosts festival fun and seasonal events all year long.



## Winter

Find comfort during **Restaurant Week** and **Hibernation retreats**. Get cozy at **Christmas in Moravia** and vote for a favorite decorated tree at the **Festival of Trees**. View the annual **Both Ends of the Rainbow** student and senior citizen art exhibition. Women's History Month welcomes **Brave Women Week** featuring **Brave Brews Festival**. The passing of Harriet Tubman Davis is observed on **Harriet Tubman Day** each March 10. Tap into **NYS Maple Weekend** for syrup-making events.



## Spring

The county blossoms with **First Friday**, **Made in NY**, and **Egg Hunts**. Delight in the **Wine and Cheese Festival** and discover your favorite flowers in bloom. Memorial Day Weekend features parades and the **Sterling Stage Folkfest** at the Kampitheater. Early June celebrates **LGBTQIA+ Pride** with special events. The **Juneteenth Celebration** has been named one of the top 12 commemoration destinations. A new season of **Broadway in the Finger Lakes** opens at The REV Theatre.



## Summer

**July 4th Fireworks**, **Sterling Renaissance Festival**, **NY Lavender Festival**, and the 50-mile **Route 90 Garage Sale** mean summertime. Enjoy **Summer Movie & Concert Series** in public parks. **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 summer with **CNY TomatoFest**, **Art in the Park**, and **Riot Run 5K**.



## Fall

This is the season for leaf-peeping, apple picking, and **Fall Festivals**. Get spooked at **Trunk-'R-Treats** and **Haunted History Tours**. See juried arts events like the **Cayuga Film Festival** and internationally known **Quilts=Art=Quilts** exhibition. Usher in the seasonal spirit with after-Thanksgiving tree lightings, vendor markets, and the annual **Holiday Traditions Open House** at historic and cultural attractions. Or take part in **Path Through History** distinguished speaker series and cheerful festivities in pumpkin patches.





# Shop Local

## Take pride in products made around the county.

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.



### Small Batch Soap

The cold-processed, scented soap made by **Otter Lake Farm & Fiber** is handcrafted right on the homestead using gentle raw materials and ethically sourced ingredients.



### Aromatic Soy Candles

These handpoured soy candles by **The Yellow Wallpaper Co.** feature nostalgic fragrances that will smell reminiscent of fresh lakeside or deep forest air.



### Pure Maple Syrup

For a true taste of New York, try locally produced maple syrup from family farms like **Smokey Hollow Maple Syrup** and **Sterling Sugar Shanty**.



### Homespun Honey Products

Look for natural honey products by **Standing Stone Honey**, **Haines Apiary**, and **Frozen Ocean Apiaries** at farm stands, markets, or straight from the source.



### Painted Artisan Ceramics

Famous for the signature checked patterns, artists at **MacKenzie-Childs** have been handmaking pieces with recognizable whimsy in Aurora for more than 40 years.

# Make It Count

## Preserving a treasured legacy tree

The prominent Ginkgo biloba tree located behind the Cayuga Museum of History and Art is the largest of its kind in Cayuga County.

### Great Ginkgo City of Auburn

Although its exact age is not known, local forestry expert and urban forest consultant Walt Aikman told *The Citizen* he speculates that the tree is 150 to 170 years old. This celebrated tree is a sight to be seen when its leaves turn vibrantly yellow in autumn. As part of the West End Arts Campus project, the **Cayuga Museum** has plans to expand its landscaping efforts to surround the Ginkgo with historically accurate greenery and include park benches and public plazas for the community to sustainably celebrate the arts for many generations.







The environment is important to governments and businesses in Cayuga County. It makes sense, because the county is the top dairy, soybean, and corn producer in New York State. In fact, the county is the top agricultural producer in the state and ranks 234th nationally. While farms are obvious partners, retail stores, resorts, and even local libraries in our destination are putting sustainability practices into place.

### Agritourism Partners

It's been said that you can make vodka out of anything, and **Moo Vodka** is an example of that. The alcohol, which comes in bottles decorated with Holstein spots, is made from whey, a waste product from cheese and yogurt making. What's more, its manufacture actually helps the environment: for every bottle produced, three-fourth pound of high protein animal feed is generated, two liters of pure water are created, and three-fourth pound of greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is captured. "MOO Vodka reflects our commitment to innovation and sustainability, values deeply rooted in our state's heritage," said Eduard Zaydman, president of **Cayuga Ingredients**, which makes the alcoholic beverage. Moo Vodka comes in regular and three milk-inspired flavors: chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry.

Farmers are stewards of the land, and brothers Greg and Neil Rejman exemplify that with their 7,500-acre **Sunnyside Farms**, which was honored with the 2024 New York Agricultural Environmental Management-Leopold Conservation Award. NYS Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball said during the award announcement that Sunnyside is the largest farm in the country to win a Leopold award. The award honors farm and forest owners who go above and beyond in the management of their land. The Rejmans' large farm is located between Owasco and Cayuga lakes, making their efforts important to the water

quality of both lakes. In addition to usual efforts, like using buffer strips and cover crops to reduce erosion, they installed a manure digester and underground piping to move liquid manure to fields for injection into the soil to prevent runoff into streams and lakes. They also adopted an experimental pest management plan, with the help of Cornell University, that uses nematodes instead of pesticides to reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals. "I think a lot of what we do on the environmental side and conservation side is... not overthinking it and trying to do the best we can," Neil Rejman said.

**Otter Lake Farm & Fiber** in Cato is taking a different approach to helping the environment. Owner Kate Pelkey raises sheep and makes products from them, including wool, soap, skincare, and meat. But her newest product is wool pellets, which are made of waste wool taken from sheep's belly or hindquarters. These pellets can be used as fertilizer, since they contain nitrogen and carbon, and to keep plants hydrated in the summer, since they can absorb 10 or more times their weight in water.

Pelkey is looking to buy other sheep farms' waste wool to help grow the wool pellet market in the state.

Farms aren't the only agribusinesses focusing on protecting the environment. **Bright Leaf Vineyards**, located in King Ferry, earned a certification as a NYS Sustainable Winegrowing Vineyard in 2024. Among

the standards wineries must achieve are building, regenerating, and conserving healthy soils; protecting surrounding reservoirs and waterways from pollution; and increasing climate resiliency and promoting climate-smart farming.

Another Cayuga County winery, **Izzo's White Barn Winery** in Cayuga, is partnering with Gabrielle Gulbe of **Windy Ridge Homestead** to offer monthly workshops on gardening and other life skills. The first topic will be sustainable seed starting. The workshop, to be held at the winery, will be followed by a complimentary wine tasting. Future planned themes are set to cover composting, preserving the food you grow, and wine making.

### Retail Partners

The best way to help the environment is to stop buying new, choose items with little or no packaging, and stop purchasing items with single-use plastic. That's the aim of **Reuse Refuge**, a low-waste shop and refillery located in downtown Auburn. The shop sells cleaning supplies and self-care items like soap, bath bombs,

and body lotions in bulk. Simply bring your own bottle, pick up a free one, or purchase one with the Reuse Refuge logo and fill them up with the store's eco-friendly supplies. Recycling is another important feature: every month, visitors are encouraged to bring in a specific item for recycling, for instance, toothbrushes or





milk cartons. The store also sells second-hand clothes and books through in-store pop-ups.

Forget fast fashion and big box furniture when there's perfectly good, gently used clothes, home furnishings and décor, artisan creations, and more waiting for new owners at **Regenerations**, an Auburn boutique and consignment shop. The store at 101 Genesee Street is an organized jumble of sights and smells. Shoppers can find furniture, handmade pillows, locally made soaps, artwork, dishware, and, yes—funky clothing in every corner of the store. “The concept of consignment and upcycling and repurposing is very popular right now,

especially with millennials who appreciate the stewarding of the Earth,” said owner Sue Waby. (It's also a great place to pick up a unique gift for that hard-to-please person in your life.)

**Dickman Farms Greenhouses and Garden Center**, now known for supplying flowers to Wegmans stores and dozens of garden centers east of the Mississippi, began in 1903 with 20 acres of vegetables. Their first greenhouse was built in 1929 to house a miniature golf course, then grew hot house tomatoes in the 1950s and 60s. But the Dickman family grew their last vegetable crop in 1985 and focused on growing ornamental plants: flowers and flowering bushes.

### Reuse Refuge City of Auburn

At this low-waste shop and refillery, owner Lucy Janssen offers new customers and regulars alike a sustainable shopping experience, plus community-building through educational workshops, clothing swaps, recycling events, and fundraising efforts.



Along the way, the Dickman family operation became a certified VeriFlora grower, committed to conserving natural resources through efficient water use, energy saving initiatives, greenhouse gas reduction efforts, and minimizing product packaging. In 2021, Dickman Farms was named Greenhouse Grower's Medal of Excellence Operation of the Year.

There are many ways to conserve water, and **Bo-Mer Custom Manufacturing** in Auburn is a leader in commercial self-watering planters. The company, which makes plastic and metal molds to order, purchased **EarthPlanter**, a New Hampshire company making self-watering planters, in 2010. The planters, which come in various sizes, can hold up to 25 gallons of water and use a wicking system to keep plants watered. Municipalities or businesses that use the planters reduce labor costs by watering plants less often and conserve water because the reservoir at the bottom of the planter does not evaporate as quickly. Bo-Mer owner Tom Herbert said EarthPlanter is growing by 30 to 40 percent per year, leading the company to consider an expansion.

### Conservation Partners

Northern Cayuga County has a 1,400-acre environmental gem in the **Sterling Nature Center**, but it almost didn't happen. In the 1970s, Rochester Gas & Electric bought up tracts of land in Sterling, planning to build a power plant there. The community came together to fight those plans, which led to its acquisition by Cayuga County and subsequent development as a county park. It features meadows, forests, wetlands made by both beavers and humans, trails, a heron rookery, and incredible views of Lake Ontario. It is staffed and maintained by volunteers with the nonprofit Friends of the Sterling Nature Center, which also helped secure government funding for its new energy efficient and climate resilient interpretive center.

There are plenty of places in Cayuga County where visitors can get close to nature, including three state parks: **Fair Haven** in Sterling, **Fillmore Glen** in Moravia, and **Long Point** just south of Aurora. Fair Haven is located on Lake Ontario and offers camping sites, a sandy beach, boat launch and more. Fillmore Glen has dense woods crowding into a long, narrow gorge with hiking trails, unique geological formations, and five waterfalls. Long Point is on Cayuga Lake's eastern shore and offers easy access to the lake with its four-lane boat launch. The county maintains three major parks—**Emerson** on northern Owasco Lake, **Owasco Flats** on the southern tip of the lake, and **Sterling Nature Center** on Lake Ontario—and several trails.

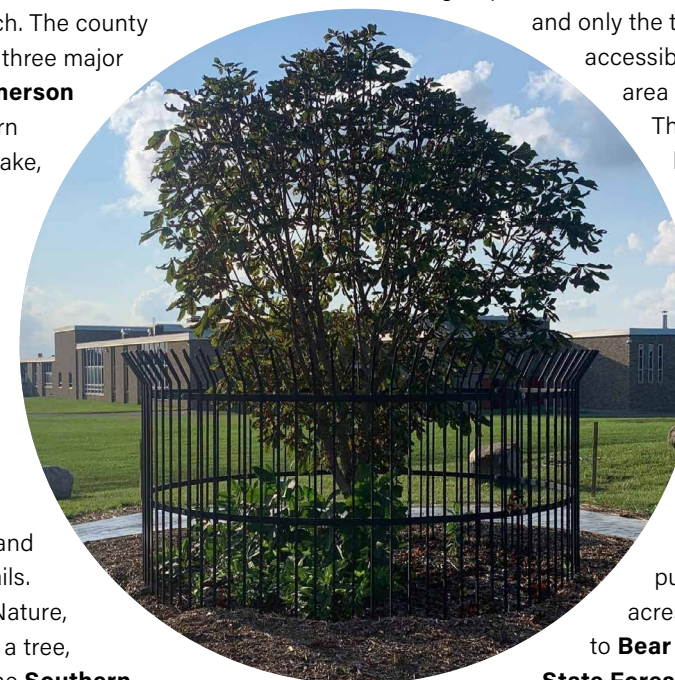
Nature, or at least a tree, sparked the **Southern Cayuga Anne Frank Tree Project**, but it was a special tree: one of 11 saplings cultivated from the Horse Chestnut tree that Anne Frank could see out the window of the Amsterdam Secret Annex where she and her family were hiding from Nazis. The Southern Cayuga school district was chosen because of the area's strong history with civil rights and women's rights. The tree holds an honored place on school grounds and is the center for programming for both students and the general community on social justice issues. The group's mission is to educate and empower children and adults to use their thoughts, words, and deeds to promote understanding, equity,

and justice within society.

An important part of maintaining water quality is preventing runoff of chemicals into lakes that serve as drinking water sources for surrounding communities. **The Finger Lakes Land Trust** takes on that challenge by buying up forests, farmlands, gorges, and shorelines in the region and keeping them forever wild. In 2018, the land trust purchased a 74-acre parcel on Owasco Lake's eastern shore and created the Owasco Bluffs Nature Preserve. It's the group's first Owasco Lake preserve and only the third publicly accessible nature area on the lake.

The group has since restored a wetland on the northern part of the land to help improve water quality. The organization purchased 218 acres adjacent to **Bear Swamp State Forest**, its ninth conservation project in the vicinity of this priority open space area.

