Experience New York’s Legendary Canals

“I got a mule and her name is Sal, Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.”
– Low Bridge, Everybody Down (1905)

People from all over the world have heard the “Erie Canal song.” Its catchy tune conjures images of trusty mules, friendly folks, long journeys, and low bridges. Even though Sal went out to pasture long ago, America’s most famous canals are still thriving and open for you to enjoy.

The legendary Erie Canal, along with the Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals remain in service as America’s oldest continuously operating canal system. You can still board a boat in Albany and travel all the way to Buffalo. You can also follow where mules once trod, riding your bike or hiking along the former towpath, now transformed into the Erie Canalway Trail.

Along the way, be prepared to experience the rich history, hometown hospitality, and numerous attractions that make the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor a remarkable place to visit and live. Nowhere else will you find the celebrated low bridges and mighty locks of the NYS Canal System. Nowhere else will you discover towns and cities whose canal waterfronts open onto historic main streets with unique restaurants, shops, museums, and other attractions.

Explore fifteen miles or all five hundred! Your trip will leave you humming that old tune and inspired to come again.
Get on the Water!

There are more than 140 public access sites for boaters and paddlers along the NYS Canal System where you can launch your own boat. The Erie Canal connects with Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes where you can enjoy other water sports, beaches, and sailing. Marinas and public docks provide services and overnight accommodations. Many communities offer showers, laundry facilities, hook-ups, and other boater amenities right in the center of town.

If you are planning a longer journey, look no further. The 524-mile NYS Canal System is comprised of interconnected canals, rivers, and lakes. The waterway is typically open to navigation from mid-May through October. Tolls for going through locks have been waived in celebration of the canal’s bicentennial.

The New York State Canal System is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority. For a complete calendar of events, and up-to-date Notices to Mariners, visit canals.ny.gov.

The NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook

Go to the NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Navigational Map Set, which are available at a cost through our website or at a discount when purchasing the NYS Canalway Map & Guide. The guidebook includes launch sites, paddler-friendly facilities and amenities, and places of interest along the Erie, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain canals. It will help you get on the water for a few hours, an entire day, or to plan an overnight trip or paddling vacation.

No boat, no problem! You’ll find rental outfitters and tour operators at numerous locations along the canal. Find a complete list online at eriecanalway.org/watertrail.

To request guidebook and map set, contact us at paddler@eriecanalway.org or visit eriecanalway.org/watertrail to download.

What is that?

New York’s canal system is famous for its engineering. As you travel, you’ll see locks, bridges, gates, and other structures used to operate the canal system today. You’ll also discover the remarkable remains of stone locks, aqueducts and other structures used in the 1800s.

NYS Canalway Water Trail

Get close to the water and experience New York’s canals by kayak, canoe and stand-up paddleboard (with more than 140 public access points for paddlers, it’s water-text to ever try the trails). Paddle alongside tugboats and cruise; and experience narrow flatwater stretches and wider river segments. For a constructed waterway, the canal’s surprisingly serene and natural. Paddlers can expect to see a diversity of birds and wildlife, unique geology, and scenery.

Locks

Locks are elevators for boats,抬着 and lowering them as they travel along the waterway. Today, there are 57 locks on New York’s canal system, busy as you travel on the Erie Canal, 11 on the Champlain Canal, near the Oneida, Seneca and Cayuga—Seneca Canals.

Lift Bridge

Built between 1905 and 1918, 16 lift bridges still carry traffic over the Erie Canal in western New York. When a boat approaches, the operator stops traffic on the roadway and raises the deck of the bridge 15 feet to give clearance for passing boats. Stairs and walkways allow pedestrians to cross while the bridge is up.

Movable Dam

Eight movable dams between Schenectady and Fort Plain regulate water flow on the Mohawk River. Dam gates are lowered into the river to form movable pools during the summer but are pulled out of the water in winter to clear the way for ice and debris-filled floodwaters.

Brookfield Renewable

Make Boating Safety a Priority

Always wear a properly-sized life jacket.
Stay a safe distance from dambs, bridges and barriers.
Respect all signs and warning signals.
Let someone know about your plans, including route, destination, and timing.
Before heading out, check the weather forecast and the NYS Canal Corporation’s “Notice to Mariners” for current information and conditions: canals.ny.gov.

Guard Gate

This type of gate helps to isolate sections of the canal in case of emergency, such as a break in the canal wall, accident, or extreme high water. They are also used when a section of the canal needs to be drained for maintenance or winter freeze protection.

Power House and Gate Cabinet

Located at almost all locks, these white building housing equipment used to generate electricity to power lock gates and valves. Nearby, you’ll see a blue and gold gate cabinet, which displays the lock number. The cabinet holds the motors and gearing that open and close lock gates and valves.

