

Manchester House Bed and Breakfast

653 Main Street
Niagara Falls, New York 14301
www.manchesterhouse.com

SELF-GUIDED TOUR NORTH TO FORT NIAGARA

Start the tour in the parking lot behind Manchester House. Turn right into 6th Street, and right again on to Walnut Street. After one block, turn right on to Main Street and drive past the Main Post Office and the front door of Manchester House. At the traffic light (Pine Avenue), turn left and drive to the end of the street. The Niagara Falls Aquarium is ahead of you; the Aquarium parking lot is on the left side of the building. When you pull into the parking lot, the odometer should read 0.4 miles.

Aquarium admission cost is \$7.50 for adults and \$5.50 for children ages 4-12. Year round hours are 9a.m. to 5 p.m. The average visitor spends a couple of hours at the aquarium. When you arrive, find out when the next Seal performance is scheduled (the first show is usually at 10:30 AM).

After leaving the Aquarium, you can walk across the foot bridge to the newly renovated Discovery Center. Admission is \$3.00 adult and \$1.50 children ages 6 - 12. The Center and Aquarium as well as the Maid of the Mist and other attractions are included in the "Passport to the Falls" priced at \$24.50 adults and \$17.50 children. The Discovery Center is also the Trail-Head of a hike along the river gorge.

If you are ready for a hike in the gorge past the largest series of standing waves in North America, then leave your car in the Aquarium parking lot. Starting at the Discovery Center, take the trail to the North. The hike follows the right-of-way of the Great Gorge Route Electric Railway Line which began operations in 1895. You will see the same sights that Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, and J. Pierpoint Morgan saw when they rode the line. You will also climb over the rock slide which closed the line in 1935. Portions of this trail are still under renovation, and may be closed during your visit.

Exit the Aquarium parking lot on to Whirlpool Street

(the Aquarium entrance is on Whirlpool Street). Turn right. You will be going North; the river and the Robert Moses Parkway are on your left. Remain on Whirlpool Street. You will pass the Whirlpool Bridge to Canada (odometer reading 1.6 miles). Continue North to the Parkway entrance (odometer 3 1/2 miles) but don't enter the Parkway. Bear right away from the Parkway. Soon you will come to a "T" junction; bear left (marked EAST 104) - you will actually be heading north toward Lewiston. Remain on Route 104 past the entrance to Niagara University. You are 4.1 miles from Manchester House. The Castellani Art Museum on the Niagara University campus displays 20th Century and contemporary art in a gracious marble building. Open Wednesday through Sunday.

Past the University entrance, you will see the pedestrian walkway bridge over the road - this marks the entrance to the Power Plant's visitor center. Turn into the parking lot to visit the Power Vista Center. Admission is free. The Power Vista offers hands-on exhibits about electricity, films about the power plant, and excellent views of the lower river. Allow about an hour for this visit. After leaving the Power Vista, return to Route 104 and continue North toward the village of Lewiston.

At the bottom of the escarpment hill follow signs for Lewiston, Artpark, Route 18F. The odometer reading should be about 6.7 miles. Turn right into the Village of Lewiston on to Route 18F North. Proceed through the Village, which is the home of Artpark.

Earl W. Brydges Artpark (phone 1-800-659-7275) is open during the summer months with matinee and evening performances. We suggest phoning before your visit to reserve tickets. There is a parking fee in addition to performance admission charges. If the car contains one person age 62 or over, parking on weekdays is free. Continue along Route 18F, turning right on 4th Street.

If you continue straight ahead instead of turning on 4th

Street, you will reach the Niagara River shore. This is the departure point for the Whirlpool Jet boat trip upriver to the Whirlpool. The trip takes an hour. Have a complete change of dry clothes with you (it is better to do the trip on the way back). Reservations strongly advised -- Telephone 1-888-438-4444.

After several turns 18F reaches River Road. The Niagara River will be on your left. You will pass Stella Niagara and Joseph Davis Park. Continue to the Village of Youngstown (odometer reading about 13 miles). Continue on 18F through Youngstown until you see the sign for Fort Niagara State Park ahead of you. Enter the park, and follow the signs for Old Fort Niagara. You will be charged a parking fee, but this will be refunded when you purchase your Fort tickets. The parking lot of the Fort is about 15 miles from the Manchester House parking lot.

Old Fort Niagara was begun by the French in 1726; the British captured it in 1759 during the French and Indian War. The Fort has been fully restored, and is open year round. Admission is \$8.50 for adults, \$5.00 for children 6-12. After July 1 rates increase to \$10.00 for adults, \$6.00 for children. During the summer, there are daily reenactments of Drills and Ceremonies, as well as a number of special programs. A visit to Fort Niagara provides a nice contrast to Fort George across the river in Canada. The British withdrew from Fort Niagara to Fort George in 1796. Allow one to two hours for your visit to the Fort.

After you leave the Fort, turn right and walk down toward the Coast Guard Station. The Niagara River empties into Lake Ontario at this point. You'll see many sail boats anchored in the river; they belong to members of the Youngstown Yacht Club located at the foot of Water Street in the village. As you return to the parking lot, take a moment to view the old light house that guided boatmen on the lake from 1872 until 1993. The buildings apart from the Fort belonged to a U.S. Army installation Fort Niagara that remained in active use until the 1960's.

There are many restaurants on the main streets of Youngstown and Lewiston which should meet your needs. Many post menus outside so that you can "window shop" before entering.

Years ago, Lewiston had a population larger than Niagara Falls. It was a way-station as travelers journeyed from

Lake Ontario to Lake Erie. Unfortunately, the village was burned by the British during the War of 1812, so the houses are relatively new.

If you are lucky, you'll happen to pass through the area during the Youngstown Strawberry Festival, or the Lewiston Peach Festival, or the Lewiston Art Festival. You may encounter a parade on one of the local Volunteer Firemen's Field Days. If you notice one of these special events, then stop and enjoy it. It is grass-roots America!

Return from the Youngstown-Lewiston area either on the Robert Moses Parkway (the fastest, most direct route back into Niagara Falls), or by way of 18F and 104. In either case, it is hard to get lost because lakes and the river border the area.

As you return, consider stopping at Whirlpool State Park (it's about 2 miles south of the Power Project with access from the Parkway). A 5 mile circular walk leads into the Gorge and north along the river to Devil's Hole State Park. You'll go down 340 steps, and up 340 steps so wear your hiking shoes! Allow enough time, so the sun doesn't go down while you are in the Gorge. Hikers tell us it is easier to climb the Devil's Hole stairs - hence this suggested route. Directions can be found in Kershner's Secret Places book in our Sitting Room.

It isn't on the tour but it is worth a visit:

Lockport, NY on the Erie Canal. Canal locks built in 1847 are right in the middle of town under the Pine Street Bridge. The New York State Canal Museum is housed in a former power plant at the base of the locks. Boat tours [Telephone (716) 433-6155 to reserve in advance] through the canal locks start from 210 Market Street and take about 2 hours. The Niagara County Historical Society Museum, 215 Niagara Street (open Thursday through Sunday, 1 - 5 pm), is worth an hour's visit to learn about the area. The Lockport Cave & Underground Boat Ride [telephone (716) 438-0174] at 21 Main Street offers an historic tour viewing the Erie Canal locks, walking through a 1600 foot tunnel blasted through rock in the mid-1800's, and riding in an underground boat.

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