List view
Map view

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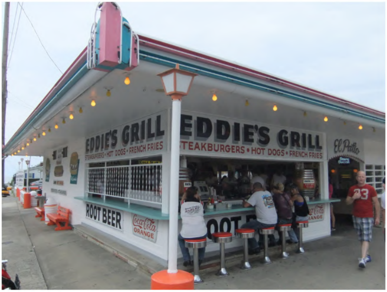
Dan Morey's guides

Print this guide

Geneva-on-the-Lake: Ohio's First Resort

Budget
Families
Nightlife

Geneva-on-the-Lake—Ohio's oldest resort community—has had various incarnations over the years. From a camping retreat for the moneyed elite, to a cluster of blue-collar cottages, to a swinging big band hotspot, to a hangout for Pennsylvania teenagers looking for rock-n-roll and a legal drink. In 1970, when the town raised its drinking age to 21, the strip clubs that had sprung up began to disappear. Families returned. These days, Geneva-on-the-Lake has something for everyone—fishing, fine dining, golf, wineries, beaches, arcades, a motorcycle rally, and, of course, the famous Lake Erie Monster Pub Crawl.


EDDIE'S GRILL
STEAKBURGERS • HOT DOGS • FRENCH FRIES
EDDIE'S GRILL
STEAKBURGERS • HOT DOGS • FRENCH FRIES
El Patio
ROOT BEER
Coca-Cola ORANGE

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Eddie's Grill

5377 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041

Chain restaurants like Johnny Rockets and Ruby's Diner do a decent job of replicating the retro atmosphere of midcentury American diners, but luckily there are a few originals still out there. Eddie's Grill is one of them. It opened in 1950 and three generations of the Sezon family, including founder Eddie, work there today. I love their foot-long hot dogs and Slovenian sausage, the root beer and lemonade. You can sit outside and watch people parade along the Strip, but I prefer the inside booths with tabletop jukes.

See more

Swiss Chalet
FRI-SAT
GOOD QUESTION
KARAOKE
SUN-THURS 9PM

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Swiss Chalet

5475 Lake Rd E, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041, United States

If you're looking for a bit of Geneva, Switzerland in Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio, this is the place to go. The architectural style is mountain chalet, and all the glorious woodwork is carved in a rustic, Old World style. It's been here forever, too. The Swiss Chalet has the longest running liquor license in the state. Be sure to check out the historic photos on the walls and the antique bottles behind the bar. The Chalet is known for its karaoke, which happens Sunday through Thursday evenings in season. They book live bands as well.

See more

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Uncle Tom's Motel & Cottages

5266 Lake Rd, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041, United States

Uncle Tom is Tomas Kainaroi, who purchased his first Geneva-on-the-Lake cottage in 1936. Tom died in 2004, but his kids have kept the family business going for the past 13 years, much to the delight of his loyal customers who come back every season. It can be hard to get a cottage here (they book up at least a year in advance), but the motel usually has some available rooms. There is a typically narrow private beach, a volleyball court, a full-size playground (teeter-totter!) and a lawn with picnic tables.

See more

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Breakwater Beach

4499 Padanarum Rd, Geneva, OH 44041, USA

Breakwater Beach is a sandy beach not far from Geneva-on-the-Lake. Lifeguards are on duty, and there are kayaks and paddleboards available for rent. The beach is located inside Geneva State Park, so bike paths, hiking trails, picnic shelters, rental cottages, a campground, boat launch and marina are all close by. This is a family friendly beach with no booze or partying. If you're staying in GOTL you'll have to drive here. Be sure to check out the old green and white harbor beacon at the end of the breakwater.

See more

Fascination
FASCINATION
OPEN

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Fascination

5472 Lake Rd E Geneva-on-the-Lake, OH 44041, USA

Fascination was once a popular game at pleasure piers, boardwalks and amusement parks. Today, there are less than a dozen parlors remaining in the world. This one, in the heart of Geneva-on-the-Lake's famous Strip, opened in the 1940s. The game is like a mechanized cross between bingo, tick-tack-toe and skee ball. A central routing machine, run by a barker, is connected, via vintage analog wiring, to individual game tables. You buy games (3 for $1) and win tickets for prizes. Some people save their tickets up for multiple seasons to claim a big item.

See more

TIME SQUARE
Restaurant
fresh Cut
FRENCH FRIES
TIME SQUARE
PATIO

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Time Square

5465 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041

Time Square is a row of shops with old-timey Victorian fronts on the Strip at Geneva-on-the-Lake. Time Square Restaurant has anchored the block (just east of the Swiss Chalet) since 1934. The menu is similar to the more famous Eddie's Grill, but cheaper and without the lines. Hot dogs are better at Eddie's, but Time Square does a perfectly acceptable job with American diner fare. The french fry plate (with many topping choices) is enormous, a meal unto itself. They also have cheap beer and karaoke!