If birdwatching is your hobby, there's no better place to visit than **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge**. Its wetlands, grasslands, shrubland and forests offer a home for many Central New York wildlife species, as well as a resting place for migratory birds. The traditional marshes were dammed and drained during construction of the Erie Canal, but the government began restoring the marshes when it formed the wildlife refuge in 1938. Visitors can tour the refuge on foot or by car, and there are four viewing towers and platforms for birding and picture taking.





## Hospitality Partners

If you want to get close to nature but still enjoy luxury, consider a stay at the **Inns of Aurora**. The AAA Four Diamond resort is located on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake in the historic village of Aurora. In addition to traditional resort offerings, including golf, spa treatments, and fine dining, the Inns at Aurora make respect for the environment a priority. The historic buildings that make up the Inns were renovated with windows and materials to reduce energy loss. The spa

is heated and cooled with a geothermal system, and the resort has installed above- and below-ground water retention features to minimize stormwater runoff. The resort even takes light pollution into consideration, using fixtures that restrict the amount of upward-directed light, avoid glare, and avoid over-lighting. Their care of the environment makes a stay at Inns of Aurora a benefit for visitors and the Earth.

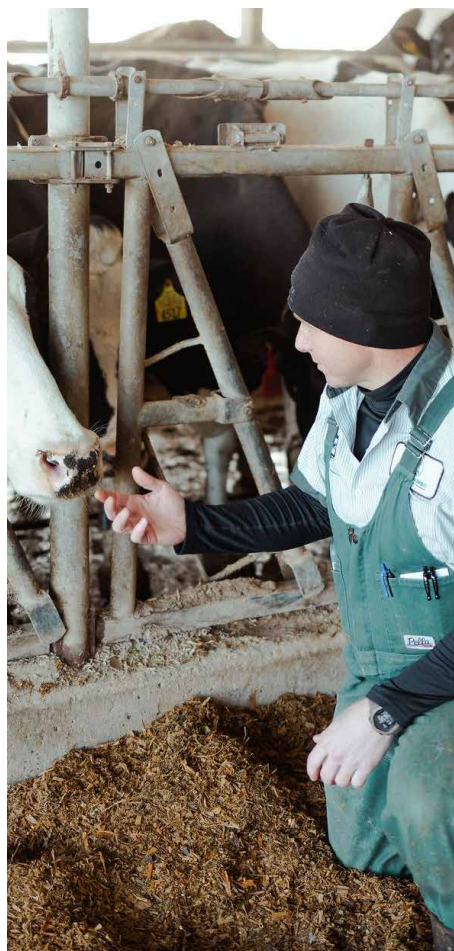
Even historic sites in our city center are instituting efforts to provide the public with access to sustainability

resources—like how to start growing your own vegetables. At **Seymour Library** in Auburn, visitors can take home packets from the **Seed Library**—and get advice from the library's partner, **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County**. Participants can select a maximum of 10 seed packets from a variety of flower, food, and herb seeds. The library also has books and garden-themed Discover Kits. Those interested do not need a library card to partake, and bonus: returning the fruits of your labor after growing season is not required.



**Otter Lake Farm & Fiber**  
Village of Cato

Kate Pelkey is a homesteader who spins, knits, and makes high-quality products from happy animals on her farm. She specializes in offering waste wool pellets as a sustainable fertilizer source.



**Oakwood Dairy**  
Town of Aurelius

This three-generation dairy farm is known for its dedication to efficient farming techniques, especially when it comes to progressing cow comfort. The farm is accessible to the community through public tours.



**Regenerations**  
City of Auburn

Artist Sue Waby owns this lifestyle boutique that gives quality furnishings and gently used clothing new life—and protects the environment from more waste. She also carries local artwork and artisan-made goods.

# Problem Solvers

## Mission-driven organizations for good

### Leave No Trace

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism is proud to be a partner with Leave No Trace, an organization dedicated to promoting environmental education and conservation to protect the outdoors. The nonprofit believes in education for all on being a part of the solution.

### Cayuga Climate Action

The mission statement of this grassroots organization is to educate, advocate, and act on the climate crisis to protect and restore the lakes and lands. The group works with other like-minded community partners like the Auburn Beautification Commission on waste reduction education efforts.

### Friends of the Sterling Nature Center

This volunteer group promotes the development and conservation of Sterling Park. In 2024, the center completed its new interpretive space, a \$3.2 million project funded through NYS's RED1 program. The center strengthens climate resiliency, expands education, and boosts regional tourism.

### Cayuga Lake Watershed

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network identifies threats to the lake and watershed, and advocates for sustainable solutions for a healthy environment. The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency is a resource to the County Legislature to protect and improve the quality of water.



**West Barrier Bar**  
Little Sodus Bay

### Friends of Emerson Park

The non-profit group of local patrons organized together to support and promote the Cayuga County Parks and Trails Department in the development, preservation, and vision of Emerson Park, while maintaining the natural resources and fostering community-oriented events and fundraisers.

### Owasco Lake Watershed

Owasco Watershed Lake Association was founded to educate the public on the environmental management, preservation, wise use, and appreciation of the lake. The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, manages watershed inspection and protection and the Fillmore Nature Preserve.

### Finger Lakes Land Conservation

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation plays a vital role in protecting natural resources and providing people with access to the outdoors. The Finger Lakes Land Trust preserves the ecological integrity of more than 33,000 acres of nature preserves in the region.



**Canal Clean Sweep**  
Village of Weedsport



**Sterling Nature Center**  
Town of Sterling



Centerport Aqueduct  
Town of Brutus

Paddling Canal Locks  
Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail

Erie Canal  
Bicentennial

Montezuma Heritage Park  
Town of Montezuma

Erie Canal 200 Poster  
Richmond Aqueduct



Canal Celebrations

Scan for the list of special events.  
Join us in commemorating 200 years of  
history, innovation, and inspiration.

# Traces of the Early Erie Canal

**T**he original Erie Canal officially opened on October 26, 1825, when Governor DeWitt Clinton landed in New York City after a seven-day boat trip from Buffalo. Clinton marked the occasion by depositing a barrel of Lake Erie water into the Atlantic Ocean. But, in Cayuga County, the Erie Canal began operating much earlier.

Work on the Erie Canal began in 1817 on the Middle Division, from its eastern end in Rome, where the first shovel was turned, to Montezuma in Cayuga County. That stretch, considered the easiest because it was the most level, was completed in May 1820. Then, work began simultaneously to extend the canal east to Albany and west to Buffalo.

This year marks the bicentennial of the Erie Canal, and we encourage you to explore the remaining canal sites in our destination to learn more about its revolutionary role in making the Empire State an industrial leader.



The Canal Expansion

Completion of the Middle Division led to an expansion of trade in Weedsport, Port Byron, and Montezuma. “There was a Port Byron, but it didn’t amount to much,” said Joni Lincoln, Conquest Town Historian. “But, then the canal came through, and things changed.”

Port Byron grew up around the canal, which served as its main street. Weedsport’s location on the old post road that led to both Auburn and Oswego made it an important stop. Montezuma began as a settlement on the turnpike road, now Route 31, but moved south to the banks of the canal when it opened.

Today’s Central New York residents cannot comprehend the impact the 363-mile Erie Canal—America’s first superhighway at 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep—had on the nation. For the first time, goods from Europe could easily travel by boat to the Great Lakes and then down into the heart of the growing nation. And the raw materials produced in the United States—grains, lumber, salt, and more—could be sent abroad. It transformed the northern half of the country into an economic powerhouse.

It also provided a cheap transportation method for people seeking to move west. The population of cities along the canal skyrocketed. During the



Old Erie Canal Heritage Park  
Village of Port Byron

The park gives visitors an authentic glimpse into life on the Erie Canal in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries including the enlarged Erie Canal Lock 52 and the Erie House Complex. The Visitor's Center offers interactive displays and educational materials.



1820s, according to an article by David Brooks of the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, Albany saw a 96 percent increase, Utica 183 percent, Syracuse 282 percent, Buffalo 314 percent, and Rochester 512 percent.

The Canal Reroutes

The canal was so popular that almost immediately state officials began to plan an expansion to widen and deepen the canal and began adding feeder canals such as the Cayuga Seneca Canal to reach more of the state. Locks were doubled and lengthened so boats could pass in both directions simultaneously. The project was completed in 1862.

In many places, including Weedsport, the canal was simply enlarged over its existing path. But the expansion led to issues in communities that grew up along its banks, including Port Byron. Despite the desire of some who wanted to keep the canal flowing through the center of town, it was moved north during the expansion to straighten its route. “Businesses never followed, because of the automobile,” Lincoln said.

In 1905, the state began to

enlarge the canal again, using existing rivers and lakes to make it suitable for larger motorized boats. The expansion into the Barge Canal was completed in fall 1917, bypassing all three Cayuga County communities. The old Erie Canal was abandoned.

Remnants of the Canal

In Weedsport, the canal’s stones through the village were removed and used to build Route 31 in the 1940s. Remnants can be seen east and west of the village, most notably the **Centerport Aqueduct** located a half mile west.

In Port Byron, little of the original canal remains, just one arch of an aqueduct that can be seen from the parking lot of the **Samuel Center for Canal History**. **Schasel Park** has a water-filled section of the 1862 enlarged canal and the filled-in Canal Lock 52 is the centerpiece of the **Erie Canal Heritage Park**. The park includes a visitors’ center, the Erie House 1895 tavern, a blacksmith shop, and a mule barn. “And later this spring, the park will also feature the Lois McClure, a replica of the types of boats that once traveled the canal,” said Andrea

Seamans, a board member for the **Canal Society of New York State**. Access to the museum is from both Route 31 and the eastbound thruway.

Montezuma offers a unique experience, said Montezuma historian Cheryl Longyear. “It’s the only place where you can see all three canals, and the Richmond Aqueduct,” she said. The 11 trails in the 165-acre **Montezuma Heritage Park** take visitors past ruins of the 1825 and 1862 Erie Canal sites and the in-use Barge Canal.

The Canal Today

As part of the **Empire State Trail, Parks and Trails of New York** designated the 12-mile stretch of the trail that connects Montezuma, Port Byron, and Weedsport as the **Cayuga County Canal Communities**.

Linking all these sites is the 351-mile **Erie Canalway Trail**, which travels from Albany to Buffalo. The trail welcomes bicyclists and walkers of all ages and abilities to experience the Empire State’s urban centers, village main streets, rural communities, and diverse history along the path that was once the Erie Canal.





### Chosen Hometown

City of Auburn

Harriet Tubman National Historical Park Ranger Brittany Lane and Rev. Paul Gordon Carter of the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. steward Tubman's legacy through leading tours at important historic sites connected to her post-emancipation life.

# Interpreting the Landscape

The people and places preserving the authentic story of Harriet Tubman's life in freedom and connection with her land

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defines a cultural landscape as combined "works of nature and of man." The Cultural Landscape Foundation interprets it as "a sense of place and identity." And the National Park Service as a historic "geographic area both cultural and natural." While the phrasing used to define a cultural resource is up for interpretation, the objective is always the same: to preserve historically significant sites for present and future generations.

In Auburn, New York, the spaces that shaped Harriet Tubman's last years are protected by the **Harriet Tubman Home, Inc.** and **National Park Service**. The shared goal is to strengthen understanding of the physical environment where she lived as a free woman and its importance to national historic heritage.

Tubman's life of independence began in 1859 with the purchase of a 7-acre farm on South Street from Frances Miller Seward. According to **Seward House Museum** Director of Education Dr. Jeffrey Ludwig, the transaction was a bold move for Tubman to trust the Searws and sign her name to documentation that announced where she was planting roots during a time when she was a "fugitive" by law. However, William Henry Seward had clout as a prominent American politician soon-to-be Secretary of State to President Lincoln, and his abolitionist wife, Frances, operated a successful Underground

Railroad station in the kitchen of their city home that is still viewable today. The Seward-Tubman families forged a strong bond in allyship and antislavery activism.

This tight knit community of supportive friends and neighbors and pastoral beauty of the landscape allowed Tubman to thrive freely in a familiar setting. In an exclusive interview with *Ms. Magazine*, Harriet Tubman Home President and CEO Karen V. Hill shared that the Finger Lakes were similar to Tubman's birthplace on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. "[Tubman] did not try to urbanize her life... she was able to separate the brutality of slavery from how she loved the land. Despite the cruelty of her experience in that place, she tried to recreate and replicate that landscape. She chose property that would give her that kind of sensibility, just her profound respect for what is natural," Hill said.

Tubman would buy the 25-acre parcel lot next to her homesite in 1896 to build the **Home for the Aged** infirmary. This first-of-its-kind senior living center provided shelter, food, and healthcare. Tubman sold the portion of her property with the eventual Home for the Aged to the **African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church** and the church has safeguarded her legacy for more than a century. For almost four decades now, the A.M.E. Zion Church has confided in Rev. Paul Gordon Carter to oversee the caretaking and interpretive tours at the Harriet Tubman Home in his role as site supervisor. Emmy Award-





Harriet Tubman

Scan to plan a visit.

Follow in her footsteps and discover the power of the place Tubman called home.

winning journalist Evita Robinson said Carter is the type of person you meet and instantly know they are excited about the work they do, delivering a “fact-packed, animated presentation on the life of Tubman” multiple times a week.

