

# Bikes and Berries Driving Tour

“Bikes and berries” is the theme as you drive through this unglaciated area. Travel through cranberry country and enjoy the spectacular wildlife. More than 3,700 acres dot the countryside in the northern part of the county. Enjoy one of our seven museums, the Amish countryside, Fort McCoy, the Wegner Grotto, and beautiful rolling hills as you travel through the area.

Check out the world’s largest bicycle in Sparta. The **Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail** and the **La Crosse River Bike Trail** offer some off-the-road tours you’re sure to enjoy. Come and explore our class 1 trout streams, public hunting, kayaking, canoeing, and hiking opportunities.

The tiny, bustling community of **WARRENS** welcomes visitors in a big way. Warrens is the “cranberry capital of Wisconsin.” Cranberry marshes, sphagnum moss beds, and great blue heron nesting spots are all things to watch for as you drive through this area. Pick up an area map at any of the Warrens businesses to help you find your way around.

**Wisconsin Cranberry Discovery Center**, 204 Main Street, 608.378.4878, is an entity dedicated to the cranberry industry in Wisconsin. Learn all about the challenges of growing cranberries, and their history in Wisconsin. Gift shop—featuring cranberry products, glassware, books, gifts, and bakery.

Warrens offers restaurants for your dining pleasure and an array of unique shopping experiences, featuring the work of many local artisans.

**The Cranberry Festival**, held each September, features more than 800 art and craft booths, 350 antique and flea market booths and 100 farmers market booths. The annual festival brings more than 100,000 visitors to the area each fall.



**McMullen Memorial County Park** offers excellent camping opportunities and a small lake for fishing and swimming. The 71-site park, situated on 1,000 forested acres, also offers a three-quarter-mile hiking trail around the bluff and wetlands area.

*Travel south on County O out of Warrens, four miles to Highway 12. Turn left (south) on Highway 12 and travel four miles to Highway 21 in Tomah.*

**TOMAH** Crossroads for west-central Wisconsin, offering recreation and convenience! Tomah’s location is midway between the Twin Cities and Milwaukee, where the state’s interstate system (I-90 and I-94) divides.

Tomah boasts small-town charm with plenty of shopping including antiques, Amish and cranberry goods, attractions, over 635 motel rooms, area campgrounds, entertainment opportunities, indoor and outdoor water parks, and several area restaurants.

Whether you’re interested in shopping for antiques, arts and crafts; taking our Amish and Cranberry Country self-guided driving tours; golfing at one of our three area courses; silent sports such as hiking, biking, or canoeing; summer festivals or the tractor pull; fall cranberry festival and autumn color tours; or winter activities, like snowmobiling and skiing, you’ll find the Tomah area has a variety of annual activities.

Our community is family-friendly where you can experience over 200 acres of green space in one of our ten city parks or walk the **Tomah Recreation Trail**, which meanders four miles through many city parks.

Tomah is truly **Wisconsin’s Cranberry Country**, and a great place to plan your next trip in west-central Wisconsin.

Area attractions include **The Little Red Schoolhouse Museum**, **Tomah Area Historical Society Museum**, **Humbird Cheese Mart**, and the **Necedah National Wildlife Refuge**, located just outside of Tomah.

*Take Highway 21 west from Tomah, nine miles.*

**FORT MCCOY**, situated between Tomah and Sparta, on Highway 21, has a **World War II Commemorative Area**, **Historical Center**, and a **Military Equipment Park**. Admission is free.



Five WWII buildings depict a soldier’s life in the 1940s. The **History Center** highlights Fort McCoy’s role in the armed forces since 1909.

**Pine View Recreation Area** has a beach, boat rentals, campsites, miniature golf and fishing. The **Whitetail Ridge Recreation Area** has facilities for downhill and cross-country skiing, a snow tubing slope, snowmobile trails and a chalet. They have rentals, and offer ski lessons. 800.531.4703.

*Continue west on Highway 21, seven miles into Sparta. Follow Highway 21 onto Montgomery Street. At the first stop sign. Turn left (south) on to Water Street at the first stop light. Go several blocks to Main Street. Turn right on Main Street and go to the intersection of Main and Court.*

**SPARTA** has the only corner in the State of Wisconsin that has four **State Historical Markers**, designating the importance of the buildings’ history—**The U.S. Post Office**, the **Sparta Free Library**, the **Monroe County Courthouse**, and the **Masonic Temple**.

