

Traverse City

BAY BREAD

601 Randolph St. • (231) 922-8022

Just a block from the beach on a quiet side street, Bay Bread occupies a handsome two-story building of pale brick. Inside, Stacy Wilcox and her crew create an astounding variety of breads – from crusty boules and sweet baguettes to great crusty ciabattas and dense multi-grain loaves – as well as scones, cookies and other treats. There's a small café serving sandwiches featuring those awesome Bay Breads, too.

GRAND TRAVERSE PIE COMPANY

525 West Front St. • (231) 922-7437

Since 1996, Mike and Denise Busley have been making pies of all kinds (27 varieties of fruit pie, including six kinds of cherry pie) as well as seven kinds of cream pie, pot pies, quiches, cookies, scones and muffins. Grand Traverse Pie is now a major chain, but this cozy shop on Front Street is the original. It includes a café with soups, sandwiches and other items – but the real draw is still that signature pie with its light, flaky crust.

DEERING'S MARKET

827 S. Union St. • (231) 947-6165

Located in a residential area just a few blocks south of downtown, Deering's looks like nothing more than a modest neighborhood convenience store. But it's the home of "Deering's Famous Jerky," a line of more than 26 varieties of cured and smoked cured meats – everything from beef, turkey, chicken and pork to venison, elk and buffalo, prepared in a bewildering variety of styles and flavors.

RIGHT BRAIN BREWERY

221 Garland St.
(231) 944-1239

Tucked into an alleyway in the city's edgy Warehouse District, this microbrewery is paired with a hair salon next door. (Their motto is, You sip, we snip.) The 70-seat pub at Right Brain features at least 10 handcrafted ales, beers, stouts and porters at a time – the selection changes regularly – and brewmaster John Niedermaier is famous for putting all manner of things in his recipes: from chocolate and heather to coffee and raspberries.

GRAND TRAVERSE DISTILLERY

781 Industrial Circle, Suite 5 • (231) 947-8635

It's not easy to find the Grand Traverse Distillery, hidden away in a nondescript industrial park off Three Mile Road, but if you're passionate about vodka, this is a very special place. Working with small handcrafted batches, Kent Rabish has taken top-grade northern Michigan rye and clear glacial water, and created True North Vodka, a triple-distilled "super-premium" vodka. Rabish has a small tasting room and loves to talk about his distillery, but be sure to call ahead.



MOOMER'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM

7263 N. Long Lake Rd.

(231) 941-4122

Selected by viewers of "Good Morning America" as the best ice cream store in the country, Moomer's is the brainchild of Jon and Nancy Plummer. In this rural setting near Long Lake, just west of Traverse City, visitors can watch the dairy cows grazing outside as they sample some of the more than 100 flavors made here. (Their signature flavor, Cherries Moobilee, features black cherry ice cream with chunks of black sweet cherries, red tart cherries, chocolate fudge swirl and chunks of homemade brownie pieces.)



Leelanau County

CARLSON'S OF FISHTOWN

205 W. River • Leland • (231) 256-9801

Fishtown is a quaint shopping district at the mouth of the Leland River, where century-old fishing shanties and sheds have been converted into galleries and boutiques. Here you'll find the region's last full-time commercial fishing operation, Carlson's of Fishtown. If your timing is good, you may be there to watch them unload boxes of iced whitefish from the tugboat out back. The store sells fresh and smoked fish and even a smoked fish sausage (it's better than it sounds!)

CHERRY REPUBLIC

6026 S. Lake St. • Glen Arbor • (231) 334-3150

The Traverse City area is America's "cherry capital," and The Cherry Republic, features more than 150 cherry products, from soda pop and wine to ice cream and salsa. Free samples are plentiful! Beautiful perennial gardens connect each of the hobbit-style buildings, and there's a charming café. Open seven days a week all year. (The Republic also has an "embassy" in downtown Traverse City.)



PLEVA'S MEATS

8974 South Kasson St. • Cedar • (231) 228-5000



The interior of the Leelanau Peninsula was settled by Polish and Bohemian farmers who dearly love the sausages of their native countries. But in the village of Cedar, butcher Ray Pleva took things a step further in the 1980s by mixing cherries and crushed pecans into his smoked sausage. Today almost every grocer in the region carries a version, but the original recipe is still followed at Pleva's Meats, along with a wide selection of Ray's other cherry-enhanced meats.

TANDEM CIDERS

2055 N. Setterbo Rd. • Suttons Bay • (231) 271-0050

In the apple orchard country at the northern end of the Leelanau Peninsula, Nikki Rothwell and Dan Young have revived the traditional art of making and bottling hard cider. A clear, fresh-flavored, slightly carbonated beverage that's usually served in bottles or fresh from the tap, hard cider. It's a traditional favorite in Europe and was America's beverage of choice in colonial times, and is making a comeback in many parts of the country.

LEELANAU CHEESE

10844 E. Revold Rd. • Suttons Bay

(231) 944-1270

Black Star Farms is a fascinating "agricultural destination" in the hills south of Suttons Bay that includes a winery and distillery. It's also the home of the Leelanau Cheese Co. founded in 1995 by John Hoyt and his French-born wife Anne. Their aged raclette, made with milk from local cows and mellowed for months in a cool underground "cave," has been named the Best Cheese in America. They also make a variety of French style fresh cheeses, and you can watch the process through a set of picture windows in the winery tasting room.



