

In Door County, summer days stretch until nine, cherries grow by the bucketful, and the lake is so clean, you can skip bath time



a 1980's model town that introduced conscientious urban planning not only to the neighborhood but to the nation—and went on to star as the set for *The Truman Show*. Picture brick-paved streets, a tiny, everything-you-need downtown, and 480 beach cottages, very few alike and 248 available for rent. On a typical August evening, a reggae band performs on the green, as parents lounge on picnic blankets and every kid around joins in a giant game of tag. Did someone say idyllic? **WEATHER REPORT** Climate-wise, the Panhandle is at its best in summer, not nearly as hot as the beaches down south. Expect breezy days hovering in the mid-eighties. **STANDOUT BEACHES** Besides looking like Tahiti, Seaside's strand has the added bonus of being scarcely farther than a roll out of bed. If you must roam, the glassy blue waters of **Grayton Beach State Park** (County Road 30-A; 850/231-4210; www.florida.stateparks.org) are a lovely two-mile bike ride away. **RENT FROM Seaside**

Cottage Rentals (888/732-7433; www.seasidefl.com; two-bedroom houses from \$292 per night). Call guest services (850/231-2222) between 6 A.M. and midnight, and they'll arrange in-house massages or have a picnic lunch—and rental bikes—delivered to your door. **HOTEL ALTERNATIVE** WaterColor, a Seaside-inspired planned community nearby, is home to the David Rockwell-designed **WaterColor Inn** (34 Goldenrod Circle, Seagrove Beach; 866/202-2930; www.watercolorinn.com; doubles from \$395) and a standout kids' camp. **EAT AT** Two of Seaside's own: the burger hangout, **Shades** (83 Central Square;



850/231-1950; lunch for four \$36), and **Bud & Alley's** (2236 E. County Rd. 30-A; 850/231-5900; dinner for four \$140), which specializes in just-caught Gulf fish and is ideal for the big night out. —MALIA BOYD

The Heartland on Half Speed Fish Creek, Wisconsin

Scandinavian settlers were attracted to the wildflower meadows and summer days that stretch until nine. Today's drop-ins to this bayside village in Wisconsin's Door County, the pinkie-shaped peninsula that separates Green Bay from the rest of Lake Michigan, also get tidy fruit orchards, markets stocked with artisanal cheddars, and a marina with slips reserved for yachts. Main Street's white clapboard storefronts are enthusiastically sprinkled with Swedish kitsch (count the blue-and-yellow flags and the heart-shaped doodads). Swim in water so clean you can skip bath time, and hike, bike, boat, and fish along the Door's 250 miles of shore. **STAY AT** The **White Gull Inn** (4225 Main St., Fish Creek; 888/364-9542; www.whitegullinn.com; cottages for four from \$299), a Victorian lodge with the best fish boil, a Nordic dish of whitefish and potatoes cooked over a hyperactive outdoor fire. (Hot dogs available on request.) **RENT FROM JR Vacation Rentals** (53 W. Spruce St., Sturgeon Bay; >>

The Customs of Door County Clockwise from top: A round at the Red Putter; taking aim at Lautenbach's Orchard Country; Sweetie Pies desserts.





Taking the Green Bay plunge at Peninsula State Park.

888/481-1935; www.jrvacationrentals.com; three-bedroom condos from \$1,485 per week). **EAT AT Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant** (702 North Bay Shore Dr., Sister Bay; 920/854-2626; dinner for four \$64), where goats chomp on the sod roof and waitresses in dirndls dish up Swedish pancakes with lingonberries and meatballs on the side. Dessert stop: **Sweetie Pies** (The Settlement Shops, Hwy. 42, Fish Creek; 920/868-2743) for cherry pie and cinnamon-piecrust cookies. **IDEAL OUTING** Rent wheels from **Edge of Park Bike and Moped** (Park Entrance Rd., Fish Creek; 920/868-3344; www.edgeofpark.com), at the main entrance of **Peninsula State Park** (920/868-

3254; www.dnr.state.wi.us), then coast the gentle trails beneath the park's 3,776 acres of white birches and sugar maples. While you're there, swim and canoe at **Nicolet Bay Beach**, a crescent of shallow water (plus a playground and snack bar) on Green Bay. **IT'S A JOKE** Take a crash course in Midwestern humor at the **American Folklore Theatre** (9462 Shore Rd., Fish Creek; 920/854-6117; www.folkloretheatre.com) in the park's outdoor amphitheater. **DON'T MISS** Miniature golf at the delightfully creaky **Red Putter** (10404 Hwy. 42; 920/854-5114), in nearby Ephraim, or a flick at the 1950's **Skyway Drive-in Theater** (3475 Hwy. 42, Fish Creek; 920/854-9938). **PERFECT SOUVENIR** A bucket of tart Montmorency cherries, harvested from mid-July to mid-August at **Lautenbach's Orchard Country** (9197 Hwy. 42, Fish Creek; 920/868-3479; www.orchardcountry.com). Be sure to test your prowess at the local sport: pit spitting.

—ELIZABETH LARSEN

Sandcastle Country

Cannon Beach, Oregon

Named for a cannon that washed ashore in 1846, Cannon Beach is sandwiched between Highway 101 and the pounding Pacific. Its big selling points: proximity to Portland and Seattle (80 miles

east and 222 miles north, respectively); wild, undeveloped beaches; four blocks of galleries and kite stores; and a highly competitive annual sandcastle-building contest (June 11 this year). **LAY OF THE LAND** The town extends four miles along the Pacific, bordered on the north by Ecola State Park and on the south by Tolovana Beach Park. **FIRST TOURISTS** Lewis and Clark stopped by in 1806, to buy 300 pounds of whale blubber from the Clatsop Indians. **FAMOUS LANDMARK** Haystack Rock, a 235-foot monolith, towers above the shore. At low tide during May and June, you can see black-and-white tufted puffins (try saying that 10 times fast!) >>