

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive Duluth, Welcome Dinner and Orientation

Today is arrival day! You are free to arrive in Duluth any time before 4pm. It's a lovely city, right on the shores of Lake Superior, and an interesting place to spend some time if you can arrive early. Tonight will be our first gathering with a welcome dinner and orientation. (D)

Overnight: Inn on Lake Superior

DAY 2

Visit Hawk Ridge, Hike Split Rock Lighthouse

We will meet in the lobby at 8:30AM for a few instructions before heading off to the beautiful north country! Our first stop is at Hawk Ridge, an open ridge just on the edge of Duluth where we can watch the hawk migration at its peak. Most raptors are reluctant to cross large bodies of water so when they migrate south and encounter Lake Superior, the birds naturally veer southwest along the lakeshore. Depending on the direction of the wind we may see hundreds to thousands of birds migrating overhead.

Once we have had our fill of hawk watching, we begin our drive North along Lake Superior. We stop for a picnic lunch and a warm-up hike at Split Rock Lighthouse State Park. The hike will take us to a high vista and to the shores of Lake Superior. Then we'll continue our drive up the North Shore to the small town of Tofte. For the next 3 nights we'll be staying at Bluefin Bay Resort, a collection of beautifully designed condos where the living room windows look out directly onto the lake. Hot tubs will be awaiting each night to help soothe any aches you may have from the day's hiking. (B, L, D) Split Rock Hiking Distance: 3 miles, Elevation Gain/Loss: 250 feet

Overnight: Bluefin Bay

DAY 3

Hike Oberg Mountain and Leveaux Mountain Loop (Optional Extension to Britton Peak)

Today begins with a leisurely breakfast with great food and plenty of coffee. We start all together today with a hike around Oberg Mountain (despite its name, the elevation gain is only about 500 feet) a 2.3-mile loop trail with eight different spectacular overlooks. This is our first opportunity to see many of the red, yellows, and oranges of the deciduous trees that grow inland from the Lake.

We then return to the parking lot and head South on the SHT (Superior Hiking Trail) to the Leveaux Mountain loop. This portion is well graded with one steeper and rockier section uphill that leads to fabulous views inland and grand views overlooking Lake Superior. After enjoying our picnic lunch at the Leveaux Mt. overlook, those who want a shorter day, will return to the vans at Oberg Parking (3.2 miles RT) and drive back to our condos at Bluefin to relax, perhaps sit in the sauna or use the swimming pool.

For those wanting a longer hike, we continue South along the trail from Leveaux Mt. to Britton Peak parking. This section of trail winds on gently rolling terrain through boreal forests of spruce, balsam fir, and cedar. After our last viewpoint of the day, which looks back at Leveaux Mt and where we came from, the final few miles roll through beautifully colored maple and birch forest. Being deep in the autumn forest, passing beaver ponds and a couple of SHT campsites, make this an enjoyable end to the day. We will meet at Britton Peak parking for a final group photo and dinner. (B, L, D)

to our hike. We return to our condos for hot tubs, hot showers, and time to relax before our home cooked dinner this evening. (B, L, D)

Oberg Mt loop: 2.3 miles, 500â€™ gain/loss

Leveaux Mt. loop: 3.2 miles, 500â€™ gain/loss

Oberg TH to Britton Peak TH via Leveaux Overlook: 6.3 miles, 950â€™ gain, 950â€™ loss

Overnight Bluefin Bay

DAY 4

Hike from Skou Road to Temperance Wayside (Optional Extension to Britton Peak)

After a hearty breakfast we head out on today's hike which goes from Skou Rd. Trailhead to the Temperance River (4.2 miles). For those who want a longer hike, after lunch we will continue from the Temperance River up and over Carlton Peak to Britton Peak parking lot (9.2 miles).

We all start together again this morning, following a spur trail up a moderate grade to the junction with the Superior Hiking Trail. Turning north on the trail, we hike through lovely birch forest and over occasional open ridges with views of Lake Superior below. After 3.5 miles we reach the Temperance River, a roaring and deep river in a basaltic canyon. This is the perfect spot for our picnic lunch, giving us time to look at the kettles and falls of the upper river. After lunch our trail parallels the river, providing excellent views of the many waterfalls in the river gorge. After crossing the river on a bridge overlooking one of the most scenic falls, those wanting a shorter day of hiking will continue on towards Lake Superior and the parking area, while those wanting a longer hike will continue heading North on the SHT.

