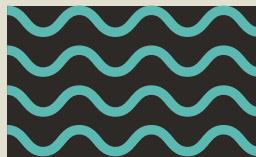


HISTORY • OUTDOORS • ART & CULTURE • DINING • SHOPPING • EVENTS • LIVING

DEFIANCE

Visitors Guide OHIO





Old Fort Defiance

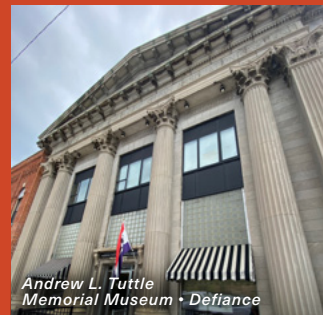
HISTORICALLY HEADSTRONG

In a word, the history of Defiance County, OH, has always been just that — defiant. Against the slings and arrows of man and the bitter cruelty of nature rose **Fort Defiance** at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers. Constructed by General “Mad” Anthony Wayne, a Founding Father and Senior Officer of the U.S. Army, during the second week of August 1794, it was one of a line of defenses constructed by American forces in the campaign leading to the Northwest Indian War’s Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Fort Defiance was considered one of the strongest fortifications in the Ohio Country. When the United States declared war against Great Britain in 1812, General William Henry Harrison constructed a new fort, **Fort Winchester**, near the site of **Old Fort Defiance**, which had been abandoned in 1796. Fort Winchester was used as a staging point and fallback position during the construction of four other forts further north and east of the Fort Defiance location, including **Fort Meigs**. **Kingsbury Park** is located across the Auglaize River from Old Fort Defiance.

— GEN. “MAD” ANTHONY WAYNE, 1794

Cover Photo: Independence Dam State Park
Photo by Radek Smolik



Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum • Defiance



Riverside Chapel Defiance



AuGlaize Village, Defiance

Visitors can experience the history of Defiance County firsthand at **AuGlaize Village**. Open only for special events and tours, this 40-acre park features both original and reproduction buildings with a treasure trove of farming and industrial artifacts — including some hands-on activities — that offer a glimpse of life in Northwest Ohio in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In Downtown Defiance, the **Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum** displays a fabulous collection of artifacts from the history of the community. Located in the historic Home Saving & Loan Co. building, the museum’s exhibits include antique coins, Native American artifacts, and military memorabilia. Turn your eyes upward and you’ll even see a Simplex airplane on display, paying tribute to the Simplex Aeroplanes corporation that was founded in Defiance in 1928.

The canals that once spurred economic and industrial growth throughout the Midwest still exist in Downtown Defiance — **Lock #37 of the Miami and Erie Canal** stands at 309 Perry St., while **Maumee and Erie Lock #13** is visible via a walking towpath through nearby **Independence Dam State Park**. These vestiges serve as a reminder of the pioneers and industrialists who built not just Ohio, but America, a continued inspiration for the bold, innovative minds working toward a better future in Defiance to this day.



AuGlaize Village • Defiance

EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS

Given the confluence of three rivers — the **Maumee**, the **Auglaize**, and the **Tiffin** — the convergence of outdoor recreation in Defiance County is only natural. Boaters, canoers, and kayakers are treated to a prime destination for drifting from one point to the next, while anglers will discover waterways inhabited by trophy walleye, smallmouth bass, and catfish. Opened in 2008, the 74-acre **Defiance Reservoir** contains about 350 million gallons of water with an average depth of 18 feet, offering even more opportunities to spend some time on the water.

The great outdoors in Defiance County extends far beyond those flowing rivers. The vast 591-acre **Independence Dam State Park** offers trails, camping, and picnic areas along with fishing and boating; history buffs can also follow along the 3-mile towpath of the **Miami and Erie and Wabash and Erie Canals** with **Lock #13** serving as a vestige of the famed waterways. **Oxbow Lake and Wildlife Area** features hunting and hiking across the slightly rolling terrain. Birders will discover an area bustling with migrating shorebirds, songbirds, and bluebirds. The 250-acre **Thoreau Wildlife Preserve** features four nature trails highlighting numerous ecosystems characteristic of Northwest Ohio, including wetlands, prairies, hardwood forests, and old growth forests.



