

PLAYING WITH WATER

Vacation Ideas with an Emphasis on Water
from the Fine Folks
of the AWRA Community

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Phoenix is definitely not too cold in early September....and we don't rely on any of that nasty synthetic water! See you in a few months!

CALIFORNIA



California North Coast

Flying into San Francisco, traveling up through Crescent City. Wine country, awesome food culture, rugged coast line, redwoods and easy detours into the Trinity mountains/river.

Big Sur

I've never been, but always wanted to visit Big Sur, California. I've heard the view is spectacular. It's just south of San Francisco - another place I'd like to visit. <http://byway.org/explore/byways/2301/>

Lake Tahoe (1)

Go to Lake Tahoe California! The most intense icy blue waters you will ever see. California high Sierra Mts. are still snow capped throughout the summer on the western shore, provides truly awesome views, sunsets, and in the morning when the water is calm, reflections are breath taking! Take a hot air balloon up, I didn't go up but every morning I watched them launch off the south west shores. Emerald Bay is spectacular, the views from the top are great, the hike down to the water is tame for most to take, the views from below are awesome... Just driving around the lake is a nice afternoon.

Kayaking, hiking, bike riding horseback riding, all kinds of motor sports and boat tours are available.

In south Tahoe near the casinos we took the tram up the eastern mts to all the ski slopes, up there provides the best panoramic view of the lake and surrounding mts, great hiking trails in the snow! Beach is your fancy? At Zepher Cove there are volleyball ball nets, great beach bar, tours and all kinds of rentals; We rented mountain bikes and tour intense eastern trails to Sandy Cove, they'll pick you up at Sandy Cove and return you back. Sandy cove is heaven on earth! The beach is surrounded with massive boulders that construct an inspiring setting contrasted by the snow covered peaks on the other side of the lake. At sandy cove there is an outdoor Shakespeare theater! Warm summer night under a star lit night, very nice. Truckee River there is white water rafting, and tubing, 3 hrs down to the River Ranch... very nice bar on the river. Like to golf there are several great courses, the one I liked the most was Tahoe Golf course, they advertise "golf in Paradise" I didn't take them serious until I got there its nestled in the snow covered High Sierras, the course is in great shape and reasonably priced.

Lake Tahoe (2)

I highly recommend Lake Tahoe in California/Nevada for the breadth of water activities, and scenic hikes etc. Night life is also good since due to casino and shows.

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

San Francisco

I have found San Francisco in September/October is the best time of year to travel. It's too foggy and cool in "summer" but in the fall, the skies clear, there is water (ocean), hills and patio weather, lots of sightseeing locales, and great seasonal local food (and seafood).

Santa Barbara

My suggestion to you for a great weekend vacation getaway is Santa Barbara! Here are the highlights:

1. Take the Amtrak train to Santa Barbara on Saturday (approx. 3 hours of ocean-view rail travel from Los Angeles Union Station)
2. Arrive relaxed and refreshed since you did not have to drive there.
3. Check into one of the hotels that are all within walking distance of the train depot.
4. Ride the electric open window trams that criss-cross the Harbor front and Downtown.
5. Walk on the pier and have a seafood feast at one of the great restaurants.
6. Enjoy the sunset while being cooled by the Santa Barbara ocean breeze.
7. Have a great night's sleep in the quiet seaside town.
8. Wake up the next morning and go to the Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show.
9. Rent bikes or a surrey for some pedaling fun
10. Dine at one of the Sunday brunches
11. Ride the Amtrak train back home and vow to come back to Santa Barbara the next chance you get.



Santa Catalina Island

My family and I just got back from a daytrip at the city of Avalon on Santa Catalina Island, in the Pacific Ocean about 20 miles south of Los Angeles-Long Beach. There is plenty to do there on a day trip or for the weekend. Check out the glass bottom boat tours, Golf Cart self guided island driving tour, snorkeling or diving, shopping in the downtown and of course eating at many of the delicious restaurants. It's a quick 1 hour 15 minute ferry ride from either the San Pedro or Long Beach ports. We had a great time and would highly recommend the trip for your first time or a repeat visit.

