



All About Michigan

Michigan's Isle Royale

Isle Royale is an island in the Great Lakes that is located in the northwest of Lake Superior. It is 56 miles from the Michigan shore. The island and the 450 surrounding smaller islands and waters make up the Isle Royale National Park.

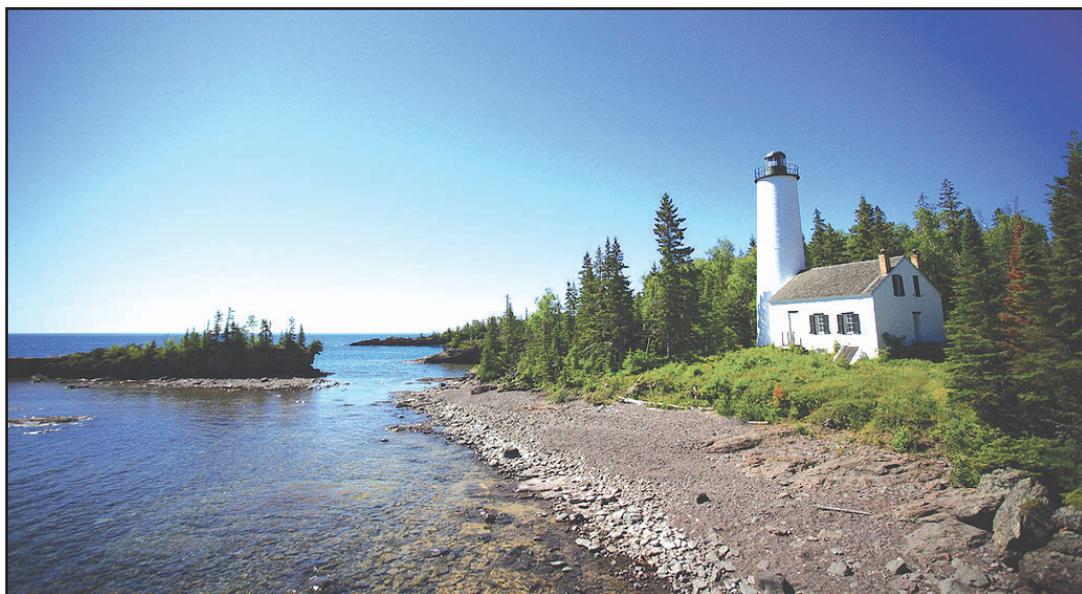
The island is 45 miles long and 9 miles wide. Ferries from Michigan and Minnesota land at Rock Harbor on the eastern end of the island. Ferries from Minnesota also run to Windigo on the western end. There is also seasonal sea plane service.

There are no roads on the island and in fact, no wheeled vehicles or devices other than wheel chairs permitted by the public.

Siskiwit Lake is the largest lake on the island. It has cold, clear water and contains several islands, including Ryan Island, the largest. Ryan Island contains Moose Boulder.

The island was a common hunting ground for native peoples from nearby Minnesota and Ontario. In prehistoric times, large quantities of copper were mined on Isle Royale and the nearby Keweenaw Peninsula. The region is scarred by ancient mine pits and trenches up to 20 feet deep.

In the mid-1840s, a report by Douglass Houghton, Michigan's first state geologist, set off a copper boom in the state, and the first modern copper mines were opened on the island. Evidence of the earlier mining efforts was



everywhere, in the form of many stone hammers, some copper artifacts, and places where copper had been partially worked out of the rock but left in place. The ancient pits and trenches led to the discovery of many of the copper deposits that were mined in the 19th century.

Isle Royale was given to the United States by the 1783 treaty with Great Britain. The British remained in control until after the War of 1812. The Ojibwa peoples considered the island to be their territory. The Ojibwas ceded the island to the U.S. in the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe.

Once the island became a National Park in 1940, logging and other exploitive activities ended and the forest area began to regenerate.

The western tip of the island is home to several shipwrecks that are very popular with scuba divers, including the SS America. Recreational activities also include approximately 170 miles of hiking trails, fishing, boating, kayaking and observing nature. The most popular trail, best marked and longest single route is the 40-mile Greenstone Ridge Trail that extends down the island's backbone. The trail leads to the peak of Mount Desor, at 1,394 feet, which is the highest point on the island and also passes through northwoods wilderness, and by inland glacial lakes, swamps, bogs and scenic shorelines. There are also numerous campgrounds - many of which are only accessible by water.

