



# Erie Canalway Map & Guide



The New York State Canal System—which includes the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals—is the centerpiece of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Experience the enduring legacy of this National Historic Landmark by boat, bike, car, or on foot.



Pittsford, Frank Forte

Dubbed the “Mother of Cities” the canal fueled the growth of industries, opened the nation to settlement, and made New York the Empire State. (Clinton Square, Syracuse, 1905, courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection.)

## Discover New York’s Extraordinary Canals

Opened in 1825, New York’s canals are a waterway link from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes through the heart of upstate New York. Through wars and peacetime, prosperity and recession, flood and drought, this exceptional waterway has provided a living connection to a proud past and a vibrant future. Built with leadership, ingenuity, determination, and hard work, the canals continue to remind us of the qualities that make our state and nation great. They offer us inspiration to weather storms and time-tested knowledge that we will prevail.

### Canals and COVID-19

Please refer to current guidelines and recommendations from the State of New York and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to safely enjoy all the Canalway Corridor has to offer. Before you travel, check to see whether visitor centers, sites of interest, tours, and services are open. Though they may not be going about “business as usual,” many businesses, restaurants, and sites are doing their best to carry on with creative new approaches. Please show your support and patronage when possible.

**Come to New York’s canals this year.** Touch the building stones laid by immigrants and farmers 200 years ago. See century-old locks, lift bridges, and movable dams constructed during the canal’s 20th century enlargement and still in use today. Walk, run, or cycle on the path where mules once trod. Imagine the strength and stamina of people who traversed the towpath long ago for work and the promise of America.

**There are many ways to enjoy the waterway.** More than 500 miles of canals and connected lakes and rivers, 365 miles of Canalway Trail, and hundreds of canalside communities are here to explore. Boating, paddling and cycling present outstanding ways to experience the canals up close. Choose from hundreds of museums, historic sites, state parks, and attractions along the way. And be sure to sample local flavor at craft breweries, wineries, farmers markets, and eateries. You’ll quickly discover that they are within easy reach of most canal waterfronts.

This guide presents exciting things to do, places to go, and exceptional activities to enjoy. Welcome!

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# Enjoy Boats and Boating on the Canals

## The Fastest Way to Slow Down



Lock 13, Mohawk Valley Welcome Center, Frank Forté



Lock 28A, Lyons ca. 1921, courtesy New York State Archives

Tugs with barges and huge motorships were once the main vessels on the canals. While there are fewer commercial shipments today, the canal continues to provide an economical and practical way to ship large cargoes, such as electrical turbines, industrial equipment, and crushed stone.

When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, its selling point was speed: the canal dramatically cut travel time for cargo and people and opened a whole new way to reach America's interior. Today, the canal offers just the opposite: a chance to slow down and explore all the fascinating places along its shores. You'll discover scenic vistas, abundant wildlife, and unique communities where you'll find amenities and numerous sites of interest.

### Watch the Boats Go By

After more than 200 years of continuous service, New York's Canals are still working waterways that connect the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes across upstate New York. Tugboats, barges, pleasure boats, canoes, and kayaks all use the canals. Visit one of the NYS Canal System's 57 locks to see their massive gates and mechanical gears, and watch boats pass through. Many locks have picnic areas and fishing below the locks is popular.

### Launch Your Own Boat

There are more than 80 public boat ramps along the NYS Canal System where you can launch your own boat for a few hours or a multi-day trip. The Erie Canal connects with Oneida, Onondaga, Cross, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes where you can enjoy other water sports, beaches, and sailing. Marinas and public docks provide services and overnight accommodations. Many communities offer showers, laundry facilities, hook-ups, and other boater amenities right in the center of town.

**A NATIONAL TREASURE**—Built between 1817 and 1825, the original Erie Canal traversed 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo. It was the longest artificial waterway and the greatest public works project in North America.

The canal put New York on the map as the Empire State—the leader in population, industry, and economic strength. It transformed New York City into the nation's principal seaport and opened the interior of North America to settlement.

The canal was enlarged several times to accommodate larger boats and increasing traffic. The version we use today was completed in 1918 and remains fully navigable. In 2016 it was designated a National Historic Landmark for its exceptional national significance and historical integrity.