San Diego (1)

On the other hand, I also love going out for tuna and wahoo on San Diego's elite fleet of 12 long range sport fishing yachts, which ply the waters off Baja, California from 1 ½ to 6 days in the summer. Unbelievably good fishing, 3 and 4 star food, hospitality, and adventure. The captains and crew are the elite of the elite, and they bust their humps to make your experience great, so you'll want to come back! Anyway, I love to fish with any and all tackle so you wanted water, and they got it.

<http://www.polarissupreme.com/>

<http://www.royalstarsportfishing.com/>

In the end it all depends on whether you are a wilderness camper, luxury or semi-lux resort devotee, like a lake cabin experience (hard for me anymore with the advent of jet skis and "bag boats"), or can't fish enough (like me). We haven't completely succeeded in trashing the place just yet, so there's still a wide variety of great water-oriented experience out there. *(Also recommended Priest Island, ID – see below)*

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

San Diego (2)

San Diego by all means. It has it all. I can also get you a free visit to the Midway (Aircraft Carrier now a part of the Maritime Museum and a must see). My son is a docent there. Balboa park can't be beat. Good dining places all around. Unbeatable weather, especially in the summer time. Take the advice of an old, old timer and GO THERE!!!

Sierra Nevada

I recommend Bridgeport Valley, on the E. side of the Sierra Nevada. It is a beautiful bucolic & pastoral valley (protected by a land trust), with a great view of the Sierra; two undeveloped hot springs; about 20 min. north of Mono Lake, Lee Vining, and the Tioga entrance to Yosemite NP. If you want backpacking, go into the Hoover Wilderness (up Green Cr., past Gilman Lake, into Yosemite, and return via Glennis Cyn, which has spectacular and interesting geology. It is a 3-day, 2 night loop, if you don't want to layover). However, I can't speak for the cuisine in Bridgeport.

CANADA

Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island

Less recent, but unforgettable (and in Canada): Vancouver Island. Specifically the Cowichan Valley, which is about 45 mins from Victoria on Vancouver Island. Lots of rivers & lakes on which to laze an afternoon away...vineyards, and great food, especially this piece of culinary paradise:

<http://www.fairburnfarm.bc.ca/> (Also recommends Northwest corner of Wisconsin – see below)



COLORADO

Black Canyon National Park

I would have to say if you're looking for some of the most breath taking views and and some of the best outdoor activities in the world then check out Black Canyon National Park. The canyon is the countries deepest narrowest canyon in the US. With vertical cliffs of over 2000ft the views are amazing. Most visitors claim to have a better time than at the Grand Canyon because of the lack of crowds here. I was able to explore a lot of the area because I worked at Curecanti National Recreation Area for the summer testing the water, not a bad summer job.

However, within an hour of the park there is, well hiking and camping of course on the several 14000ft peaks in the area. Rafting and fly fishing on the Gunnison are some of the best in the state. However my personal favorite was the mountain biking, but if that's too extreme there is always taking pictures of the wild flowers. Where ever you go I'm sure you'll enjoy it, because there are so many great places that need to be experienced and protected for future generations.

Glenwood Springs (1)

Well, I might be biased, because I live in Colorado..... Book a room in the historic Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs; sign up for a 2-day kayaking class and test your skills on the Colorado River, which runs right through town. The water isn't too cold by the end of summer, and you can warm up at night in the adjacent hot springs. There are plenty of good places to eat; and Vail is about an hour away if you want something higher end. You can also ride mountain bikes and ride the train through the canyon, contemplating both the geology and complex water rights along the way. If you get tired from all this activity, take a day off and go wine tasting.

