



Erie Canalway Map & Guide



Newark

Start Your Adventure Here

Welcome to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor—your gateway to adventure and discovery along 524 miles of canals and connected waterways, more than 400 miles of Canalway Trails, and 200 welcoming communities. This guide highlights inspiring places to visit, memorable things to do, and exceptional events to enjoy throughout this remarkable region.



Lock E25, Mays Point (Frank Forte)

On the Water

The New York State Canal System includes land cut canals, river sections, and several large lakes. Boating here is one of the most interesting ways to explore New York, offering a front row view of picturesque scenery, legendary history, and lively communities.



Jordan

Along the Trail

Stretching across the full expanse of New York, the Canalway Trail is ideal for fun, fitness, and adventure. Enjoy a leisurely walk or bike ride or plan a longer cycling trip to experience all the trail has to offer. Much of the trail is flat and accessible to people of all abilities.



Lockport

Welcoming Communities

One of the most enjoyable things to do here is to explore the many cities, towns, and villages that grew up along the waterway. You'll find visitor centers, shops, restaurants, and attractions within walking distance of the canal and Canalway Trail.



Macedon

Canal Heritage

Visit local museums and historic sites to discover the people, places, and innovations that shaped canal history. Many sites also preserve remnants of historic locks, aqueducts, and other structures from the 1800s that showcase the ingenuity and craftsmanship of early canal engineering.



In partnership with the National Park Service

2026

CONTENTS

Top Ways to Get on the Water	2	Erie Canalway Map	4-5
Canal Boating Basics	3	Enjoy the Canalway Trail	6
Canal Structures	3	Revolutionary Experiences	7
Events and Programs	4-5	Erie Canalway Photo Contest	8
On the Canals	4-5	Thank a Volunteer	8



Top Ways to Get on the Water

The Erie Canal opened in 1825 to international acclaim for its unprecedented size, scope, and engineering achievement. It transformed transportation and launched a new era of innovation and growth. Today, the New York State Canal System continues to spark the imagination—inviting visitors to embark on big journeys or simple pleasures on the water. Head to the canal for your own unforgettable experience.



1

Take a Boat Tour: Enjoy a scenic ride or savor a lunch or dinner cruise aboard one of the many tour boats operating along the canals. Specialty cruises—including sailing adventures and wine tours—are offered on lake and river sections of the waterway. You'll find tour options within an hour's drive of every major city in the Canalway Corridor.



2

Launch Your Own Boat: With more than 80 public boat ramps, it's easier than ever to get on the canal. Many communities offer visitor centers right in the heart of town, with showers, laundry, hookups, and other helpful boater amenities. Marinas and public docks also provide services. The NYS Canal System includes Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca lakes, where you can enjoy water sports, beaches, and sailing.



3

Paddle the Canal: Explore the New York State Canalway Water Trail by kayak, canoe, or stand up paddleboard. More than 150 public launches and numerous rental outfitters will help you get on the water. Paddling here is a unique experience as you navigate century old locks, glide past stunning stone aqueducts from the 1800s, and see a diversity of birds and wildlife.



4

Rent a Canal Boat: Vacation rentals offer an easy, relaxed way to experience life on the canal. Before you depart, you'll receive instructions on steering, docking, and locking, so even first time boaters can feel confident. Rental boats are well equipped with sleeping quarters, a galley, and deck space for relaxing—and many include bikes so you can explore the Canalway Trail along the way.



5

Watch the Boats Go By: Sometimes the best way to enjoy the canal is from shore. Visit canal promenades, parks, historic sites, and visitor centers. Or stop by one of the NYS Canal System's 57 locks to watch massive gates and mechanical gears in action. Pack a picnic, cast a fishing line, attend an event, or strike up a conversation with passing boaters. Many are traveling as part of the 6,000-mile Great Loop and are eager to share stories from their journey.