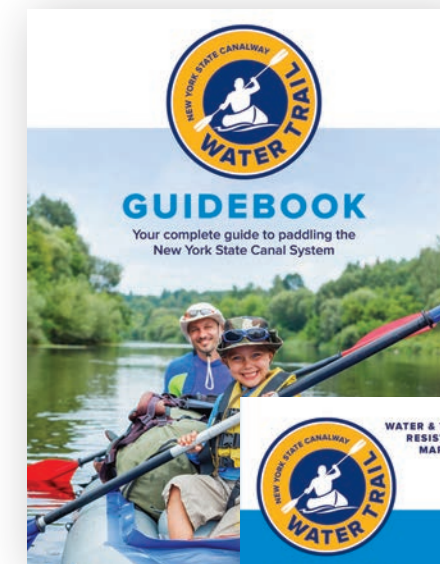


Lock E2, Waterford, Call of the Loon



### Paddling

The NYS Canalway Water Trail welcomes kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddleboards with more than 140 public access points and lots of amenities and places of interest. Paddlers navigate century old locks; pass stunning stone aqueducts used to carry boats over rivers and streams in the 1800s; paddle alongside tugboats and cruisers; and experience narrow canal channels and wider river segments. You'll find rental outfitters and tour operators at numerous locations.



The New York State Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Map Set are indispensable resources for paddlers. Request a copy of the mile-by-mile guide at [paddler@eriecanalway.org](mailto:paddler@eriecanalway.org) or visit [eriecanalway.org/watertrail](http://eriecanalway.org/watertrail).

### Boat Tours and Vacation Rentals

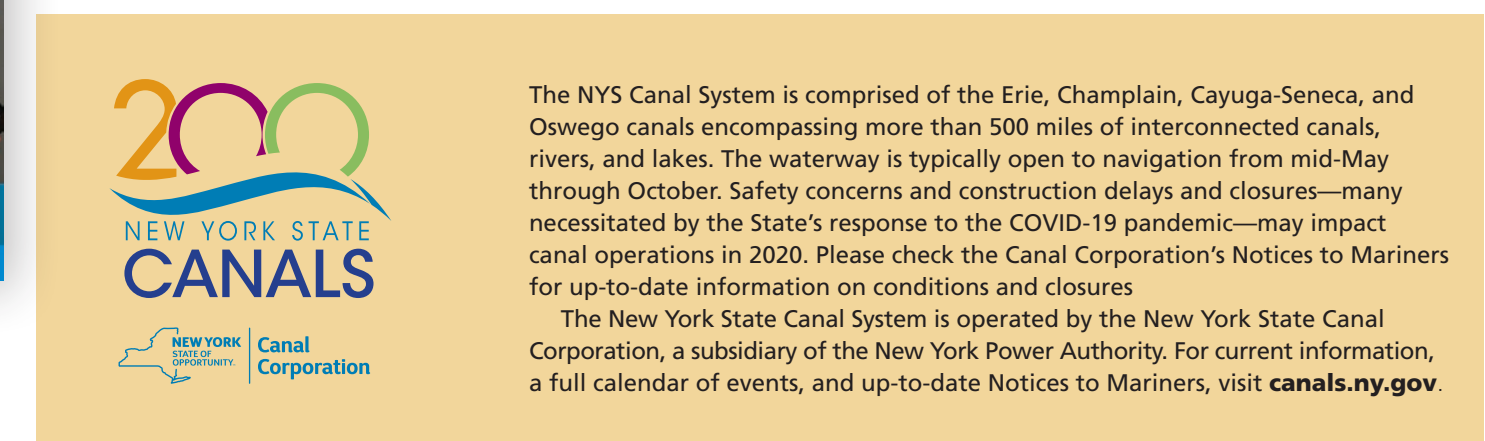
You can get on the water for a scenic ride or enjoy a lunch or dinner cruise on one of the many tour boats along the canals. Specialty cruises, sailing adventures, and wine tours are offered on lake and river sections of the waterway. Multi-day cruises are available if you are looking for a longer trip.

Vacation rentals provide an idyllic way to experience the canal at a relaxed pace. You'll get lessons in steering, docking, and locking before heading out, so you can feel confident on the water even if you're not an experienced boater. Rental boats are well-equipped with sleeping quarters, a galley, and deck space for relaxing; many come with bikes so you can enjoy the Canalway Trail too.