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

Glenwood Springs (2)

I didn't make your deadline but could not pass up the opportunity to suggest our home town of Glenwood Springs, Colorado for a nice domestic vacation. In early September we will have warm days and chilly nights. As for water we have the worlds' largest natural hot springs pool; the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers and several lakes. The rivers will still be floatable and fishable and the hiking, biking and sightseeing unmatched. As far as our best vacation - I'd say we are living here. See <http://www.coloradowebcam.net/> for webcams of the area. By September the Eagle (Vail) County airport will be open again and there are direct flights from eastern hubs. I think you can get to National or Dulles in one stop. Sometimes direct from Newark.

FLORIDA



Key Largo

My suggestion, to meet all your criteria, would be the Florida Keys from which I have recently returned. Of course this time of year it's pretty hot, but hey you only excluded cold. Even so, as Humphrey Bogart said to Lauren Bacall in *Key Largo*, "The Keys are different than anyplace I've ever seen ... and hotter"

My second choice might be the southern end of my own home of Delaware but I, of course am biased.....

HAWAII

Hana, Maui

Don't know if you are planning on going with a buddy or a spouse, but Hana, Maui, Hawaii, is the most wonderful, romantic vacation spot imaginable (although, I haven't been to many places, so I could be wrong, there could be somewhere better, but I doubt it – lol). There are a lot of things to do there and it's not crowded. The food is delicious, there is plenty of ocean everywhere and hills for hiking and horseback riding. There are tropical flowers growing all around you and the air smells so sweet and fresh. The temperature stays the same day or evening. You might get some showers, but they don't last long. I have been there in March and June when the temperature was low to mid 80's and I believe September would be similar (see temp link below). I think it's the closest place on earth to paradise. The hotel we stayed at was pricey but worth it - <http://www.hotelhanamaui.com/> - this hotel link has a lot of information about the town. There is hardly any commercial shopping in Hana, only a couple of General Stores, a small bank and post office, but you can always catch the shops in town before or after the climb to Hana. Allow yourself a leisure drive up and back (2-3 hrs each way to go the 50-some miles up there) cuz you have to stop and enjoy all the waterfalls and one-lane bridges and all the lush greenery. Maybe you've already been there and know what I am talking about, but if not, it's worth all the money and effort to have yourself a fabulous, fun and very memorable vacation.

<http://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/getForecast?query=hana,%20maui,hawaii&wuSelect=WEATHER>

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

IDAHO

Priest Lake

You'll never regret going to Priest Lake in North Idaho. I recommend the resort at Hill's near Coolin, or Elkin's Resort, and all sorts of cabin rentals going for cheap in this year's tanked economy. There are also lots of state and federal camping opportunities, including really cool natural pocket beach camping at sites around the lake. The upper lake is all natural, inside the National Forest. Good hiking, kayaking and power boating, sailing, angling, sitting around with a book and a tall one. *(Also recommended San Diego, CA – see above)*

http://www.priestlake.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=5

<http://www.elkinsresort.com/>

<http://www.priestlakevacations.com/>

<http://www.hillsresort.com/>

IOWA

All over

Yes, I too was searching for a nice little trip this summer, but my biggest hang up was finding the time to fit it in around the kids' schedules. Upon recently booking the last weekend we had opened, I called the trip to a halt, there shall be no weeklong vacation this summer.

Just last night I was running through some files and found half of an old article from the Des Moines Register



entitled "100 Things to Eat in Iowa Before You Die". Gosh, my mouth started to water as I Googled the original article and a new plan quickly came to mind. The kids and I are going to throw in quick trips across the state (as we meet their other obligations) and we shall start crossing off our list!