Veterans Memorial Park at Latty's Grove • Defiance



The marina at Independence Dam State Park Defiance



Hicksville Community Park



Splash Park at Bronson Park Defiance



Confluence of the Maumee of Auglaize Rivers

Stop and relax. With a variety of amenities at each location, Defiance County's world-class parks system can accommodate with recreation — and relaxation — for all ages! Beat the summer heat at the **Defiance Splash Park at Bronson Park** or at **Kingsbury Park & Pool**. Foster your children's imaginations at the Kids Creation Playground at Diehl Park. Take a break under the Victorian gazebo in **Holgate Park** or by the **Zonta Fountain at Pontiac Metro Park**. And beyond the Defiance city limits, **Little Reservation Station Park** and **Moats Park** in Sherwood offer plenty of opportunities to play and relax. **Hicksville Community Park** — with a brand-new splash pad coming in 2024 — and **Ney Community Park** and **Splash Pad** provide a much-needed break from the summer sun. For a complete listing of parks, go to visitdefianceohio.com/explore/parks-outdoors.

BLAZE A TRAIL

However you want to get around — by pedal, paddle, or your own two feet — the trails around Defiance County are the ultimate way to immerse yourself in the grandeur of the Northwest Ohio outdoors. Set out on a short jaunt around a local green space or embark on a journey across the state or the entire Midwest!

Defiance Reservoir & Walking Trails

The Reservoir Nature Trail is an 8-foot wide, multi-use trail extending from the Defiance Reservoir parking lot through approximately 2,500 feet of natural wooded area, offering opportunities for bird watching, leaf-peeping, or enjoying quiet walks through nature. The “upper” trail is a 1.25-mile stone walkway around the top of the reservoir that provides unobstructed views of the reservoir and occasional waterfowl. The Reservoir trails connect to the **Buckeye Trail**, which in turn connects Defiance to the scenic, eight-state **North Country Trail**.

Thoreau Wildlife Reserve

Thoreau Wildlife Reserve features four nature trails that highlight meadows, woodlands, wetlands, and old growth forest. The reserve covers about 250 acres with 2 miles of trails. Numerous signs can be found along the trails with reference to the thoughts of H.D. Thoreau, who inspired the Reserve.

Oxbow Lake & Wildlife Area

The Oxbow Lake Wildlife Area is situated in the glaciated lake plain of Ohio and has a slightly rolling topography. Some steep land lies adjacent to **Mud Creek**, which bisects the area. Large cottonwoods and sycamores are found along Mud Creek. The upland woods consist mostly of oaks and hickories. Migrating shorebirds and songbirds can be observed utilizing the lake edges and woodlots during spring and fall.

Maumee Water Trail

The Maumee River travels through woodland, farmland, and the heart of Defiance en route to Maumee Bay in Lake Erie. Boat, canoe, or kayak from Fort Wayne to Toledo. Download a map at visitdefianceohio.com/explore/trails.

Independence Dam State Park

Independence Dam State Park is located approximately 3 miles east of Defiance on OH-424 and features a hiking trail, once the towpath for the **Miami-Erie and Wabash-Erie canals**, meandering between the old canal path and the river for 3 miles before ending in Florida, OH. In addition to hiking opportunities, Independence Dam State Park provides plenty of opportunities for boating, kayaking, canoeing, and fishing on the **Maumee River** with no horsepower limits. Common fish species include smallmouth bass, northern pike, crappie, catfish, and walleye.

Buckeye Trail

The Buckeye Trail is a 1,444-mile hiking and long-distance trail that loops around the state of Ohio from Cleveland to Cincinnati. The Buckeye Trail Association maintains and develops the trail. In 2017, the Buckeye Trail Association named Defiance an official Buckeye Trail Town. The trail enters Defiance at the **Defiance Reservoir**, travels along the south end of town and Downtown, across the **Old Fort Grounds**, and across the Maumee River to Pontiac Park, from which point it heads east out of town. The trail is marked by the Blue Blazes, markings on trees or poles signifying the trail's shape and direction.

North Country National Scenic Trail

The longest in the National Trails System, the North Country National Scenic Trail stretches 4,600 miles across eight states. From North Dakota, the trail continues eastward and joins the Buckeye Trail through parts of Ohio (including Defiance) and continues to Vermont.

LOCAL MASTERPIECES

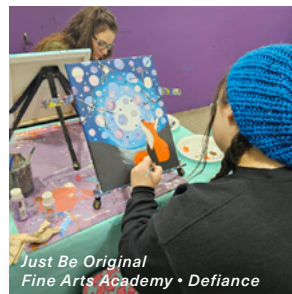
The show goes on in Defiance County — our communities revel in live music and entertainment on stages that have stood for generations, inviting audiences to enjoy captivating performances just as countless others have before them. Here, the landmark buildings that defined our cityscapes years ago serve as centers for the arts today.



