

Mighty Michigan



Mighty Michigan is on the short list of top-notch summertime golf destinations. For decades its growing prominence was something of a secret, known mostly by state residents. But in the past twenty years the northern reaches of this upper Midwest state has reached the upper strata of public-access golf. Combine the quality of their myriad courses with the serenity and drive-ability of the highways and byways crisscrossing the landscape, the sunny days, cool evenings and friendly Michiganders who are so pleased to show off their state's many natural assets, and it's easy to see why tens of thousands of avid golfers make a pilgrimage to the region on a regular basis.



Shanty Creek – Cedar River

Shanty Creek is as good a place as any to start. This full-service resort facility resides in the town of Bellaire, just thirty-five miles from Traverse City. There are four courses on property, none more compelling than Cedar River, the most popular of the four. This Tom Weiskopf design features roomy fairways, plenty of elevation changes and deep stands of massive hardwoods on the periphery. Lots of mounding help contain errant drives, and players can run the ball up onto most greens as there aren't many forced carries. If you can make it through the first half-dozen holes intact you can score well, but the course starts off with a bang. The namesake river itself comes into play midway through the back nine on a potentially drivable par-4, and the drop shot par-3 that follows. It's the most memorable stretch of the course.



Shanty Creek – The Legend

Also be sure to check out The Legend, an Arnold Palmer design with wonderful views of Lake Bellaire. The Summit Golf Course is extremely family friendly, perfect for neophytes, with par-3 options on every hole, and fifteen-inch cups in addition to traditional cups on every green.

Treetops, in the town of Gaylord, is owned by well-known golf instructor Rick Smith. This is an 81-hole venue, well worthy of a weeklong, or certainly long weekend excursion.



Treetops

Masterpiece, located several miles from the other courses, is a Robert Trent Jones design that opened in 1987. It features dramatic elevation changes with far-reaching views for up to thirty miles. The Premier, created by Tom Fazio, is more user-friendly, with vast, bowl-shaped fairways to corral errant shots. Tradition, a Rick Smith design, is the newest addition to the resort. It is built on gently rolling land that is partially wooded and it boasts some of the best greens in Michigan. It has the classic look of a course that was built many years ago. Signature, also by Smith, features plenty of natural vegetation and a variety of hardwoods and pines to create a picturesque setting for some of the most demanding holes at Treetops. Finally, Threetops has been called the finest par-3 course in the world, and offers thrilling elevation changes throughout. Built for a Billy goat, the terrain changes on this 9-hole curiosity range from 70 to 190 feet, some with severely sloping greens. Threetops is an absolute “must-play” at

Treetops, along with the additional 72 holes of full-scale, IE–driver friendly golf.



Forest Dunes

Forest Dunes, in the tiny burgh of Roscommon, is a far-from-common experience, undoubtedly worthy of an overnight visit. This is another Tom Weiskopf design, playing firm and fast, with thoughtful bunkering and a serene location. The front nine is more of a parkland setting, set through the woods. The back nine is more exposed, with numerous sand blowouts, and the conditioning on this housing-free facility is impeccable. Forest Dunes features a number of intriguing challenges including wide-open meadows, hardwoods, century old red and jack pines, rugged native dunes, scruffy sand areas and water features. Forest Dunes has recently doubled the fun, opening an honest-to-goodness reversible golf course called The Loop. Designed by native Michigander Tom Doak, players begin on the first hole and conclude on the eighteenth one day, while the next they begin on eighteen, and play ‘backwards,’ to the first.



Forest Dunes

Forest Dunes is the epitome of destination golf, that fact becomes apparent on the miles-long, meandering drive off the county road that takes you to the facility. It's a full five-or-more minutes of anticipation as you circuitously close in on the 4,500 acre property. The course is top notch, but so is the handsome and welcoming clubhouse, the bar/restaurant, and well-appointed lodge with fourteen rooms, sleeping 26 in total. Add in the half-dozen nearby cottages, and the total capacity for onsite accommodations is just below seventy. Once you park the car everything you need for a total golf (and as dusk falls, bocce ball) immersion is within fifty or a hundred yards.

Traverse City has many good dining options, including [Red Ginger](#), specializing in sushi and Thai food in a modern, welcoming atmosphere. [Slabtown Café and Burgers](#) is more of a down-home option. This memorably-named eatery impresses with succulent burgers and an array of local soda pop flavors that will appeal to kids, and the kid that resides in all of us. Finally, [The Filling Station](#) has a unique ambience in an old train station. Wood-fired pizza and craft beer are the primary attractions at one of the area's most popular establishments.