One of our first stops will be #15 on the list, Nutty Bar, Arnolds Park Amusement Park, Arnolds Park, IA. "Okoboji has been the ideal destination for family vacations for more than 100 years. Truly a recreational haven, the Iowa Great Lakes are rich in heritage and abundant in leisure activities. Visitors of all ages are drawn to the blue lakes, the sunshine and the fun times. I personally would suggest meandering to

the park area around 8 when the sun is beginning to set. Grab yourself a nutty bar and sit along the dock area as the sun goes down. If you're up for a walk venture south past the park and visit Abby Gardner's Cabin or take a walk along Sunset Beach to Pillsbury Point. The view is absolutely spectacular. A ride on the Queen can also give you a full view of the lake, and if you haven't been there for the 4th of July fireworks you certainly have no idea of the beautiful site you are missing."

And don't forget, at any point you can close your eyes and breathe in the refreshing blue lake air! Enjoy your summer where ever it takes you.

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

MAINE

Anywhere

Maine is of course a prime destination. September is awesome- few tourists, few bugs, warm weather, warm water (by our standards). The ocean is great, but you may find it cold. We have thousands of lakes and ponds. There are some sporting camps with very good cooks, plus other local treats.

Acadia National Park

RUNNER UP

I highly recommend Acadia National Park, Mt. Desert Island, Maine – camping (or beautiful hotels), Mt. biking on well-maintained carriage trails, sea-kayaking, hiking (mountains – be the first to see the sunrise in the US - or hike the rugged coastline), Thunder Hole, sunset sails and historic boat tours, great restaurants in Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor, and the Jordan Pond Tea house (tea, popovers and lobster bisque on the lawn!). One of our favorite family vacations, repeated often!

MINNESOTA

Grand Marais

One of our favorite places and where we have spent a lot of our outdoor time is on the Gunflint Trail/ Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Grand Marais MN. If not canoeing on the wilderness lakes (can do day trips), there are many lodges and resorts on the Trail with rooms/cabins to rent and many outdoor activities (hiking, mountain biking, birding, photography, etc). One of the better resorts with excellent accommodations and first-rate food is Gunflint Lodge (where my wife and I both worked as teenagers) but there are many others from Trail center (Poplar Lake) on up to end of the trail. The drive up along Lake Superior from Duluth to Grand Marais is by itself worth the trip.



MEXICO

Espiritu Santo Island

We just had the most wonderful 7-day kayaking trip around Espiritu Santo Island in the Sea of Cortez off of Baja Sur. Lots of paddling (50 miles), great hiking, wonderful vistas, knowledgeable guides, snorkeling the reefs, jumping manta rays, swimming with sea lions, learning about the cultures, environment, hydrology, biology, etc. As for cuisine we had the most wonderful fresh fish dinners every night, outstanding lunches and wonderful breakfasts by our cook Alvaro - all great local fresh foods! I think I could go back again!

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

MONTANA

Missoula

RUNNER UP!

Go to Missoula, Montana. It is a big enough town it ought to have fine dining (though I don't know that for sure). But it has the lovely Clark Fork river, a superfund site (a hydro dam that supplied electricity to the Milwaukee Railroad electric trains for the Hiawatha route, which filled up with contaminated sediments from the Butte mines), some emerging groundwater/surface water issues, and gorgeous mountains. The Pintler Scenic Route is a nearby nice scenic drive on paved roads, which includes a view of a decaying wooden pipe that supplied a hydroelectric plant, and lovely Georgetown Lake. Also nearby is Rock Creek, a blue ribbon trout stream in a granite canyon where you can see mountain sheep. That road gets a little rough, but it is fine for a two wheel drive pickup or a beat up old car. If you fly in and use a rental car, request an urban assault vehicle. Also not too far from Missoula is the "Ride the Hiawatha" rails to trails project where you can ride a mountain bike along 15 miles of the old Milwaukee grade, through several tunnels including one 1.7 miles long, and over several high trestles. Though it is not developed, east of Missoula you can also walk the railroad grade a couple of miles to one of the old substations for the electric train. The hardware is mostly gone but there's a nice early 20th century brick building that is almost art deco in style. Also you will pass a couple of places where the insulators that supported the overhead wires for the train are still clinging to a rock face. You can see the substation from the freeway but it is on the far side of the Clark Fork.