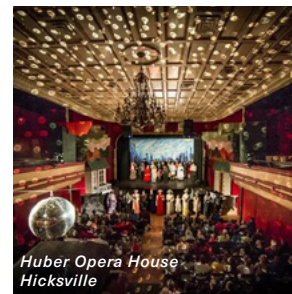
Defiance High School musical: Newsies

The Jingle Queen of Defiance

Evelyn Ryan established herself as a literary master in the 1950s. Her wit and erudition proved resourceful as the contest winnings from her clever jingles helped support her family. Her story was captured in the 2001 memoir "The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio" by her daughter, Terry Ryan, and was adapted into a film in 2005.



Just Be Original
Fine Arts Academy • Defiance



Huber Opera House
Hicksville



Fort Defiance Players

For example, visit the **Defiance Community Auditorium**. Originally constructed in 1920 as part of Defiance High School, this historic venue now hosts various musical and theatrical performances throughout the year, including those by the **Fort Defiance Players**. Another venue, the **Stroede Center for the Arts**, was built in 1846 as the First Baptist Church with then-Gov. William McKinley on hand as the cornerstone was laid. Donated to the Defiance Community Cultural Council in 2007, the building has since provided Defiance County with professional video, lighting, and sound, making it an ideal location for regular events like the **Tuttle's Town and Gown Series**, performances by the **Young People's Theatre Guild**, and **The Stroede Center for the Arts Concert Series**, as well as recitals, weddings, and presentations.

In Hicksville, the **Huber Opera House and Civic Center** — originally Mackey's Brick Hotel — was built in 1895 and became a tryout theater for larger theaters in New York and Chicago that were owned by the Opera House's namesake, George H. Huber. After being restored and reopened in 1999, the Huber Opera House boasts an intimate seating capacity of 800 people and is used for a variety of community events and attractions, including its in-house theater troupe, the **Hicksville Village Players**.



Hicksville native, successful actress-producer, and Broadway star Amelia Bingham

The arts are more than just a pastime for spectators in Defiance County. Enrich your creativity at **Just Be Original Fine Arts Academy**. Located inside **Northtowne Mall**, JBO encourages aspiring artists to "Just Be You" with classes for all ages, plus space for private parties and a retail store, **JBOutique**, where visitors can pick out local, handcrafted masterpieces of Defiance made by local artisans.

FLAVORS THAT DEFY THE ODDS

Pull up a seat and enjoy delicious, handcrafted meals paired with refreshing, locally brewed libations on a broad menu suitable for all palates.

Set amid the fairways of **Eagle Rock Golf Club**, **The Compound** offers dining options that go well with a day spent relaxing on the greens. Dig into meals sourced from local farmers at **Sweetwater Chophouse**, including prime, Black Angus steak and ribs dubbed the “Best Racks in Town.” Grab a slice of Italy at **Fired Stone Tavern**, featuring wood-fired pizzas alongside an extensive burger menu. Finally, wash it all down at **4KD Crick Brewery**, which features a vast menu of locally brewed beverages.

In Downtown Defiance, diners and eateries fill historic storefronts with incredible flavors. Since 1928, **Kissner’s** has served rib-sticking comfort food and crafty cocktails. **Bud’s Restaurant** serves classic, homestyle fare in a vintage diner setting — try one of their pies! Speaking of sweets, **Meek’s Pastry Shop** has proudly served donuts, cookies, and cakes since 1925.

Beyond the Defiance city limits, **Iron Horse Brews** offers smoky and tangy BBQ and other Americana-style dishes paired with a wide menu of beers, wines, and spirits. **Two Bandits Brewing Co.** serves up pub classics like Bavarian pretzels, burgers, and fish ‘n chips alongside creations like the Canadian Cardiac Arrest, Cajun Gator Bites, and Elk Meatloaf.



Dark Horse Restaurant & Social Club • Defiance



Amanda Lee Coffee • Hicksville



Eric's Ice Cream Factory • Defiance

DORA Libation Exploration

Raise a toast to Defiance! The Defiance Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) is a designated public area where alcoholic beverages can be purchased in a designated cup from permitted establishments and carried within the district. The DORA covers 96 acres of downtown Defiance with the southernmost boundary along Davidson Street.

