



Top ten list of things to do in the Painesville area:

1. **Hit the Beach.** Two closely Lake Erie beaches await with picnic grounds, changing facilities, concessions, lifeguards and plenty of parking. Lake MetroParks' Fairport Harbor Beach is 10 minutes away, a straight shot down Richmond Street. It also has kayak rentals and a full calendar of activities. Headlands Beach State Park is west on Route 2 then north on Route 44, about 12 minutes away.
2. **Antiquing.** Head west on Mentor Avenue (Route 2) to Ye Olde Oaken Bucket. Pick up a brochure with map detailing other closely antiquing, including several shops around the square in Burton, heart of Amish Country.
3. **Amish Country.** A half-hour southeast of here in Geauga County, find one of Ohio's largest concentrations of Amish — people who pursue an agrarian lifestyle without automobiles, electricity and other trappings of modern life. Follow side roads off Route 608 between Burton and Middlefield and you'll see their one-room school houses, neat farms, and shops with quilts and handcrafted wooden toys. Respect their beliefs and don't photograph them.
4. **Wine Country.** Ohio wines are making their mark in international competitions and a dozen or so wineries within a half hour or so of here participate in special events that include hot air balloon rallies to jazz and folk festivals. Stop at their tasting rooms and sip their vintages, which often can be paired with food from their kitchens. If you're a connoisseur, ask about ice wine that can be made in only a few wine regions of the world —including Ohio. Head east on I - 90, exit south on Route 528 and follow the signs to a few of them.
5. **History.** This part of Northeast Ohio was settled in the late 1700s as part of the Western Reserve land grants made to folks in Connecticut. That's why our town squares are reminiscent of New England. Learn more at Morley Library, just a few blocks walk from here, which has an entire section devoted to local history. The Lake County Historical Society, 15 minutes away on top of Little Mountain in Kirtland Hills, has a museum and pioneer village to explore. Historic Kirtland is a restored village where Mormon church founder Joseph Smith and his followers settled in the 1830s
6. **Underground Railroad.** During slavery years Northeast Ohio was a destination for slaves seeking to escape to freedom across Lake Erie in Canada. Many brave local abolitionists sheltered them in their cellars and took them hidden beneath loads of hay to ships waiting along Lake Erie's shores. See several stops on the Underground Railroad including one beneath the floors of a former stagecoach stop in Unionville, on today's Lake and Ashtabula County lines. Legend has it that tunnels ran to a fake grave in the cemetery across the street where escaped slaves would exit in the dead of night.

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7. Pick your own. Whether your tastes run to fresh asparagus, just picked strawberries, blackberries, blueberries or apples you can easily spend an afternoon picking your own produce, starting in early May when the asparagus is ready. We like Secor Farms, just five miles after the Route 2-Route 20 split in Perry Township, less than a half-hour east from here.
8. Farmers markets. Lake Erie's moderating influence on the climate and the rich loamy soils left when the glaciers retreated add up to wonderful conditions for growing a lot more than grapes. Although large farms have given way to development, many small growers and producers bring their eggs, lettuce, berries, honey, tomatoes, and cheeses to market from May to October. Find markets in Painesville on Thursday afternoons, in Willoughby on Saturday mornings and on mid-summer Fridays in Mentor on the grounds of Lawnfield, one time home of 20th U.S. President James A. Garfield.
9. James A. Garfield National Historic Site. Garfield lived, taught and preached in these parts and conducted his presidential campaign from the front porch of this spacious home. Since the Garfield family lived there until just a few decades ago, many of its furnishings are original. Garfield served as a Civil War general and U.S. president all while being a family man. His wife established the first-ever Presidential Library after his assassination death. A tour of his home gives a great glimpse of the Victorian era in Ohio.
10. Hit the trails. Holden Arboretum, the nation's largest at 3,100 acres, and Lake MetroParks, offer hundreds of ways to explore nature, get exercise, or go by bike or horseback. The park system's paved Greenway Trail, for instance, begins just a few minutes from here and takes cyclists, bladders, and strollers through the woods and meadows and even over a freeway along the path of a one-time railroad.

Lots more:

Ask Debra and Tom about a Geneva-on-the-Lake, an old-time lakefront tourist village little changed since the 1950s; a pair of local cooking schools, and the world class museums and symphony a half hour west of here in University Circle.