On the return from either drive you can arrange your route to visit the antique auto museum in Deer Lodge and the territorial prison museum. You can also see an electric locomotive.



PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

NEW MEXICO

It's New Mexico. I know you were here not too long ago, but consider the following.

1. Santa Fe's Fiesta is in early September. <http://www.santafefiesta.org/Schedule%20of%20Events.htm>. This celebration honors the historic re-entry of Spaniards into New Mexico after they retreated down the Rio Grande into the safety of Juarez during the Pueblo Revolt in 1680. Under the pre-Revolt religious beliefs of the early New Mexico Spaniards, Native Americans did not have "souls" and thus could be exploited for slave labor. As a result of a change in theological interpretation, the re-entry was intended to peacefully convert Native Americans who now were known to have "souls." The celebration commemorates the Spanish and Native American (Pueblo) communities living in peace as neighbors for 400+ years. The Fiesta itself has been happening annually for nearly 300 years. Santa Fe is a great town to visit anyway, it is even more fun during Fiesta.
2. New Mexico is not too hot, not too cold. Right now we are in monsoon season, which means that despite being high desert (Albuquerque's elevation is 5000 feet. Santa Fe is the highest state capital in the Country at 7000 feet), we are enjoying cool temperatures (60s at night, 90s at noon). It should be similarly nice, probably dryer, in September. If you want colder, just head north or up a mountain. If you want to be warmer, head southward or to a lower elevation. It's easy.
3. YES, we have water. If you are looking to anchor your trip around water activities, here are some options:
 - We have excellent fly fishing in the Four Corners area on the San Juan River, a tributary to the Colorado River. From here, you can go west to the Navajo Nation, southwest to Canyon de Chelly, or north to Durango, Colorado. From Durango, you can take an old-fashioned train to Silverton and enjoy the mountain scenery in the San Juan mountains. Alternatively, Telluride is about two or so hours away from Durango if you do not mind some gentle 4-wheeling over Ophir Pass.
 - If you want to lie on a lake shore and do some sailing, canoeing or boating, consider that the Chama River (tributary to the Rio Grande) is home to several beautiful reservoirs—my favorites are Heron Reservoir for sailing near the mining town of Chama and Abiquiu Lake in Georgia O'Keefe country.
 - Great rafting is available on the north Rio Grande in the Taos area... and Taos itself is fantastic. If you have not seen the Rio Grande Gorge near Taos, it is amazing!
4. There is no shortage of outdoor activities. We have everything from hiking and mountain-biking in the 10,000 foot Sandias near Albuquerque to the 12,000 and 13,000 foot mountains near Santa Fe and Taos. We have redrock hikes, ice caves hidden in lava rock, birding at Bosque del Apache, full moon walks at White Sands... you name it. The challenge is picking which one to do.
5. Nowhere in the world can you get New Mexican food except in New Mexico. Not Tex-Mex. Not Cal-Mex. I mean red chili and sopapillas. In addition to New Mexican food, consider Santa Fe's fine collection of restaurants...



PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

NEW YORK

New York City

NYC has the best of everything you've listed. If it doesn't have it, NYS does near by. See: <http://nycgo.com/>

NORTH CAROLINA

Outer Banks

I just returned from five days along the Outer Banks of North Carolina and I would recommend it to anyone who loves being on or near the water. From Corolla south to Nags Head, you'll find no building taller than four stories, which was a welcome change from the shoreline of sunny, south Florida and its imposing hi-rise condominiums. The 75-mile drive down the Cape Hatteras National Seashore provided multiple bird-watching opportunities. One of Florida's favorites, the heron, was observed in great numbers on the islands just offshore in the Pamlico Sound. And, a stop by the lighthouse is a must for anyone visiting here!