1800s Lock

Stone-arched locks used in the 1800s were replaced by much larger and fewer concrete structures between 1905 and 1918. You can see many of them in parts throughout the national heritage corridor.
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Designated by Congress in 2000, the National Heritage Corridor extends along New York’s canals from one end of the state to the other. As you travel, you will discover distinct regional differences that will keep you coming back to experience all that the Canalway Corridor has to offer.

Passport to Parks

Many cultural heritage sites and museums along the canal participate in the National Park Service “Passport to Parks” program. When you visit, you can record your trip with free passport cancellation stamps. Stamp your own journal or purchase a National Park Passport (or kid’s Passport). Learn more: eriecanalway.org/explore/culture-heritage

Rochester to Syracuse (90 miles)
The canal is the centerpiece of vibrant cities and small towns along this stretch of the Erie Canal, where you’ll find varied terrain on water and land.

Buffalo to Rochester (80 miles)
Find charming towns connected by water and trail along the longest section of the Erie Canal that still follows much of its original path.

The Cayuga-Seneca Canal plummets to Geneva, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes (62 miles)
Famed for its Vanessa, wildlife, and beautiful Finger Lakes, this region also includes Seneca Falls, the birthplace of the women’s rights movement in 1848.

Syracuse to Little Falls (90 miles)
Follow the historic route of the 1820s Erie Canal through the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park or travel the route of today’s canal through lively summer communities along Oneida Lake.

The Champlain Canal

Waterford to Whitehall (80 miles)
Boat, paddle, or cycle a region steeped in American history along the picturesque Hudson River and Champlain Canal.

Little Falls to Albany (90 miles)
The Erie Canal merges with the scenic Mohawk River through a region rich in history and culture.

The Oswego Canal

Three rivers to Oswego (23 miles)
Short but sweet! The canalized Oswego River flows north to Lake Ontario and is a popular place for sport fishing, boating, and paddling.

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Way to Go! Enjoy the Canalway Trail

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If you’re looking for a scenic and safe place to cycle, run, or walk, look no further than the Canalway Trail. The trail extends east-west along the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany for 365 miles. An additional 62 miles north from Waterford to Whitehall along the Champlain Canal. By the end of 2020, New York State will link these trails with routes from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to create the 760-mile Empire State Trail.

Whether you go for just a few miles or plan an extended cycling vacation, you’ll enjoy great scenery, fascinating history, and an unparalleled experience. The trail’s route alongside the historic Erie and Champlain canals adds distinctive flavor and an unparalleled experience. The trail’s route alongside the historic Erie and Champlain canals adds distinctive flavor and an unparalleled experience.

The Canalway Trail hugs the canal but there’s more to explore in neighboring towns and countryside. Trail maps are available for on-road cycling loops that connect with the Canalway Trail in Montgomery, Madison, Ontario, Wayne, and Orleans counties and in the Mohawk Valley Request cue sheets and route maps from county tourism agencies, download them from the Cycling Resources page of the Erie Canalway website, or visit mohawkvalleymarshistory.com/bike-trail-history.

Along the Champlain Canal

There are off-road trail segments on the towpath of the old Champlain Canal in Waterford, Halfmoon, and Schuylerville, with more under development. The Glen Falls feeder Canal Trail is a nine-mile trail along the historic feeder canal from Fort Edward to Glen Falls. The trail passes several stone lock chambers, including the Five Combinies, an intact staircase of five locks built in 1832 near Fort Edward.

15 Miles—Great for kids and families, as well as those looking for a new wellness challenge! Whether you’re walking, cycling, or paddling, you’ll quickly get the feel of the trail or waterway and build confidence to tackle more.

Cycling with Kids

The Erie Canalway Trail is not just for adults! It presents fun and safe opportunities for kids and families to exercise, learn, and discover some of New York’s best treasures.

Tips for Cycling with Kids

• Go far enough to have fun, without pushing it beyond what kids can handle. Plan short rides initially and lengthen them as your child’s interest and stamina grow.
• Stop along the way. Take time to look at wildlife or visit parks, museums, and locks.
• Choose a destination where you’ll turn around. This gives kids a sense of accomplishment and a point to shoot for as they ride.
• Be prepared with snacks and water or plan a picnic to celebrate the end of the ride.
• Find suggestions for kid-friendly rides on our website: eriecanalway.org/explore/cycling/cycling-kids.

Are you up for a new challenge?

Discover what you can do along New York’s Canals!

Get ready for fun, fitness, and adventure on the NYS Canalsway System and Canalway Trail! The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor has launched the Canalway Challenge to help you achieve your personal fitness goals while experiencing the many great things that New York’s canals have to offer.