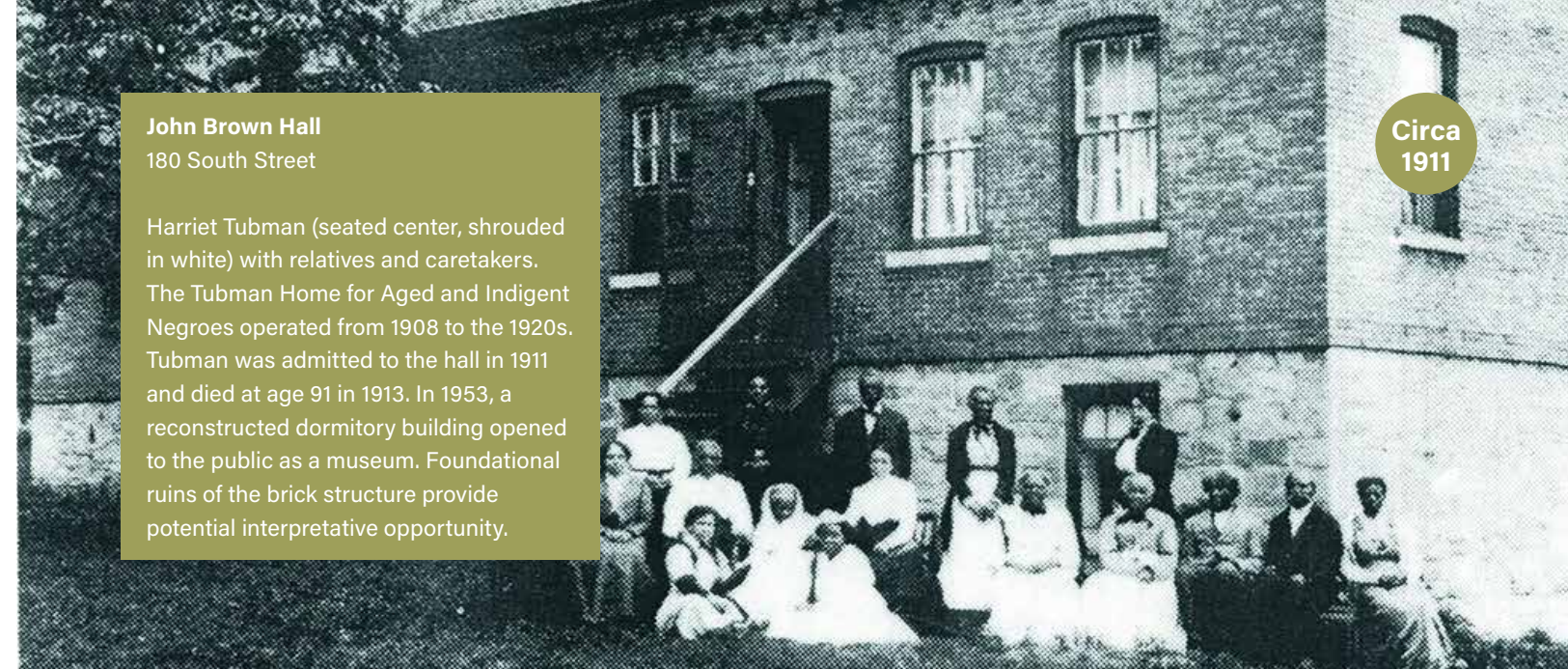
Condensing Tubman’s life story into a 90-minute tour is challenging, but highlighting how she used her property in selfless servitude is a main thread of connection. The outdoorswoman operated a farm to nourish those in her care and to generate revenue for her philanthropic work. “Not only did she own property, but she accumulated 32 acres of property, had the Home for the Aged to take care of people, had an infirmary on the backend of the property, had vegetable gardens here where the people who stayed here worked on the farm...,” cited Carter. Evidence that the property had been used as farmland was revealed in the Harriet Tubman Cultural Landscape Report.

Authored by State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry professor John Auwaerter, the project with the **Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation** provided park management with detailed documentation on the rural character to preserve. Research discovered that the original property boundary had not altered much. A 1896 drawing of Tubman’s house found in a Syracuse newspaper illustrated a picket fence for a garden, trees, lawn, and barn. Archaeological excavations facilitated by Syracuse University professor Doug Armstrong led to the uncovering of many artifacts: medicine bottles, bed pans, a heart-shaped brass pillbox, ceramics, dining sets, and personal items. And it was his students that discovered the stone foundation ruins of the **John Brown Hall**. All indications of Tubman’s lived experience on her property.

The most recent structures to be conserved are the **Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church** and **Parsonage**. The restoration of the sites are a vital addition to Tubman’s story as the church represents her incessant love for her community to thrive and serves as a testament of her faith. In an interview with Leroy Adams of Culture Travels Media, **Harriet Tubman National Historical Park** Lead Ranger Brittany Lane shared that “...Tubman was a woman of faith. Faith was one of the characteristics that carried her forth... Faith was one of her guiding principles.”

Built in 1891 with fundraising by Tubman, the Parker Street church was the anchor in the historic Black neighborhood and a hub of social activity. As summarized by *THE DIRT* landscape architect blog, National Park Service Cultural Resource Specialist Jessica Bowes noted that the foundation of the Underground Railroad was “church, family, and community;” those elements are key to the cultural landscape of Auburn’s Black community. The congregation continued worshipping and growing in the church until 1994 when it moved locations. It currently congregates at the **Harriet Tubman Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church** on Franklin Street.

In 2017, the National Park Service acquired the Parker Street property and began restoration on the church and parsonage. Removal of the modern renovations that had



**John Brown Hall**  
180 South Street

Harriet Tubman (seated center, shrouded in white) with relatives and caretakers. The Tubman Home for Aged and Indigent Negroes operated from 1908 to the 1920s. Tubman was admitted to the hall in 1911 and died at age 91 in 1913. In 1953, a reconstructed dormitory building opened to the public as a museum. Foundational ruins of the brick structure provide potential interpretative opportunity.

Circa  
1911

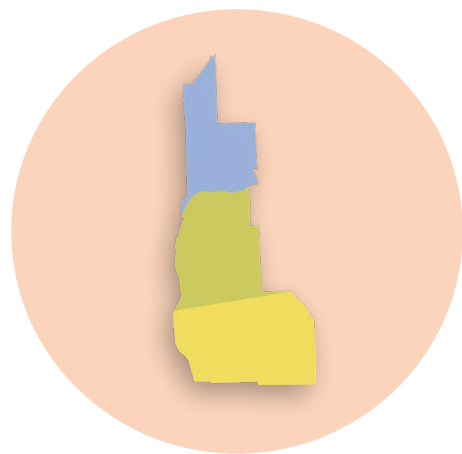
taken place over the past 100 years was completed in 2024. Today, visitors can walk into the sacred space where Tubman worshipped—original pink stenciling included—as it appeared in 1913 during her funeral and interment in nearby Fort Hill Cemetery.

Although the park owns and manages 0.5 acres that encompasses the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church and Parsonage, the impact of the church history expands throughout Auburn. As the park grows, there is hope that the site will revive its opportunity to serve as a community gathering space that honors, celebrates, and preserves Tubman’s resilient spirit. Staff are currently working on an exhibit case where local community members are invited to share impactful and lesser-known stories about the leaders and congregants of the church, Tubman, and the evolution of programming, fundraising, and outreach efforts that ensued to manage the property.

The overarching desire is for these spaces to be centered around the historical contributions of the Black freedom-seeking community and serve as institutions of joy, pride, and comradery.







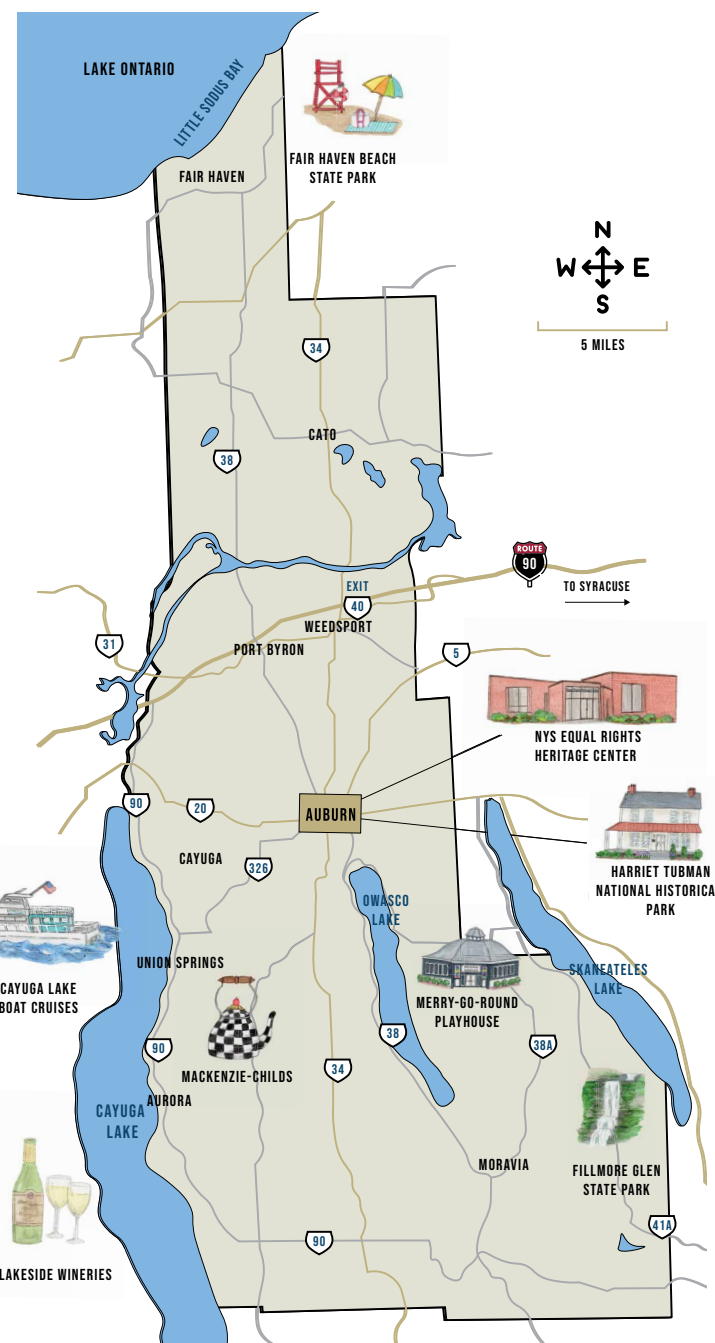
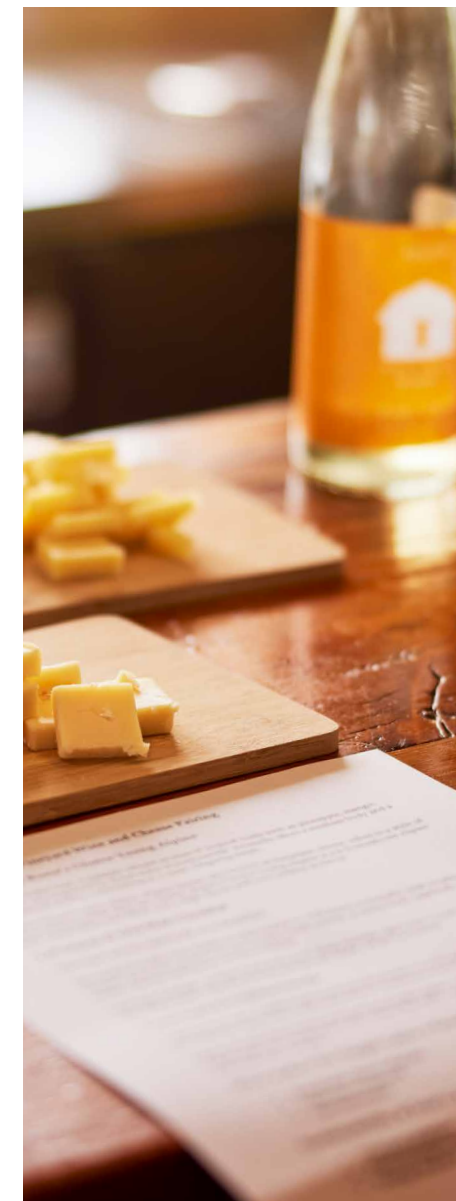
# Cayuga Communities

## Sip your way through our county's regions.

Located in the eastern Finger Lakes, Cayuga County is home to an abundance of award-winning craft beverage producers. Over the past decade this area has watched the local alcohol industry brew back to life for the first time since Prohibition. Currently, our county ranks second in the nation for the number of craft breweries, third for wine production with the Finger Lakes as one of the best known wine-making regions, and first east of the Mississippi in distillery concentration. But brewing was big business in Cayuga County pre-Prohibition with independent breweries, commercialization of hop production, and the Erie Canal and railroads making it one of the leading distilling and cider-making centers in the 19th century. Whiskey and cider became the alcohol of focus during the Temperance Movement, which was active in our region's history as an epicenter of social movements like women's suffrage and abolition of slavery. It would take until the mid-2000s for the craft beverage industry to rise again in the county. Today, with a wide variety of options to enjoy, craft your own beer, wine, cider, and spirits tasting tour through our destination. From Lake Ontario to Cayuga Lake, our historic urban core to quaint village charm, and rolling hillside farmland, we invite you to Visit Cayuga to experience our laidback waterfront lifestyle—one glass at a time.

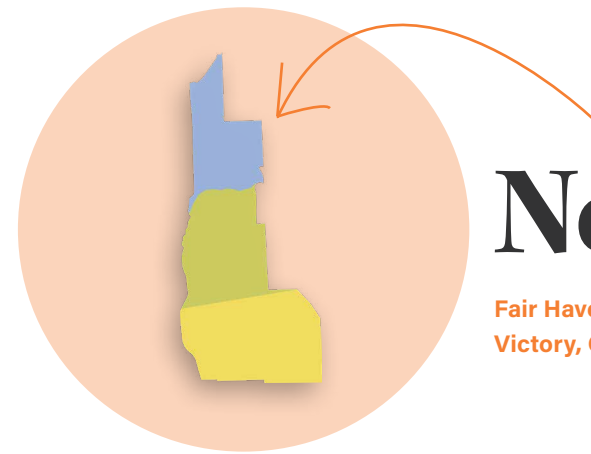


*Experience Cayuga County*  
**Scan to watch the video.**  
 Take a visual journey through all three regions in our Finger Lakes destination.