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Pucker Up Candy Shoppe

5334 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041, USA

Tony and Nina Salerno run this whimsical candy shop on the Strip at Geneva-on-the-Lake. They have an incredible selection of sweets that can be purchased by the piece or by the pound. Saltwater Taffy is a big seller, as is cotton candy. Customers can make their own cotton candy and customize it by adding hard candies like Jolly Ranchers to the mix. They have some goodies for adults, too, like rum taffy and beer cheddar popcorn. Pucker Up regularly hosts birthday parties for children.

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The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake

4888 North Broadway, Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio 44041

This is the go-to place for weddings and other events at Geneva-on-the-Lake. Already the largest hotel in the area, they have recently expanded to include a number of 6 person cottages. You'll have to drive to get to the heart of the Strip from here, but Geneva State Park is at your doorstep. Hiking, boating, swimming and fishing await. The Ohio Wine Shuttle, which makes the rounds to local wineries, stops here. The lodge's restaurant, Horizons, is a bit pricey, but very good. For cheaper eats, try the lounge.

See more

HERITAGE TRAIL
1953
GENEVA-ON-THE-LAKE OHIO

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Heritage Trail

Lake Rd., Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041, United States

The full name of this attraction is The Geneva-on-the-Lake Summer Fun Heritage Trail. It consists of a series of signs marking historical sites over the entire length of Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio's oldest resort town. There's a QR code at the bottom left corner of each sign. Scan it with your mobile device to access period photos, videos and narratives. It's a fun, educational walk, with lots to see, and the signs themselves are very well done. I love the reproductions of old postcards and souvenir pennants.

See more

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Jennie Munger Gregory Memorial Museum

5685 Lake Rd E Geneva, OH 44041 United States

This farmhouse was built by the Fitch family in 1823 and is believed to be the first frame home in Geneva Township. It later became a 7-room resort (Grand View) operated by Jennie Munger Gregory. Gregory donated the house to the Ashtabula County Historical Society, and it remains their headquarters. Inside, there are rooms with Victorian furnishings and special exhibits. If you're wondering why the back of the house faces the Strip, it's because the old Lake Road used to pass on the other side of the house before it was rerouted in the 1920s.

See more

SURVIVORS CLUB

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Survivor's Club

5236 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041

We stopped by the Survivor's Cub to have a beer and get our Lake Erie Monster Crawl slips stamped. Once you buy a drink and get a stamp at every participating bar you win a Monster Crawl t-shirt. It's a fun tradition that started 15 years ago. The proprietor of the Survivor's Club, Suk Hui Hays, was very friendly and welcoming. We enjoyed talking to her so much that we stayed for another drink...something from her special Korean stash. Suk Hui cooks, too, and will be happy to make you a stir fry. Great hospitality and prices!

See more

Madsen Donuts
Since 1938
MADSEN DONUTS
Katie's Korner
ICE CREAM

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Madsen Donuts

5426 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041

Madsen's has been making delicious donuts on the Geneva-on-the-Lake Strip since 1938. It's owned by the Biery family, who also operate Katie's Corner Ice Cream Shop next door. I'd tell you my favorite donut flavor, but I can't pick one. They're all awesome. Chocolate icings and cream fillings are made from scratch, starting every morning at 5 o' clock. At 3 o' clock in the afternoon they start a new batch. Any unsold donuts are tossed, and fresh ones put out. You'll never get a stale donut at Madsen's!

See more

Sandy Chanty
Sea Food
Restaurant
OPEN
OPEN

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Sandy Chanty Seafood Restauraunt

5457 Lake Avenue, Geneva on the Lake, OH

Great seafood place with all the nautical accouterments: fishing nets, starfish, sand, mermaid figureheads...But the decor isn't all briny. When owner and head chef Patt Bowen was renovating the building she made a discovery behind the back wall: a 1928 Mangels mechanical shooting gallery that still functions. She tore the wall away and made the gallery the restaurant's focal point. Ask the bartender to fire it up. The food here is always creative and delicious. They also hold an annual music festival in the fall.

