

WILD ABOUT BERRIES



Where can you find an assortment of berries all growing in the wild? The Ottawa National Forest (906/932-1330) provides a million acres where you can search along trails, old logging roads, fields, and under shaded trees.

The wild berries begin to ripen in mid-June and into July and can occasionally continue throughout the summer if there is enough moisture. We start with June as the month die-hard pickers search for wild strawberries. You'll first spot the tiny white flowers of these delicate strawberries. They like dry, well-drained soils and lots of sunshine. You'll find them along country roadsides and dry open fields as well as in forest openings, roadways and outlying edges of sandy pit areas.



The plants are small and low to the ground and the berries like to hide beneath the leaves. These plants are usually not more than a few inches high with serrated leaves less than an inch in diameter width. Finding as many as a fistful means you're lucky. These are also particular favorites of many smaller forest animals and seem to disappear as they ripen. They are small sized berries but their intense sweet/tart flavor makes up

for it. They have small seeds over their skin, but are generally round or oval and not heart shaped like the cultivated variety.

Most Michigan berries are edible, but, watch out for poisonous or inedible look-alikes! To be certain you should use one of the excellent plant guides for the region before you pick, and/or ask local advice. Quite often, the berries that can harm you will taste bad anyway.



If all else fails and you find yourself out of luck, you can always pick up a variety of cultivated berries at farmers' markets or pick your own at the Saxon Harbor Berry Farm. They grow and sell strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, rhubarb, garlic and pumpkins. The farm has a large pick-your-own patch and if you don't want to harvest your own, they sometimes have a stash

of fresh picked berries ready for purchase. Opening day is always contingent on Mother Nature, so potential berry pickers should always call ahead to verify hours and berry availability at 715/893-2397.



DEEP SEA FISHING AND SUNSET CRUISES ON LAKE SUPERIOR



The Black River Charter Association provides four beautiful boats for fishing and pleasure cruises for a full or half day with sunset and custom tours from Black River Harbor in Ironwood Michigan. These are large safe charter boats that are fully equipped and US Coast Guard Certified. The Charter Captains are Michigan DNR licensed and inspected. When you charter a boat for a deep sea fishing trip the boats supply all fishing tackle and free fish cleaning.

The charter boats fish for Lake Trout, which are the primary species, Coho Salmon that are delicious, Steelhead (Rainbow) and Chinook Salmon. Charter groups are from 2 to 6 people for fishing. The season generally runs from late May through late September. A full day fishing charter leaves at 8:00 a.m. central time and returns to the dock between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. with a "Fish All Day, No Fish, No Pay" guarantee. Evenings cruises last about an hour and are usually available from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Evening cruises are ideal for reunions and good opportunities to relax and take it easy or take spectacular

sunset photos. Sunset cruises are under \$100 and ask your captain for rates for any trip, Full day trips are under \$700 and half day trips are under \$400 for the group. Fishing licenses are required, a Michigan fishing license and trout stamp are for sale at the harbor.

For information or reservations contact any of the boat captains. Jolly Roger - Captain Jim Johnson (906) 932-5196; Nomad - Captain Dan McManman (906) 932-1576; Bud's Charter Service - Captain Bud Johnson (906) 932-5652; and RiKu - Captains Ray & Patrick Niemi (906) 932-1266.

WESTERN U.P. HERITAGE TRAIL NETWORK

The Western Upper Peninsula Heritage Trail Network promotes tourism through its message that the Western Upper Peninsula is a culturally rich, scenic and historical part of Michigan. The Trail Network features Iron, Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Ontonagon and Gogebic counties. WUPHTN is an organization with members working together to draw tourists and features over 70 historic sites. Sites include museums, state and federal park systems, cultural arts, waterways and mining/mineral museums. For more information, log on to www.upheritage.org. Guide books are also available at the Ironwood Chamber.

