

JETSETTER

The Most Romantic Lake Hotels to Spend a Summer Vacation

It was on the shores of a lake that the transcendentalist writer Henry David Thoreau produced his most famous work, *Walden*. Another loch is the backdrop for a pivotal scene in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. But the truth is that lakes, with their pristine waters and sheltered forest locations, capture more than just the intellectual's imagination. Here, we round up nine of America's best lake hotels that offer simple pleasures for both active types and relaxation seekers.

By Jennifer Fernandez Posted: April 18, 2018



The Point, Saranac, NY

At this ultra-luxurious **all-inclusive resort** in New York's Adirondack Mountains, you can live like an oil magnate—if only for a week. Formerly the warm-weather hideaway of William Avery Rockefeller and his cohorts, this 75-acre estate is dotted with log cabins made from local timber and stone, and 11 cozy suites are outfitted with 19th-century landscape paintings, pitched roofs, and leaded-glass windows. The stately environs are an ideal base for all the diversions Upper Saranac Lake has to offer, from bass fishing and Hacker-Craft boat tours in the summer to ice-skating and cross-country skiing in the winter – all best capped by an evening spent in front of the fire.

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Photo courtesy of Jumping Rocks

Blair Hill Inn, Greenville, ME

Drive an hour-and-a-half drive northwest of Bangor, and you land at **Blair Hill Inn** — a restored Queen Anne Victorian home on a commanding hilltop overlooking Moosehead Lake. Each of the 10 guest rooms are elegantly appointed with mahogany beds, antique furnishings, and sumptuous linens, and some have wood-burning fireplaces. An on-site spa encourages further relaxation with its rustic renovated barn setting and house-made scrubs with ingredients picked from the garden, but those with restless legs might prefer a guided moose safari or nearby white-water rafting. At night, settle in for a six-course dinner at the inn's gourmet restaurant, followed by a stargazing canoe ride on the lake.



Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz, NY

A throwback summer-camp vibe is palpable at the family-owned **Mohonk Mountain House**, where the calendar of activities reads as long as your arm. Though the 1869 resort resembles something of a Victorian castle, the pleasures here are simple: hiking, biking, paddle boarding, and otherwise exploring some of the 40,000 acres of Hudson Valley forest that surround neighboring Lake Mohonk. There's also enough to keep people with more discerning palettes occupied, including a 30,000-square-

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foot spa, a chef's table and gourmet tasting menu in the dining room kitchen, and the new lushly-furnished Grove Lodge, a six-room guest house intended for family – and maybe even summer-camp – reunions.



Ritz-Carlton Reynolds Plantation, Greensboro, GA

There's more to love at this genteel **waterfront getaway** than golf, though there's plenty of that thanks to five world-class courses and 99 holes designed by legendary architects Tom Fazio, Rees Jones, and Jack Nicklaus. The resort offers southern hospitality in spades with its sweeping views of magnolia-lined paths and Lake Oconee. Soothing spa treatments using regional elements such as grits and honey make it difficult to engage in more active pursuits (unless you count the golf-ball massage as sport), and the effect is all but amplified in 251 spacious rooms with marble baths. One thing you'll find well worth the effort? A nightly bonfire where guests toast up s'mores under the stars.



Photo courtesy of Brand USA

The Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI

For a classic, all-American vacation that feels like a step back in time, look no further than this **1887 grand dame**. A sweeping colonnaded veranda looks out onto the

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cerulean waters of Lake Huron, where sailboats glide lazily across the horizon. Landlubbers have their choice of activities, including lawn games like bocce and croquet and after-dinner dancing à la Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. There's also a 220-foot-long pool that snakes along the property and is named after the aquatic screen siren Esther Williams, who filmed *This Time for Keeps* here in 1947. Add 393 guest rooms designed by Dorothy Draper protégé Carleton Varney, and you've got a place that's nearly impossible to leave.



Photo by Joseph Leute

The Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake, WI

Formed by receding glaciers, pristine Elkhart Lake remains an insider's secret among Wisconsin natives and in-the-know Chicagoans who need only travel a mere 90 minutes to reach its quiet shores and this 1800s **lakeside retreat**. When you've had your fill of pontoons and hydro-bikes, you might turn your attention to the L'école de la Maison, an on-property cooking school where the focus is on French cuisine and the ingredients come from local farms as well as the resort's garden. Then wind down in the 20,000-square-foot award-winning spa with a soothing woodland cedar treatment that incorporates elements from the surrounding forest.



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Lake Austin Spa Resort, Austin, TX

Texas Hill Country might be the last place you'd expect to find a luxury wellness retreat, but that plays to **Lake Austin Spa Resort's** advantage. Instead of the usual cookouts and campfires, guests enjoy a host of health-focused activities, from yoga in an airy treetop studio to tai chi on the banks of Lake Austin. In the dining room, there's nary a brisket in sight; the all-inclusive menu centers on nutritious meals made with vegetables plucked from the resort's garden. Homebodies will appreciate the 40 comfortable guest rooms swathed in serene blues and greens, a nod to the peaceful surroundings.



Photo courtesy of Tordrillo Mountain Lodge

Tordrillo Mountain Lodge, Anchorage, AK

Alaska's remote wilderness is your playground at **Tordrillo Mountain Lodge**, a series of surprisingly luxurious log- and wood-clad cabins on the immaculate shores of Judd Lake. Accessible only by chopper and owned by Olympic gold medalist Tommy Moe and heli-ski legend Mike Overcast, the property acts as home base for daredevils and adventure seekers who come for the snow (heli-skiing is, of course, their specialty) but return for the fishing, kayaking, and rock climbing that's available during summer months. If you're not much of an adrenaline junkie, settle for a day trip to see otherworldly volcanoes and brown bears in their natural habitat at Katmai National Park.

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Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe, Incline Village, NV

Winter sports enthusiasts are keenly aware of Lake Tahoe's snowy amusements, but summer holds just as much promise at **Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe**, a modern adventure lodge that—in keeping with its Nevada digs—also houses a 20,000-square-foot casino. Not a gambler? Embark on a tour of the lake aboard a 55-foot catamaran, or charter a fishing trip, then bring your catch back to the kitchen where the chefs will prepare it for a sunset feast. And if the cold still lures you, there's an outdoor pool heated year-round.

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