

GREAT LAKES LIGHTHOUSE SWIMS

1st Swim in Lake Michigan

Holland Harbor Light to Grand Haven Light

This virtual swim is 20 miles, going north along some of the most beautiful shoreline in the Great Lakes. In midsummer, water temperatures can vary almost 20 degrees, from 52 to 72, depending on the wind direction. It may be the busiest aquatic sports area in the State of Michigan. A relay swim to raise money for charity has followed this shoreline route. As you do the swim, imagine stroking by the beautiful dunes and beaches while sailboats drift by. You are swimming from the "Big Red Lighthouse at the mouth of Lake Macatawa to the Grand Haven Light at the mouth of the famous Grand River, which meanders through much of lower Michigan.

Use the generic mileage chart for this swim.
Compiled by Jennifer Parks, Michigan LMSC



Holland Harbor Lighthouse They call this light "Big Red," and like most of the lights on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, it sits at the end of a pier. The unusual twin-gabled structure was built in 1907, and it reflects the Dutch influence in the area. In 1936 the current light tower was added to the top of one of the gables, and the entire building was covered with steel plates. The light sits [across the channel from Holland State Park](#). It's a lazy-summer-day kind of place, with benches lining the park along the channel, and a handful of not-too-serious fisherpeople intermingling with handholding strollers. You can visit the light by turning onto Ottawa Beach Rd. off River Ave. Follow the signs to the State Park.

The road that meanders along the lakeshore between Holland and Grand Haven is a beauty. It's lined with shade trees, homes with wide lawns, and a great bike trail the entire way. A lighthouse was first built at the mouth of the Grand River in 1839. The current inner tower dates from 1905, with the outer light added in 1922. The [inner light](#) shines a fixed red, and the outer light a flashing red. [Both lights](#) are painted red. The [outer light](#) has an unusual face to the lake that looks like the bow of a boat--the better to plow through storm-driven waves. The pier is adjacent to a great beach and campground, with RV's packed tightly facing the sunset over the lights. The pier itself is a perfect spot for a stroll. I also heard rumors about Grand Haven's famous musical fountain, but I spent most of my evening there taking [night shots](#) of the lights, and didn't see the fountain.

Grand Haven Lighthouse