About the New York State Canal System

The New York State Canal System includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals. This historic waterway links the Hudson River with Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie, allowing boaters to travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the upper Great Lakes. Over the last 200 years, the canals have been enlarged and modernized to accommodate larger boats, increased traffic, and a wide range of recreational and commercial uses. The canal system is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.

ERIE	CHAMPLAIN	OSWEGO	CAYUGA-SENECA
338 miles	60 miles	24 miles	12 miles
35 locks	11 locks	7 locks	4 locks
16 lift bridges	—	—	—
Connects the Hudson River to Lake Erie and links to all other canals in the system	Connects the Hudson River to Lake Champlain, Vermont, and Canada	Connects the Erie Canal to Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence Seaway	Connects the Erie Canal to Cayuga and Seneca Lakes

Canal Boating Basics



- The NYS Canal System is open daily from **mid-May through mid-October**.
- **Boating is free**, and no permit is required to pass through locks.
- Friendly, knowledgeable lock tenders are on hand to assist boaters.
- Locking through typically takes **15–20 minutes**.
- Observe speed limits and minimize wakes.
- **Clean, drain, dry** to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species.
- Check current hours of operation and sign up for Notice to Mariners Alerts at www.canals.ny.gov for updates on openings, closures, water levels, and construction.
- Make boating safety a priority. Consult the **New York State Boater's Guide** for registration, operation, and safety information www.parks.ny.gov/boating.

Where Water Meets Ingenuity

New York's canal system is famous for its engineering. During your visit, take a closer look at these common structures that are essential to canal operations.



Locks are elevators for boats, lifting and lowering them as they travel along the waterway. There are 57 locks on the NYS Canal System; each one is 328 feet long and 45 feet wide.



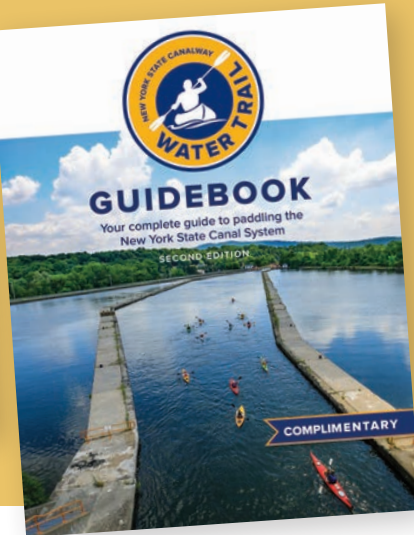
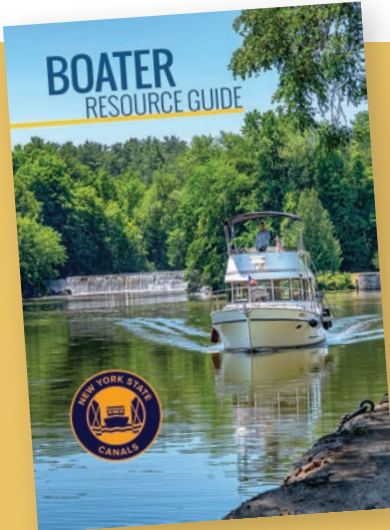
Lift bridges carry traffic over the Erie Canal in western New York. When a boat approaches, the operator stops traffic on the roadway and lifts the deck of the bridge 15 feet to give clearance for passing boats.



Movable Dams regulate water levels on the Mohawk River section of the Erie Canal. Dam gates are lowered to form navigable pools during the summer but are pulled out of the water in winter to clear the way for ice and floating debris.



Hydroelectric Plants at several locations use water flowing along the canal to produce electricity. Still in use today, the Mechanicville Hydroelectric Plant at Lock C2 on the Champlain Canal is one of upstate New York's first electrical generating facilities.



Find a list of boat tours, vacation rentals, and paddling information here:



Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor



Enjoy hundreds of special events, concerts, tours, and programs all year long. Let these highlights whet your appetite and lead you to our full events calendar.