See more

MIKE'S BERMUDA TRIANGLE
LOUNGE
FOOD & SPIRITS
MIKE'S BERMUDA TRIANGLE LOUNGE

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Mike's Bermuda

5028 Lake Road East, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041

Mike's Bermuda Triangle Lounge is a popular local hangout in Geneva-on-the-Lake at the far eastern end of the Strip. They have an outdoor patio with tables and umbrellas for sunny days. Inside, there's pool, TV, a jukebox, some risqué art, and Julie, everyone's favorite bartender. Mike's serves good food and stays open all winter long. They are a stop on the Lake Erie Monster Pub Crawl. The crowd tends to be older, though not necessarily less rowdy. Local musicians like Fred Ludivic play here.

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Earth's Natural Treasures

5503 Lake Rd E Geneva, OH 44041, United States

Sharon Bezoski and Michael Coles buy gems and crystals from around the world and sell them in their Earth's Natural Treasures store. These items are said to possess healing and nurturing powers. They also sell local art, bamboo stalks (supposed to bring luck), organic herbal and body care products, water storing crystals (used for flower arrangements, centerpieces, etc.) vitamins, handcrafted clothing, natural foods from organic farms and more. They are very committed to conservation and only use recycled packaging.

See more

GREENLANTERN WAY
PICKLED
PEPPER

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The Pickled Pepper

4949 Golf Ave, Geneva, OH 44041

The Pickled Pepper is another stop on the Lake Erie Monster Pub Crawl. It's off the Strip, but not far. Look for the bright green and yellow building. They book a lot of live music (Jim Golen, Carlos Jones, etc.), both inside and outside on the patio. Lot of good food here, too. Pickled peppers, of course, but also BLTs, chicken tenders, fries, burgers, etc. It's a little pricier than other places in Geneva-on-the-Lake, but not outrageous, and they do have some excellent specials. Five buck spaghetti and meatballs every Monday, for instance.

See more

THE COVE
PARKING

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The Cove Niteclub

5326 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041

Pete Macchia, founder of the Cove, learned the nightclub business at the Riviera in Palm Springs, where he worked with Sinatra and Dean Martin. Around 1963 the New Castle, PA native decided to open his own music club in Geneva-on-the-Lake. It was an instant smash, and has been going strong ever since. The acts that have played here are representative of national rock-n-roll trends, starting with the smooth sounds of the Platters and Drifters in the early '60s, followed by the psychedelic late '60s and '70s (Hendrix played here), the hair metal of the '80s (Vixen), up to today's modern rock. The Dueling Pianos comedy act is a favorite here.

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Open All Holidays and Weekends
Pavilion Restaurant
WE LOVE BIKERS
PAVILION
HOME OF THE KILLER BURGER

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Pavilion Bar and Grill

5276 Lake Rd E Geneva-on-the-Lake, OH 44041, United States

The Pavilion is right next door to the Surf Motel (a.k.a. "The Hog Pen") so you know there are going to be bikers here. Even If you didn't know, the big sign that says "We Love Bikers" should pretty much spell it out. There's a bike rally called "Thunder on the Strip" towards the end of every season at Geneva-on-the-Lake, and a good amount of bikers hanging around all summer. Most of them are good guys and gals and all very friendly at the Pavilion. Sit upstairs for a great view of the Strip and try one of their massive 10 oz. Killer Burgers. Great Italian food too.

See more

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The Lakehouse Inn

5653 Lake Road East, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041

This boutique resort on Lake Erie really has it all: a spa, a restaurant (Crosswinds Grille), even a winery. There are 8 rooms in the main bed and breakfast house and four detached cottages. It's a bit outside Geneva-on-the-Lake's famous Strip, but the distance is walkable. Very close to Adventure Zone, which is great if you have kids. The Lakehouse Inn stays open all year and they have some good deals on winter weekend “cabin fever” getaways.

See more

LOG CABIN INN
FOOD · LIQUOR
ICE
OLMSTED ICE

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Log Cabin Inn

5306 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041, USA

A lot of Geneva-on-the-Lake locals hang out at the Log Cabin, but out-of-towners are always welcome. In fact, more than welcome. The friendly bartenders, cooks and regulars will treat you like you've been coming here for a decade or two. They have a bowling machine, a loud, rockin' jukebox, and no shortage of live bands during the season. Food is good too: burgers, hand-cut fries, etc. The Log Cabin doesn't participate in the Lake Erie Monster pub crawl, but don't let that stop you from going in!

See more

Joe's Place & Marieta's HOMEMADE Pina Coladas
777
Joe's Place & Marieta's HOMEMADE Pina Coladas
HAPPY HOUR 1-6
Marieta's HOMEMADE Pina Coladas
ATM

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Joe's Place

5500 Lake Rd E Geneva, OH 44041, United States

It's hard to miss this red and white striped bar on the Strip in Geneva-on-the-Lake. Their signage has a fun hand-painted look that drew me in, especially the one that read "Marieta's Homemade Pina Coladas." The one that says "Happy Hour 1-6" didn't hurt either. Marieta turned out to be the manager, and she does indeed make a tasty Pina Colada. They only take cash at Joe's, so be sure you have some. An ATM is available, but there will be a fee, of course.

