

Reading the State Map

Michigan is surrounded by water - two peninsulas – and four out of five Great Lakes. Can you name them?

Michigan has more shoreline (3,200 miles) than any other state in the United States. What can you find on the map along the shoreline?

Learn what symbols on the map mean: red tree, green triangle, red triangle, ship's wheel, sinking boat, etc. Find out what they mean in the "Map Symbols" section.

The map shows different kinds of roads - 119,354 miles of highways, county roads and city streets. See the "Map Explanation" section for the key to road types. Limited access freeways are blue with three black lines; divided highways are white with two red lines; two lane state highways are a solid red line, and county paved roads are grey.

Mackinac Island has a state highway (M-185) around it, but no cars are allowed (it is the only state highway in the country that does not allow cars!).

On the map, lakes and rivers are marked in blue.

Yellow lines define county lines. Each county name is listed in green capital letters. There are 83 counties in Michigan.

Notice that the bigger the type the city name is in, the larger the city is. The "Index to Communities" lists all cities and towns, and a letter-number to help locate each on the map. Can you find a town where the letter and number intersect?

The distance between major towns can be found in the "Mileage Table." To find distance between smaller towns use nearest larger towns to start, then add mile age from there to smaller towns. Try using your ruler to measure the distance. One inch equals 14.5 miles.

You also can determine distances by reading the small red numbers between red dots. (Note: The black numbers formerly between towns and highway-to-highway intersections have been removed.)

On Interstate freeways you can subtract freeway exit numbers to determine the distance between exits. Note that the Interstate freeway exit numbers are the smallest at the southern and western state borders and get larger as the freeways move northerly and easterly. How long is I-75 in Michigan?

Other symbols that point to places of interest: The red airplane is for airline airports. Can you find Capital City? A green airplane is for other large airports. The blue H is for hospital. Why is it important to show where the hospital is? A hospital must provide emergency medical services 24-hours day to get the H designation.

The dotted line crossing a Great Lake stands for ferry service.

The back side of the map has close ups of major cities and Detroit Metro. One inch equals about 3 miles on these maps. These maps help us find city streets, parks, universities and other major destinations.

The Mackinac Bridge spans the Straits of Mackinac and is longest suspension bridge in North America. Can you use your ruler to measure its length in miles?