

7 Lakes for Cool Summer Fun

by Allen Cox

Whether close to the city or in the countryside, the Northwest's prime lake destinations are ideal for hot-weather family fun. From Washington and Oregon eastward to Idaho and Montana, these lakes offer a diverse range of scenery and a variety of activities. Here are Northwest Travel's picks of seven lakes for a summertime blast.

Kick back and relax in Lake Pend Oreille



© Mike Parker/Dakota Columbia Houseboat Adventures

Lake Roosevelt



© Mike Parker/Dakota Columbia Houseboat Adventures

Houseboats

Lake Roosevelt – Banks Lake – Sun Lakes, Washington

In eastern Washington, known for summer sun, a long string of lakes starts above Kettle Falls about 30 minutes from the Canadian border. Lake Roosevelt occupies the path of the Columbia River above Grand Coulee Dam, then farther to the southwest, Banks Lake and finally the cluster known as Sun Lakes. In a summer landscape as dry as this, these bodies of water glisten like jewels, inviting travelers who are seeking the sun and a wide range of activities.

Lake Roosevelt, the centerpiece of the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, is 130 miles long, winding its way through pine forests, basalt cliffs and bare desert hills. Visitors can take advantage of a plethora of activities: launching a boat at any of 22 launches (boat

rentals are available), fishing, canoeing, swimming at your pick of 10 swimming beaches, camping at one of 27 campgrounds and visiting



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Big boy toys

the historic sites of Fort Spokane and St. Paul's Mission.

A great vacation option on Lake Roosevelt is to rent a houseboat. You can swim, cook, sleep, fish and even soak in an on-deck hot tub—and, of course, explore the entire lake in comfort at your leisure.

At the west end of Roosevelt Lake, Grand Coulee Dam stands as one of the world's greatest engineering achievements. In summer months, the Visitor Center is open, with exhibits about the dam; and don't miss the evening laser show, changing to a new show in early August 2013.

A short distance to the south of the dam, 27-mile-long Banks Lake draws wildlife watchers from every direction. Farther south, popular Sun Lakes attracts campers, RVers, golfers and anyone seeking an oasis in the desert.

>> Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, nps.gov/laro/index.htm

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- >> **Dakota Columbia Houseboat Adventures**, Lake Roosevelt, dakotacolumbia.com
- >> **Grand Coulee Dam**, usbr.gov/pn/grandcoulee
- >> **Banks Lake**, wdfw.wa.gov
- >> **Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park**, parks.wa.gov
- >> **Sun Lakes Resort**, unlakesparkresort.com
- >> **Grant County Tourism**, tourgrantcounty.com
- >> **Kettle Falls Tourism**, kettle-falls.com



Lake Sammamish, Washington

Located eight miles east of Seattle, Lake Sammamish is a suburban recreational hub surrounded by the cities of Bellevue, Redmond, Sammamish and Issaquah. With four parks and waterfront trails—and plenty of upscale real estate lining its shores—it's a popular summer haven that offers abundant entertainment.

Claim your spot for a picnic and a day of swimming at Lake Sammamish State Park at the south end of the lake in Issaquah. This is one of the most popular lakes in the region for water

skiing and wakesurfing. If you have a boat, use the park's boat launch to cast off and cruise the lake.

On the north shore, Redmond's massive Marymoor Park offers everything from concerts to movies to free use of Trek Classic Cruiser bicycles to explore the park or head down the lake shore on the Sammamish Trail.

Both Redmond and Issaquah offer an excellent selection of nearby dine-in and take-out restaurants if you didn't prepare a picnic.

- >> **Lake Sammamish State Park**, [parks.wa.gov/parks/?selectedpark=Lake Sammamish](http://parks.wa.gov/parks/?selectedpark=Lake%20Sammamish)
- >> **Marymoor Park**, [kingcounty.gov/](http://kingcounty.gov/recreation/parks/inventory/marymoor.aspx)

recreation/parks/inventory/marymoor.aspx

- >> **Experience Redmond**, experienceredmond.com

- >> **Discover Issaquah**, discoverissaquah.com

Diamond Lake, Oregon

Once you arrive at Diamond Lake, you will have driven 76 miles from Roseburg on the northern end of the Rogue-Umpqua National Scenic Byway through some of Oregon's most beautiful country. And the stunning views don't stop there. Situated in an emerald forest between two cascade peaks, Mt. Bailey (elev. 8,375 ft.) and Mt. Thielsen (elev. 9,185 ft.), mile-high Diamond Lake is a wild Cascade Mountain lake perfect for outdoor recreation.

Before you go, stop at the USDA Forest Service - Umpqua National Forest office in Roseburg (2900 NW Stewart Pkwy., 541-957-3200) to pick up maps, inquire about recreation passes and ask any questions about visiting the area.