Cider Flight Tasting  
Sterling Cidery



# Northern Region

Fair Haven, Sterling, Montezuma,  
Victory, Cato, Ira, Martville

At the northern tip of the county is one end of the **Lake Ontario Wine Trail**, featuring the easternmost wineries of the bunch. Summer months in the village of Red Creek are filled with the fragrant blooms of lavender fields and the delicious tastes of floral wine and cider at **Ol' Factory Farm**. The former fruit farm now specializes in growing several types of lavender, which they use for soap, aromatherapy, and culinary treats. Sue Chmielecki is proud to have turned her passions for gardening and soapmaking into a successful woman-owned business. Visitors to the farm can step inside the historic 1891 wine barn and sample a handful of wine and ciders made using the lavender grown onsite. With names like Luminous, Radiant, and Dazzling, these white and rosé wines are crafted in small batches each year. The festivities at the farm amp up every July when they host the NY Lavender Festival.

Head a little further north to find a wine campus along the shores of Little Sodus Bay. **Colloca Estate Winery** is a destination for wine, food, and events. In addition to the wines created with estate-grown grapes, Colloca also has property in Australia where they make region-specific wines to complement their New York offerings. Owner Chris Colloca shares his passion for Australian wines with his customers, adding that he's been doing collaborative research there for more than a decade. He explains that the Australian wines they bring to Colloca are "not typically wines we can grow very well here in New York State because

they need a longer growing season." In addition to their unique wine offerings, Colloca has a stunning event center featuring high, wood-trussed ceilings and a grand chandelier centerpiece. Inside, the winery hosts everything from weekend brunches and paint-and-sips to live music and elaborate weddings. In the summer months, guests can gather around the outdoor bar and enjoy a wood-fired pizza with a glass of wine. There's a style to suit anyone's flavor palate, including crowd pleasers with the effervescent charm of Mindy's Giggle Juice, the sweetness of New York Rieslings, and the richness of Australian Shirazes.

Across the bay in Sterling is another charming watering hole. **Sterling Cidery** has been crafting farm-fresh hard ciders with local apples for many years. Owners Brandon Furber and Jana House are proud to be part of the local drink scene, proclaiming "diversity in the offerings, scale, and size of its many craft beverage producers makes Cayuga County a special place to visit." The addition of their micro-batch hard cider adds to the numerous options available, while featuring fresh, and seasonal flavors. In their own words, they offer "a rotating menu of creative ciders that always has something different and never gets stale."

Not all local watering holes in Cayuga County make their own beverages. Some of them curate a creative selection of locally produced and nationally beloved drinks. **Stick & Rudder Pub** in Fair Haven does exactly that. The traditional public house specializes in craft beer, wine, whiskey, and cocktails.



Vineyard Apple Picking  
Colloca Estate Winery

Colloca Estate Winery  
Little Sodus Bay



Sterling Cidery  
Village of Sterling





### Vineyard Stroll Colloca Estate Winery

Explore the shoreline wine campus and estate-grown grapes at this vineyard on Little Sodus Bay.



Located in a historic building just south of Lake Ontario, Stick & Rudder is filled with aircraft and boating memorabilia. John Gadjo, the pub's owner, is a former Marine aviator and lifelong recreational sailor. His passion shines through as he pays homage to the region's aviation and nautical history as well as his own military service. Visitors to the bar enjoy live music and nightly drink specials as they gather with friends over some tasty drinks and traveling tales.

One of the more family friendly craft beverage destinations in the county is **Giancarelli Farm Winery and Distillery**. Open year-round, the family owned fruit farm is the perfect sweet spot. The farm is home to a fruit stand, farm store, u-pick fields, and a winery. Visitors can purchase fresh fruits, jams, jellies, pastries, wine, and spirits. Giancarelli specializes in fruit-forward wine and spirits for the sweeter palates.



### Stick & Rudder Pub Village of Fair Haven

A unique historic public house that pays tribute to the region's aviation and nautical history.

### Colloca Estate Winery Town of Sterling



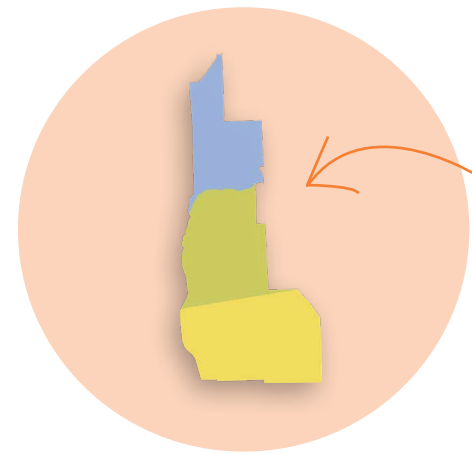
### Vineyard Picnic Colloca Estate Winery



Heart & Hands Wine Company  
Village of Union Springs



Quarry Ridge Winery  
Village of Union Springs



# Central Region

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

Cellar & Folly Whiskey Company  
City of Auburn



**L**unkenheimer Craft Brewing Company in Weedsport made history as the first brewery to open in Cayuga County since Prohibition. Since September 2014, the husband-and-wife team of Kristen and Derric Slocum have brought new life into their village. Lunkenheimer has become a community hub with craft beers named in honor of local landmarks and legends. The brewery has won several awards, including the prestigious Governor's Excelsior Craft Beer Cup in 2022.

**Prison City Pub & Brewery** also opened its doors in 2014. Owners Dawn and Marc Schulz recently celebrated their 10th anniversary by announcing an expansion to their farm brewery location. The original brewpub is located in an old Civil War armory building downtown, and their nearby brewery and urban farm location is more spacious with a rural atmosphere. Beers such as Mass Riot NEIPA and Wham Whams Imperial Stout have won numerous awards and are staples in bars and restaurants across the state.

Just down the street is **Cellar & Folly Whiskey Company**, specializing in small batch whiskey and spirit-infused cocktails. Co-owner Caleb Liber acknowledges "the craft beverage scene in Cayuga County is very community driven and welcoming," noting the willingness to collaborate. Cellar & Folly is the dream of three friends—Caleb, Colin, and Nick—who created their own reality in 2022. In addition to their signature Patron's Choice, made with charred applewood from Owen Orchards, Cellar &

Folly have also created Chai Fusion spiced whiskey and Dawn & Dusk coffee-infused rye whiskey.

**Combgrown Mead** honors the tradition of fermenting mead with the modernity of experimenting with creative flavor profiles. Combgrown is one of roughly a dozen meaderies in the state, making it a rare and unique new addition to the local beverage landscape. Owners Elaine Ferrier and Michael Sojka are familiar with running a meadery; they previously owned one in Canada before moving to the Finger Lakes. Ferrier shares that they "are lucky to be in the heart of an agricultural region that has a lot to offer" and is appreciative of the vibrant community. While mead is known as a honey wine, the session meads found at Combgrown are more akin to beer—they are carbonated and lower in alcohol content.

Rounding out the beverage trail in Auburn is **Shep's Brewing Company**, also known as The Good Shepherds. The father-and-son team of Bob and Garrett Shepherd opened its doors during the craft boom of 2014. Since then, they've developed a loyal fan base by creating a wide variety of beer styles. Their brews cover the gamut from imperial porters and sour ales to hoppy IPAs and classic pub ales.

Outside of the city limits is where the wine region starts to shine. Located in the town of Aurelius, **CJS Vineyards** is a family owned estate winery specializing in vegan-friendly Riesling, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, and Chambourcin wines. Visitors to the winery can tour the facilities



and are often greeted by the winemaker, Chris Scholomoti, and his wife, Jan.

Nearby on historic Route 20, **Izzo's White Barn Winery** sits on a picturesque property overlooking quaint vineyards and two ponds. The family run winery prides itself on its signature Finger Lakes wines, including Riesling, Chardonnay, and Cabernet Franc. They offer a special wine sampler to visitors from outside the region so they can help them experience the history and flavors of the FLX.

Embracing the sweeter side of life in Cayuga is **The Apple Station Winery**. The family owned apple orchard celebrates the state's official fruit with apple picking, jams, jellies, pies, cider, and other local produce. A winery onsite produces a mixture of apple wines as well as apple and fruit wine blends. A destination for visitors of all ages, Apple Station truly shines in the autumn harvest season.

Nearing the shores of Cayuga Lake, **Quarry Ridge Winery** has

incredible views to accompany its noteworthy wine. A wrap-around covered patio overlooks the rolling vineyard and the lake, with Adirondack chairs for guests to enjoy the vista. Quarry Ridge uses the unique terroir of its shale soil and seasonal climate to produce a wide variety of wine styles. All of the grapes harvested for their Pinot Noir, Riesling, Chardonnay, and Cabernet Franc wines are grown on the 10-acre estate.

While regional wines are unique in nature, there are still many parallels that can be drawn to other wine regions around the world. **Heart & Hands Wine Company** in Union Springs is built on a foundation—literally and figuratively—similar to that in France. The limestone shale beneath the vineyards is reminiscent of the stone found beneath the soil in Burgundy. Heart & Hands focuses on Riesling and Pinot Noir wines, noting that “the estate vineyard [has been] producing complex, layered wines of distinction” since its first harvest in 2012.

### Izzo's White Barn Winery Village of Cayuga

Taste estate-grown wines made from grapes selected for their cold hardy tolerance and diverse characteristics.



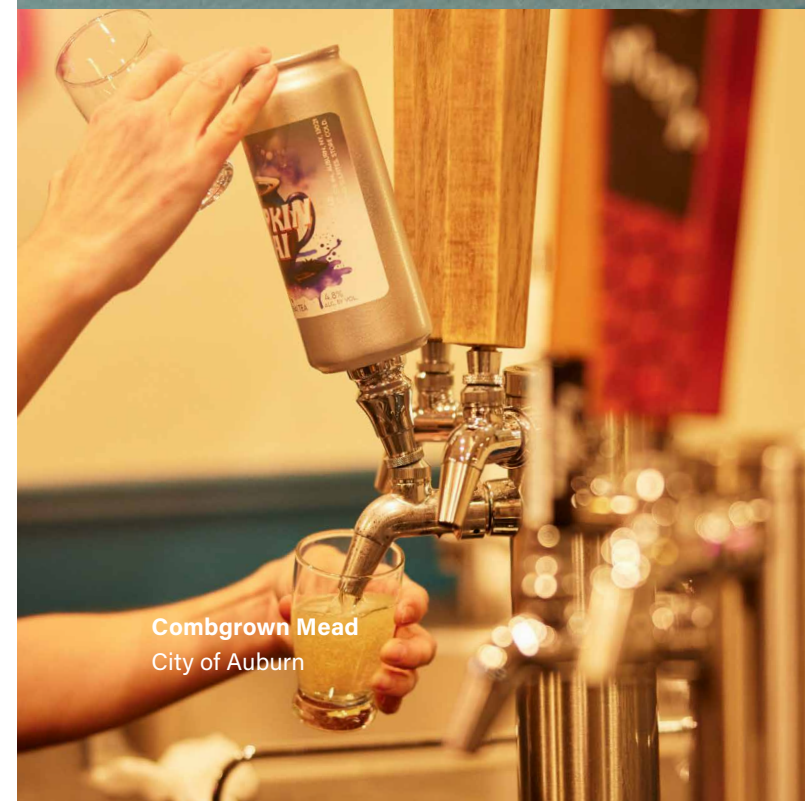
### The Apple Station Winery Village of Cayuga

This apple orchard specializes in crafting wines from the fruit grown right on its property.

### Prison City Pub & Brewery City of Auburn



Note: There can be any number of photos on this page, but currently, the page shows (3).



### Combrown Mead City of Auburn

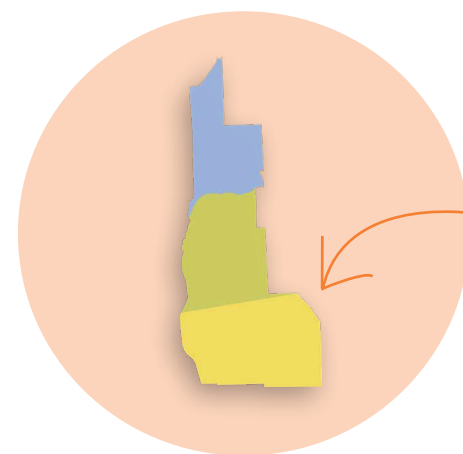
### Lunkenheimer Craft Brewing Company Village of Weedsport







Grisamore Cider Works  
Village of Locke



# Southern Region

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



Long Point Winery  
Hamlet of King Ferry



Owasco Lake Brewing  
Town of Moravia

Down at the southern end of the county, the hamlet of King Ferry boasts the majority of the area's craft beverage producers. A few more places are scattered nearby, providing an ideal route for a weekend of beer, wine, and cider tasting.

While many Finger Lakes wineries focus on sweeter varietals, **Long Point Winery** is proud to specialize in drier wines, both red and white. Winemaker Gary Barletta started making wine as a passion project in his basement, until he and his wife, Rosemary, turned his dream into a reality. Situated on 72 acres of prime grape-growing land along Cayuga Lake, Long Point creates 16 different wines. Among their wine offerings are the usual Finger Lakes wines, but they also produce Pinot Grigio, Syrah, and Zinfandel.