See more

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Sportsterz Bar & Grill

5422 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH 44041, USA

This big, biker-friendly saloon has two stages for live music. The indoor one is smaller, but the outdoor one is large enough to accommodate national touring acts like Skid Row. They book a lot of very good local musicians as well. I saw the great Pat Dailey play the outdoor stage a couple summers ago and had a blast. There are indoor and outdoor bars, and a full kitchen. They make a mean pulled pork, plus wings, pizza, chicken fingers and other pub grub.

See more

Anchor
MOTEL & COTTAGES

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Anchor Motel & Cottages

5196 Lake Rd, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041, United States

Another great example of the old-school motel/cottage operations that give Geneva-on-the-Lake its character. Sure, the room furnishings are dated, but that's part of the fun. The Anchor is right on the Strip, so you can walk to the restaurants, shows, bars and arcades. Rates are very affordable, and the cottages can sleep up to 6 people. There is a two-night minimum stay for a cottage rental. Outside there's a nice gazebo and shady picnic area. Everything is clean and tidy.

See more

GENEVA-ON-THE-LAKE
RECREATION PARK

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Geneva-on-the-Lake Recreation Park

5606 Lake Road East, Geneva-on-the-Lake, OH 44041

This park is a great place to get some exercise while staying in Geneva-on-the-Lake. It has tennis and basketball courts, a baseball diamond, and plenty of open field for whatever sort of calisthenics you're into. For kids, there's a playground with plastic slides and an elevated tube to crawl through. This is also a popular spot for picnics. The park is located at the beginning of the Strip, right next to the Visitor's Center. Public restrooms are available at the Center.

See more

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The Eagle Cliff Inn Bed & Breakfast

5254 Lake Road East, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041

This charming B&B was built in the 1880s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It started out as the popular Eagle Cliff Hotel, but had fallen into disrepair when the current owners purchased it in 1990. They restored it with exacting period detail (though there is AC and TV now) and have really brought the old building back to life. Also restored and available for rent are 3 cottages: Siesta, Fiesta, and the Hideout. This is a family-oriented operation, so don't stay here if you want to party on the Strip all night.

See more

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GOTL Brewing Co.

5243 Lake Rd, Geneva, OH 44041, United States

This gastropub and craft brewery is making a big impression on the Geneva-on-the-Lake Strip with its creative menu (lobster corn dogs, pierogi of the week) and tasty beer. They also book regular afternoon and evening entertainment (Matt Boland, Ron Yarman) during the high season. I like to sit outside at the open-air bar and enjoy the Lake Erie views. There are patio tables as well. If the weather's inclement, you can always opt for indoor dining. Knowledgeable and friendly staff all around.

See more

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Allen Court Cottages & Motel

5317 Lake Rd, Geneva on the Lake, OH 44041, United States

Rates are very reasonable at this older lakeside motel. Our room was basic, but had everything we needed. The private beach isn't really much of a beach when the water is high. There's a steel ladder down a concrete wall and a bit of gravelly sand. This is actually pretty good for the heart of the Geneva-on-the-Lake Strip, though! Enjoyed our swims. If you want to sunbathe stick to the grass lawn above the wall. They have a number of cottages, of varying sizes, for rent as well.

See more

BAR
Sunset Bar
AT THE LANDING FESTIVAL MARKETPLACE

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The Landing Festival Marketplace

5481 Lake Rd E, Geneva, OH, United States

This area of Geneva-on-the-lake used to be home to Erieview, an amusement park that closed in 2006. Nowadays, the land is used for a variety of festivals, focusing on wine, beer, jazz, and art. There's an outdoor bar (The Sunset), and the Firehouse winery is right next door. The winery often has live entertainment from Ohio legends like Westside Steve Simmons. There's a dinner theater in the Historic Oak Room operated by Noble Art Entertainment. The shows are interactive and always fun. Good food too.

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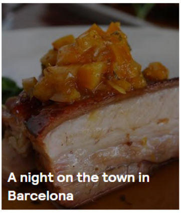

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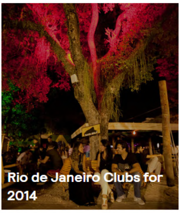

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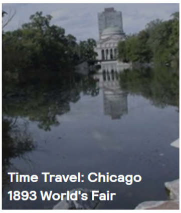

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curated by Liz Behler

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