

The Champlain Islands

This is one of the most scenic tours in Vermont.

Go to the bottom of the hill and turn right onto Rt. 2W.

Option 1: Go about 8 miles through Richmond to I-89. Take I-89N to Exit 17, Champlain Islands. Make a right off the ramp and you will be on RT. 2W again.

Option 2: Stay on Rt. 2W through Burlington and up to the Champlain Islands.

After crossing the Lamoille River start looking for telephone poles on the left. On top of the poles are Osprey nests. Often times you will be able to see these large hawk-like birds which have come off the endangered species list.

Next you will come to Sandbar State Park. If the weather is good you can stop and swim or rent canoes and paddle boats. As you cross the causeway you can stop at parking areas on either side of the road. Take in the beautiful views of Lake Champlain while watching the sailboats or kibitzing with the local fishermen.

After leaving there, you will come into the small town of South Hero. The islands are known for their apple production and you will see many stands along the road. The first one you see also has gift items and a hamburger stand. Just outside of town look for the signs for **Snow Farm Vineyard**, one of the best in the State in our opinion and the only award winning vintner in the state. It's worth the drive down for the Lake views, the Alpaca farm and of course the tasting room. During the summer on Thursday evenings they have concerts on their grounds that are worth checking out.

As you continue up the Islands you will drive by Keeler Bay. The Grand Isle State Park is on the left. It is a great spot to swim, rent a kayak, or have a picnic before continuing on. Further on up the road on the right you will see signs for the Hyde Log Cabin, the first building on the Island. As you cross the causeway into North Hero you will see Knight Point State Park on the left. This is the new home of the *Royal Lipizzaner Stallions of Austria*. During a limited time during the summer they offer shows on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

As you enter North Hero stop and visit the North Hero Welcome General Store. Here you can enjoy some refreshments including a variety of sweets as well as a wide selection of Vermont gift items. Walk across the street and sit along the water on some of the picnic tables.

Going on up the road through North Hero into South Alburg watch for signs for Isle La Motte. Here is the home of **St. Anne's Shrine**, a must for Catholics and a beautiful beach and grounds for everyone else. A sculpture of the Lake's first discoverer, Samuel de Champlain, is also at this site. Fort St. Anne was Vermont's oldest settlement. Forts were very important on Lake Champlain. They protected the colonists from the British trying to invade from Canada during the Revolutionary War.

Continue north enjoying the views of the Lake and the Green Mountains.

Option 1: At Alburg Center you will pick up Rt. 78 and the bridge back to Swanton and the mainland.

From Option 1 there are two more options.

Option a: In Swanton pick up Rt. 7S into St. Albans.

Option b: Stay on Rt. 78 and take I-89S either to exit 14W and Burlington or exit 11 to come back to the Inn.

Option 2: At Alburg Center continue on Rt. 2W towards New York and cross Lake Champlain on the bridge to Rouse's Point. At Rouse's Point take a right onto Rt. 9B N towards Canada or a left on Rt. 9B S into New York.

St. Albans has a wonderful center green and a nice downtown shopping area. It is also the site of the Northernmost Civil War Battle. From St. Albans, you can do either of the following:

Option 1: Pick up I-89S to Burlington or the Inn.

Option 2: Take Rt. 36E to Rt. 104S to Rt. 128S into Fairfax.

In Fairfax you will find a recently renovated **covered bridge**. Continue south on Rt. 128 to Rt. 15 West/South. Shortly you will come to Essex Junction and what is known as Five Corners. Take Rt. 117 into Richmond along the Winooski River. At the Stop Sign take a left onto Rt. 2E.

At the light in Richmond make a right onto Bridge St. and cross the bridge. The **Richmond Round Church** will be on your left. When it is open a docent will be glad to tell you its history and show you around.

Go back to Rt. 2E for 6 miles and make a left for the Black Bear Inn.

Total distance about 110 miles – Full Day Trip including lunch and stops.