



Destination
U.S.A.,
New Hampshire

Lakeside Fun in New Hampshire



By Elizabeth Riordan

Unplugging a teenager from their electronics remains the bane of a parent's existence when trying to plan a summer holiday. Engaging and captivating that same child without use of a computer or iPhone is quite another matter. I look no further than the Lake Region of New Hampshire. A long time favourite of skiers and snowboarders, New Hampshire has

a tremendous amount to offer those less fond of cold temperatures. We head to the mid-section of the state, punctuated by the beautiful Lake Winnepesaukee and its surrounding sister lakes.

Clearly water sports top the menu in this particular region with swimming, tubing, water skiing and boating being the favourites. First one must decide where to hang ones hat at night as most of the lodging options

include your entrance to the water sports arena. We opt for the Lakeside family run type of places, which offer rooms or small cabins such as Cottage Place on Squam Lake, just north of Winnepesaukee.

Quaint accommodations equipped with the ability to dine-in, and furnished with eclectic cozy items imbued with lake living, you can fill the hours lounging on the lake beach, swimming, taking the kayak out or

touring the lake by motor-craft. After a fun-filled family day, a cozy campfire with s'mores rewards the sun weary souls of guests.

Those who are looking for more active water related activities don't have to venture far. Local businesses such as the Squam Lake Association offer kayaks for self-touring of Little and Big Squam Lakes, and motorised vehicle-guided tours of the same.

If larger bodies of water are your passion, the M/S Mount Washington Cruises tours of Lake Winnepesaukee out of Weirs Beach can't be beaten. You can take one, two or three hour tours of the lake, peacefully taking in the gorgeous scenery while knowledgeable staff pipe in interesting facts about the area.

If nightlife interests you, themed dinner cruises complete with live music, dancing and spectacular four-course cuisine calls to all members of the family, young and old. If an active day in the sun on the water doesn't wear out the family, then a day finished off with a night of dancing and dining will definitely tucker them out...and not a computer nor iPhone in sight.

For those with more 'need for speed' type of adventures, head over to Wolfeboro, on the southeast side of the lake. The New Hampshire boat museum gives a wonderful insight into the history of the wooden speedboats on Lake Winnepesaukee, and as part of the museum experience, you can head straight out and take a tour on one of those same wooden speedboats. Everyone got a clear, concise history lesson of the area from Captain Jim while the wind whipped through our hair, and the lakes spray coated our skin. Delicious!

In addition to the water offerings, the wooded hills and mountains of New Hampshire are just within reach for hiking, climbing and exploring. A favourite of my family was the family owned and operated Polar Caves in Rumney.

Formed from granite boulders that fell at the base of Hawk's Cliff as glaciers passed through during the last Ice Age, this venue boasts lovingly maintained trails/walks/stairs that wind around the cliffs and the nine caves so that each guest can explore at his or her own pace. So much to take in...gorgeous views, history and information, secret spaces and crevices, a menagerie of exotic birds, animals to pet, lots of fresh air and good old-fashioned exercise. Stay for a few hours, or make a day of it! If your time commitment is more on the



Paddleboarding under a covered bridge



Miss Meredith II



Polar Caves



meagre side, Rattlesnake Mountain is a mere 15 minutes away in Holderness. With plenty of parking located at the mountain base, the well-maintained trail, peppered with areas of crushed stone, logged steps and dampened earth, takes even a non-experienced climber only 20 minutes to reach the top. Even the least goal orientated will benefit from a refreshing sense of accomplishment as they are rewarded with expansive breathtaking views of the lakes below.

Just down the road from Rattlesnake Mountain is the Squam Lake Natural Science Center, a location that speaks to family members of all ages. The stated mission of the centre is 'To advance understanding of ecology by exploring New Hampshire's natural world'. This is beautifully accomplished with acres of trails that wind around live animal and bird exhibits, with natural habitats and ecosystems scattered throughout the park-like setting, and with educational programs presented in the many buildings on site.

Besides the gardens and the many hiking trails, there is a large recreational area for the kids to climb, swing, explore and play. If you plan in advance, tickets may be purchased

here to the ever-popular Squam Lake Cruise where guests are treated to a 90-minute educational tour of the waters and wildlife of this beautiful part of the state.

Downtime, with less rigorous activity, is a must for any holiday, if you are hoping to keep everyone energised. The entire lake region is known for its rich history and its small quaint towns, so sightseeing and antique shopping remain staples in the tourist experience. Stop along the way for homemade ice cream or sweet confections at Kellerhaus, the oldest candy shop in the state (located at Weirs Beach) or grab a meal in Meredith. Drive through many of the 54 covered bridges located in the state of New Hampshire to get that rich rustic feel for which this area is so famous.

For those looking to stay on the go but not interested in breaking a sweat, the lake region boasts many interesting low-key destinations to occupy your family. While in Wolfeboro, be sure to check out the Wright Museum of WWII, a beautifully preserved monument to this country during wartime. Loaded with colourful, well-organised exhibits with visual, auditory and interactive

components, the kids will soak up more history by walking around the two-floored building than they would in a year of history classes!

Where else can you listen to authentic tunes from the 1930-40s while placing your hands on a real Sherman Tank? Educational fun for the whole family! 'Castle in the Clouds' is a 1914 Arts and Crafts mansion located in Moultonborough and is constructed solely by locally procured materials - tour the home, which offers dramatic views of Lake Winnepesaukee below, or stroll around the many trails located on this 5,500 acre property. Whatever your choice, you can be assured of having a restful, peaceful experience in this most beautiful natural setting.

I believe that the success of a family holiday is underscored by the kids, weary but content..asking from the backseat, "When would we be back to visit the area again?" I wasn't able to give a concrete answer, however, I was able to assure them that the lake region of New Hampshire hadn't seen the last of us! 🇺🇸



Military Gallery



Winnepesaukee Pier



Castle in the Clouds

facts:

About the author: Elizabeth Riordan (MD) currently resides in Farmington, Connecticut with her two teenagers, Aidan and Madeleine. When not travelling or writing, she is a board certified general surgeon with the Hartford Healthcare Medical Group.

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Places to Stay:

Cottage Place, Holderness
www.cottageplaceonsquam.com

Naswa Resort, Laconia
www.naswa.com

Activities:

Polar Caves, Rumney
www.polarcaves.com

Squam Lakes Association, Holderness
www.squamlakes.org

Squam Lake Natural Science Center, Holderness
www.nhnature.org

Castle in the Clouds, Moultonborough
www.castleintheclouds.org

Mount Washington Cruises, Laconia
www.cruisenh.com

New Hampshire Boat Museum, Wolfeboro Falls
www.nhbm.org

Wright Museum of WWII, Wolfeboro
 W: www.wrightmuseum.org

New Hampshire Lakes Tourism Association, Tilton
www.lakesregion.org