### Tours, Rentals, and Boater Information

Find a list of boat tours and vacation rentals at [eriecanalway.org/explore/boating](http://eriecanalway.org/explore/boating). Please check schedules and availability with tour operators as tours may be impacted in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Additional boater resources and maps include:

- [nycanalmap.org](http://nycanalmap.org)
- [canals.ny.gov](http://canals.ny.gov)
- [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org)
- [greatloop.org](http://greatloop.org)



The NYS Canal System is comprised of the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego canals encompassing more than 500 miles of interconnected canals, rivers, and lakes. The waterway is typically open to navigation from mid-May through October. Safety concerns and construction delays and closures—many necessitated by the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic—may impact canal operations in 2020. Please check the Canal Corporation's Notices to Mariners for up-to-date information on conditions and closures.

The New York State Canal System is operated by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority. For current information, a full calendar of events, and up-to-date Notices to Mariners, visit [canals.ny.gov](http://canals.ny.gov).

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Renewable

## Make Boating Safety a priority

- Always wear a properly sized life jacket
- Stay a safe distance from dams, buoys and barriers
- Respect all signs and warning signals
- Let someone know about your plans, including route, destination, and timing
- Before heading out, check the weather forecast and the NYS Canal Corporation "Notices & Alerts" website for current information about conditions: [canals.ny.gov](http://canals.ny.gov)

- Use designated launch sites to get your boat on the water
- Boat sober
- Be cautious near hydroelectric plants where currents and water levels can change quickly
- Leave no trace: carry out what you carry in

[brookfieldrenewable.com](http://brookfieldrenewable.com)



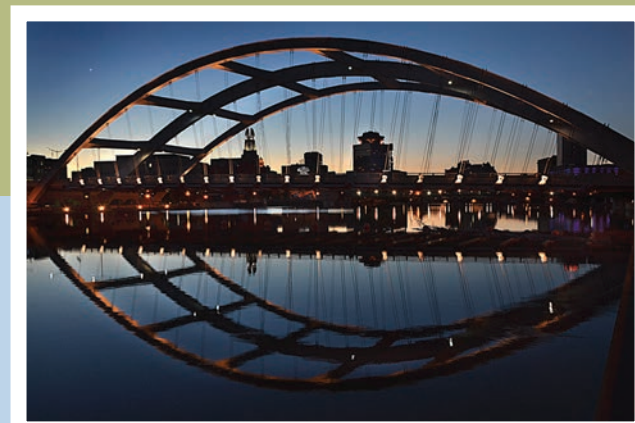
Rome

# Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Designated by Congress in 2000, the National Heritage Corridor extends along New York's canals from one end of the state to the other. As you travel, you will discover distinct regional differences that will keep you coming back to experience all that the Canalway Corridor has to offer.



**Buffalo to Rochester (90 miles)**  
Find charming towns connected by water and trail along the longest section of the Erie Canal that still follows much of its original path.



**Rochester to Syracuse (90 miles)**  
The canal is the centerpiece of vibrant cities and small towns along this stretch of the Erie Canal, where you'll find varied terrain on water and land.



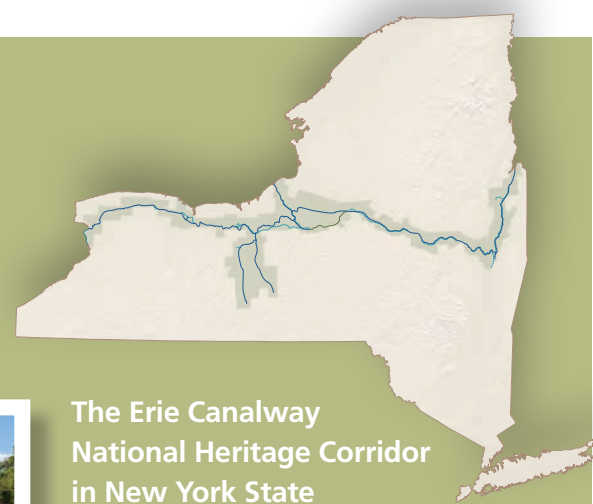
**The Oswego Canal (23 miles)**  
Three Rivers to Oswego  
Short but sweet! The canalized Oswego River flows north to Lake Ontario and is a popular place for sport fishing, boating, and paddling.



