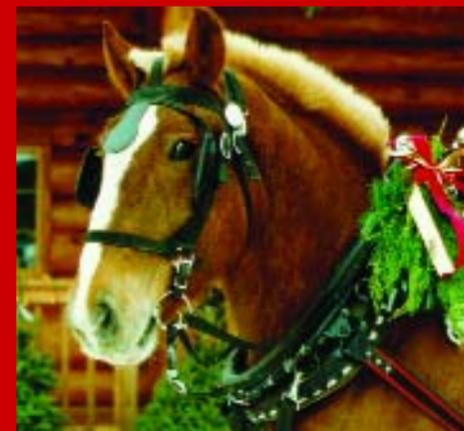


The Gem that is *Chippewa Valley*



*It is the sweet, simple things of life which
are the real ones after all.*

Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957)

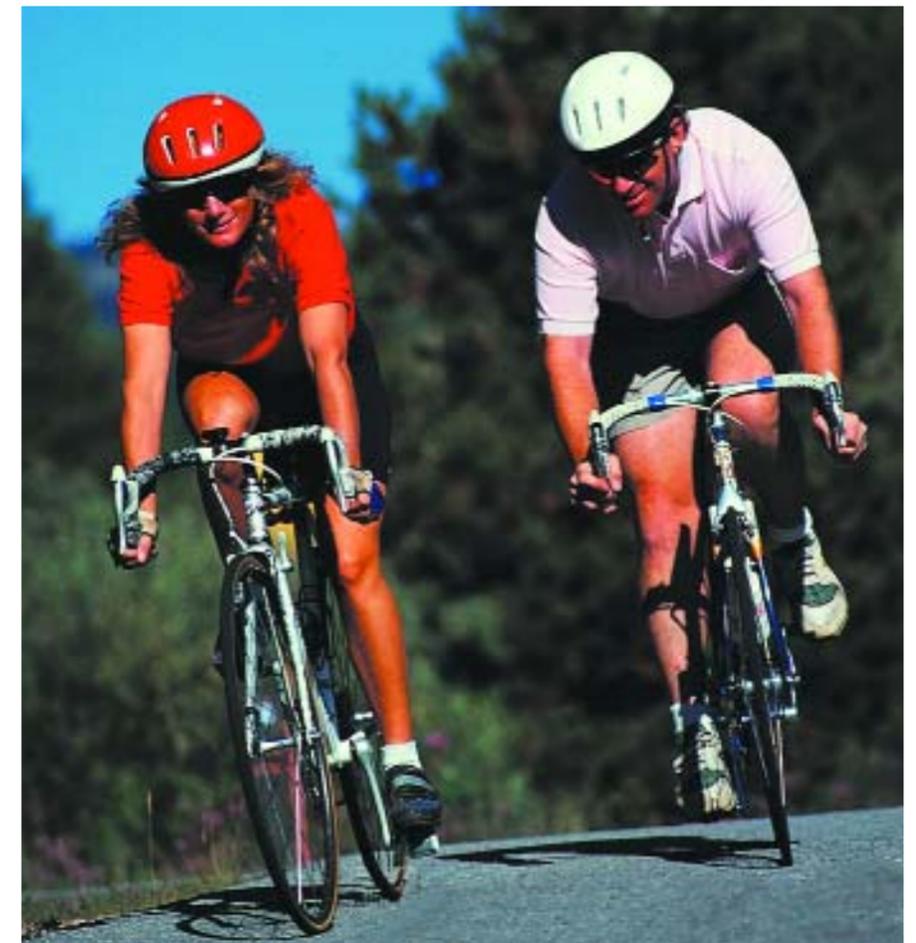
To understand what the Chippewa Valley is, it is helpful to understand what it is not. While it may be the real Wisconsin, America's "dairyland," with as many cows as people (4 million), it is not Milwaukee, that wholesome party city where beer is big. It is not Madison, site of architect Frank Lloyd Wright's "autobiography in wood and stone," Taliesin, nor is it Sun Prairie, birthplace of artist Georgia O'Keefe. It is not where filmmaker Orson Welles began (Kenosha) or where Laura Ingalls Wilder drew inspiration for her Little House books (Pepin). It is not even Madeline Island, where in 1397 Wisconsin's native Ojibway, winding up a 5-year journey from "somewhere on the shores of the Great Salt Water in the East," according to tribal lore, felt ah, at last: home.