Right next door **Aurora Brewing Company** is making some of the best beers in New York State. Before opening their third location earlier this year, Aurora got its roots in King Ferry. Co-founder Mark Grimaldi is proud to be located in Cayuga County, noting that "everyone is so focused on the [other lakes], but it's super sneaky cool over here when you think about it." He adds that they are "a force to be reckoned with on this side of the lake, both in beauty and quality." Since opening in 2016, Aurora has made a name for itself across the state. With its success, the Finger Lakes taproom has expanded, adding a covered patio with outdoor seating, an extensive food menu, and plenty more beers.

With a region so heavily

focused on agriculture, it is important for locals to be good stewards of the land, taking care of it for future generations.

**Bright Leaf Vineyards** is proud to be a New York Sustainable Winegrowing Vineyard, creating great wine in the most environmentally conscious way. The soil beneath them is two distinct types, one ideal for white grapes and the other for red. Winemaker Colleen Lukas has won several awards for Bright Leaf wine using a robust array of Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Lemberger varietals.

Just around the corner, wholesale manager Shenoa Landon enthusiastically describes **Treleaven Wines** as "the ultimate playground for grown-ups who love wine, craft beer, delicious food, music, and good vibes." Established by the Saltonstall family in 1984, Treleaven is a mainstay in Cayuga County. With a harvest of estate-grown and locally sourced grapes, the winery produces a rainbow assortment of wines. Now in its second generation, Treleaven has expanded from winemaking to include a restaurant and a plethora of events including live music, brunches, weddings, trivia, and more. Shenoa says "being part of the local craft beverage scene feels like hosting the coolest party in the Finger Lakes."

A 19th century dairy barn in Locke has been the home of Grisamore Farms for nearly a century. The Grisamore family has covered almost every produce, farm product, or barnyard animal you could think of over the past five generations. Visitors are invited to the



Summerhill Brewing  
Town of Summerhill

This microbrewery prides itself on crafting beers using local ingredients and serving up artisan pizza.



Treleaven Wines  
Hamlet of King Ferry

Treleaven is a one-stop operation for beverages, food, and entertainment with its popular Hangtime series.



farm from April through December, where they can shop at the farm store, explore the u-pick fields, and sample the farm's hard cider. **Grisamore Cider Works** uses traditional methods to create various ciders using fruit grown on the farm.

At the easternmost point of the county, **Summerhill Brewing** celebrates the ultimate brewery origin story—building up their business out of their garage in Locke. The quaint family owned operation brews hand-crafted, small-batch beers. When the brewery expanded in 2020, they added a restaurant with small bites and artisan pizzas while hosting Taco Tuesdays and Sunday brunches.

Over in Moravia, the Morse family has a small-batch winery operation on their home farm. **Kelloggsville Farm Cider and Winery** presses the fruit for their wine and cider on their property. Partner Gail Morse invites visitors to come to their tasting room on the farm or visit them at the Owasco Farmers Market on Wednesday evenings in the summer.

When folks say that the craft

beverage community is a family, **Firelane 6 Winery** means that literally. When Rick and Corinne Ryan first built their home on Owasco Lake, they planted grapes for Rick's sister and her husband to use at **CJS Vineyards**. But when the couple retired, they decided to use their newfound time to make their own wine. Firelane 6 is a small operation, making a couple of Rieslings, a Pinot Noir Rosé, a blended red, and a blended white. While they do not have a dedicated tasting room, they have been known to do dockside tastings along the lake. Their wines can be found in local shops and restaurants.

**Owasco Lake Brewing** is not afraid to pave their own path. Unlike the classic styles of flagship beers found at most breweries, this farm brewery is best known for their Twisted Sail, a blackberry kettle sour ale with notes of plum and cinnamon. Sourcing everything locally, the team at Owasco Lake also crafts New York Style IPAs and blonde ales in their rustic barn venue.



Aurora Brewing Company  
Hamlet of King Ferry



Bright Leaf Vineyards  
Hamlet of King Ferry



Kelloggsville Farm Cider and Winery  
Town of Moravia



Apple Picking  
Owen Orchards

Kayak Splashing  
Little Sodus Bay

Shoreline Sand  
Fair Haven Beach

Snow Sledding  
Town of Brutus

A Year-Round  
Destination



*Adventure Awaits*

**Scan to access the guide.**  
Discover memory-making adventures  
all year long in the heart of the  
picturesque Finger Lakes region.

## Four Seasons of Fun

**W**here you go matters, make it count in Cayuga County. More than 800 square miles of four-season adventure awaits in our destination. Discover something new or partake in your favorite pastimes. 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 for 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 and find the perfect pumpkin in the patch. Scout the rolling landscape for craft beverage tours and tastings, or find restorative relaxation at a worldclass lakeside spa. 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.



Go  
Beyond

10 choose your own guided  
or DIY adventures

**C**ayuga County is where adventure meets natural beauty. With the most freshwater coastline, three state parks, nature preserves, and three state forests, it's a paradise for hikers, fishing enthusiasts, bikers, horseback riders, and skydivers—or for camping under the stars. Whether expert or self-guided, we invite you to explore our destination.

## 1 Make Waves Exploring the 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. It is home to Cayuga Lake, Owasco Lake, Skaneateles Lake, and five smaller lakes, streams, ponds, and tributaries, plus portions of the Erie Canal.

For a unique experience, rent hydrobikes from **Fair Haven Water Bikes**. The state-of-the-art water bikes are a safe and dry way to get on the water. This human-powered paddlecraft can make for an exhilarating 90-minute workout or relaxing glide along Little Sodus Bay. An added bonus is that furry friends can accompany riders. Small pets with life vests are allowed to sit on the pontoon part of the bike.

## 2 Scuba Diving Class

Take a trip under the sea—or lake—with **Finger Lakes Scuba** in downtown Auburn. The full-service retail shop opened in 1998 and owners Henry and Joan MacDonald offer all snorkeling and dive equipment needs and varying levels of scuba certification and specialties. Not sure if you're ready for open water tank dives? Take a two-hour scuba class with "Mac" in a community pool to experience instruction on breathing underwater and the proper gear.

In addition to providing local diving opportunities, dives can be chartered for select locations around the Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario to see shipwrecks and freshwater marine life. And if you're feeling more brave, **Coral Reef Dive Adventures**—the travel arm

of Finger Lakes Scuba—hosts week-long diving retreats in international and domestic destinations.

## 3 Enjoy the View from the Sky

Get a bird's eye view from the air. Experience the ultimate adrenaline rush as you soar above breathtaking landscapes with **Skydive Central New York**.

Located at the Whitford Airport in Weedsport, the premier skydiver training facility provides training for solo skydiving or tandem skydiving experiences for those who want to freefall with an expert. Their full-time instructors and professional pilots have logged tens of thousands of skydives—owner Michael Burgess has more than 17,000 jumps alone.

## 4 Basic Archery Lessons

When you choose one of our guided adventures, you have the chance to try something you've never done before, without any of the stress. The **Inns of Aurora Resort and Spa** offers expertly guided archery lessons at the trailhead opening on Sherwood Road. Join experienced staff members and learn the basics of archery using a traditional, lightweight recurve bow.

Throughout the experience, participants will receive instruction on proper stance and how to aim the bow efficiently. Check the activities calendar to sign up for a spot on the archery range or arrange for a private lesson. Take your shot at landing a bullseye and walk away with your target in tow.

## 5 Cast a Fishing Line or Aim a Bow

Home to some of the finest fishing in the northeast for bass, salmon, northern pike, walleye, panfish, and trout, there is a plethora of chartered or dockside opportunities for the experienced angler or excited novice.

Whether you want to fish from the shore, in a stream, or motor out on one of the lakes, the opportunities are endless. Experience a new adventure like winter ice fishing or take a four-hour bow



Scuba Diving  
City of Auburn



Sky Diving  
Village of Weedsport



fishing expedition for carp with Captain Jay Barnes from **Frontenac Fowlers**.

## 6 Accessible Adventure for Everyone

Adventure travel is accessible to all in our destination. Whether you want to try something new or embark on a relaxing hike, our varied landscapes and activities ensure everyone can find their next thrill. For example, the observation platform at **Carpenter Falls Unique Area** has a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk.

Located at **Frontenac Park** in Union Springs, a new adaptive kayak launch was opened to the community in fall 2024. The BoardSafe dock is the first Adaptive Kayak Launch built on the Finger Lakes and it is the only fully handicap and ADA-compliant kayak launch on Cayuga Lake that provides universal access to all paddlers. The dock serves as an accessible launching point for the **Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Blueway Trail**.

## 7 Spread your Wings into Birdwatching

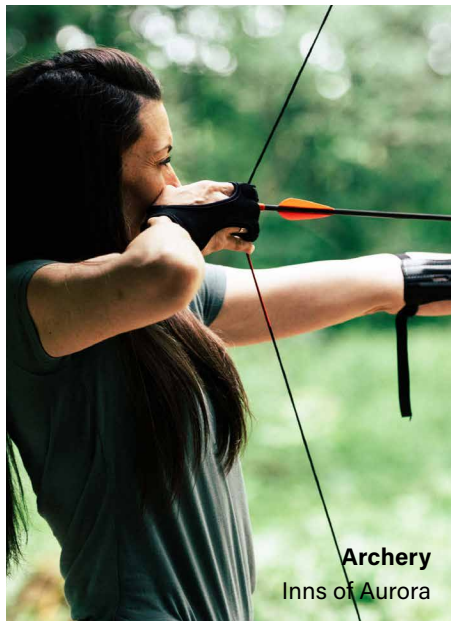
Experienced observers or new hobbyists will appreciate birding in the Finger Lakes. There are nature centers, educational classes, and self-guided trails in all corners of the county to view waterfowl, Bald Eagles, woodpeckers, and more.

The **Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary** boasts some of the highest breeding bird diversity in the state, and be sure to bring your binoculars to the **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge** to catch sight of one of the most active flight paths for migrating birds.

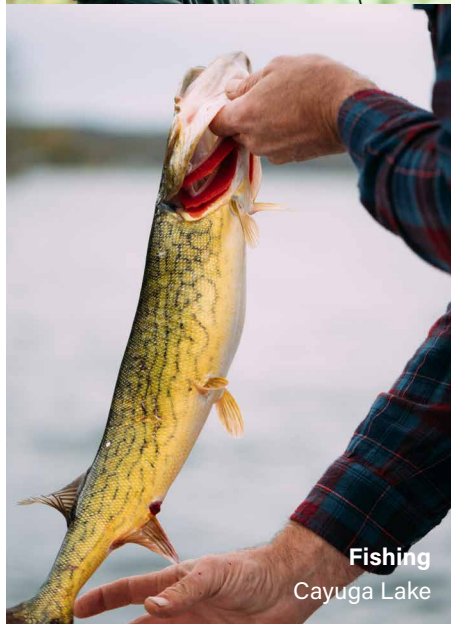
## 8 Lantern-Lit Sunset Hike

There are many nature trails and solo walk opportunities in our county, but try something different like a guided sunset hike. **The Inns of Aurora** offers a two and a half hour experience on the three-mile nature trail that departs at dusk for a trek up to the eye-opening overlook platform.

On the journey up, you will discuss indigenous plants and native



Archery  
Inns of Aurora



Fishing  
Cayuga Lake



Accessible Kayaking  
Cayuga Lake

medicinal herbs. An evening campfire, hot cocoa, and s'mores are served at sunset. Guests make their way back along the trail holding lanterns and stargazing to light the way.

## 9 Time to Get Out on the Water

Whether it's the thrill of a successful fishing expedition, the peacefulness of paddling on a tranquil lake, a fun group outing on a sunset cruise, or the excitement of picking up speed in a single or double kayak, there are a myriad of aquatic experiences available for all skillsets.

Choose your own path and pace to admire the picturesque shoreline from **Owasco Lake**, paddle the **Seneca River** through wetlands and forests and **Erie Canal** locks, and the marshes surrounding **Howland Island**. Bring your own paddlecraft, or rent from local operations like **Owasco Paddles** in Emerson Park and **Fair Haven Kayak** in the northern region.

## 10 Outdoors Survival Skills Workshop

Get into the woods with experienced outdoor guides at the **Inns of Aurora** and learn the basics of surviving in the wilderness as you explore the property by off-road vehicle. Throughout this workshop, guides will share tips for building a fire, finding water, creating shelter, orienting yourself with natural surroundings, and caring for minor wounds. Walk away knowing how to create an emergency kit for daytime excursions and short distance treks.

