



Georgian Bay

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Georgian Bay

Introduction

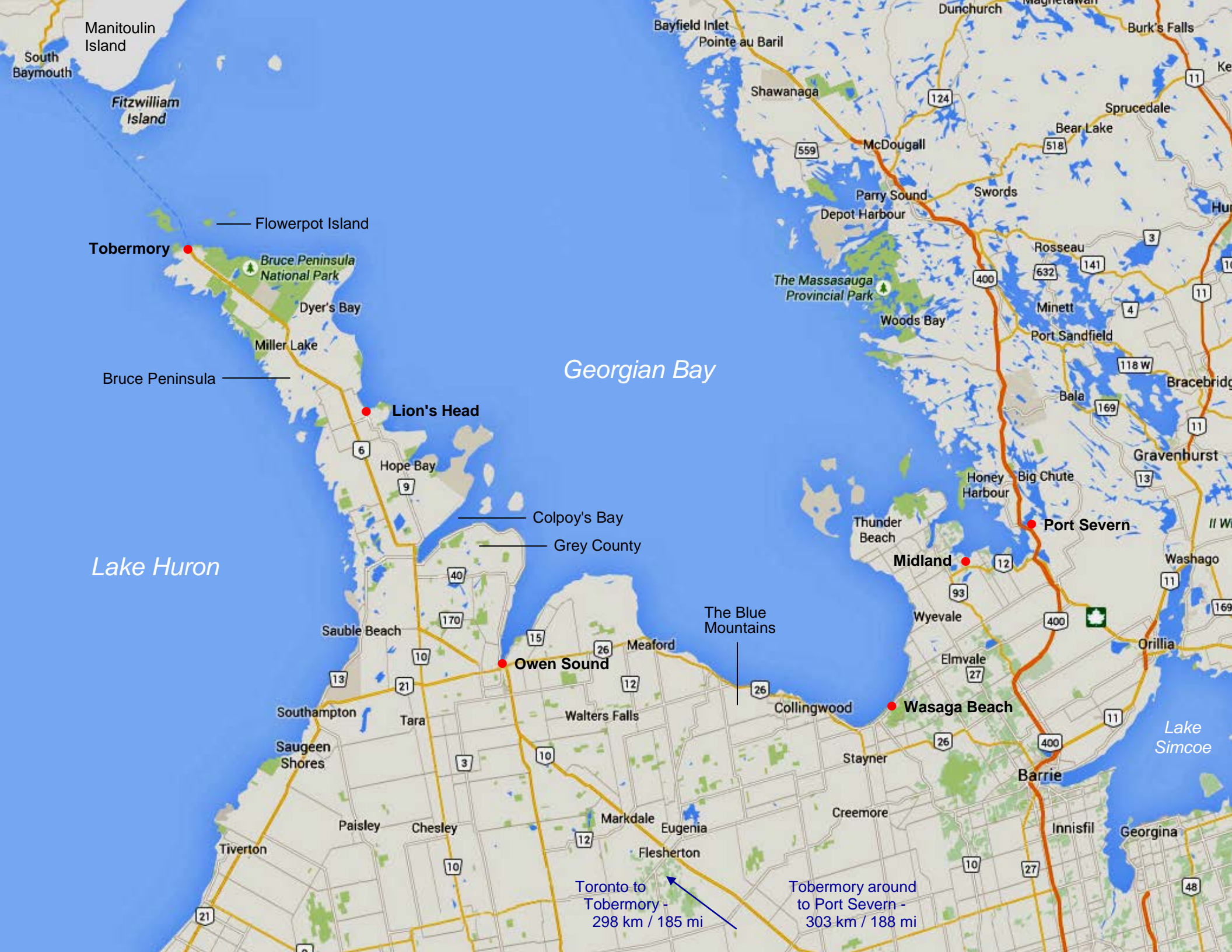
Lake Huron's Georgian Bay sits between what are commonly considered to be the Southern and Northern regions of Ontario. Because this area is relatively close to home it's easy to overlook its interesting features. I was here as a little kid, but hadn't been back since. These photos are from a five-day visit in August 2015.

