

Soo Locks boat cruise is a favorite Michigan attraction

Sault Ste. Marie tour is made for family fun and adventure

(SAULT STE MARIE, MI) To watch freighters that would dwarf the Titanic ply international waters between the United States and Canada in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is to wonder: what must life on the Great Lakes be like? To ride aboard the [Soo Locks Boat Tours](#) is the closest a non-mariner comes to experiencing the answer.

Those first steps through the gangway are filled with anticipation, in part because a [boat cruise](#) on the St. Marys River is a different adventure every time. What ships will we meet on the water? Will we see a loaded, 1,000-foot freighter down bound en route to the steel mills of Ohio? Will our family "lock through" with a tugboat, a freighter, or a U.S. Coast Guard vessel?

The waterborne commerce that surrounds every Soo Locks Boat Tour is a feast for the eyes, but the unique view of history from the river's perspective is a banquet for the mind. Both the United States and Canadian shores are dotted with not-to-be-missed landmarks that tell the story of the region.

On the U.S. shore, there is the quarter-mile-long [hydroelectric power plant](#) (one of three on the tour) that began churning out power for the region in 1902. On the opposite side of the river, the Canadian Bushplane Museum, which historically served as the hangar for the Ontario Fire and Aviation seaplanes fighting fires in Northern Ontario.

Industry is also on display at the water's edge, from the shipyards of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to the working steel mill on the Canadian shore that dates back to 1901 and puts on quite a show for visitors with a sailor's view.

But of course, the highlight of the tour is traversing the world famous Soo Locks. With a century-and-a-half of service under its belt, the Soo Locks complex has seen the evolution of ships and industry and never missed a beat. Just like the hundreds of thousands of vessels that came before, each SLBT tour boat is raised and lowered 21-feet through the Locks, allowing safe travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. Not long after the Captain radios "lockmaster, lockmaster" to gain entry, visitors are drawn to reach out and touch Lock walls, making physical contact with a little piece of history.

From the time the lines are thrown and the Captain navigates the boat away from the dock, visitors may take a seat either above deck under an open-air canopy or below in climate-controlled comfort. Explore the U.S. Coast Guard inspected, double-deck tour boat and take advantage of conveniences like a snack bar and restrooms. Expert narration sews together the experience in a way that young and old find fascinating and fun.

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