

Lake Geneva

Fall Color

GUIDE



Every year, the **Fall Color Report** issued by the **Wisconsin Department of Tourism** predicts when trees will hit their peak of color in cities across the state. Yet, due to a little known secret, **Lake Geneva** has always been the place for the most dramatic, longest lasting autumn display. The next time you take a drive in **Lake Geneva** in the fall, you can thank **America's foremost landscape architects** for the spectacular view. When many of **Chicago's elite** built estates on **Lake Geneva** beginning in the late 1800s, they didn't stop with just their mansions. Several went on to hire **America's foremost landscape architects** to design the grounds.

For estates like Wrigley's Green Gables, a top request was to have the longest lasting color display possible. So, architects carefully selected landscapes that yield specific colors from a wide species of trees and shrubs. Beginning in early September, trees begin to be dotted with yellow accents, followed by bursts of burnt orange, dashes of fiery red and ending with a finale of caramel brown in late November.

For the grounds at Grommes' Allview estate, Danish landscape architect Jens Jensen designed enchanting woods on the lake side of the residence with a mile-long "maple alley" – a winding path lined with brilliant orange in the fall. The Allview site exalted nature and explored new ways to relate buildings to landscapes.

Several substantial landscape projects around Lake Geneva, including the estates of Hutchinson, Harris, Swift, Bartlett and the Yerkes Observatory, were designed by John Charles Olmsted. He was heavily influenced by his father's work, especially having grown up in a small home in the middle of Central Park during the construction of his father's design for the park. Brothers, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. went on to create the largest landscape architecture firm in America.

For the famed "Wychwood" estate, a country home for then president of the Art Institute of Chicago, Charles Hutchinson and his wife, the Olmsteds left many of the native trees undisturbed. The estate is prized for its flower and wildlife sanctuary, and was once in the trust of The University of Chicago for use as a research site. Named for the witch hazel that grows wild on the land, the bright green foliage becomes magenta in the fall.

Black walnut trees are what give Black Point Estate, an 1888 Victorian home landscaped by Olof Benson, its name. Since walnut trees quickly shed their leaves in the fall, it is a rare treasure to catch them when they burst with bright, yellow color. However, one can still enjoy the estate after this magnificent display – the fallen leaves are highly aromatic when walked upon and crushed.

There are many ways to enjoy the fall colors in the Lake Geneva area – whether by foot, boat, car, rail, bicycle or air. One of the best drives in the area is Snake Road, a three mile-long, wooded, winding road off of Highway 50 on the northeast end of Geneva Lake. Another leisurely ride is the Rustic Roads in nearby Lyons. If you prefer an even slower pace, a hike on the 21-mile Geneva Lake shore path affords up-close views of fall foliage along with a peek at grand estates on the water. Great hiking can also be found in nearby conservancies, preserves and Big Foot Beach State Park. In addition to foot paths, biking trails are plentiful, with routes both to and from downtown on the Lake Geneva bike path.

For those looking to kick back while enjoying the scenery, the Lake Geneva Cruise Line continues daily water tours through October. Signature cruises that complement the fall palette include a Sunday morning champagne brunch or a sultry, jazz dinner cruise every Friday night. Other slow-rolling tours include horse and carriage rides and a vintage trolley that operates 10-mile round trips from its East Troy depot. And for a single glimpse that says it all, catch a bird's eye view in a hot air balloon ride. Daily tours glide over the area at sunrise and two hours before sunset. No matter how you choose to enjoy Lake Geneva in the fall, it's bound to be a picture perfect escape. **TO LEARN MORE visit lakegenevawi.com.**



SCENIC DRIVE #1 Around Geneva Lake

South Route: From Chamber of Commerce office on lake front (201 Wrigley Drive) go south on Wrigley Drive and curve left up hill on local Hwy 120. Continue on 120, passing through Big Foot Beach. At intersection of Hwy 120 and BB, bear right on BB to South Lake Shore Drive. At 4-way stop, turn right on South Lake Shore Drive into Fontana, past The Abbey Resort to Hwy. 67. Turn right on Hwy 67 and follow route, turning right at Pierce's Farm Stand (Jct. F) into Williams Bay and left at the "T" to Hwy. 50. Turn right on Hwy. 50 at Mercy Medical Center stop light and drive approximately 9 miles to city of Lake Geneva.

North Route: Take Main Street/Hwy. 50 west out of Lake Geneva. Continue approximately 9 miles to intersection Hwy. 50 and 67 (Mercy Medical Center). Turn left on 67 to the "T" in Williams Bay where 67 turns right. Continue on 67, which turns left at 4-way stop (Pierce's Farm Stand, Jct. F). Continue on 67 into Fontana to Fontana Blvd. Turn left on Fontana Blvd, which becomes South Lake Shore Drive. Continue on South Lake Shore Drive, turning left at 4-way stop. Continue route, veering left at Jct. 120 and passing Big Foot Beach to city of Lake Geneva.

SCENIC DRIVE #2 Snake Road

Take Main Street/Hwy. 50 west out of Lake Geneva to Snake Road. Snake Road is at bottom of hill just outside of city, left side. Continue on Snake Road which will turn right at the "T". Snake road ends at Hwy. 50. Landmark is Woods School.

SCENIC DRIVE #3 Lake Como/McDonald Road

From Snake Road/ Woods School, cross over Hwy. 50, which becomes Schofield Road. Go to South Shore Drive (last left before the waters of Lake Como). Follow as far as desired and either reverse trip or exit first road left (Mars Restaurant) to return to Hwy 50. From Hwy 50 turn left on Schofield Rd., then right on McDonald Road, continuing to the "T" at Forest Road. Turn right on Forest Road back to Hwy. 50. If reversing the trip, take first left from Schofield Rd. onto McDonald Road and continue to the "T" at Forest Road. Turn right to Hwy. 50.

SCENIC DRIVE #4 Grand Geneva Resort & Territory

Take Hwy. 50 east. Underpass Hwy. 12 and turn left to enter Grand Geneva Resort grounds. Meander the main drive, then exit the back entrance, taking a left just past the golf pavilion, alongside condos to Sheridan Springs Road. Turn right on Sheridan Springs Road and continue to the "T". Right will continue on Sheridan Springs Rd. through the quaint town of Lyons on Mill Street. Go left on Mill Street, left on Hwy. 36 and left on Hwy. 120 back to Lake Geneva. Left at Sheridan Springs "T" will take Buckby Road to Hwy. 120, then left back to Lake Geneva. Option is to cross Hwy. 120, becoming Krueger Road, and continue to "NN". Turn left on NN and another left on Hwy. H back to Lake Geneva.