- ▶ The Georgian Bay area is a popular vacation destination, with lots of **striking and gorgeous scenery**.
- ▶ This is the home of some spectacular **geological formations**, and this time I made an effort to understand them at least a bit.
- ▶ Some important chapters in the **early history** of the European conquest of Canada occurred here, and it's interesting to see how our understanding of the motivations and impacts of European intervention has changed over time.

No attempt to organize my photos to correspond with these themes seemed to work, so I've just presented them in the order of my trip, from west to east around the southern shore of Georgian Bay.

You'll see that the weather wasn't always ideal for photography, but hopefully the content is interesting enough to compensate for that.

– Bruce McKay



Tobermory

Flowerpot Island

Bruce Peninsula
National Park

Dyer's Bay

Miller Lake

Bruce Peninsula

Lion's Head

6

Hope Bay

9

Colpoy's Bay

Grey County

40

170

Sauble Beach

13

Southampton

Saugeen
Shores

Paisley

Chesley

Tiverton

21

Owen Sound

3

10

Walters Falls

Markdale

Eugenia

Flesherton

Toronto to
Tobermory -
298 km / 185 mi

The Blue
Mountains

Meaford

26

12

Collingwood

Stayner

Creemore

Midland

93

Wyevale

27

Elmvale

Wasaga Beach

26

Barrie

27

Innisfil

Georgina

48

Georgian Bay

Lake Huron

Lake Simcoe

Tobermory around
to Port Severn -
303 km / 188 mi

Bayfield Inlet

Pointe au Baril

Shawanaga

559

McDougall

Parry Sound

Depot Harbour

The Massasauga
Provincial Park

Woods Bay

Swords

Bear Lake

518

Sprucedale

Burk's Falls

11

Rosseau

632

141

Minett

Port Sandfield

Bala

169

Bracebridge

Gravenhurst

13

Washago

11

Orillia

169



Owen Sound

Lunch break, day one. Owen Sound (pop. 32,000) sits on a bay of the same name on the south-western shore of Georgian Bay, at the base of the Bruce Peninsula.



Owen Sound

Owen Sound, once one of many busy Great Lakes ports, is now a regional commercial centre, supported mostly by agriculture and tourism.



Tobermory

Tobermory, at the northern tip of the Bruce Peninsula, is a small village of about 1450.



Tobermory

Tobermory is a seasonal community.
Most businesses close for the winter.



Tobermory

The ferry service to Manitoulin Island is the largest single employer. It operates from May through mid-October.



Tobermory

The ferry can carry 143 vehicles. The 40 km / 25 mile trip to Manitoulin Island takes an hour and forty-five minutes.



Tobermory

Tourism is Tobermory's major business.
It's a centre for hiking, SCUBA diving, and sightseeing.



Tobermory

The community is known as the "fresh water SCUBA diving capital of the world" because of the 22 shipwrecks that lie in the surrounding waters.



Tobermory

Glass bottom boat cruises are very popular. These explore sunken shipwrecks from above, and visit the unique geological formations of Flowerpot Island.



Tobermory

All manner of vessels offer these sightseeing tours, ranging from stately double deckers ...



Tobermory

... to jet boats. Altogether there are over 30 glass bottom cruise departures per day.



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

**I'll take this conventional tour around Flowerpot Island,
part of the Fathom Five National Marine Park.**



Fathom Five Cruise

As we head out past Tobermory's Big Tub Lighthouse it's suddenly clear that we are not alone.



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

**We pass by some private summer cottages in the
outer harbour on our way to see some shipwrecks.**



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

The Sweepstakes was a two-masted schooner that
sank in Tobermory's Big Tub harbour in 1885.



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

**We head out towards Flowerpot Island,
7 km / 4 miles northeast of Tobermory.**



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

On our way we pass White Rock ...



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

... resting place for cormorants (I think) ...