Participation is free and registration is open to individuals and groups. Simply sign up online and choose a milestone goal: then walk, run, cycle, or paddle on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System to achieve it. You can complete the Canalway Challenge in one big trip or many small ones.

Like a hiker seeking to become an Adirondack 46er, you can strive for mileage status and recognition through the Canalway Challenge. Upon completion, you can show off your accomplishment with a photo finish, cankayak decal, and gear bag.

15 Miles—There are so many ways to get to 50 miles! Do a 5-mile run, 3 times a week for 10 weeks. Explore six different locations with 15-mile cycling trips. Or plan a long weekend with three 35-mile bike days.

90 Miles—There are so many ways to get to 90 miles! Choose a destination where you’ll turn around. This gives kids a sense of accomplishment and a point to shoot for as they ride.

180 Miles—Up the ante on adventure by exploring different regions or going longer distances. Paddlers should plan about two weeks of 12-mile days to complete 180 miles. Cyclists going 30 to 45 miles a day can complete 180 miles in four to six days. If you are walking or running, divide 180 by your weekly mileage to determine how long it will take to reach 180 miles.

360 Miles—Join this exclusive club! The distinction of being an Erie-to-Ende rer is reserved for those who cycle, hike or paddle the entire distance (360 miles) from Buffalo to Albany (or Albany to Buffalo). Plan an extended trip or get there by checking off one 90-mile week on at a time.

Getting started? Check out your nearest county tourism agency, download them from the Cycling Resources page of the Erie Canalway website, or visit mohawkvalleymarshistory.com/bike-trail-history.

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Go the Distance

If you’re ready for a longer cycling trip, there are great options for weekend and multi-day vacations. You’ll find excellent online and printed guidebooks and maps to help you plan your trip. A variety of fully supported tours are offered annually if you’d like a group ride without the hassle of carrying your gear. For complete details, visit cycletheeriecanal.com.
2019 Canal Festivals & Events

More than 400 events take place along the canal each year. Find a complete calendar listing at canals.ny.gov.

### MAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Canal Opens for 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>Low Bridge, High Water, Brockport</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Erie Canal Half Marathon, Utica</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Celebrate Commemorate Memorial Day, Waterloo</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-June 2</td>
<td>Fairport Canal Days, Fairport</td>
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### JUNE

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Canoe/Kayak Race &amp; Family Recreational Paddle, Queensbury</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Paddle the Flight, Waterford</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hudson Crossing Triathlon, Schuylerville</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>Heritage Weekend at Historic Palmyra, Palmyra</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Old Erie Canal Boat Float &amp; Bash, DeWitt to Chittenango</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Erie Canal Family Fun Day at Lock 30, Macedon</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>Path Through History Weekend, Multiple Locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>28-29</td>
<td>Adaptive Paddling Extravaganza, Lockport</td>
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### JULY

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>Tall Ships, Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Canal Day, Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, Fort Hunter</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Waterford Steamboat Meet, Waterford</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-14</td>
<td>Cycle the Erie Canal, Buffalo to Albany</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Erie Canal Night Concert, Amsterdam</td>
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<tr>
<td>11, 18, 25</td>
<td>15 Miles on the Erie Canal (paddling), Montgomery County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Canalfest at Mabee Farm, Rotterdam Junction</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Canalfest of the Tonawandas, Tonawanda and North Tonawanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-28</td>
<td>Oswego Harborfest, Oswego</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Erie Canal Heritage Connection, Macedon</td>
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<td>27-28</td>
<td>Spencerport Canal Days, Spencerport</td>
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### AUGUST

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1, 8</td>
<td>15 Miles on the Erie Canal (paddling), Montgomery County</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Canalfest, Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Albion’s 6th Annual Rock-The-Park Festival, Albion</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>32nd Annual Little Falls Canal Celebration, Little Falls</td>
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<td>9-11</td>
<td>Canalfest, Sylvan Beach</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Towpath Day, Camillus Erie Canal Park, Camillus</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>15th Annual Cardboard Boat Race, Schuylerville</td>
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### SEPTEMBER

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Tugboat Roundup 20th Anniversary, Waterford</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9th Annual Kayaking 4 Meso, Waterford</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Old Timers Fair, Albion</td>
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### OCTOBER

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Locktoberfest, Lockport, Phoenix, Rome (10/5), Fort Edward, (dates TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Erie Canal Music and Stories, Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village Museum, Amherst</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Path Through History, Multiple Locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mohawk Towpath Byway Duathlon, Rexford</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>3rd Annual Erie Canal Run, Chittenango</td>
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Enter the Erie Canalway Photo Contest

Entering the contest is a snap: find an entry form and tips on our website: eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest

Deadline for entries: **August 30, 2019**

**Note:** Winning images will be published in the 2020 Erie Canalway calendar, so images must be horizontal format.