



ROUTE 20 STATE PLANNER

Indiana Route 20 State Planner

Plan the bridge from the Chicago side through the Indiana Dunes gateway, South Bend, Elkhart, northeast Indiana, and the Ohio handoff.



Gary / Dunes -> Michigan City -> La Porte -> South Bend -> Elkhart -> LaGrange -> Angola

Use this planner for route shape, not live road status. Verify weather, construction, lodging, hours, parking, seasonal access, and local conditions before travel.

Planning principle

Indiana shifts quickly from the Chicago industrial edge and Dunes country into an inland chain of cities and small towns. Use South Bend and Elkhart as the strongest inland anchors.

Revision

August 2026
Built from the current Route20RoadTrip state guide.



Current Indiana Route 20 guide

Scan for the state page, connected segments, trips, and place guides.



How the Indiana corridor works

Indiana shifts quickly from the Chicago industrial edge and Dunes country into an inland chain of cities and small towns. Use South Bend and Elkhart as the strongest inland anchors.

CHAPTER 1 - LAKEFRONT ENTRY

Gary and the Indiana Dunes Gateway

Move from the Illinois handoff through Dunes-side communities and make lakefront decisions early.

CHAPTER 2 - WEST-TO-CENTRAL ROUTE

Michigan City, La Porte, and South Bend

Connect a lake-adjacent anchor, a smaller inland town, and the larger South Bend base.

CHAPTER 3 - CENTRAL ROUTE

South Bend, Elkhart, and Middlebury

Carry the route east through two practical city anchors and a smaller-town pause.

CHAPTER 4 - OHIO APPROACH

New Carlisle, LaGrange, and Angola

Use the quieter inland chain for continuity and finish at Angola before Ohio.

My westbound chapter

My eastbound chapter



ROUTE SECTIONS

FOUR LANES

Choose the chapter that fits

LAKEFRONT ENTRY**1. Gary and the Indiana Dunes Gateway**

Move from the Illinois handoff through Dunes-side communities and make lakefront decisions early.

Primary anchor

Stop / timing note

WEST-TO-CENTRAL ROUTE**2. Michigan City, La Porte, and South Bend**

Connect a lake-adjacent anchor, a smaller inland town, and the larger South Bend base.

Primary anchor

Stop / timing note

CENTRAL ROUTE**3. South Bend, Elkhart, and Middlebury**

Carry the route east through two practical city anchors and a smaller-town pause.

Primary anchor

Stop / timing note

OHIO APPROACH**4. New Carlisle, LaGrange, and Angola**

Use the quieter inland chain for continuity and finish at Angola before Ohio.

Primary anchor

Stop / timing note



PLACE ROLES

ANCHOR MAP

Use towns for the job they do best

Gary

Illinois handoff

City history, services, and lakefront access decisions.

Chesterton

Walkable Dunes gateway

Pair a downtown pause with one Dunes-area priority.

Michigan City

Lake-adjacent anchor

Lakefront time, culture, services, or an overnight.

La Porte

Inland connector

Lakes, downtown, or a meal stop before South Bend.

South Bend

City and overnight anchor

Museums, campus, food, services, or an overnight.

Elkhart

Eastern city anchor

Riverfront, museums, downtown, or practical services.

Middlebury

Small-town culture stop

Quieter meal, shopping, or heritage pause.

Angola

Ohio approach

Downtown, lakes, services, or an overnight before the state line.

My anchor hierarchy

Not every place needs equal time.

Overnight base

Walk / explore

Quick reset



TRIP SHAPES

WORKSHEET

Build a realistic Indiana plan

West Indiana weekend

Indiana Dunes to South Bend

Use the existing weekend for the clearest Illinois-to-Indiana handoff and move inland.

East Indiana weekend

South Bend and Elkhart

Use the existing weekend for an easy eastward trip centered on the two larger inland anchors.

Lakefront chapter

Gary to Michigan City

Best when Dunes access and lakefront choices are the main purpose.

Northeast handoff

Elkhart to Angola

Best for a quieter inland continuation and a clean Ohio approach.

Choose the smallest trip shape that delivers the experience you actually want. A state planner is allowed to end before the state line.

My chosen chapter

Primary experience

Overnight anchor

First thing to cut



DEPARTURE SHEET

BEFORE YOU DRIVE

Write down the decisions that matter

Route plan

Direction and start

End point

Overnight

Primary experience

Backup

Verify before departure

- ☐ Dunes-area access, parking, and seasonal conditions
- ☐ Chicago-side traffic and the Illinois handoff
- ☐ Weather, roadwork, and construction
- ☐ Lodging around Michigan City, South Bend, Elkhart, or Angola
- ☐ The first optional small-town stop to cut if the day runs long

Notes

Keep live information separate from this static planner.

For current Route20RoadTrip context, return to <https://route20roadtrip.com/states/indiana/>. This PDF is a planning companion, not a live conditions source.



Keep the current guide with the paper plan.

Use the site for deeper segments, trips, and place guides, then verify live conditions with authoritative sources.