**Fathom Five
Cruise**

... until we get too close.



**Flowerpot
Island**

Flowerpot Island is a 500 acre / 2 km² island covered with a forest of cedar, spruce, white pine, and birch trees, some over 1500 years old.



**Flowerpot
Island**

The island has campsites and a network of trails ranging from 1.7 km to 3.5 km long.



**Flowerpot
Island**

**The trails branch out from Beachy Cove.
My tour doesn't stop.**



**Flowerpot
Island**

We see places where differential erosion has exposed steep cliffs.



**Flowerpot
Island**

The limestone rock in this area formed from ancient coral reefs and sediments that built up under a tropical sea 425 million years ago.



**Flowerpot
Island**

When sea levels were higher caves were eroded into the cliffs in some places.



**Flowerpot
Island**

Flowerpot Island is named for these unusual "flowerpot" formations.



**Flowerpot
Island**

These sea stacks were formed over many years as wind, rain, waves, and ice hammered away at the cliff that once stood alongside the water's edge.



**Flowerpot
Island**

The softer rock eroded more quickly, leaving the harder rock remaining in the shape of flowerpots.



**Flowerpot
Island**

A second flowerpot.



**Flowerpot
Island**

A third sea stack fell down in 1903.
This one still looks sturdy.



**Flowerpot
Island**

We leave the flowerpots behind, cruise through some of the other Fathom Five islands, and return to Tobermory.



**Bruce
Peninsula**

Tourism and summer cottages occupy much of the Bruce Peninsula.



**Bruce
Peninsula**

This family resort, 10 km south of Tobermory, is on Cameron Lake.



The Niagara Escarpment

An escarpment is a steep slope or long cliff that separates two relatively level areas of differing elevations.

The Niagara Escarpment runs along the north shoreline of a vast ancient lake that covered parts of New York State, Ontario, and Michigan over 400 million years ago.

The compositions of the lake deposits differed from the shore, and differences in the layers allowed lower levels to be eroded more, exposing sharp cliffs above.



Lion's Head

The Smokey Head White Bluffs north of Lion's Head are dramatic Niagara Escarpment cliffs.



Lion's Head

The Lion's Head area is short on sandy beaches, but still a favourite summer getaway location.



Lion's Head

**Lion's Head is a village of about 900 people
(in summer).**



Lion's Head

The village is named for a rock formation on the east escarpment, this one, I think.



Grey County **A quiet shoreline road around Colpoy's Bay**



Grey County

**You have to get into the back country to meet the latest technology.
Spyder RS-S 3-wheel motorcycle. 1000 cc. 100 horsepower.**



Grey County

**This is about as far north as prosperous agriculture extends.
North of here the land is much rockier.**



**The Blue
Mountains**

Further east, near Collingwood, the Escarpment takes the form of the Blue Mountains. Ski runs are cut into the slopes here.



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The Blue Mountains

Blue Mountain is Canada's third-largest ski resort, and now boasts 42 runs, 16 chair lifts, and 3 freestyle terrains. It sells 750,000 lift tickets a season.



**The Blue
Mountains**

**A stunning achievement given that Blue Mountain's
vertical drop is only 219 metres / 720 feet.**



**The Blue
Mountains**

**Relative proximity to Toronto (170 km / 105 mi) and the lack of
taller slopes in Ontario are key to this mass tourism success.**



The Blue Mountains

Blue Mountain has now morphed into an all-season resort, with the addition of mountain bike trails, a monster roller coaster, and its own "village".



8:00 a.m.

Wasaga Beach

**Wasaga Beach offers the world's longest freshwater beach – 14 km / 8.7 miles.
Decades ago teenagers flocked here for wild times.**



4:25 p.m.

**Wasaga
Beach**

The Beach now attracts about 2 million visitors a year,
seemingly mostly 4, 5, and 6 year olds.



**Wendat
Village**

The Wendat / Huron Village in Midland is a recreation of a native people's village between AD 1500 and 1600, just prior to the arrival of Europeans.