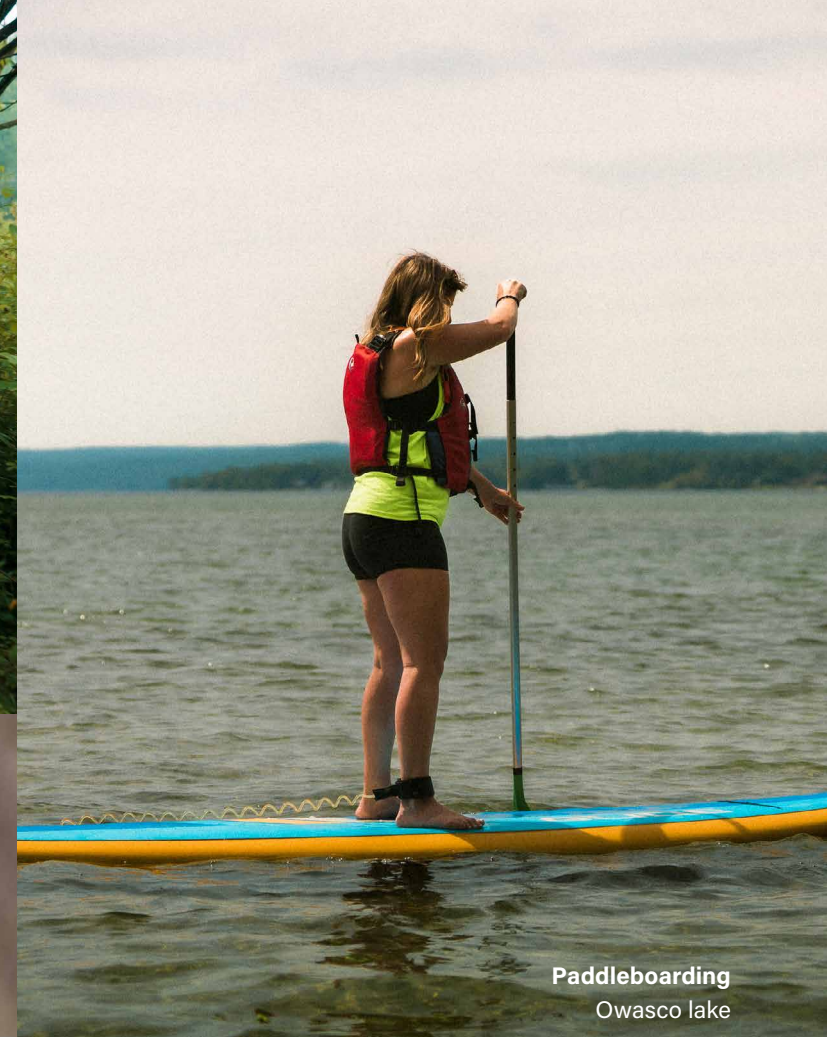
Or, take part in an expert-led foraging experience on local farmland and nature preserves to find edible wild plants. Learn how to identify consumable garlic, ramps, mushrooms, fiddleheads, herbs, fruits, and flowers, and the "rule of three" best practice for ethical harvesting to sustain the wildlife.



Bird Sanctuary  
Lake Como Outlet



Sunset Hike  
Inns of Aurora



Paddleboarding  
Owasco lake



Survival Skills  
Inns of Aurora



# Power Trio

Three business owners create community through collaboration—not competition



A trio of businesses on Seminary Street in Auburn have a single mission: to help people improve their health. What is unique about these entrepreneurs is that all three are owned or co-owned by women who graduated together from Auburn High School.

**Erin Schillace** owns **Zen Den**, a yoga studio on the left side of Seminary Commons, which has the Auburn Fire Department anchoring the right end. Zen Den shares an entrance with **3 Leaf Tea**, a tea shop owned by **Luciana Torous** that specializes in matcha, a green tea powder from Japan made from finely ground, shade-grown tea leaves. Between 3 Leaf and the fire department is **Achilles Heel Training**, a unique gym that focuses on making lifestyle changes that last a lifetime; it is co-owned by Auburn native **Brittany Rubuano** and Kevin Valente.

The three sat down for interviews about their businesses and how they work together to improve the health of Auburn and Cayuga County residents.

**Schillace:** I started my own yoga studio after I moved back home from New York City, and I felt like I was missing something. I wanted to bring something that I was doing in the city here, and there wasn't really a yoga studio in Auburn specifically. I felt like there was a need for it in the community. I opened up Zen Den in downtown Auburn in 2019.

**Torous:** For me, it was about my mental health. I had pretty bad anxiety and OCD, and my friend was a foreign exchange student from Japan. I had gone to a tea shop in Syracuse and I tried properly brewed tea for the first time. I told my friend about this while she was living in Japan, and when she came back the following year, she brought me back some matcha. I tried some and I noticed after I drank it, it made me feel really good. It calmed my mental chatter. It didn't cure me by all means, but it definitely helped.

I looked up the health benefits and I found out how great matcha is for calming people. A couple years later, my friend ended up moving to Japan and that's when I started getting the idea, "OK, I want to share this with other people. How can I do that?" I ended up visiting her in Japan and when I came back in January 2015, I started 3 Leaf Tea online only. It flopped completely. I thought if you start a website, it'll immediately have sales. But that's not how it works. Then in August of that year, I opened the brick-and-mortar location (on Genesee Street near Angelo's Pizza). I thought, well if I open it at least people will physically see me, and I can build up business from there. And that worked.

**Rubuano:** I was born and raised in Auburn, and I have played both soccer and lacrosse since I was 5. I went to college (Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio) for lacrosse and majored in psychology. Afterwards I started coaching lacrosse (at Lourdes University in Sylvania, OH) and got a master's degree in organizational leadership. While I was there, I got into the world



**Erin Schillace**  
Zen Den Yoga Studio

This serene studio fosters community, healing, and growth through restorative yoga, meditation, and infrared saunas.

of bodybuilding. I was a strength and conditioning coordinator as well, which led me to becoming a personal trainer.

I moved back home and got a job at Live It Fitness and Training, known as LIFT. I began to realize that I could have a career in group fitness training. A couple of years later, I met Kevin. We had an opportunity to open Achilles Heel Training, and we did (opening a facility in Camillus on January 1, 2019). We opened the Auburn location in 2022 because there was so much interest in what we do. One day in Auburn we saw a for-lease sign at Seminary Commons. We had the ability to open another facility. We're very happy we did.

**Torous:** I was at my first location by Angelo's Pizza for three or four years, and I was thinking about moving into a larger location. I wasn't really sure what to do, and then Erin came to the rescue.

**Schillace:** When I opened at my original location, there was a smoothie and coffee shop on one side and the yoga studio on the other side. I was running both of those things and after a short amount of time, it was just overwhelming. They're complementary, but they're two totally different businesses, and it was just taking a lot to juggle all of it. A friend had told me that Luciana was thinking about moving, and I was like "I'm just going to go talk to her. So, I just walked into her shop and asked, "Do you want to move in with me?"





**Luciana Torous**  
3 Leaf Tea

This quaint tea shop crafts small-batch matcha and fosters community with premium, ceremonial blends from Japan.



**Brittany Rubuano**  
Achilles Heel Training

This appointment-only gym offers classes, nutrition, training, and apparel, focusing on lasting results and individual goals.

**Torous:** It worked! I didn't want to think about it. I wanted to say yes, but I realized it seemed so crazy to say yes right away. I just pretended to think about it, but I knew my answer already. It was yes.

**Schillace:** We were appreciating each other from afar. We had similar clients. For instance, one of my instructors would come every morning that she had to teach, she would come with a Matcha from 3 Leaf Tea. So we kind of knew that there was a shared clientele. It was already a workable space for a café, so we just made it work. There were four more years there, and then we started looking for another place.

**Rubuano:** I had already partnered with Luciana. She makes Gym Juice, which is sugar-free matcha lemonade, for Achilles Heel Training that was exclusive to the Auburn location. 3 Leaf was just a hop, jump, and skip away in her downtown location, but she had to deliver the Gym Juice every week. I jokingly told her, "It would be so much easier if you were next door. We can put in a window between us."

I knew the landlords (Washington St. Partners) were looking for tenants to fill that spot.

Erin, Luciana and I knew each other from high school. I knew that Luciana was already partnered with Erin's Zen Den. I just kept at it until they decided to move.

**Schillace:** Having all three businesses in the same complex has been beneficial for us all. We share clientele, recommend each other's businesses to our clientele, and run cross promotional deals throughout the year. We all offer different things that complement one another and allow for collaboration instead of competition.

**Rubuano:** It's obviously been good for business. 3 Leaf is open hours that we are not, so it brings people in to see my business. Luciana is a member of AHT, and we have participated in their wellness events. We encourage our members to do yoga at least one day a week for strength and flexibility, and we promote Zen Den for strength and conditioning.

**Torous:** We are adding services, too. We had extra space to work with and thought a sauna would be a nice addition to go with the wellness theme. Benefits that people get are general detoxing, help with inflammation/pain, and relaxation. It's a full spectrum infrared sauna; the waves penetrate deeper and along a fuller range. To our knowledge, it's the only one in Auburn.

**Rubuano:** It's really great that our three businesses are in one place. The more people we can reach for health and wellness, the better. We're definitely the place to come if you want to get and stay healthy.



**The Hamilton Salon and Apothecary**  
Village of Moravia

# Serenity Now

Restore your mind, body, and soul with health and wellness offerings in our destination.

Take a break from the daily grind with mood-shifting self-care and pampering at locations throughout the county.

At **The Hamilton Salon and Apothecary** in Moravia, owner Jacob Hamilton views his practice through a holistic health lens. The award-winning stylist keeps clients on-trend with the latest techniques, and uses his historic Main Street space to host yoga and sell locally made wellness products.

**New Leaf Massage Therapy** in Locke offers clients equal parts pamper and repair. Colleen Weibel integrates massage techniques into every session that is tailored to meet clients' individual needs. The nationally certified masseuse is trained in Swedish and deep tissue work, and prenatal, hot stone, and Reiki therapies.

There are also spaces in our destination that make "sense of place" a business priority. The vibe at the **Inns of Aurora Resort and Spa** is one grounded with nature—through all seasonal elements. Its farm-inspired campus has a full menu of detoxifying and restorative treatments, healing activities, nature trails, sound journeys, recreation, and workshops.

And look for our agritourism partners with unique experiences. **Izzo's White Barn Winery** has found success in rethinking how visitors access its grounds and product. Think a zen yoga session among the vineyard followed by tasting the wine harvested from the grapes for a full-circle connection.



**New Leaf Massage Therapy**  
Town of Locke



**Izzo's White Barn Winery**  
Village of Cayuga



# Cayuga Cuisine

Indulge in farm-sourced freshness



*Culinary Scene*

**Scan to watch the series.**

Meet the locals crafting specialty menus and plan your next Finger Lakes foodie vacation.

The ethos at **Little Yard Farm** is a “small farmstead sharing the joy of place through food and plants.” Owner Laura Hahn notes the special ingredient to her success is using local produce from neighbors, her farm, and the woods. In 2017, she along with her husband, Bill Meade, and daughter, Genevieve, began transforming their 25-acre property nestled in the hills of Moravia from overgrown wilderness into a small family farm with a focus on pastured poultry and pigs. According to the United States Department of Agriculture 2022 Census, there are 19,351 female-owned farms and 21,894 female producers in New York State. In Cayuga County alone, there are 408 female-owned farms and 444 female producers for a total of 91,353 acres of farm lands that are female operated.

Hahn used her background in forestry, agriculture, and the kitchen to dream up Little Yard Farm as a cultural and ecological center of community connection and togetherness. Today, she offers herbal home supplies, health remedies, beauty products, and meals grown largely from the land. Word of mouth expanded Hahn’s catering and meal delivery side of the business

to clients from around the region. The female-driven, farm-based operation “composes seasonal quality food into honest and inclusive cuisine.” Menus of farm raised meats, foraged spring greens, and spreads of in-season produce inspired customers to want to visit the farm. Hahn listened and soon she began hosting special events where people could dine right on the farm and experience foods as seasonally fresh as possible.

## Greenhouse Gatherings

### Winnie and Evie's Greenhouse

**Gatherings** series at Little Yard Farm was born out of customer demand. Hahn outfitted the bohemian-chic dining space to be both functional and pretty, letting the realness of farming shine together with the place-based meal. The intimate gathering of 10 begins with a farm tour of heritage plants, animals, and sunset views before gathering around a table for five courses of food grown from the

surrounding land. Hahn also implemented a sliding scale for all to celebrate nourishment and togetherness regardless of the cost.

Hahn notes it’s hard to pick a favorite culinary creation, since it depends on the availability of what’s fresh or usable from last year like pickles and fermented foods. She is also hyper focused on offering what is available and in season from the farm at that moment in time. For instance, a springtime harvest might mean seeing a ramp bread or soup on her menu. Hahn uses these specialty dinners to showcase other local producers she often partners with like The Full Apron, Ripley Family Farm, Little Cow, Summerhill Brewing, and Kelloggsville Farm.

In addition to the farm hosting its own greenhouse gatherings, the space is also available for private event rental with two different choices: chef's choice menu and guest choice menu. Rental includes three hours for five to seven courses, non-alcoholic beverages, and a tea bar.



## Laura Hahn

The owner of **Little Yard Farm** and **The Good Neighbor**, Laura Hahn told the tourism office that “she is passionate about food and cooking because there is not one part of our lives that is not touched by food—the food we eat, the food we grow, where you get your food, is all very important.”

Hahn was recently named the 2025 recipient of the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce Phyllis Goldman Encouragement Award. Before opening her own catering operation, she began her culinary experience as a kitchen manager at Cafe 407 in Liverpool and as a sous chef at Elderberry Pond in Cayuga County. Growing up in Western New York, she gained farming experience while working as a milker on a dairy farm in high school. After graduating from SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), Hahn used her biology degree as the public program coordinator at Lime Hollow Nature Center in Cortland and facilities manager at Orenda Springs Experiential Learning Center in Marcellus.

Hahn’s background and knowledge tending to the land, event catering, and seasonal cooking culminated in purchasing land in Sempronius to build her business and raise her family on the same land where the food they eat is grown.

**Farmstead Foraging**  
Little Yard Farm



Think a starter of smokey sweet corn and bacon chowder, beet tartare with cilantro pesto, or pork sausage stuffed peppadews in overwintered marinara with parmesan; and entree options like mussels and foraged spring greens linguine topped with a blue cheese pistou, farm raised pork chop in an apple cider brine with new potatoes, braised yard bird with a lemon-caper sauce and fresh rough cut parsley over a polenta cake, or grilled summer squash with a savory wild rice and pinto bean stuffing topped with chive crème fraiche.

