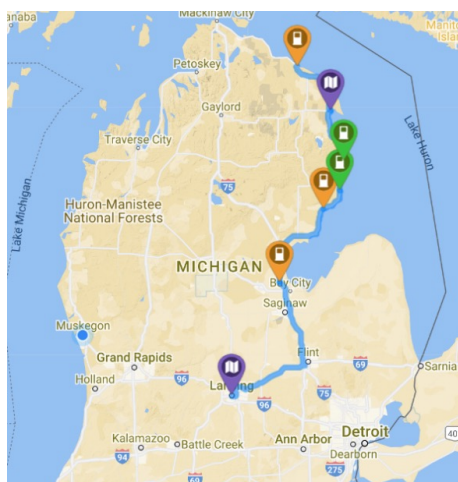


EV Road Trips: Longer Range EVs and Public Chargers Make It Possible

Just a few years ago, typical Electric Vehicles (EVs) had ranges that limited them to fun low-carbon regional cars as well as cheap-to-operate grocery getters. That has changed with most EVs now sporting a range between 200 - 300 miles according to [InsideEVs](#). In fact, there are only several models with a range below 200 miles.

Here in Michigan just a few short years ago, there were no Direct Current Fast Chargers (DCFCs) available for non-Tesla EVs north of the I-96 corridor. With the introduction of programs like Consumers Energy's [PowerMIDrive](#) which provides EV charging site hosts with grants and rebates, that has changed dramatically. Not even counting Level 2 destination chargers and DCFCs on other networks, the PowerMIDrive program has helped bring [36 DCFCs \(see interactive map\) online](#) throughout the Consumers Energy service territory.

With the price of gas and diesel varying wildly between \$3.50 and \$6.00 per gallon right now, this is a great time to explore road tripping in your EV. Let's see how it works.



Trip Planning

Experienced EV drivers will tell you that it takes some planning, and a few key considerations, to make for carefree EV road trips.

Charge Planning

Start with [Plug Share](#), [A Better Route Planner](#) or your favorite EV mapping app to map out the charging station location you'd like to use on your road trip. For more details on PlugShare, see the [September 2021 EV e-Newsletter](#).

Check which stops offer good food, coffee, shopping, or fun activities, as popular stations at busy times of the year may require a stop of an hour or two. Have a backup plan with a "just-in-case" charger within 50 miles of your planned spot.

Other Tips

Here are a few other things to consider as you plan your trip:

Embrace the relaxed EV road trip lifestyle. Overlay those charging stops by checking out charming small towns, beaches, farm markets or hiking trails.

Plan for range variables. The following can decrease your range:

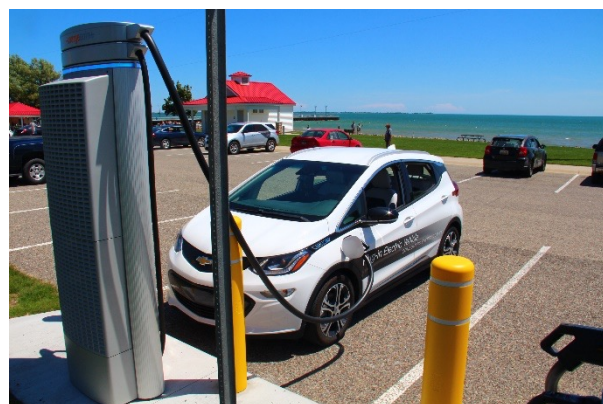
- Take the scenic route on 55 MPH secondary roads vs. 75 MPH interstates to get more range. Speed has a huge impact on range!
- Use of air conditioning or heating – but modern EV heat pumps are pretty efficient.
- Very cold weather, which can also slow down your charging.
- Steep hills and mountain driving, even taking into account the regenerative braking of your EV on the downhills.

Check charger status. In the days before your trip, check PlugShare ratings and recent check-ins to ensure the location isn't unavailable due to a mechanical issue, a festival that's blocking the charger or busy times where they might get used extensively. Check on the charging networks website like [ChargePoint.com](#) to see if the charger is available in real time as you approach.

Have a backup plan. Consider identifying a "Plan B" charging station on PlugShare nearby your primary charging location. If your car has a portable charging cable capable of plugging into a NEMA 14-50 outlet, 50A RV outlets at RV parks or many state parks can charge your car at Level 2 speeds in a pinch. Just ask for permission and offer to pay for the electricity.

Learn EV charging etiquette. Read about charging etiquette [here](#), use your PlugShare app to check in and out of a charging station and consider leaving a note in your car or a charging hang tag to notify other EV drivers when you'll be done charging. [Read more about how to be a PlugShare power user in our recent newsletter article.](#)

Use Charging Network apps and Radio-Frequency ID (RFID) cards. To avoid having to fiddle with mobile web browsers to enter information like credit card numbers while standing in front of a charger, check which networks are most prevalent in the area you'll be visiting. Download the associated smartphone apps, create a membership, and if the network offers it, consider getting an RFID card. RFID cards are either credit card sized or even small tags for your keychain. Tapping a card associated with your account on the charging station at the appropriate spot can start the session without even needing to pull out your phone.



