



# An American Tour: 112



## The Midwest's Great Lakes

*[I kill two birds with one cover here! It's a Famous Place and an error]*

The Great Lakes are a series of interconnected freshwater lakes located primarily in the upper midwest region of North America, on the Canada–United States border, which connect to the Atlantic Ocean through the Saint Lawrence River *[I'm sure that's obvious to those of you in the East, but I'm sure some of us here in the West (like myself) have never seen them in person]*. Consisting of Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron (or Michigan–Huron), Erie, and Ontario, they form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth, containing 21% of the world's surface fresh water by volume. The total surface is 94,250 square miles, and the total volume is 5,439 cubic miles. Due to their sea-like characteristics (rolling waves, sustained winds, strong currents, great depths, and distant horizons) the five Great Lakes have also long been referred to as inland seas. Lake Superior is the second largest lake in the world by area, and Lake Michigan is the largest lake that is entirely within one country.

The Great Lakes began to form at the end of the last glacial period only around 14,000 years ago, as retreating ice sheets carved basins into the land and they became filled with melt water. The lakes have been a major highway for transportation, migration and trade, and they are home to a large number of aquatic species. Many invasive species have been introduced due to trade, and some threaten the region's biodiversity.

The Great Lakes are today used as a major water transport corridor for bulk goods and also supplies drinking water to tens of millions of people in bordering areas. *[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Lakes#Economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Lakes#Economy)]*