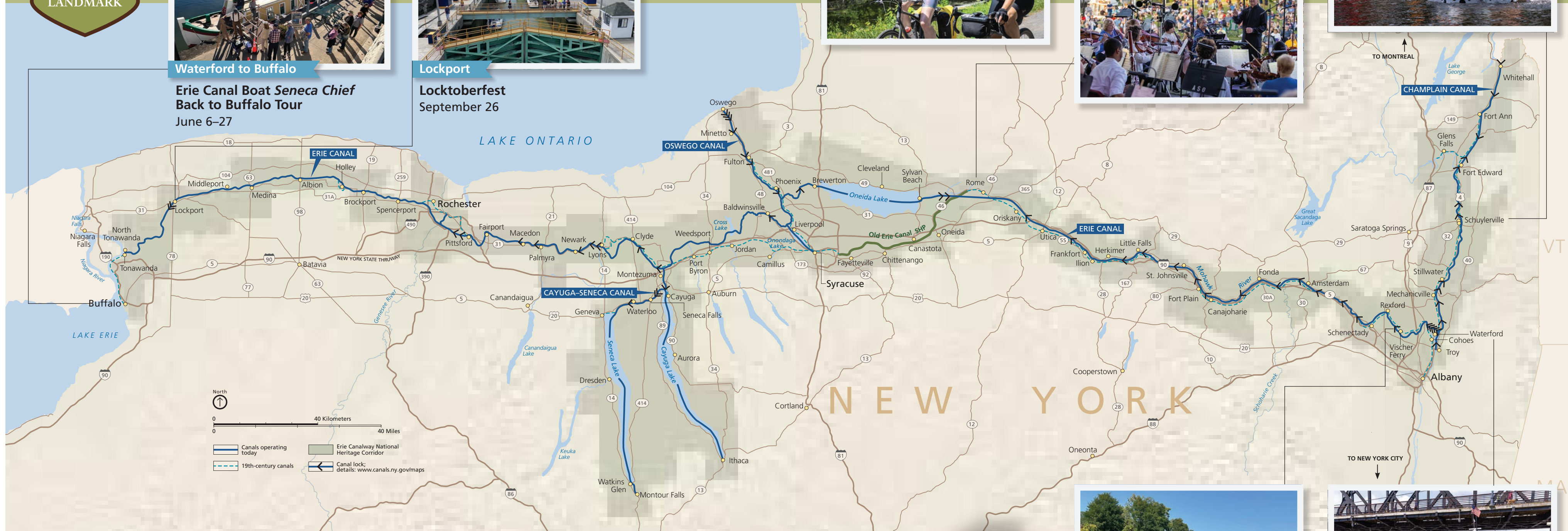
Waterford to Buffalo

**Erie Canal Boat Seneca Chief
Back to Buffalo Tour**
June 6–27



Lockport

Locktoberfest
September 26



Cycle the Erie Canal
July 11-19

Buffalo to Albany



Water Music NY

July 10, Waterford
July 11, Rome
August 15, North Tonawanda

Rome



**20th Annual
Wild Card-board Boat Races**
August 8

Schuylerville



Niskayuna

**Paddle the Canals:
Mohawk River Adventure**
June 27



Waterford

Tugboat Roundup
September 11 – 13

On
THE
CANALS

Get On the Canals! FREE, Accessible & Welcoming Recreation for All

Head to the canal system for free recreational adventures and cultural heritage experiences across upstate New York. *On the Canals* offers something for everyone—kayaking, cycling, boat tours, birding, wildlife hikes, painting, and more.

These short, guided experiences are welcoming and easy to try, making them a great way to learn something new and experience the canal corridor firsthand. Most *On the Canals* programs are accessible and inclusive, ensuring that people living with disabilities can participate alongside their friends, family members, and others in the community. www.onthecanaals.com



The Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor
in New York State

Enjoy the Canalway Trail



Chittenango

Explore New York State’s extraordinary people and places along the 750-mile Empire State Trail. The trail includes the east-west Erie Canalway Trail from Albany to Buffalo and north-south routes from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to Lake Champlain.