**Wendat
Village**

Aboriginal or "First Nations" people have lived in what is now Canada for at least 12,000 years.



**Wendat
Village**

The Wendat people of the Georgian Bay area, later called Hurons by the French, lived in fortified villages, farmed the surrounding fields, and hunted for game.



**Wendat
Village**

Many families lived together in one longhouse. Fireplaces and fire pits ran down the middle of the longhouse for heating and cooking.



**Wendat
Village**

Each family was assigned a specific area within the longhouse, for sleeping and for the storage of food, furs, and other belongings.



**Wendat
Village**

Tobacco, considered sacred, was hung to dry in the longhouse.
Meat and fish were smoked and dried for preservation.



**Wendat
Village**

This recreated Wendat Village is operated by a non-profit foundation and is staffed primarily by volunteers.



**Jesuit
Mission**

Recreation of Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, Ontario's first European community, headquarters for the French Jesuit Mission to the Wendat / Huron people



**Jesuit
Mission**

In 1639 the Jesuits, along with French lay workers, began construction of a fenced community that included barracks, churches, workshops, and residences.



**Jesuit
Mission**

By 1648 the population of Sainte-Marie was 66 French men, one-fifth of the entire population of New France.



**Jesuit
Mission**

First a carpenter and then other volunteer tradesmen and young boys were imported to help develop the community.

The Jesuits' Own Chapel



Jesuit Mission

The Jesuits' efforts to convert the Wendat to Christianity caused a bitter split within the native community between the converted and the traditionalists.





**Jesuit
Mission**

In 1648 and early 1649 Iroquois raids killed eight of the Jesuit missionaries and many Wendat.



**Jesuit
Mission**

In June 1649 the Jesuits and some of their Wendat followers abandoned Sainte-Marie after only 10 years, set fire to the mission, and eventually returned to Montréal.



**Jesuit
Mission**

Unlike the Wendat Village, this European mission reconstruction was created and is operated by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture.



**Jesuit
Mission**

**Each week thousands visit this Martyr's Shrine honouring the fallen Jesuits.
There is no shrine to the fallen Wendat.**



Midland

Midland (pop. 35,000) is the main town of the southern Georgian Bay area. It was founded in 1878 and prospered on Georgian Bay shipping and the lumber and grain trade.



Midland

Some lake shipping activity remains. These grain elevators at Midland's town dock are still in use, but the harbour now caters mostly to pleasure craft and tourism vessels.



Midland

This huge mural depicting an interchange between a Wendat and a Jesuit makes an unintended point: Canada still wrestles with the legacy of its handling of native peoples.



Miss MidLand Cruise

I sign up for an afternoon "30,000 Islands" cruise through what is claimed to be the largest concentration of islands in the world.



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

**We see islands large and small and a wide range
of summer homes, from modest to opulent.**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

CSL *Niagara* is a typical "lake boat", a high capacity bulk carrier unique to the Great Lakes, designed for carrying minerals or grain.



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

Lake boats are proportionately longer, narrower, and shallower than ocean-going vessels. *CSL Niagara* is a grain carrier.



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

**This is novel. Not sure if this boat was stopped
by the police for speeding or drunk boating.**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

**Honey Harbour is a main access point to the thousands
of summer homes on the 30,000 Islands.**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

Honey Harbour's Delawana Inn has had a varied career, including stints as a five-star resort, a busy conference centre, and a bankrupt enterprise.



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

**New ownership reopened the property as the Delawana
Resort in 2014 and is continuing redevelopment.**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

**We pass this floating "last gas" and convenience store
as we leave Honey Harbour and head back to Midland.**



**Miss Midland
Cruise**

When we return to Midland, the *CSL Niagara* is already unloading wheat for the Five Roses flour mill.



Port Severn

On the last day I had planned to head up into the more rugged country north from Port Severn, but the weather didn't cooperate.



End

Just the same I did have some great times while it was sunny, and I learned all sorts of new things even when it was overcast or raining.

< End >



Georgian Bay