No trip to the Outer Banks would be complete without at least a day trip to Ocracoke. I had the pleasure of overnighing in the quaint Village of Ocracoke at the Island Inn (built in 1901) and dining at the Back Porch Restaurant and I recommend both to anyone who wants a delightful experience on this tiny island accessible only by ferry or plane.

The final leg of this journey was a 2-hour+ ferry ride from Ocracoke to Cedar Island where my darling husband and I savored the watery wilderness of the Outer Banks as we made our way back toward civilization and our home in south Florida. There were places along the road through Cedar Island that could have easily been mistaken for Everglades.

The Outer Banks is peppered with historical lighthouses and stories of days gone by. It is not the place to go if you're looking for the kind of 24/7 entertainment easily found in south Florida. It is a place for fishing, surfing, shelling, building sand castles and just being in a laid back mode. There's always an ocean breeze and one gets a sense of being in a sun-swept wilderness, which I found to be the perfect antidote to the hectic pace of my Florida life. Let me know if you go. I'll give you some good tips about where to stay and where to eat, as well as the "must see" sights!



PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

OREGON

Portland

At the beginning of September, you typically couldn't find better weather in the U.S. than in/around Portland, OR and the great Pacific NW. Labor Day historically is the driest holiday of the year here, so you have a very good chance of having sunny, warm days with cool nights/early mornings. There are plentiful water resources to visit and play in. For example, Portland is situated at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers, both of which are great for boating or sailing. Canoes or kayaks are available for rent within the city and blue heron, osprey and eagles can be seen within an easy paddle on the Willamette River.

If you prefer sport fishing, the fall Chinook and coho salmon recreational fisheries are in full swing in the Columbia River estuary near Astoria and in the lower Columbia River at that time, with many charter boats available. Plus crabbing is usually good at that time of year along the Oregon coast! So you could bring home a cooler full of fresh salmon filets and/or Dungeness crab to tide you through the winter!

If you enjoy waterfalls with magnificent scenery and hiking, a trip to the Columbia River gorge an hour or so east of Portland provides both. In fact, you could be skiing in the morning on the Palmer glacier on Mt. Hood and board sailing on the Columbia River in the afternoon near Hood River, OR. Then, when you're thirsty from all your outdoor activities, you can visit several excellent local brew pubs for some fine liquid refreshment.

When it comes to dining, there are numerous fine restaurants in and around the Portland area. In fact, the fine dining experience in Portland has been written up and promoted in the *NY Times*. While you would need a car to travel west to the Oregon coast or east to the Columbia gorge or Mt. Hood, if you stayed in Portland you can get around very easily without a car using our excellent public transportation system, including light rail, street car lines and buses. You can even get to/from the airport and downtown Portland in about half an hour on a light rail line. If you like to bike, Portland has a platinum rating as a "bike friendly" city for its extensive system of bike paths and trails.

In sum, at that time of year Portland has good weather, great scenery, exciting outdoor activities, with excellent brew pubs, coffee houses and fine dining. What more could you want?!

TENNESSEE



Falls Creek State Park

WINNER!!

For beauty, water and rest you can't beat the Falls Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee – it's a fabulous and the lake incredible with so much to see around it and if you are lucky enough to book a cabin your back door is floating right over the water. You can also stay at hotel complete with a dining hall or camp! In addition to the Falls, nearby there are dams along with lots of boating, fishing and sightseeing in many places – cool nights and fabulous stars!

<http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/FallCreekFalls/>

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

Ococee River

My vote is for whitewater rafting on the Ocoee River on the Tennessee/Georgia border. I just returned from my vacation there. This section of the Ocoee is fed through water released from a TVA dam...so, while you're playing in the whitewater, you're actually helping to make renewable energy!! It is one of the most popular stretches of whitewater in the world and was the location for the many of the '96 Summer Olympic games. The Ocoee boasts several Class IV rapids that you will not soon forget! Here's a link:

<http://www.tva.gov/river/recreation/ocoee.htm>

It was one of the most fun times I've ever had...and I was a paratrooper in a previous life! I couldn't believe that our guides were actually PAID to work there!! This area has great, natural campsites and is free from both mosquitoes and the dreaded "wait-a-minute" vines which choke the woods further south along the Gulf Coast where I live. Trust me...you'll love it! Enjoy!