Lock C4, Frank Forté

**The Champlain Canal (63 miles)**  
Waterford to Whitehall  
Boat, paddle, or cycle a region steeped in American history along the picturesque Hudson River and Champlain Canal.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in New York State



## Plan Your Trip

Use the online **New York State Canals Map** to find a wealth of information on places of interest, visitor centers, boat rentals and tours, and paddling access sites. You can filter by features such as municipal centers, public restrooms, camping, and picnic facilities. Directions and a distance calculator make it easy to plan trips by bike, kayak, boat, or car.

[nycanalmap.com](http://nycanalmap.com)



Seneca Falls, Frank Forté

## The Cayuga-Seneca Canal (92 miles)

Montezuma to Geneva, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes  
Famed for its wineries, wildlife, and beautiful Finger Lakes, this region also includes Seneca Falls, the birthplace of the women's rights movement in 1848.



Old Erie Canal State Park

## Syracuse to Little Falls (90 miles)

Travel the route of today's canal through lively summer communities along Oneida Lake or follow the historic route of the 1800s Erie Canal through the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park. The Canalway Trail runs through the park and paddlers are welcome to explore the shallow waters of the old Erie.



Waterford

## Little Falls to Albany (90 miles)

The Erie Canal merges with the scenic Mohawk River through a region rich in history and culture.

# Hit the Trail



Phisford, Keith Boas



Spencerport Cycling Club, courtesy Ogden Historical Society

Cycling along the canal isn't new. As bicycles became more affordable in the late-1880s, hundreds of cycling clubs formed across the United States. In larger cities like Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse and small towns like Spencerport (above), clubs promoted cycling for sport, social activity, and transportation. Women's liberation activists, like Susan B. Anthony, promoted cycling as a way for women to gain greater freedom of movement and self-reliance.

## Did you know?

### 365 miles

The multi-use trail is 80-percent off road and extends east-west along the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany for 365 miles.

### 77 miles

An additional 77 miles of off- and on-road trail segments extend north-south from Waterford to Whitehall, including the 9-mile off-road Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail.

Trail conditions vary from stone dust to paved. Hybrid tires are recommended for stone dust segments.

### 750 miles

By the end of 2020, New York State will link the Canalway Trail with routes from New York City through the Hudson River Valley to Lake Champlain to create the 750-mile Empire State Trail.

The Canalway Trail offers opportunities for fun and safe cycling, walking, and hiking for all ages and abilities. You can spend a leisurely afternoon cycling with family or friends. Teach your kids to ride a bike. Get out for an evening stroll or morning training run. Or set your sights on a multi-day trip of a lifetime.

The trail's route alongside the historic Erie and Champlain canals makes cycling here truly unique. This living waterway adds distinctive flavor in the form of canal structures like locks and lift bridges, working tugs and other vessels, friendly vacationers in boats of all stripes, and canal communities and historic sites that are intriguing and fun cycling destinations.

### Cycling with Kids

The Canalway Trail is fantastic for families. Flat sections are easy for kids to manage and you can practice good bike etiquette and safety when passing, stopping, and turning. Plan shorter rides initially and lengthen them as your child's interest and stamina grow. Choose a destination to give kids a point to shoot for as they ride and a sense of accomplishment when they reach it. Your destination may be the next lift bridge or town, a

lock, park, historic site, or ice cream stand. In New York State, all children under the age of 14 are required to wear certified bicycle safety helmets. Be a good role model and wear yours, too.

### Cycling Resources and Tours

Whether you want to cycle on your own or with an organized ride, you'll find comprehensive guidebooks, maps and online resources to help you find trailheads, sites of interest, best bet trips, kid friendly rides, and amenities. We recommend consulting maps in advance of your trip.

Cycle the Erie Canal in July is an annual 8-day bike tour from Buffalo to Albany organized by Parks & Trails New York. Several private companies offer supported rides throughout the season. Find cycling resources at:

- [cycletheeriecanal.com](http://cycletheeriecanal.com)
- [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org)

# Take the Canalway Challenge



John Copp

Trace history and track miles along New York's canals with the Canalway Challenge. Part fitness challenge, part journey of discovery, the Canalway Challenge is an invitation to discover all you can do along New York's canals and Canalway Trail.

Participation is free and registration is open to individuals, teams, and organizations. Simply register online and choose a mileage goal of 15, 90, 180, or 360 miles (End-to-End/Buffalo to Albany); then walk, run, cycle, or paddle on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System to achieve it. You can complete the Canalway Challenge in one big trip or many small ones.