The **Deke Slayton Memorial Space and Bicycle Museum** and the **Monroe County Local History Room** are housed in the **Monroe County Museum Complex Building**, also known as the **Masonic Temple**.

This museum has three permanent exhibits exploring the bicycle revolution, local aviation history, and the life of **Mercury 7 Astronaut Donald Kent “Deke” Slayton**. Exhibits include antique and vintage bicycles, a full-scale home built

Pietenpol airplane, and one of Deke's original astronaut space suits. The Kid's Area is filled with building blocks, books to read, an interactive quiz wall, and a loft to fly paper gliders from.

The **Local History Room** contains the pioneer history of the area, illustrating farming, industry, and life in a typical home in years gone by. It also has a state-of-the-art research room, including microfilm copies of all area newspapers, state and federal census info, as well as a cemetery card file.

Go one block east back to Water Street. Turn right (south) and continue to the second stop light on Wisconsin Street (Highway 16). Turn left (east) and then right immediately into the first driveway.

Sparta is home to the "world's largest bicycle." The fiberglass structure stands 30 feet tall, and the rider, "Ben Bikin'," will speak to you when you stop by. A great photo opportunity.

Sparta celebrates "Butterfest" the second weekend in June. A three-day event dedicated to the rich dairy industry in the area, it includes a carnival, flea market, quilt

show, and softball tournaments. It features live family entertainment and a huge parade on Sunday.

Drive back up to Highway 16 (Wisconsin Street). Turn right (east). Turn around when you can and head west on Highway 16 (Wisconsin Street) to Highway 27 (Black River Street) Turn right on Highway 27 (north). Go nine miles. Turn left onto Highway 71. Go one-half mile. Turn left into the driveway.

**CATARACT** is home to the **Wegner Grotto**, a grassroots art environment. This garden park includes concrete structures decorated with a brilliant mosaic of shattered glass and broken crockery, including an American flag, a 50th anniversary cake, a prayer garden, a glass church, and a peace monument.

Turn right (east) onto Highway 71. Go to the first stop sign at Highway 27. Turn left (north) into Cataract, about two miles. Turn right onto County Highway B. Travel one mile. Turn left onto Highway 11. Go one mile and look for the caboose.

A magical experience awaits you in the

**Little Falls Railroad and Doll Museum.** More than 2,000 dolls grace the museum, which also includes a gift shop.

The **Railroad Museum** serves as a reference library for over 1,000 books and magazines dating back 100 years. You'll find a telegrapher's office, lanterns, and a gallery of railroad art. The campus includes a picnic shelter, outdoor garden railroad, a caboose tour, children's train rides, and a miniature train on which children may play.

Exit back onto Highway 11 and turn right (west). Go one mile. Turn left on Highway B. Go 10 miles back into Sparta. Turn right at the first stop light onto Montgomery Street. Travel several blocks to the next stop light. Turn left (south) onto Highway 27 (Black River Street). Travel 15 miles to Highway 33 in Cashton.

**CASHTON** sits atop a scenic hill, and is home to Wisconsin's largest Amish settlement. Drive through the beautiful countryside yourself or take an Amish tour. You'll find unique shops, a cheese factory, and plenty of friendly eateries in this cozy town. Follow Highway 33 east 10 miles to Ontario and Wildcat Mountain State Park.

Drive through **Wildcat Mountain State Park.** High bluffs and narrow valleys make this a spectacular scenic area.

Return to Highway 33. Turn right (west) and travel two miles to Highway 131. Turn right on Highway 131 (north) and go 11 miles into the Village of Wilton.

The communities of **NORWALK**, **WILTON** and **KENDALL** parallel the Elroy-Sparta National Bike Trail.

Norwalk boasts a beautiful community park that offers relaxation and camping.

Wilton is a charming community. It offers several restaurants, a small motel, camping, and several bed and breakfasts. It is considered the heart of the trail.

Trail headquarters to the **Elroy-Sparta Trail** is the restored Kendall Depot. Fishing enthusiasts can enjoy the scenic **Baraboo River** which flows through the village park in Kendall.

Turn right onto Highway 71/Highway 131 and travel four miles to Highway 131, turn left (north) and travel 10 miles back into the community of Tomah.

Take a leisurely auto tour and enjoy all that Monroe County has to offer.