Pigeon Forge

This past October I proposed to my fiancé on the top of Clingman's Dome, the highest point in the Great Smoky Mountains. I believe that when most people think of this national park it brings back terrible memories of the tourist attraction that is Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge (I know our first experience together there involved sitting in traffic). But, this trip we discovered Wears Valley just west of Pigeon Forge. This little area is removed from the hustle and bustle of mainstream tourism and offers many cabins with fantastic views (see attached picture). Also, the "Wears Valley entrance" to the national park is hardly used, giving the solution to sitting in traffic.

You said you wanted someplace with water... there are several streams that run along the roads throughout the park. If you really want to get in touch with your inner-woodsman, you can hike several trails that run along streams up into the headwaters in the mountains. There's nothing quite like sitting in a crystal clear pool of mountain water watching brook trout swim away from your advances to remind you of why you work in water resources.

UNITED KINGDOM



Anywhere

Too bad it has to be in the continental US because I'm off for two weeks to the UK to enjoy the Thames, the Forth, the Clyde and the Avon, among other rivers. While there I'll be attending a music festival, the theatre, museums, walking Hampstead Heath, and eating fabulous food as well as visiting friends. If that isn't a vacation with everything, I don't know what is. May you plan one just as fun!

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

UTAH

Upper (and Lower) Calf Creek Falls/ Escalante/ Boulder Utah area

Lake Powell (1)

One of favorite US vacations is houseboating on Lake Powell in Utah/Arizona. You do have to plan in advance and you do have to supply your own great food. Other than that, for outdoor activities there is water skiing, hiking, and fishing; for natural wonders there is Rainbow Bridge National Monument and countless canyons and other features to explore; and for sightseeing the whole area has some of the most gorgeous scenery in the world, in my humble opinion. I've houseboated there three times, usually with four other couples who like to explore, ski, and have fun. <http://www.lakepowell.com/>

Lake Powell (2)

It is difficult to beat a family houseboat trip on Lake Powell, good fishing, swimming, hiking, and extraordinary scenery. Go to:

<http://www.houseboating.org/POWELL/overview.cfm>

Lake Powell (3)

Go to Lake Powell in Utah and Arizona for plenty of water, warmth, red rock (sandstone) landscape, surrounded by several National Parks (Canyonlands, Arches, Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zions, Capital Reef). This venue will provide opportunities for boating, water skiing, fishing, swimming, camping, hiking and exploring with fantastic vistas and a perspective you will not see in the lush vegetation of Virginia and the middle Atlantic region. We would love to have you fly in to Salt Lake, and Lake Powell is a 5 hour drive from here.



Moab (1)

In May I attended the National Mitigation Banking Association conference in Salt Lake. I decided to take advantage of the opportunity by taking extra time to do some exploring. I spent 5 days in Moab. I hiked in Canyonlands National Park and Arches National Park. I also took a rafting tour on the Colorado River. The area was beautiful, the food good, the people friendly and it was very economical!

Moab (2)

The best vacation I took was last summer and spent a long weekend in Moab, Utah. Great mountain biking, Arches National Park and Canyonlands close by, but the best thing was a two day rafting trip down the Colorado River...FANTASTIC.....