### Hot on the Trail

As you log miles, take up the quest for what's *Hot on the Trail* by seeking out great food and beverages, historic sites, parks, and communities. You can earn a chance to win prizes for visiting a variety of sites while also achieving recognition for your mileage status. Canalway Challengers share experiences, recommendations, and support in a dedicated Facebook group and on other social media.

Visit the website to hear inspiring stories of people who have completed the Challenge and sign up today to hit the ground running—or cycling, walking, or paddling!

- [canalwaychallenge.org](http://canalwaychallenge.org)
- [Facebook.com/groups/canalwaychallenge](https://www.facebook.com/groups/canalwaychallenge)



### Every Journey Begins with a Single Step

The Canalway Challenge is open to people of all ages and abilities. If you're not used to regular exercise or you have a disability, start with the 1st Mile Challenge. That's right: get up, get moving, and see if you can work up to doing one mile.

There are numerous places along the canals and Canalway Trail that are accessible and several that offer adaptive bikes and kayaks. Once you complete your 1st Mile, challenge yourself by signing up for more through the Canalway Challenge. Learn more at: [eriecanalway.org/1st-Mile](http://eriecanalway.org/1st-Mile)



Fort Hunter, Stefanie Obkirchner

### Enter the Erie Canalway Photo Contest

Entering the contest is a snap: find an entry form and tips on our website: [eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest](http://eriecanalway.org/get-involved/photo-contest)

Deadline for entries: **August 28, 2020**

**Note:** Winning images will be published in the 2021 Erie Canalway calendar; images must be horizontal format.

## NEW YORK STATE CANAL STORE

### Take the Memories With You!

Visit the **online canal store** to find shirts, hats, mugs, and totes to show your love for canals, sport your Canalway Challenge mileage, or gear up for paddling on the NYS Canalway Water Trail. All net proceeds support Erie Canalway programs.



[shop.eriecanalway.org](http://shop.eriecanalway.org)



**Be mindful!** Follow current New York State guidelines for social distancing while enjoying parks and trails. [coronavirus.health.ny.gov](http://coronavirus.health.ny.gov)

# Votes for Women

2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment ratifying women's voting rights. But the call for women's rights began much earlier and traces a significant part of its history to New York's canals.

In 1848, people convened the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, demanding full and equal rights between women and men. They drafted the Declaration of Sentiments, denouncing inequities in property rights, education, employment, religion, marriage and family, and suffrage. The Declaration was signed by 100 women and men, and the U.S. women's rights movement was born.

It took another 72 years before women could cast their first ballots. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally passed by Congress on June 4, 1919 and ratified on August 18, 1920.



*"When Anthony Met Stanton" by sculptor Ted Aub in Seneca Falls*

## Touch History in Seneca Falls

Visit the place that touched off the movement for women's rights and learn more about the canal's role in spreading ideas and information at the **Women's Rights National Historical Park**, **National Women's Hall of Fame**, and **Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry** in Seneca Falls. Round out your trip by paddling or cruising on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal and visiting the region's award-winning wineries.



Courtesy Schneider Family

**From cooks to cabin maids to captains, women have long played vital roles on the canal. Many boats were family-owned, and women raised children and managed household chores aboard their floating homes. Today, women work as tug captains, canal engineers, and in other leadership roles in organizations and business associated with the canals.**

## 2020 Canal Festivals & Events

Please find a list of events for 2020-21 online at [eriecanalway.org](http://eriecanalway.org) and [canals.ny.gov](http://canals.ny.gov). Check with event organizers for up-to-date information, as many events have been postponed, rescheduled, or cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tour Boat Wm B Kirk, courtesy Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse



## SHARE YOUR JOURNEY

When you explore the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, or Oswego Canals, you're traveling in the wake of generations of families, canal workers, and world travelers who have plied these waters and walked its towpath since the Erie Canal opened in 1825. Some of our more famed literary visitors include Charles Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mark Twain.

Travelers sent postcards home by the thousands to share their journeys. Share your experience on social media with **#eriecanalway**, and **#NYSCanals**, connect with us **@eriecanalway**, or send an old-fashioned postcard home.



In partnership with the National Park Service

The **Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of historic waterway. We achieve our mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York.

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## Many thanks!

The Erie Canalway Map & Guide, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Canalway Challenge are made possible with generous support from these sponsors:



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