Meandering up the Sunrise Coast: Lansing to Rogers City

Distance: 269 Miles (One way)

Vehicle: 2019 Chevy Bolt EV
Range: 238 miles

Charging stops: 2
(Can be done in 1 stop)

Trip Highlights

- Pick up some jerky as a road trip snack at the Jerky Outlet in Kawkawlin while you charge
- Get off the interstate to enjoy beautiful views of Lake Huron on M13 and US 23
- Stop at one of the many state and county parks for a picnic along the endless sandy beaches
- Bring a swimsuit and enjoy the beach, rent a bike for a shoreline ride or grab a meal in Tawas City while you charge
- Take a walk along the Huron Pier in Oscoda for a spectacular view of Lake Huron while the kids check out the playground
- Go on a canoe float on the Au Sable River
- Stop at Harrisville for a quiet picnic overlooking the harbor
- For the lighthouse fans, take a detour to Sturgeon Point and Presque Isle Lighthouses
- Alpena offers a whole host of activities and food options, but no charging
- End your trip recharging yourself and your car in Rogers City



Lansing to Bay City

This Sunrise Coast drive offers two DC Fast Charging stops along the way, the first of which is just north of Bay City. The first driving leg from Lansing to Kawkawlin is 105 miles, so you'll likely be ready to stretch your legs and refill your travel mug. Use your ChargePoint app or RFID card to get the car charging while you check out the goodies inside.

In addition to a wide selection of cured meat jerky products, the Jerky Outlet is also a full-service convenience store. Pick up some snacks and supplies for a picnic lunch since we'll be heading for the shoreline next.

Backup charging location: Electrify America station in Bay City

Bay City to Tawas City

The next DC Fast Charging opportunity in Tawas City is only about 60 miles away, so no need to charge to 100% at the Jerky Outlet. Your car will likely be ready to go before you are. We suggest you head over to M13 and then head north on back roads rather than rushing up I-75. You'll have better opportunities to spy scenic stops like [Pinconning Park](#) plus the lower secondary road speeds will extend your range with better efficiency compared to highway speeds. Note that some parks require fees so check before you go.



Tawas City

The next 104-mile stretch offers so many things to do, you'll have to be selective what you choose. Beach? Canoeing? Bike riding? Lighthouses?

The DC Fast Charger in Tawas City is right at the city's Shoreline Park. Start your charging session, then grab your beach gear and walk right onto the sand to stake your claim along Lake Huron.

If you don't like getting sand in your shoes, carefully walk across Route 23 to one of the many restaurants right along the main drag and enjoy a sandwich or flatbread with a beverage.

Think about charging etiquette and leave a note on your car so others needing a charge can contact you. Be sure to move your car when it has sufficient range for the next leg of your trip. Some chargers have idle fees once your charge is complete plus it's just a good idea to vacate the spot for the next vehicle. Check your charging smartphone app to monitor charging progress and turn on notifications.

Up North

The coastline heading north offers more options for attractions, food and drink. **Oscoda** is another oasis with a beach park, a fishing pier that juts out into Lake Huron, an indie coffee shop and great restaurant options and, of course, EV charging. Although "only" a Level 2, the Red E charger has two plugs and will add 25-30 miles of range per hour to a Bolt EV or similar vehicle. Recharge your soul and let the kids get some energy out in the playground after an ice cream while the car regains energy.



and places to eat, so we'll roll on north.

Stop at the **45th Parallel Marker** to take a selfie as you are halfway between the North Pole and the Equator. You are now truly "Up North."

Take a detour off Route 23 to **Presque Isle** and marvel at the old and new lighthouses. Take it easy both in town and on the curvy country roads. Pedestrians and wildlife likely can't hear your quiet EV coming so you want plenty of stopping distance at your disposal.



Just a few miles up the road, **Harrisville** is a quiet town with another indie coffee shop, family-owned restaurants, a wonderful marina, and – you guessed it – Level 2 EV charging. You probably won't need it if you stopped at Tawas City, but if you're stopping anyway, you might as well get a few kilowatt-hours. Rogers City is about 70-80 miles north, so be sure you have at least that much range plus a small buffer.

Alpena would require a whole other story regarding things to do



Rogers City

With a full day behind you, you're ready for a recharge of both car and body. If you're staying in town or even if you're moving on, remember to unplug your car when you have sufficient range. That way you can avoid idle fees that some stations charge after a car is finished charging and give other EV drivers a chance to top up.

Getting Back Home

If you just want to hit the highway, there are plenty of charging choices. Heading back to Lansing via I-75 and US Route 127, you'll have DC Fast

Charging options at least every 70-80 miles with lots of options for amenities.

Remember you get the fastest charging speeds at the lowest battery state of charge when using DC Fast Chargers based on battery physics. Unless you have the time to top up during a sit-down meal while charging, consider charging when your battery level drops to 10-20%. This will give you the most time-efficient trip.

Final Thoughts

The charging infrastructure keeps growing, so be sure to regularly check out the [PowerMI Drive interactive DC Fast Charger map](#) – or PlugShare – for additional charging locations. In the not-too-distant future, EV charging during a road trip will likely be just as convenient as getting gas and require even less planning.

Overnight Level 2 charging at home or at hotels is already more convenient than gas because you wake up with a fully charged battery...and it's cheaper too. Bonus: Hotels often have free charging for paying hotel guests and some municipalities have free chargers to encourage EV drivers to come visit downtown businesses while they charge.



Speaking of cheaper, with the occasional free charge and even with typical DC Fast Charging rates, EV road tripping is considerably cheaper than with a gas car. So, leave the gas guzzler at home for other tasks and take the EV on the road!