Whether you like to cycle, hike, run, or roll, the trail offers fun, fitness, and adventure for all abilities. Its accessible, varied terrain makes it easy to enjoy a short outing with friends or family—or to plan an unforgettable multiday journey. Lodging, dining, and visitor services are conveniently located just off the trail.

The 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail closely parallels both active and historic sections of the Erie Canal. Along the way, you’ll see iconic canal structures such as locks and lift bridges, watch boats of all kinds pass by, and explore canal communities and historic sites that make rewarding cycling destinations. More than 85% of the trail is off road; remaining on-road segments are designated on roadway shoulders and are intended for experienced bicyclists comfortable riding near traffic.

The 65-mile Champlain Canalway Trail includes a mix of off- and on-road segments from Waterford to Whitehall. This scenic route follows the Hudson River and Champlain Canal through a region rich in Revolutionary War history. Forty percent of the trail is off road. At Fort Edward, the 9-mile Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail provides an off-road connection to the Glens Falls Bikeway and Lake George.

Plan Your Visit



Parking areas, restrooms, lodging, dining, and visitor information centers are located throughout the corridor. Camping is available at public and private campgrounds, as well as at designated canal locks. Comprehensive guidebooks, maps, and multiday itineraries are available to help you plan your trip.

- eriecanalway.org
- nycanalmap.com
- canals.ny.gov
- empiretrail.ny.gov
- cycletheeriecanal.org



Get in on the Action!

Ready for an adventure? Cycle, hike, walk, or paddle along the Canalway Trail and canals—and make every mile count with the **Canalway Challenge**! Sign up for this free program, choose your mileage goal, and hit the trail. Complete your miles by the end of October to earn rewards and bragging rights!

Choose from mileage goals of 15, 90, 180, or 360 miles. If you’re just starting out or have mobility challenges, try our 1st Mile Challenge—every step counts.



We’ll help you along the way with tips, day trips, and itineraries to keep you inspired and make planning easy. When you reach your personal finish line, you’ll receive a mileage sticker, magnet, and pennant.

www.canalwaychallenge.org

Revolutionary EXPERIENCES

Commemorate America’s 250th along the mighty waterways that shaped the course of history. Walk in the footsteps of patriot soldiers at Saratoga, stand where cultures clashed at Fort Stanwix, follow the bold reformers of Seneca Falls, and uncover stories of freedom seekers who traveled through canal towns on the Underground Railroad. From the Revolution to the reform era to the rise of the Erie Canal, the Corridor offers a rare chance to experience history across centuries.

Hit the Road!

Try our multiday, self-guided Revolutionary Experiences itineraries to explore the battles, movements, innovations, and everyday lives that shaped the nation—and continue to inspire the ongoing pursuit of American democracy. Each one includes optional boat tours and cycling and paddling excursions to make your visit even more active and memorable.



America’s Gateway Tour

The American Revolution offered a promise of freedom to people around the world—and the Erie Canal became a gateway to that promise. Travel from New York City to Buffalo on this five-day road trip following the path of generations of immigrants. Along the way, explore national parks, historic sites, and welcoming canal towns that bring the canal’s enduring legacy to life.

Credit: Jess Walker



Follow America’s Destiny

Step into the story of America’s fight for liberty. Explore the Hudson River/Champlain Canal on our two-day self-guided trip and follow the waterways that carried soldiers, settlers, innovators, and freedom seekers.



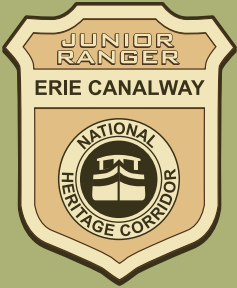
Battles, Boats & Big Views

Begin your Mohawk Valley adventure at a reconstructed frontier fort that once shaped the course of American history, then follow the flow of the Mohawk River and Erie Canal from Rome to Little Falls on this three-day trip in the picturesque Mohawk Valley.



