

America's Great Loop Adventure

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The Great Loop is an adventure in cruising that is on many cruisers bucket list. The Loop Cruise Route a continuous waterway that recreational mariners can travel that includes part of the Atlantic, Gulf Intracoastal Waterways, the Great Lakes, Canadian Heritage Canals and the inland rivers of America's heartland. People on the loop are called Loopers, flying the white flag. When you finish a loop once you are then a Gold Looper, when finishing it twice you are a Platinum Looper.



“Looping” has become a passion for thousands who hope to one day navigate their boats on this 6,000-mile trip around eastern North America. Deciding whether to embark on the Great Loop journey is a significant decision that at depends on your personal preferences, boating experience, available time, and sense of adventure. Here are 18 considerations when deciding whether to undertake the Great Loop:

1. **Adventure:** The Great Loop offers a unique and adventurous way to explore a diverse range of landscapes, cities, towns, and cultures throughout the eastern United States.
2. **Scenic Beauty:** You'll have the opportunity to experience breathtaking scenery, from tranquil rivers to bustling coastal areas.
3. **Boating Experience:** The journey can be an excellent way to further enhance your boating skills, navigation, and overall knowledge of boating.
4. **Community:** The Great Loop boating community is supportive and tight-knit. You'll have the chance to connect with fellow Loopers, share experiences, and gain valuable insights.
5. **Flexibility:** You can tailor your journey to your own pace, interests, and preferences. You can take detours, explore side routes, and spend more time in places that captivate you.
6. **Historical and Cultural Exploration:** Along the way, you'll encounter historic sites, landmarks, and local cultures, providing rich educational and cultural experiences.
7. **Time Commitment:** The Great Loop journey typically takes several months to complete, depending on your route and pace. It requires a significant time commitment.
8. **Boating Experience:** While the Great Loop is navigable by boaters of various experience levels, some parts of the journey can be challenging, especially for those without extensive boating experience. Be sure to do your research.

9. Costs: The costs associated with the journey can add up, including fuel, marina fees, maintenance, and living expenses while on the water.
10. Weather and Conditions: Weather conditions can impact your journey, and you'll need to be prepared for varying weather, sea conditions, and navigation challenges.
11. Logistics: Proper planning is essential, including route research provisioning, navigation, and understanding clearance procedures.
12. Isolation: While you'll encounter other Loopers and boaters along the way, there may be stretches where you're navigating in more remote areas with limited amenities.
13. Boating Experience: Assess your boating skills and comfort level with various waterways and conditions. Some parts of the journey may require more extended experience and confidence.
14. Time Availability: Consider how much time you can dedicate to the journey. Many Loopers take a few months to complete it, but you can also break it up into segments over multiple years.
15. Finances: Evaluate the costs associated with the journey and ensure you have a realistic budget in place.
16. Boat Choice: The type and size of your boat can influence your experience. Choose a boat that is suitable for the waterways you'll be navigating.
17. Lifestyle: Think about whether the boating lifestyle, including living on a boat for an extended period, aligns with your preferences.
18. Preparation: Thoroughly research the route, navigation, regulations, and amenities along the way. Proper planning is key to a successful journey.



Boating the Great Loop can be an incredible and rewarding adventure, but it's important to weigh the considerations and make an informed decision based on your individual circumstances and desires. If you're new to long-distance boating, you might consider joining Great Loop forums or attending seminars to learn from experienced Loopers and gather insights that can help you make the best choice for your situation. There are many online sites available, as an example, this one from Waterway Guide:

<https://www.waterwayguide.com/knowledge-center/news-post/11814/thinking-about-a-great-loop-adventure-heres-what-you-need-to-know>

This article is given courtesy of your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico a great resource to help you increase your knowledge, navigation and skill building. We invite you to visit our website, <https://pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org> to learn about the opportunities available. Specific questions...feel free to contact Bob at educationalofficer@pspsnc.com