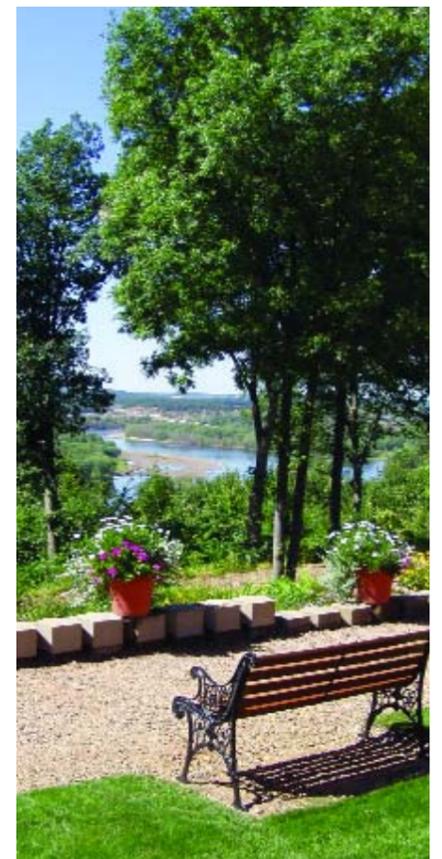
The Chippewa Valley, which encompasses the cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire (so-christened “clear water” by early French fur traders) is none of that. And how great a thing is this? Very great. Might as well be out with it: Ready those headings to the southern extremity of Wisconsin’s North Woods, fellow revved-for-adventurers. Pilot Michael has some fly-in excitement in the logbook and it is called the Chippewa Valley. This postcard-pretty place has its own Wisconsin-esque wonder, its own “badger state” charms. It doesn’t need O’Keefe or Wright or Welles or Wilder to give it cool or caché. With a riverside setting as stunning as any (sheesh, even *Time* magazine once named Chippewa Falls one of America’s Top 10 small towns), this leafy land of rolling hills and abundant orchards (one alone grows over 30 varieties of apple) puffs-up its residents proud for being clean and friendly and safe.

And you betcha: Chippewa Valleyites are more than happy to pass the thrill around, opening all their beautiful parks and historic homes, their great golf and awesome fishing, to every friend-to-be flying-in for a look-see. So do it. Alight and tie-down at Chippewa Valley Regional Airport (EAU), scurry over to the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewery Co. in Eau Claire, the country’s seventh oldest barley-and-hops bottler where the free (limited) tasting bar always is packed, and consider: Traveling here means entering the land of skyblue...fun. For if it isn’t grabbing a canoe at Loopy’s in Chippewa Falls for a day of waterplay on wondrous Lake Wissota, it’s stopping by Riverside Bike & Skate in Eau Claire for means to wheel through the wood- and farmland of Amish country; along the ride, you’ll find beautiful Amish furniture and crafts for sale. Either way, the recreational delights of the Chippewa Valley (a game of paintball at Bubba’s anyone? a cross-country ski of the Red Cedar trail?) are no less enticing than its historic sights.

After all, Chippewa Falls, following its days as an 18th c. French-Ojibway fur trading post, went boom in logging and lumbering until wheat farming took over, and then dairying. So by the mid-1900s when it with Eau Claire went hugely into cheese, wood-working and cigars (having six cigar facto-



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ries), the immigrant Germans, Scandinavians and Poles at home here got serious about building some oh-so-glorious piles. There is the Cook-Rutledge Mansion, for example, a lumber baron's home of extraordinary carved woodwork and stained glass. Less grand than perhaps romantic, there is the Anderson log house, where in the 1860s Lars and Greta raised their children...all 10. Pop by the Empire in the Pines Lumber Museum for a glimpse into the logging camp era that then made this area known around the world, or travel the Timber Trails of Chippewa Valley, a trip that links lots of museums with grand mansions, nature trails and parks in a see-it-all escapade of many local bests.

For a wonderful walkabout, try the Chippewa Falls walking tour of a downtown USA so together that it once won the coveted national Great American Main Street award for its impressive preservation-based revival. It is revived, all right. Just try getting out of there without doing some serious "damage" shopping, antiques, dining, and otherwise delighting.

Or, forget it, and save it for the next trip

(you'll be back). There is a reason baseball's Hank Aaron, Mr. Home Run with his phenomenal 755, stands in statute outside Eau Claire's Carson Park Stadium looking very 1952, the year he played with the Eau Claire Bears: The Chippewa Valley is a sports spectacular. So if all you do while here is catch some Cavaliers baseball at Carson Park, or tee-off for some super golf at the Mill Run Golf Club, with its ultra-lavish garden landscaping (www.millrungolf.com), or at the Wild Ridge Course, a true Wisconsin gem for its beautiful play (www.wildridgegolf.com), then you will understand. Simple pursuits here take on that Chippewa something that makes the area, as Wisconsin daughter Laura Ingalls Wilder would say, sweet indeed.

And real. "Create your own...style," said Orson Welles, another Dairyland product. "Let it be unique for yourself and identifiable for others." Pretense-free and utterly devoted to beauty of place, simplicity of enjoyment and a rip-roaring sense of fun, the Chippewa Valley is not all those other Wisconsins. It is, you'll be glad, its own. www.chippewavalley.net X

CHIPPEWA VALLEY REGIONAL AIRPORT (EAU)

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 907'
Runways: 14/32 4,999' 4/22 7,301'
Approaches: GPS RVAV, ILS, LOC/DME, BC, NDB, VOR
ATIS / ASOS: 715.832.7990

FIXED BASE OPERATIONS / FUEL / SERVICES

Heartland Aviation (Phillips) 122.95 715.835.3181

TRANSPORTATION

A-Plus Limousine 715.834.0842
Eau Claire Taxi 800.204.1466
AVIS 715.835.7744
Hertz 715.833.6868

AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Connell's Restaurant 715.833.9400

AIRPORT LODGING

Plaza Hotel (8 mi) (airport pick-up) 715.834.3181
Ramada Inn (8 mi) (downtown) 715.835.6121

Profile map viewed from
Chippewa Valley looking west.

Maps provided by Voyager
Flight Planning Software

