



All About Michigan

Upper Peninsula's Kitch-iti-kipi Spring

Kitch-iti-kipi Spring is a tourist attraction in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It's location is northwest of Manistique in the Palms Book State Park. The Kitch-iti-kipi is Michigan's largest natural spring. The water stays cool all year, maintaining a 45 degree temperature. The spring is 300 feet by 175 feet and is about 40 feet deep. It looks like a big oval! In the water you can see huge fish because the water is crystal clear. The fish you see are Lake Trout, Brown Trout and Brook Trout. At times you will spot other species like Yellow Perch.

Hydraulic pressure forces the groundwater to the surface. The spring's pool bowl is like other sinkholes except it is connected with an underground stream to Indian Lake. The spring pool was created when the top layer of limestone dissolved away and collapsed into the cave already created by underground water.

To get to the middle of the spring, you can ride with your family in a large observation raft that you pull along a cable. The cable uses

pulleys to move, so any kid can move the whole thing!

Kitch-iti-kipi (Kitch-i-tee-ki-pee) means "big spring". Its name makes a lot of sense. The spring has

10,000 gallons of water per minute flowing! Kitch-iti-kipi is said to have many meanings in the Chippewa language such as: The Great Water, The Blue Sky I See, The Roaring, Bubbling Spring. Others called it the Sound of Thunder and Drum Water.

There are many Indian legends about Kitch-iti-kipi. One legend says it was named after a young Native American chieftain, whose



tribe lived near the spring. He fell in love with a girl who wanted him to prove his love for her. She told him that she would jump from a branch that overhung the spring and he was to be at the bottom in a canoe to catch her. He set off in the freezing waters in a canoe, while she sat back with other girls and laughed over his foolishness. The legend tells that his canoe tipped over, and the young chieftain met his end in the cold waters.

Another legend is that Chippewa parents would come to the spring to give names to their newborn children, claiming to hear names in the bubbling water. They also believed the spring held healing abilities.

A drop of honey on a piece of birch bark dipped into Kitch-iti-kipi and presented to a loved one was to make them true forever. Another legend concerned the tamarack growing on the banks of Kitch-iti-kipi. A small piece of the bark ground in a mortar and pestle and placed in an individual's empty pockets would be replaced by glittering gold at exactly midnight. Whatever the legends, visitors to the spring love them.

Some people think that these stories were made up by the founder of the park, John Bellaire, who discovered the black hole spring in the 1920's. He loved the beauty of the spot, and convinced the Palms Book Land Company to sell the spring and 90 acres of land to the State of Michigan for \$10 (That was a lot back then!). The property deed required the property to be forever used as a public park. Now this beautiful spring is one of Michigan's Parks.