The Good Neighbor

Started by Hahn in 2023, **The Good Neighbor Grocery** has a goal of being a community hub and bringing wholesome

food and groceries to Groton and the surrounding region. The little general store filled with good coffee, good food, and good people officially opened in March 2024. The collaborative business venture among actual neighbors solved the community need for access to grocery staples, made-to-order meals, baked goods, and fresh produce.

Hahn aims to build a similar greenhouse space on The Good Neighbor property to host programming similar to the Little Yard Farm dinners. For now, the community store is holding classes and workshops where families can craft matching hanging planters together, cooking classes for children to learn how to cook easy meals like pizza, and adult learning opportunities on building an herb planter or how to create a charcuterie board with chargrilled elements.



Fresh Fruit Pies  
Morgan's Half Acre

Farm  
Stands

Enjoy bounty deeply tied to its land  
and committed caretakers

Cayuga County is the top agricultural producer in New York State. From u-pick orchards to farm tours and speciality stores, our destination has abundant opportunities to sample the bounty sourced from the land. Here we highlight a few.

A longstanding member of the Sweet Treat Trail, **Morgan's Half Acre Produce** on Half Acre Road in Auburn is famous for their hand-picked sweet corn and seasonal homemade fruit pies and quick breads. The family owned operation opened in 2005 to retail the fruits and vegetables grown from two respective farms and has added fresh-cut flowers, vegetable plants, and herbs to their offerings.

Over in Weedsport the **O'Neil Family Farm Pumpkin Patch** is known for its pumpkins, gourds, squash, and sunflower field. Pick carving pumpkins from the patch at **Penny's Country Farm**. Find produce and poultry at Staehr Family Farm's **Cayuga Pumpkin Barn**, a collective of producers at **The Farmers Depot**, products made in state at the **Taste NY Market**, and milk products from Ripley Family Farm at **Hillcrest Dairy**.

Hydroponic and first generation farms are cropping up like **Silver Tree Forest Farm**, **Wyllie Fox Farms**, **Farm Girl Greens**, and niche roadside stands like **Wildflower Creek Flower Farm's** bouquet blooms to go. Visit community farmer's markets and farm stands around the county for a true taste of the Finger Lakes.



Pumpkin Patch  
O'Neil Family Farm



New York Apples  
Morgan's Half Acre



# High Spirits

## Cozy up in well crafted experiences

Speakeasy culture grew in response to the Prohibition era where access to these clandestine spots was gained via password when it was illegal to serve clientele liquor.

According to the Cayuga Museum of History & Art, a report from 1930 stated that there were at least 60 speakeasies in Auburn's corporate limits. In today's re-interpretation of this nostalgic nightlife trend, low lighting, luxe fabrics, and sophisticated cocktails create the vintage vibe—without breaking the law. In our destination, intimate experiences are surfacing throughout the county that prioritize pride in product offerings, whether it's with or without the buzz.

A Cayuga County staple is The Inns of Aurora, where at its **1833 Kitchen & Bar** the team of experts take a fun and playful approach to cocktail and beverage creation. This practice allows for their selections to be innovative, fresh, and accessible, with an emphasis on local and sustainable product sourcing.

**The Armory Speakeasy**, the underground gem at Prison City's State Street location, opened in 2024 and serves up classic and modern craft cocktails and mocktails, plus bar bites and live entertainment. Try "Beggar's Banquet" a cocktail made with their Crispy Boys lager.

The newest spot on the scene is **Roast & Toast**, a café by day and cocktail bar by night. After success with drive thru coffee huts, Simple Roast Coffee Company expanded into downtown Auburn. The seasonal menu features specialty coffee drink flights and, of course, coffee-based cocktails like martinis and negronis.



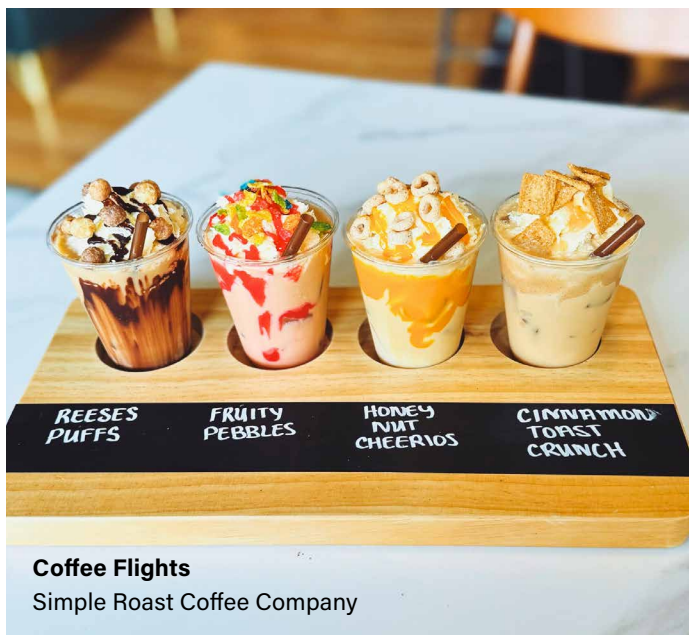
*Beverage Trail*

**Scan to access the list.**

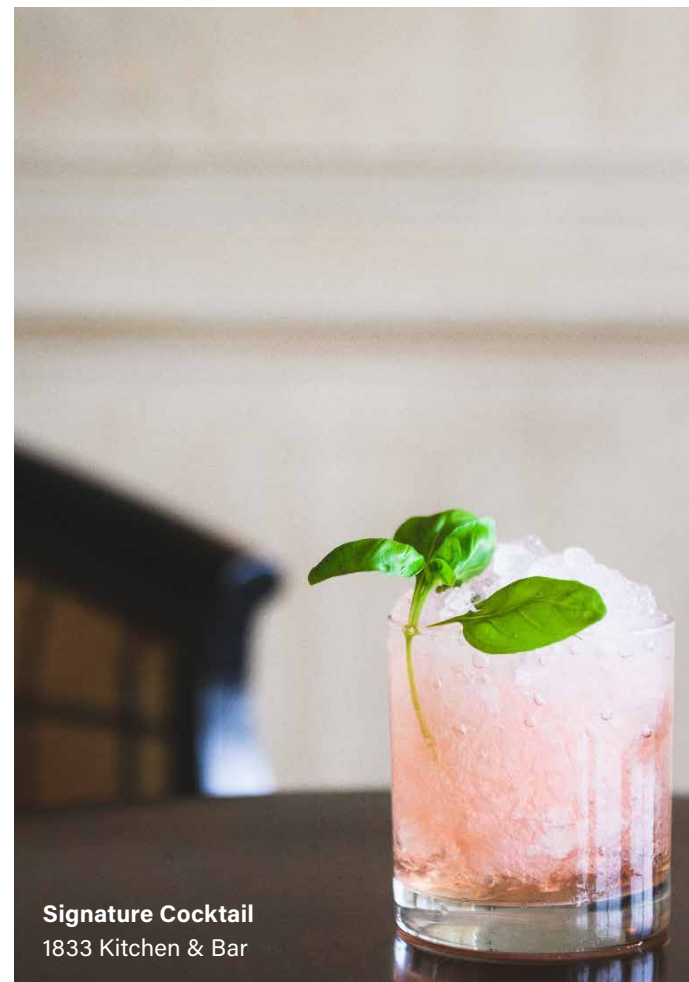
A complete guide to craft beverage producers and destinations.



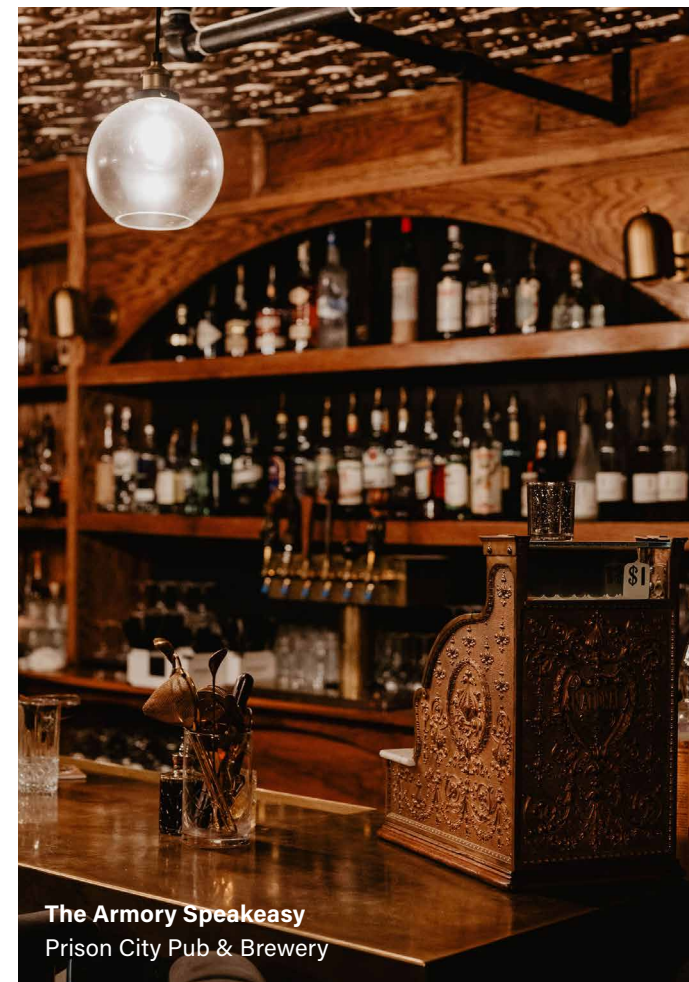
**Charcuterie Board**  
Roast & Toast



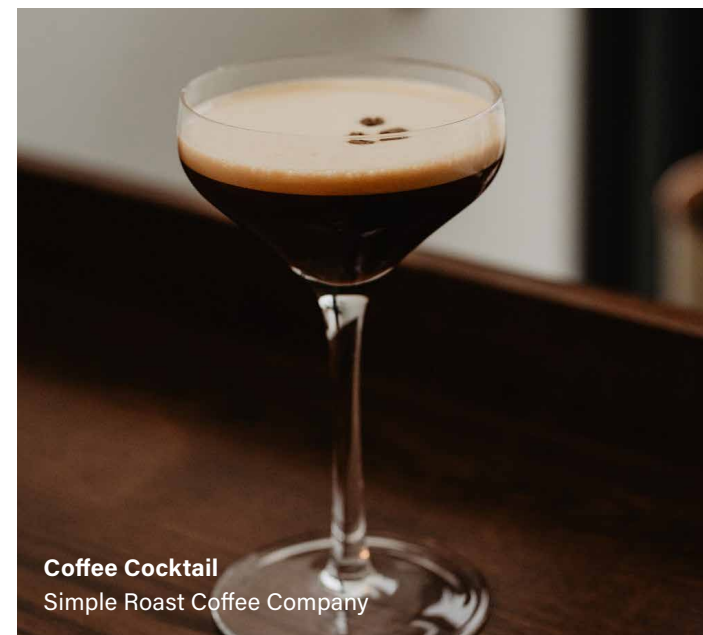
**Coffee Flights**  
Simple Roast Coffee Company



**Signature Cocktail**  
1833 Kitchen & Bar



**The Armory Speakeasy**  
Prison City Pub & Brewery



**Coffee Cocktail**  
Simple Roast Coffee Company



**Mixology Event**  
Combgrown Mead and Cellar & Folly



**Spirited Sips**  
Seasonal cocktail creations



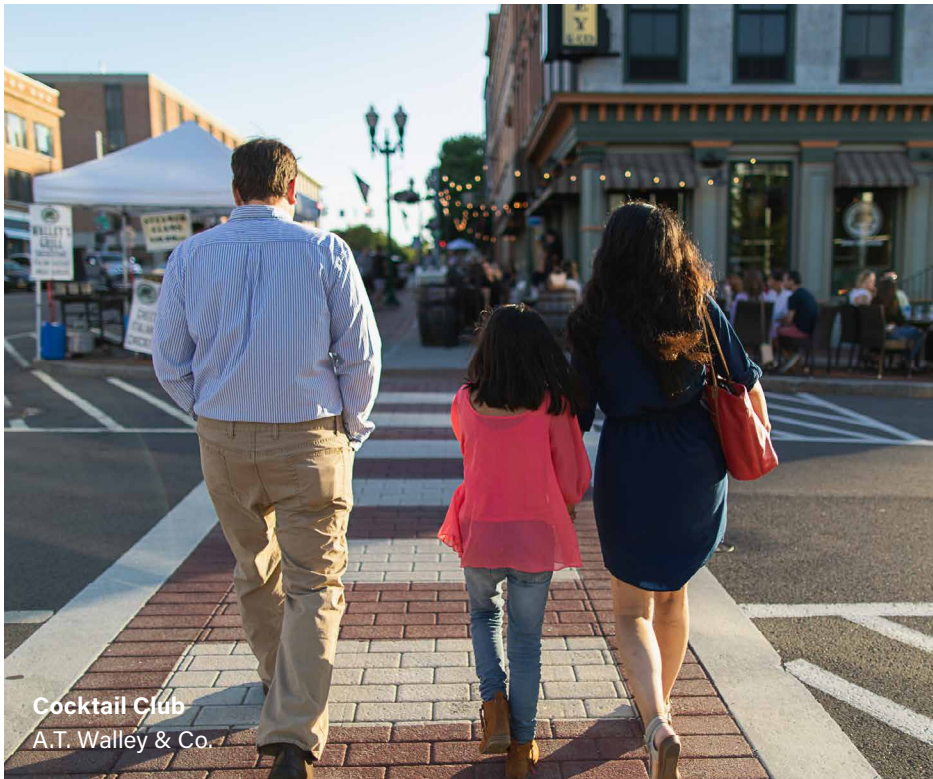


**Northville Arts Center**  
Hamlet of King Ferry

This former church now operates as a community gathering space that hosts high teas and craft beverage pairing dinners.