The Village at Grand Traverse Commons



HIGHER GROUNDS TRADING COMPANY **L**

806 Red Dr.
(877) 825-2262

Many of the area's most interesting foodie attractions are located in The Village at Grand Traverse Commons, on the site of what was once the local mental asylum. Located in the hospital's former laundry building, Higher Grounds is a coffee roastery that features only fair trade and organic coffee. Founders Chris & Jody Treter designed their coffee bar like a wine tasting room, featuring brewed-to-order coffee and large viewing windows into the roastery so you can watch the beans being roasted and prepared for sale.

LEFT FOOT CHARLEY **M**

806 Red Dr. • (231) 995-0500

Sharing the former laundry with Higher Grounds this is Traverse City's first "urban winery." Owner/winemaker Bryan Ulbrich buys his grapes from selected growers on the nearby Old Mission Peninsula, but all the wines are made here in the old laundry building. Stop in at the tasting room to sample some of their Rieslings, Pinot Grigios and other whites. (In warm weather, the winery also runs Café Leftique, a patio bistro where you can enjoy a plate of bread and cheese with your wine.)

PLEASANTON BAKERY **N**

812 Cottage View Dr. • (231) 941-1964

The asylum's former fire station is now home to this unique bakery, where bakers Gerard Grabowski and Jan Shireman use an enormous wood-fired brick oven to bake hand-shaped loaves made with organic Michigan grains and natural leavening agents. Their flavorful and deeply textured breads include such varieties as Parmesan Olive Herb, Cranberry Pecan, Sesame Whole Wheat and Village Rye.

UNDERGROUND CHEESECAKE COMPANY **O**

1333 Yellow Dr.
(231) 929-4418

This business actually did begin underground, when Lori Dawson and Mary Vickerman decided to start making designer cheesecakes in their basement. Today their cheesecake emporium occupies two handsome brick buildings at the Grand Traverse Commons. They produce 42 different flavors of cheesecake, from Turtle Sundae to Mocha Mudslide, nine cake varieties, five kinds of brownies and a frozen concoction called "cheesecake on a stick." There's also a café serving soups, salads and sandwiches.



Long known for its scenic beauty and recreational bounty, the Traverse City area has also begun to attract attention as one of America's most unique culinary destinations.

Today, many visitors are familiar with the region's award-winning wines and superb restaurants. But there is another side to the story: the talented artisans who create delicious foods that you can sample, purchase and enjoy on your own – whether it's a fresh baked loaf of bread, a warm cherry pie, a glass of hard apple cider or a string of smoked sausages.

Want to meet and chat with the butchers and bakers, fishermen and brewers, cheesemakers and candymakers whose creations have helped to turn Traverse City into a "foodie's paradise?" Here are a few places where you can do exactly that. This guide is by no means exhaustive, but it offers a wide variety of food experiences that you can enjoy any season of the year.

Chocolate Trail

THE CHOCOLATE DEN **P**

324 E. Front St. • (231) 935-3618

Well-established chocolatiers, whose owners pride themselves on the fact that their truffles have only a three-week shelf life (because they refuse to add preservatives or use pre-mixed ingredients) as much as on the chewiness of their homemade chocolate-covered caramels.



CHOCOLATE EXOTICA **Q**

525 W. Front St.
(231) 922-9401

Offers a wide selection of handmade truffles, barks, dipped fruits and delights like Louis XVI cakes.

DOUG MURDICK'S FUDGE **R**

116 E. Front St. • (231) 947-4841
4500 US 31 • (231) 938-2330

Murdicks was founded in Mackinaw Island by a complex dynasty of fudge-makers and confectioners. (One branch migrated to Martha's Vineyard -- another island destination similar to Mackinac.) Traverse City is home to Doug Murdick, whose two stores make 16 varieties of fudge.

KILWIN'S OF TRAVERSE CITY **S**

129 E. Front St. (231) 946-2403

One of the oldest stores in an immensely popular chain started in nearby Petoskey.



JACQUES TORRES CHOCOLATE **T**

225 E. Front St. • (231) 922-9401

French Culinary Institute chef Jacques Torres recently opened his first chocolate shop outside New York City here in downtown Traverse City.

PHIL'S ON FRONT **U**

236 E. Front St. • (231) 929-1710

An 80-seat bistro with a "chocolate lounge" where handcrafted chocolates are paired with wines and spirits, including several variations on the chocolate martini.

GROCER'S DAUGHTER CHOCOLATES **V**

12020 S. Leelanau Hwy • Empire • (231) 326-3030

This tiny candy factory offers intensely-flavored "artisan chocolates" in which powerful Ecuadorian cocoa is blended with local herbs, flowers, fruits, nuts and honey, offers such delicacies as lavender and rosemary truffles, and even a Mayan truffle flavored with a subtle but unmistakably warm dose of chili.



Tasty Traverse
A Self-Guided Foodie Tour