

Top Lakes to Visit in Arizona

Written by Leslie K. Hughes

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Any water seen in Phoenix for the next few months can either be attributed to monsoons or mirages. In order to quench your thirst for more consistent and tangible enjoyment of water, escape the Valley and head to one of Arizona's refreshing lakes. The Grand Canyon state has a number of notable lakes hidden within its deserts; here are the most notable ones:

MORMON LAKE



Holding the title of Arizona's biggest natural lake, Mormon Lake is a must-see. Southeast of Flagstaff, this lake provides a multitude of activities; from racing speedboats, to surfing, to fishing, Mormon Lake does not leave its visitors disappointed. Be aware, however, that during droughts the lake can dry up entirely, so be sure to check the notices on the website below before heading up North. You may even be lucky enough to catch sight of some buffalo while up there! Mormon Lake Lodge offers log cabin stays, or campgrounds for those more adventurous travelers. Make sure to grab a drink at the lodge's 1880s-style saloon where you can give your two-step skills a whirl Friday and Saturday nights with live music performances. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/coconino/> and <http://www.mormonlakelodge.com/>

LAKE PLEASANT



On the border of Maricopa and Yavapai counties, Lake Pleasant is the go-to spot for a quick escape from the Valley heat. The lake was created by the Waddell Dam's diversion of water from the Colorado River, and its clear blue water attracts outdoor enthusiasts from all over. For aquatic visitors, the lake offers opportunity for water-skiing, sailing and fishing. For those more interested in inland adventures, there are beautiful hiking and mountain biking trails. The lake's more than 140 sites for both tent and RV camping allow visitors to enjoy the lake's nighttime beauty. http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/lake_pleasant/

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LAKE HAVASU



Home to the London Bridge, Lake Havasu is second to the Grand Canyon for Arizona's largest tourist attraction. Shipped brick by brick from London to Lake Havasu City, the London Bridge finished reconstruction in 1971. Known not only for its bridge, Lake Havasu is called the "Personal Watercraft Capital of the World," and truly is the perfect spot to let the daredevil in you loose. Visitors to the lake enjoy wakeboarding, jet skiing, waterskiing, and boating; any form of water sport can be experienced in its waters. The lake's namesake city, Lake Havasu City, provides an abundance of additional activities including hot air balloon rides, jeep tours, and parasailing. There are a number of hotels and lodges, as well as campgrounds, ensuring that visitors are provided with a variety of experiences. <http://www.golakehavasu.com/>

LAKE POWELL



Straddling the border between Utah and Arizona is Lake Powell – the second largest man-made lake in the United States. With nearly 2,000 miles of shoreline, there are activities abound. Rent a boat from one of the marinas and take a tour of the 96 canyons at Lake Powell – most of which are only accessible by water. The lake's crystal clear water invites visitors to water ski, scuba dive, snorkel and much more. You can even get a view of the lake from the top by taking a helicopter or plane tour. With a shoreline that is longer than the whole continental United States West coast, there is no doubt that visitors will spend at least a day adventuring at Lake Powell. www.lakepowell.com

ROOSEVELT LAKE



Named after President Theodore Roosevelt, Roosevelt Lake is the biggest and the oldest of the six Salt River Project lakes. The lake was formed by Roosevelt Dam, which still holds the title of largest stone dam in the world. Fishing is the main gig at Roosevelt Lake and visitors can hook smallmouth and largemouth bass, catfish, and crappie. With hundreds of campsites to stay at, the trip to Roosevelt Lake can last for days, allowing visitors time to really soak up all 21,000 acres of fun the lake has to offer. www.arizona-leisure.com/lake-roosevelt.html