Rules to Enjoy:



- 1. ENTER** any liquor establishment and request your favorite beer or cocktail in a DORA cup. The DORA operates from noon to midnight Monday through Saturday.
- 2. EXIT** onto the sidewalks of Downtown Defiance. Beverages must be purchased in DORA cups to leave an establishment and cups must stay within the boundaries indicated by DORA signs.
- 3. ENJOY** your beverages while strolling through Downtown Defiance and at any participating merchant with the green DORA decal.
- 4. DISPOSE** of your DORA cup when empty. DORA cups are one-time use and must be thrown away prior to entering ANY permitted establishment (i.e., business that holds a liquor license) OR any business with the red DORA decal.
- 5. REPEAT!** Drink responsibly and have fun!



RETAIL THERAPY

Do you revel in the pursuit of a great bargain? Is tracking down the perfect gift just as much of an unforgettable thrill to you as giving it? That surprised gasp you hear from your recipient is a feeling worth chasing, and the shops and boutiques around Defiance County are the perfect hunting ground.

Located in historic Downtown Defiance, the **Defiance Central Business District** is home to more than 100 merchants, including more than 40 locally owned retail shops. Spanning six blocks of preserved and restored historic buildings, these downtown shops are loaded with unique gifts, home décor, and great finds ranging from yesteryear's treasures to handmade goods from local artisans.

Eclectic Wallflower Boutique, owned by a mother-and-daughter team, offers a wide range of gifts and apparel for women and children, including jeans and leggings, tops, outerwear, accessories, candles, and jewelry. Best of all, almost everything in the store is under \$25!

Rated the most trusted jeweler in Northwest Ohio, **Stambaugh Jewelers** has been a staple of Downtown Defiance since 1948. Their amazing selection of stunning rings, earrings, and pendants makes for a breathtaking, one-of-a-kind gift with options suiting any budget!

Want to give your home a vintage flair? **Fort Defiance Antiques** features 4,000 square feet of repurposed treasures. Furniture, glassware, pottery, memorabilia, records... every item at Fort Defiance Antiques tells a story — wouldn't you like to add those stories to your home?

Looking for more familiar labels? **Northtowne Mall** offers a variety of stores carrying brands you know in one convenient location. Savvy shoppers will also discover well-known chains along the **Clinton Street** corridor north of the Maumee River, rounding out an exceptional shopping experience.



Scan the QR code to find more shopping opportunities in Defiance, Hicksville, Ney, and Sherwood.



History Studios • Defiance



Eclectic Wallflower Boutique • Defiance



Downtown Defiance



Ruby Rose Market • Defiance

Save the Date

Ever walk away from an event thinking, “I can’t wait to do this again next year”? We sure have — in fact, some events here have intertwined themselves into the fabric of Defiance County. These are the occasions that leave a lasting impression and reel you back in to recapture the laid-back, carefree spirit you celebrated in days gone by. From holiday celebrations to weekend-long initiatives supporting friends and neighbors, these annual events hosted by the Defiance Main Street & Visitors Bureau define life in our communities.

May LILAC FESTIVAL & STREET FAIR

Celebrate the official flower of Defiance at the Lilac Festival & Street Fair, featuring the largest art and craft fair in Defiance County, plus food vendors, children’s activities, and free lilacs to the first 750 guests.



March DEFIANCE COUNTY RESTAURANT WEEK

Support your favorite local eatery or find a new favorite during Defiance County Restaurant Week! Enjoy specials and discounts whether you dine in or take out and send your receipts in for fabulous prize drawings!



First Friday of June, July, & August FAMILY FUN FRIDAYS

Get the whole family involved in a citywide scavenger hunt during Family Fun Fridays! This summertime event presents a fun challenge for the whole family. Stick around Downtown for the monthly Maumee Valley Car Club Cruise-in!



April CHOCOLATE WALK

Taste the sweet life! Visit local businesses around Downtown Defiance and sample delectable chocolates along the way. A shopping excursion has never been so sweet!



June THUNDER ON THE RIVER

Full-throttle action hits the water during Thunder on the River! This weekend-long event features hydroplane boat races at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers — feel the thunder at the Fort Grounds, Pontiac Park, and Kingsbury Park!



July

DEFIANCE FIREWORKS CELEBRATION

The Defiance Fireworks Celebration lights up the night sky every first Friday in July over the Maumee and Auglaize rivers. The Old Fort Defiance Grounds — as well as Pontiac Park and Kingsbury Park — offer a fantastic view of this patriotic jubilee!