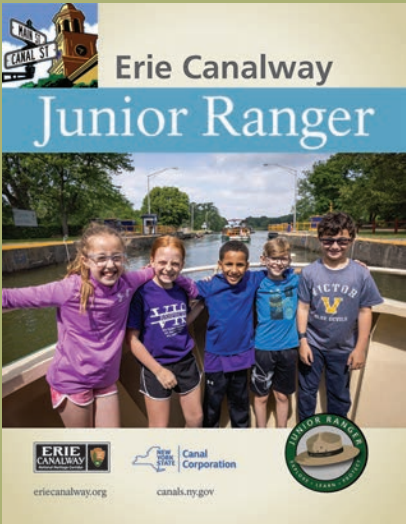
Paddle the Cayuga-Seneca Canal

Paddle through history where women first united to champion equal rights. This four-day self-guided journey weaves together water, women’s rights, wildlife, and wine, offering a rich mix of paddling and exploration both on and off the water.



Become a Junior Ranger

Pick up a Junior Ranger booklet at participating sites or download it online and enjoy fun activities to learn about the New York State Canal System. Complete the activity booklet to earn your official Junior Ranger certificate and badge.



Junior Ranger Day!
Saturday, August 1, 2026



ERIE CANALWAY PHOTO CONTEST

Only Here!

The Erie Canalway Photo Contest invites you to capture the one-of-a-kind character of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. With its miles of interconnected waterways and trails, scenic vistas, rich history, welcoming communities, and endless opportunities for recreation, the Canalway Corridor is truly a place like no other.

CONTEST CATEGORIES

First, second, and third place winners will be selected in each category.

- **A Vibrant Connector: Waterways, Parks, and Trails**
Share your favorite places to explore—parks, waterfront promenades, and trails—and the activities that bring them to life, from boating and paddling to cycling, walking, birdwatching, and fishing.
- **Past Meets Present**
Capture the moments where past and present intersect along the canal—historic sites, working structures, and the ways people continue to use and enjoy these spaces today.
- **The Canal at Work**
Spotlight the canal in action. Photograph its distinctive engineering and daily operations—work boats, lock operators, lift bridges, and the structures that keep this iconic waterway moving.
- **Scenic Beauty**
Celebrate the natural beauty and diverse habitats of the Erie Canalway in every season. Whether it's winter stillness, spring blooms, summer adventures, or fall color, show us the landscapes and wildlife that make the canal so special.

DEADLINE: AUGUST 28, 2026

ENTER AT: www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest



Credit: Stefanie Obkirchner

Getting Here



Access the canal and trail system by car, boat, bike, or train, or fly into Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, or Buffalo. I 90 and Amtrak follow the Erie Canal; I 87 and NY Route 4 serve the Champlain Canal. Local roads connect canal communities throughout the corridor.

Thank a Volunteer!

An incredible community of volunteers protect and share New York's remarkable canal heritage at visitor centers, historic sites, museums and along the waterway and trail. These dedicated stewards do it all—from greeting boaters to keeping paddling access sites clean to teaching school children. As you travel along the canal, take a moment to thank volunteers for their service!

If you have time or talents to share, contact us about getting involved. We can connect you with volunteer opportunities near you that match your interests. info@eriecanalway.org



Bob Stopper and John Hewes, volunteer greeters extraordinaire, in Lyons.



In partnership with the National Park Service

The exceptional scenery, history, culture, and natural resources of the New York State Canal System earned the 524-mile waterway and the communities along its shores Congressional designation as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in 2000. This designation recognizes the canals' national significance and their lasting impact on New York State and the nation.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the nonprofit Erie Canalway Heritage Fund preserve this extraordinary canal heritage, promote the region as a world-class tourism destination, and foster vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of historic waterways.

518-237-7000

info@eriecanalway.org

www.eriecanalway.org

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www.canals.ny.gov



www.sprucecreekcampground.com



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