

Heavenly harbors

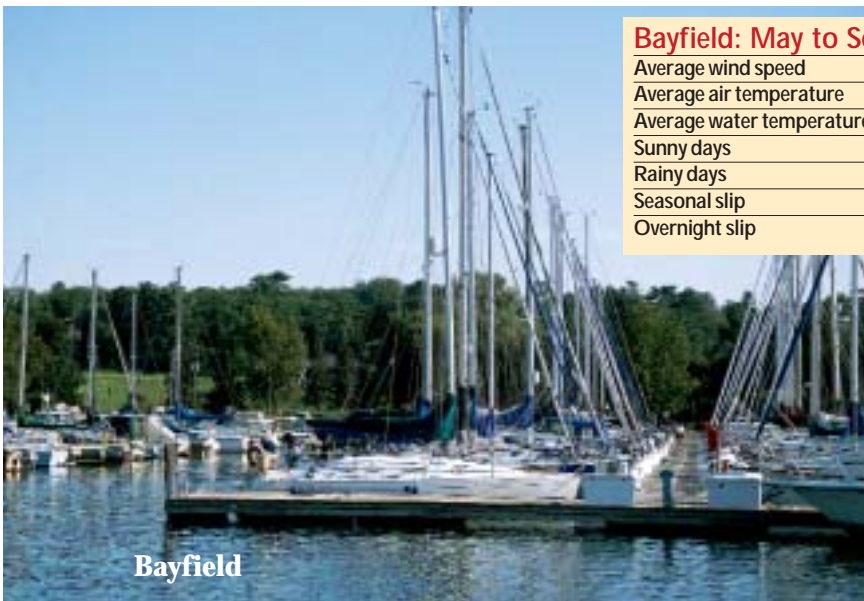
Ten towns with the goods—sailboat-friendly harbors, dependable sailing conditions, strong sailing communities, and more—that make them great destinations for sailors

By **DAVE BALDWIN**, **KIMBALL LIVINGSTON**, **ELIZABETH WRIGHTSON**, AND **JOSH ADAMS**

Welcome to Sailville, USA. You just reached into town under full sail and a sunny sky. The harbor entrance is wide with few navigation hazards. The harbor is big and well protected, and moorings are available for a reasonable fee in the transient area. The only powerboat in town is the launch that picks you up and delivers you to the sleepy waterfront. The locals sail good seaworthy boats, on which you're invited to race in the local series. Be sure to ask them about favorite anchorages and other hot spots; they love to share this information. You'll enjoy a quiet night's rest—there's no chop after dark—and tomorrow the 15-knot sea breeze will arrive at 1100. By the way, if you'd like to move here and call this harbor home, speak with the marina about their remaining slip vacancies.

Ah, yes, Sailville. Where is the harbor that has it all? In our search for the best places to sail in the United States, we considered the following criteria—sailing conditions, boat traffic, sailboat-versus-powerboat population, marine services, and access to cruising grounds. But sailors are attracted to their own kind, and it's often the sailing community that makes you want to visit, stay longer, or stay forever.

We found that some renowned sailing towns—Newport, Rhode Island (busy boat traffic), Key West, Florida (more for fishermen than sailors), and Hood River, Oregon (more for speedsters than cruisers)—have a notable flaw. We think the towns we selected deliver more. Stop by and be assured of a welcome.



Bayfield

BAYFIELD, WISCONSIN

Located on Lake Superior between Duluth, Minnesota, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Bayfield is a launching point for premier Great Lakes cruising grounds. The nearby Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, known as the "Caribbean of the North," offers 21 remote and uninhabited islands, 12 miles of lighthouse-laden coastline (the largest lighthouse collection in the U.S.), and crystal-clear waters.

Steady summer winds of 10 to 18 knots delight a large

Bayfield: May to September

Average wind speed	9.5 knots
Average air temperature	60°F
Average water temperature (June)	48°F
Sunny days	59%
Rainy days	40%
Seasonal slip	\$62-\$95/foot
Overnight slip	\$1.25/foot



number of cruisers exploring the world's largest freshwater lake and its pristine wilderness, rugged cliffs, sandy anchorages, and sea caves. As one of the National Park Service's more lightly traveled areas (169,000 recreational visits in 2002), the Apostles are free of waterborne crowds.

Despite a short sailing season—May to September (with an earlier start if the ice thaws by April)—Bayfield has a good-size racing fleet and accommodates roughly 1,200 sailboats, many owned by nonresidents, in local marinas.

Little Bayfield—population 600—continues to grow in popularity as a trailersailing destination.

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