**Seasonal Ingredients**  
Inns of Aurora



**Cocktail Club**  
A.T. Walley & Co.



**Infused Whiskey**  
Cellar & Folly Whiskey Company



**Aurora Cooks!**  
Village of Aurora

Watch Chef Lou Ruscitto-Donato demonstrate how to make signature hand-shaken cocktails or mocktails at this interactive Inns of Aurora culinary experience.

**Make mix-it-yourself and pairing events a must-do**

While cocktails and mocktails are having a major moment, try an interactive experience to make-your-own drinks at local spaces, mix at home, or group tasting events as a unique way to support local.

An early addition to the local cocktail scene, **A.T. Walley & Co.** opened in the heart of downtown Auburn in 2013. A.T. Walley holds a monthly cocktail club offering how-tos and tastings of specialty seasonal cocktails and premier spirits, especially for those also a member of its George Dickel Tennessee Whiskey bottle club. The historical limestone building was the former Amos T. Walley & Company Drug Store.

At the Inns of Aurora demonstration kitchen **Aurora Cooks!**, chef Lou Ruscitto-Donato demonstrates how to make signature hand-shaken cocktails or mocktails at this interactive culinary experience. Guests gather around the counter while learning tips and tricks for current takes on classic cocktails. Newer businesses on the scene provide patrons with the opportunity to become mixologists for an evening. **Cellar & Folly Whiskey Company** hosts its own membership-based cocktail club, and also teams up with **Combgrown Mead** to host in-person workshops where participants are provided with all tools and ingredients to craft two beverages combining both producers' products—mead and whiskey.

The **Northville Arts Center** is a former church turned community gathering space. The King Ferry spot partners with area producers like **Grisamore Cider Works** to host pairing dinners where participants can celebrate local flavors in a real-time shared experience.





Harriet Tubman Mural  
City of Auburn

Arthur the Artist in front of his *Harriet Tubman: Her Life in Freedom* mural.

# Sustaining a Legacy

Support Black-owned businesses in Cayuga County.

Black residents have been making integral contributions to Cayuga County since the area's beginning after the Revolutionary War. One highlight is the story of Underground Railroad pioneers, Kate and Harry Freeman. Illuminated by descendant **Pastor Ted Freeman** in his book, *God's Free-Man: An American Tale of Perseverance: A Life in Service*, the Freemans came to the colonies as indentured servants. They co-founded modern-day Auburn with Col. John Hardenbergh in 1793 and established the New Guinea Negro Settlement for Black freedom seekers. Their leadership in the fight for freedom and justice built a community for emancipated Black Americans like Harriet Tubman Davis to establish an independent life as a businesswoman after the Civil War.

Today, Black entrepreneurs continue to uphold the legacies of historic residents and are paving the way for a more diversified experience through authentic restaurants, art exhibits, and professional talents. Meet **Arthur the Artist**. Raised in Auburn the son of Jamaican parents, Arthur Hutchinson dreamed of a life creating art. After earning a degree in architecture from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and working in the field for 10 years, he pursued his passion while holding a job as a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He honed his signature style of vibrant, intricate digital paintings and cut paper relief sculptures with layered colored paper to

create symbols and imagery. Since returning to his hometown, Hutchinson is leaving his mark on the downtown public art scene with three murals.

In the fall of 2024, Hutchinson's *Harriet Tubman: Her Life in Freedom* mural was unveiled on the Nolan Block. He spent a year designing the picture featuring seven scenes of Tubman's 54 years in freedom. Inspired by medieval tapestries that tell a life story in one image, the 61-by-26-foot mural commissioned by the Harriet Tubman Boosters depicts her overlooked accomplishments: her military experience; founding the Home for Aged; and her participation in women's rights.

Hutchinson also designed a *Welcome to Auburn!* mural on State Street and is working on his largest to date, *Theodore Case: The Magic of Sound and Light*. This mural in partnership with the Case Research Lab at the Cayuga Museum will be located on the Nolan Block and will show Case's creation of sound on film and the work it takes to change the world. And his featured exhibit at Seymour Library titled *Cosmic Black Joy: The Jubilee Tapestries* aims to elevate Black culture by uniting the community around a positive vision of dreams and aspirations.

Read on to learn more about the Black business owners and talented creatives in our destination and explore the storied culture, connect with the past, and celebrate the present.







**Caiken Baked Goods**

Laiken Wilson grew up in a home never short on baked goods. The homebaker followed in the footsteps of her father, Marcus, and began taking an interest in baking at age 13. Since then, the marketing specialist has crafted a successful side business in **Caiken Baked Goods**.

Known for her artistically iced custom cakes, cupcakes, and sugar cookies, Wilson operates a one-woman business that also gives back. She often partners with other local businesses like Wild Flower and Simple Roast and donates proceeds to select nonprofits like Auburn Downtown BID and CAP. Another homebaker to be on the lookout for at farmer’s markets and events is **Chef Dorothy of Moravia** and her signature “Big Ass Brownies,” pies, fudge, and cookies.

**Mane and Wigs**

A transplant to the area, Vernon Gaines experienced a lack of access to hair products when moving to the Finger Lakes from Connecticut. Her first **Mane and Wigs** location opened in Ithaca in 2019, and in 2023, she expanded her beauty shop brand to downtown Auburn.

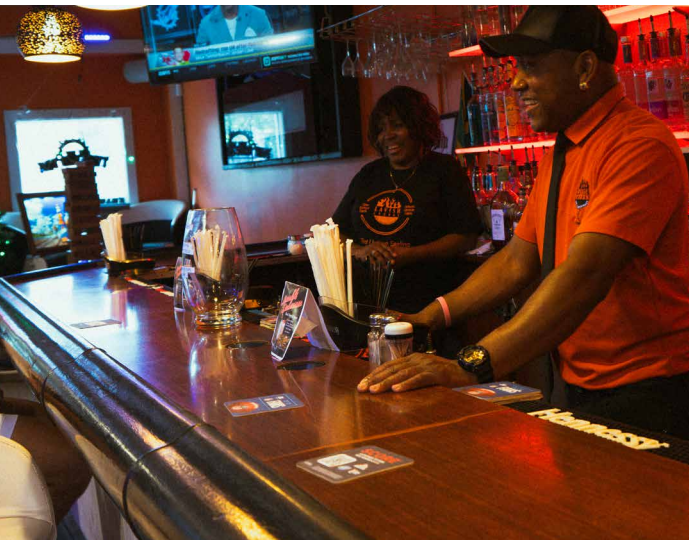
The Jamaican native and nurse specializes in hard-to-find ethnic hair products that serve all genders and ages, plus head wraps, combs, wigs, and extensions. The hair care products and supplies are for all types—natural, straight, curly, processed, and hair loss. Also check out **Nate’s Barber Shop** for expert grooming and barbering; **TC3 Beauty Supply** for lashes, braiding hair, locks, and accessories; and **Barbara Jeans Body & Hair Butter** custom blended products.



**Essentially Erica**

The former Syracuse City School District security guard moved to full time photographer after a project with the Cayuga County Office of Tourism. The career-changing shoot was focused on capturing Tubman’s still living legacy. The lifestyle photographer is the owner of **Essentially Erica** and she specializes in capturing the unscripted, real selves of her clients.

Erica Manners received the 2023 Phyllis Goldman Award from the Chamber of Commerce that recognizes a noteworthy female entrepreneur, and in 2024, she was awarded the New York State Empire Business Award from Senator Rachel May on world photography day. She continues contributing to the betterment of her community by creating opportunities for families and youth like her Black Santa experience.



**Lavish Lounge**

Opened in 2019, Lavish Lounge serves authentic Jamaican and American cuisine in a relaxing, charming, and contemporary setting. “All the ingredients and spices are natural, the food also has to fall off the bone. This is the way it should be,” said co-owner Marcia Meyers.

**Lavish Lounge** hosts exhilarating entertainment by local DJs and bands. Co-owner Andrew Kirkland aims to make the lounge a safe spot for people to dance, have fun and play games like dominoes (a Jamaican favorite), and savor delicious food. With a menu that blends Jamaican and American cuisine, popular items include traditional oxtail stew, jerk chicken, curries, and of course, Rum Punch, plus wings and burgers with Caribbean flair.



**Melody's**

Harlem born Melody Smith Johnson wants customers to know they are in the right place. Her coworking, retail, private office, and event space was especially designed with the female professional in mind and is the first Black woman-owned business of its kind in our county. In fact, the Cayuga County Legislature proclaimed July 28 Melody Smith Johnson Day.

In addition to being a 20-year human resources executive and consultant, she is the lead creator of her specialty and custom bedazzled **Divine Coverings** products. She was a recipient of the 2023 Women of Distinction Award for her work and service mentoring women of color through her **Beverly L. Smith Empowerment Initiatives, Inc.** nonprofit named after her mother.



*Black Owned*

**Scan to access the directory.**  
Meet the Black entrepreneurs carrying on Harriet Tubman’s legacy in her chosen free home.







**Fair Haven Beach  
State Park**  
Town of Sterling

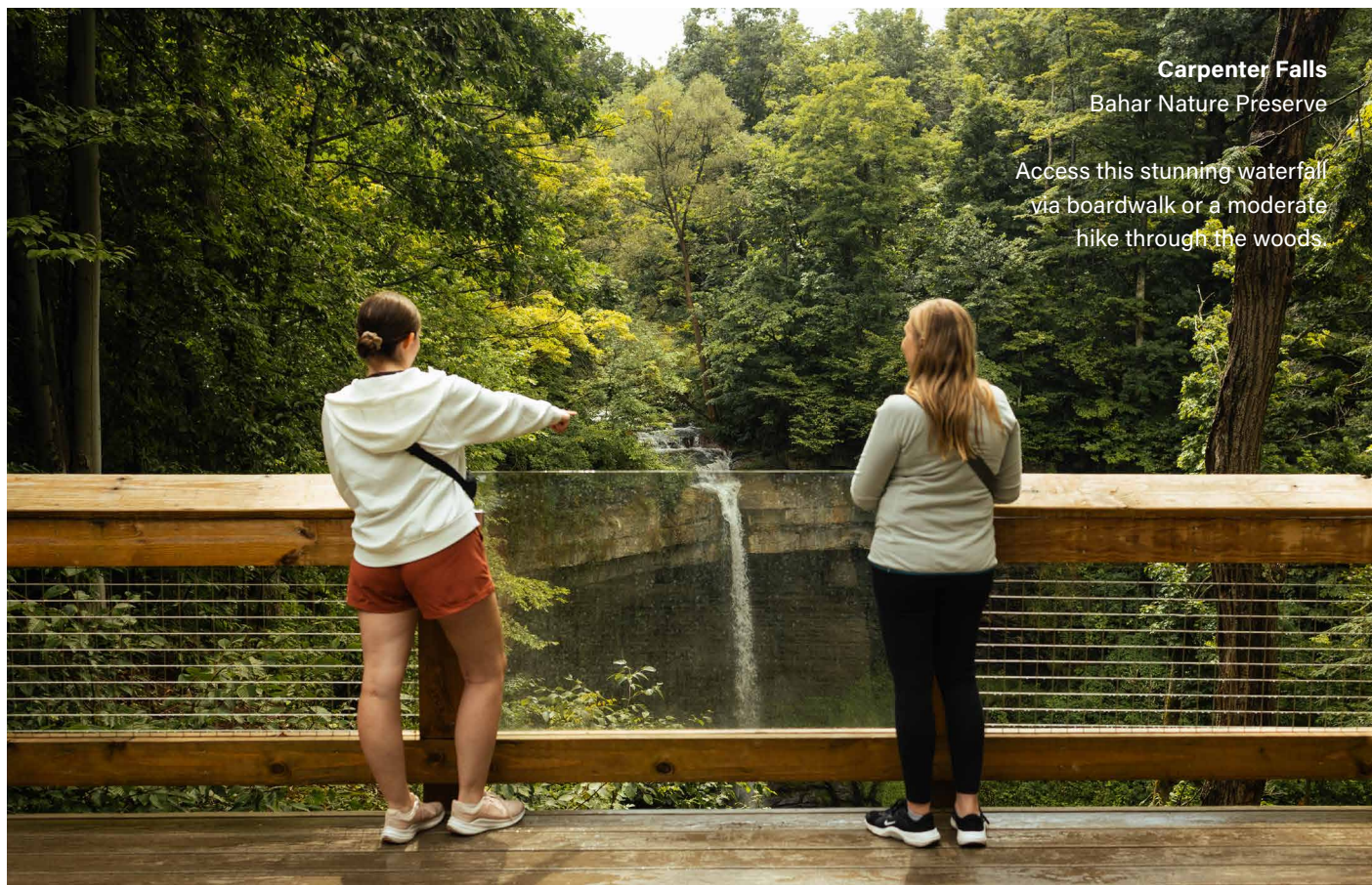
This sandy shoreline on Lake Ontario is known for its pristine beach access, but it also boasts towering glacial bluffs, wooded trails, wetlands, nature watching, and year-round recreation. In the 1930s, members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a national work program enacted by President Roosevelt, had a major impact on improving infrastructure at state parks like Fair Haven. Today, a placard marks the oldest surviving cabin built by the CCC at this New York State park.



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