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## Iconic Fort Mackinac Open for the 2023 Season Tomorrow

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — Iconic Fort Mackinac, which has stood guard over Mackinac Island for more than 240 years, will open for the 2023 season on tomorrow, May 4. A cannon salute at 9:00 a.m. will officially kick off the season.

“We are excited to welcome visitors back to Fort Mackinac and get the 2023 season underway,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director.

An immediate change guests will notice at Fort Mackinac is that the theater and museum store have swapped places, with the store now in the Post Commissary and the theater in the Soldier’s Barracks. The swap is part of a larger interpretive plan for the barracks which will happen in stages in coming years. The Fort Mackinac Museum Store will continue to feature publications, apparel, and one-of-a-kind souvenirs.

Elsewhere at the fort, a new program titled “Soldier’s Gear and Quartermasters’ Storehouse” will allow visitors to see what soldiers would have been issued at Fort Mackinac in the 1880s and how that had an impact on their daily lives. Classic programs, such as the rifle and cannon firing demonstrations, will feature fresh perspectives. Other programs will highlight the changing face of Fort Mackinac, the historic residents who called the fort home, a look at Mackinac as a national park, the role women played at the fort, and what happened in the evening at Fort Mackinac.

“We hope to display the unique mix of the military culture and tourism at Fort Mackinac in those last years of Mackinac National Park,” explained Jack Swartzinski, Mackinac State Historic Parks’ Interpretation Coordinator.

The Tea Room at Fort Mackinac, operated by Grand Hotel, will feature new menu items for the 2023 season, and, as always, will feature one of the most stunning views in Michigan. Perhaps the way to make a Fort Mackinac visit most memorable is firing the opening cannon salute, which is available to one guest daily. More information can be found [here](#).

2023 marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the automobile ban on Mackinac Island. Mackinac State Historic Parks will mark this occasion with a special event on July 22, complete with an 1886 Benz Motorwagen on the island. The “horseless vehicle” will also be on display outside Fort Mackinac during the day on July 22. A special commemorative logo has been developed and will be found on merchandise at Mackinac State Historic Parks museum stores, as well as on the license plates found on carriages throughout the island. A new vignette, written by former Mackinac State Historic Parks’ Director Phil Porter, will also be published for the anniversary.

“Mackinac Island is famous for many things, but the century and a quarter-old ban on motorized vehicles is truly at the top of why it is such a special place,” Brisson said.

The Mackinac Island State Park Visitor’s Center, located on Main Street across from Marquette Park, opens for the season on Friday, May 5. Home of the Official Mackinac Island State Park Store, the visitor’s center is the best place to start your exploration of Mackinac Island State Park.

The Biddle House, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, and Benjamin Blacksmith Shop open for the season on Friday, May 12. The American Fur Co. Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum and McGulpin House open Saturday, June 3.

Special events at Fort Mackinac and Mackinac Island include the Fort2Fort Five Mile Challenge May 13; the annual Vintage Base Ball game July 29; special activities for July 4; special history evening programs including a guided tour of Historic Downtown Mackinac as it would have looked in the 1830s and a tour highlighting the creation of the village of Mackinac Island; special nature and birdwatching

tours; night sky programs at Fort Holmes and Arch Rock; bike tours looking at Mackinac's forgotten features and the War of 1812; and much more. More information can be found at [mackinacparks.com/events](http://mackinacparks.com/events).

Most major projects were funded, in part, by Mackinac Associates. Visit [mackinacparks.com](http://mackinacparks.com) for a complete listing of updates and projects at Mackinac State Historic Parks, hours of operation, daily events, special events, and more.

*Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at [www.mackinacparks.com](http://www.mackinacparks.com).*

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