November

SHOP DOWNTOWN DEFIANCE

Shop Downtown Defiance coincides with Shop Small Weekend and Small Business Saturday, encouraging shoppers to explore the boutiques and gift shops around Downtown Defiance.



The Mystical Moons • Defiance

September
RIB FEST

Got a hankering for something smoky, savory, and saucy? Rib Fest celebrates the best BBQ masters in Defiance County with tangy, delicious, lip-smacking ribs, plus brews and live tunes all set in Defiance's historic Downtown! You won't want to miss this mouthwatering good time.



December

COOKIE CRUMBLE

Sweeten your holiday season at the Defiance Cookie Crumble! Enjoy delicious, freshly baked cookies from participating downtown businesses while soaking in the spectacular holiday scenery — and get a little gift shopping in while you're there!



October

WITCHES BREW FOR CASA

Grab your broom and hit the town with fellow witches and warlocks during Witches Brew for CASA! Collect treats and drinks from Downtown businesses and take home prizes for the best costumes — a spooky good time!



MORE TO EXPLORE



Defiance County is full of year-round events extending far beyond those listed here! Check out our Community Calendar for more incredible happenings!
events.yodel.today/defiance

◀ Enjoy live music during Battle of the Bands at Rib Fest, highlighting some of the best bands in Northwest Ohio.

MAKE A *Great* LIFE HERE



Since the construction of Fort Defiance more than 200 years ago, settlers have arrived in Defiance County to enjoy a quality of life emblematic of Northwest Ohio. Here, children are nurtured in some of the best school districts in the state of Ohio, while a robust job market provides exceptional employment opportunities across numerous economic sectors. And with a wide variety of housing options — historic downtown homes, brand-new developments, and rural homesteads — new residents can build a lifestyle that suits them amid stunning, Midwestern environs and a charming, small-town attitude.

Education

Schools in Defiance County are consistently ranked among the highest in Northwest Ohio, proof positive of how we place an emphasis on a quality education. *Defiance City Schools, Ayersville Local School District, Central Local School District, Hicksville Exempted Village School District*, the *Four County Career Center*, and *Northeastern Local School District* all provide the knowledge and skills needed to attain a high standard of living in adulthood. Open enrollment allows parents in Defiance County to choose a school and curriculum that best suits their children.

Students continuing their education may stay local at *Defiance College*, a private, four-year institution offering bachelor’s programs in numerous majors as well as several post grad and master’s degree programs. Defiance College and nearby *Northwest State Community College* offer a dual credits program to Defiance County high school students, enabling them to get a jump-start on their degrees before they even graduate.

Career Opportunities

Defiance County’s varied job market promises exceptional opportunities for numerous skills and trades, including advanced manufacturing, automotive, agribusiness, and healthcare. Residents may choose small, local businesses or global corporations close to Toledo, OH and Fort Wayne, IN, keeping them connected to larger metropolitan areas without sacrificing their small-town way of life.

TOP EMPLOYERS IN DEFIANCE COUNTY

1. GM Powertrain 600 (Defiance)	6. Maysville Engineering Corp. (MEC)432 (Defiance)
2. Defiance City Schools499 (Defiance)	7. ProMedica Defiance Regional Medical Center410 (Defiance)
3. Mercy Defiance Hospital and Clinic 468 (Defiance)	8. Defiance College399 (Defiance)
4. Keller Logistics Group467 (Defiance)	9. B&B Molded Products 190 (Defiance)
5. Johns Manville Corporation461 (Defiance)	10. Sabre Industries 186 (Hicksville)



Go with the Flow

The streams of your life often seem to run parallel to one another — never meeting, always separate. While appearing disparate, these currents inch closer and closer until they converge in one special time and place. Defiance County, Ohio, captures the spirit of that existential confluence with unparalleled opportunities to visit, settle down, build your career, and enjoy your life. Discover the potential awaiting you in Defiance County and follow the flow of life to an unforgettable convergence of new opportunities.

DEFIANCE OHIO MAIN STREET & VISITORS BUREAU

325 Clinton St. • 419-782-0739 • visitdefianceohio.com



Stick Around!

Charming Inns, familiar hotel brands, and rustic campgrounds are saving a spot for you — book a stay and extend your Defiance County adventure! Scan the QR code to view all listings!