Camping is a perfect way to treat your family to a Diamond Lake summer vacation. Whether your preference is RV or tent, Diamond Lake Campground has more than



Cool Summer Fun

200 sites, some by reservation only, and some set aside on a first-come, first-served basis. The paved, 11-mile Diamond Lake-John Delenbeek Trail, open to hikers and bicyclists, winds around the lake, and the first half mile is wheelchair accessible.

Diamond Lake Resort also offers a range of accommodations on expansive lakefront property, complete with a cafe, pizza parlor, boat rentals, fishing gear and everything you need to make your summer vacation a hit.

You can also reach Diamond lake from Gold Hill near Grants Pass at the southern start of the Rogue-Umpqua National Scenic Byway.

>> **Southern Oregon Visitors Association**, southernoregon.org
>> **Roseburg Visitors Center**, visitroseburg.com

>> **Grants Pass Tourism**, visitgrantspass.org
>> **Umpqua National Forest**, fs.usda.gov/umpqua
>> **Diamond Lake Campground**, fs.usda.gov/recarea/umpqua
>> **Diamond Lake Resort**, diamondlake.net

Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon

Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge sits on the north shore of Upper Klamath Lake. The city of Klamath Falls occupies its southern shore. Between the two, the 20 miles of relatively shallow water that make up this south-central Oregon lake east of the Cascade Range attracts fishermen and birders.

The refuge consists of nearly 15,000 acres of freshwater marsh, excellent habitat for waterfowl and other birds to breed and rear their young. Species birders often see are the American white pelican, various herons, bald eagle and osprey. To explore the refuge, you'll need a boat. There is a marked canoe trail through the refuge; if you didn't bring a canoe, you can rent one nearby.

Upper Klamath Lake has huge nutrient-rich blue-green algae blooms, perfect for producing 20-inch trout. This spot is a favorite fishing hole for catching rainbows as well as the occasional sturgeon and German brown trout. Fishermen enjoy staying at Rocky Point Resort in Winema National Forest on the northwest shore; they offer full service boat and tackle rental.

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Upper Klamath Lake

>> **Klamath Falls Tourism,**
discoverklamath.com
 >> **Upper Klamath National Wildlife**
Refuge, fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges/upperklamath/upperklamath.html
 >> **Rocky Point Resort,**
rockypointoregon.com

Priest Lake, Idaho

Located in the northern end of Idaho's panhandle, Priest Lake and its surrounding forests and mountains are adventure country for outdoor enthusiasts. Lakefront resorts, B&Bs and campgrounds offer plenty of retreats to use as base camp while exploring the 70-plus miles of shoreline. For an exceptional resort experience, Cavanaugh's offers superb accommodations and a casual yet sophisticated dining and bar menu, all right on the beach on the eastern shore. Priest Lake Outfitters at Cavanaugh's can arrange kayak float trips and a Kids' Adventure Camp.

On the west shore, Hill's Resort has earned recognition as a great family resort and maintains an atmosphere of rustic authenticity. Generation after generation of families return to Hill's to experience Priest Lake the way it used to be. It offers accommodations from cabins to condos to private chalets in a

"Upper Klamath Lake has huge nutrient-rich blue-green algae blooms, perfect for producing 20-inch trout."

secluded, full service resort. Only a few minutes away, golfers can enjoy 18 holes at the championship Priest Lake Golf Course set in a natural wonderland of forests, ponds and wetlands.

When it's time to hit the trail, you'll have

plenty to choose from. You can hug the shore or head into the hills. You won't go wrong by packing a picnic in your backpack and locating the Lakeshore Trail on the west shore. This 7.6 mile trail offers stunning views of the lake and mountains (bring your camera), and many secluded beaches for your picnic. You can tackle this easy trail on foot or bicycle.

>> **Priest Lake Visitor Information,** priestlake.org

>> **Cavanaugh's Resort,**
cavbay.com

>> **Hill's Resort,** hillsresort.com

>> **Priest Lake Golf Course,**
priestlakegolfcourse.com

>> **Idaho Panhandle National Forest,**
Priest Lake Ranger District, fs.usda.gov/recarea/ipnf/recreation/recarea/?recid=6763



Parasailing on Priest Lake



Lake Pend Oreille

Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho

South of Priest Lake, in Idaho's Panhandle, Lake Pend Oreille is a massive body of water whose 111 miles of shoreline has everything, from the vibrant community of Sandpoint to the Pend Oreille Scenic Byway (perfect for an old-fashioned Sunday drive) to stately mountains, such as Green Monarch Mountain (elev. 5,059 ft.) that towers above the lake.

By far the best way to get a sense of this rugged and majestic area is by seeing it from the air. Book a flightseeing tour with Sandpoint Seaplane Service for a 20-minute to one-hour or longer tour and absorb the beauty of the area. Then, once on the ground, take a day to explore the Pend Oreille Scenic Byway and allow plenty of time to stop at the many points of interest along the way.