After about a half mile the trail leaves the noise of the river and once again we are enveloped by the silence of the fern-filled woods. We follow the trail up a short, rocky ascent to the top of Carlton Peak where we are rewarded by sweeping views of both the Lake and the woods. After we have taken plenty of photos and had a rest, we continue down the other side of Carlton Peak, back into a spectacular birch forest, and continue to the parking lot at Britton Peak, where we meet our van. Tonight we'll dine at the delicious Bluefin Grill. (B, L, D)

Hiking Distances and Elevation Gains/Losses:

Skou Rd. to Temperance Wayside: 4.2 miles, 650â€™ gain/700â€™ loss

Temperance River to Britton Peak TH via Carlton Peak: 5.2 miles, 950â€™ gain/400â€™ loss

Overnight: Bluefin Bay

DAY 5

Hike from White Sky Rock trailhead to Lake Agnes (Optional Extension to Caribou Trail)

We'll start this morning with packing up for our move to Grand Marais. For those wanting a shorter hike today, we drive north to the White Sky Rock trailhead and head south on the SHT to Lake Agnes. This out-and-back hike (2.5 miles round-trip) is incredibly picturesque, as we climb up through lovely mixed forest and a cedar "fairyland" to Lake Agnes. We continue along the shore to a rocky outcrop with great views of Lake Agnes and the colorful canopy that surrounds it. Before returning to the van, we take a short spur trail to White Sky Rock for a scenic lunch spot overlooking Caribou Lake.

After lunch we drive to the quaint town of Grand Marais. Grand Marais is a town of historical significance (it was initially an outpost of the Voyageurs), a modern day artists' colony, and a delightful place to spend time walking around.

For those wanting a longer hike, today we follow the section from Lutsen to the Caribou Trail (6.4 miles), a very pleasant and diverse section of the SHT, including a mature and colorful maple canopy. After a short break at a spectacular vista of the Poplar River valley, we continue on through a mix of birch/aspen/pine and spruce forest. Stretches parallel the Poplar river and along the shores of Lake Agnes. Tonight we eat at the Agnes Trout in Grand Marais, undoubtedly the best restaurant in the

forest. Stretches parallel the Poplar river and along the shores of Lake Agnes. Tonight we eat at the Angry Trout in Grand Marais, undoubtedly the best restaurant in the area and always a huge hit. (B, L, D)

Hiking Distances and Elevation Gains/Losses:
Caribou Trail to Lake Agnes (2 .5 miles, 300â€™ gain/loss)
Lutsen TH to Caribou Trail (6.5 miles, 800â€™ gain/675â€™ loss)

Overnight: Best Western Plus Superior Inn
DAY 6

Hike in Judge Magney State Park to the Devil's Kettle or Free Time in Grand Marais. Return to Duluth.

On this last day we offer a shorter morning hike for those who want it. Alternatively you can continue exploring Grand Marais, walk out to Artist's Point on the lakeshore, grab a coffee in town or simply sleep in.

If you choose to hike, we will drive north to the nearby Judge Magney State Park for a 2 mile out and back hike to Devil's Kettle, which is the highlight of the park. Clarence R. Magney, a former mayor of Duluth and judge on the Minnesota Supreme Court, was instrumental in getting 11 state parks and scenic waysides established along the North Shore. The hike alongside the Brule River is magnificent just on its own, but the Falls of Devil's Kettle is the true destination. Here the river splits in two to flow around a mass of rhyolite rock. The eastern flow goes over a two-step, 50 foot waterfall and continues downstream. The western flow surges into a pothole, falling at least 10 feet, and disappears underground. It is believed the water rejoins the main channel of the river or has a separate outlet into Lake Superior, but it has never been located!

Once we've packed up, we will drive back to Duluth with a stop at a state park for a final picnic lunch along the way. We will be back in Duluth and to the airport by 3:30PM and you can plan to fly out anytime after 4:30PM. For those of you who drove and left your car at the Duluth hotel, we will return you to the hotel to pick up your car. (B, L)

Hiking Distance and Elevation Gain/Loss:
Devil's Kettle/Judge Magney State Park: 2 miles, 400 feet