The waterfront city of Sandpoint makes a great base from which to explore the lake with all it's coves

and surprises. But you'll want to spend some time exploring the city as well, with its historic downtown, waterfront attractions, parks, and some fine breweries that have helped put the panhandle's craft

brew scene on the map (Mickduff's at 312 N 1st Ave., and Laughing Dog at 55 Emerald Industrial Park Rd. in nearby Ponderay).

An excellent base from which to explore Lake Pend Oreille is Dover Bay, near Sand Point. There, you can rent a private bungalow, condo or a vacation home. And, while you're there, check out the real estate.

The town of Sandpoint has the full spectrum of lodging to match taste and budget. The Lodge at Sandpoint provides a luxurious waterfront setting, great accommodations and is perfect for families. Excellent restaurants are as close as next door.

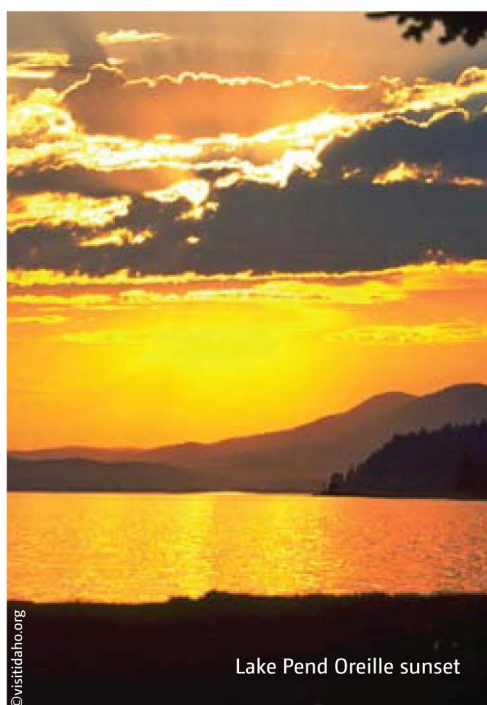
>> **Visit Sandpoint Idaho,**
visitsandpoint.org

>> **Sandpoint Seaplane Service,**
sandpoint.com/seaplane

>> **Dover Bay,** doverbaybungalows.com

>> **The Lodge at Sandpoint,**
lodgeatsandpoint.com

>> **Idaho Panhandle National Forest,**
Lake Pend Oreille Ranger District,
fs.usda.gov/recarea/ipnf/recreation/recarea/?recid=6796



Lake Pend Oreille sunset

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Flathead Lake, Montana

With 185 miles of shoreline and 188 square miles of surface, Flathead Lake is the granddaddy of freshwater lakes in the Lower 48 west of the Mississippi. You'd be hard pressed to name a lake activity you couldn't do at this mammoth body of water in northwestern Montana.

Two towns frame the lake, Bigfork in the north and Polson in the south. Both offer full services when a town is essential, but the beauty of Flathead Lake is getting away from it all. On this king of Western lakes, some say fishing rules, and by the looks of the blue ribbon catches that are hauled out of these 385-foot-deep waters, anyone would agree. The experienced fishing guides are all about taking you where you can land those famous trophy trout and take home some fish stories from Flathead Lake. And the best guides think like the trout think. Guests have landed specimens 30 lbs. and up. It's also a fun way to take in some sightseeing on the lake.

Flathead Lake has it all: swimming, camping, cruises, water sports, and

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nearly every type of watercraft you can dream up. Flathead Lake Lodge near Bigfork offers a full package of waterfront lodging, meals and activities for the entire family: horseback riding, sailing lessons, chartered lake fishing, even a family rodeo.

>> **Flathead Convention & Visitors Bureau**, fcvb.org/flathead-lake-montana.php

>> **Bigfork Visitor Information**, bigfork.org/contents/view/bigfork-montana-chamber

>> **Polson Visitor Information**, polsonchamber.com/visitor-info.asp

>> **Western Montana Visitor Information**, glaciermt.com

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Flathead Lake

>> **Flathead Lake Charters**, flatheadlakecharters.com

>> **Woods Bay Charters**, worldwidefishing.com/montana/b1581

>> **Flathead Lake Lodge**, flatheadlakelodge.com

Keeping it Safe

Following a few basic guidelines will help you and your family stay safe in and around the water.

>> **Learn to swim.** This might sound obvious, but you might save a life, including your own.

>> **Supervise kids;** be aware of where they are at all times. If they are preschool age, be within touching distance so you can rescue them instantly if necessary.

>> **Don't go swimming alone;** use a site that has a lifeguard on duty if possible.

>> **Learn CPR,** and use it in an emergency before paramedics arrive.

>> **Avoid alcohol** when in or on the water, especially if you are supervising children.

For more tips, visit the U.S. Center for Disease Control's web page on water safety: cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html#prevented.



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