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

VERMONT

Alburg, VT

My family and I have found one of the greatest vacations spots in the Northeast. We travel to Alburg, VT every year and stay in a very nice cabin overlooking Lake Champlain (last one on the road). During late July and August the weather is usually dry (nighttime t-storms) and hot (early September isn't too cold). The owners live in the adjacent house and have fresh vegetables and fruit. The Champlain Islands have a lot of recreational activities and are quiet relative to comparable lake areas, and a nice bike trail that starts at the southern end and travels north <http://www.champlainbikeways.org/>. Where we stay, there is a nice family beach in a state park less than a mile from our cabin. You have to pay to use the beach, but it is relatively inexpensive. I think it is \$20.00 for 10 visits (two adults would be two visits – kids are free). The islands have a decent amount of conservation land with easy hikes. The Adirondacks and Green Mountains are relatively close. We usually spend a day in Burlington and go to the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center (www.echovermont.org), have lunch outside on Church Street (<http://churchstmarketplace.com/>) and walk along the water. We also travel into Canada (sorry, outside of US) and go to Parc Safari (<http://www.parc safari.com/index.php>) and Montreal for a day each. Ben and Jerry's ice cream is on the way (an hour from the cabin). The islands have a lot of good restaurants, but you will also find great restaurants in Burlington and Montreal.

WASHINGTON STATE

Olympic Peninsula

No question: visit the Olympic Peninsula: mighty forests, pristine lakes, lovely seashore and the Elwha River with 2 dams authorized for removal. Lake Quinalt Lodge and Crescent Lake Lodge are historically interesting and fun but there are great opportunities for camping, packing into the backcountry, etc.



PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

Seattle

Seattle, "The Emerald City" is my suggestion for your September Adventure.

September is the absolutely perfect time to visit Seattle. The hot summer days of July and August are gone and the cool and usually damp days of fall are weeks away.

- To the south, Mount Rainier's 14,400 foot snow-capped peak is in full view against the bright blue sky. To the east, the Cascade Mountains compete with the equally appealing and stately Olympic Mountains to the west.
- Redirect your attention from the spectacular vistas and stride toward the familiar neon sign marking the Pike Place Market's location where you can literally "catch" your fresh fish ready to be shipped back home for a memorable meal.
- Getting around town from one end to the other is easy. You'll have the opportunity ride our new (July 18 first day of operation) Sound Transit Light Rail system <http://www.soundtransit.org/Projects-and-Plans/Project-Updates/Link-Grand-Opening.xml>. The increasingly popular Seattle Streetcar <http://www.seattlestreetcar.org/> takes you through the heart of Seattle's most exciting and attractive area for development and urban living.
- And don't forget the Monorail, from the landmark Space Needle <http://www.spaceneedle.com/> right to the heart of the downtown retail core in just a few minutes. You can glide across Puget Sound aboard a Washington State Ferry, from the nation's largest ferry system. Or, for a more unconventional trip, you can see the sight aboard Seattle's fastest growing attraction, a Duck! Take a tour around town and then slide into Lake Union aboard the WWII amphibious landing craft! You really haven't seen Seattle until you've seen it from a Duck! <http://www.ridetheducksofseattle.com/>
- Seattlelites enjoy sports and I guarantee you'll say "wow" if you catch a ball game at beautiful Safeco Field watching the Seattle Mariners http://seattle.mariners.mlb.com/schedule/index.jsp?c_id=sea&m=9&y=2009 during a remarkable turnaround season. Next door you can see the nation's most successful new professional team, the Seattle Sounders FC at the nation's most beautiful stadium to watch soccer, Qwest Field, <http://www.soundersfc.com/Matchday/Schedule.aspx> Qwest Field is also the home of the Seattle Seahawks <http://www.seahawks.com/schedule/season-schedule.html>. And while our former NBA champions Seattle Supersonics are no longer here, the Seattle Storm www.storm.wnba.com, 2004 WNBA champions, have captured the hearts of the area's basketball fans and continue to pack Seattle Center's Key Arena.
- Ready to satisfy your artistic palate? Visit the Seattle Art Museum www.seattleartmuseum.org, the new Olympic Sculpture Park or tour through the numerous galleries in the Pioneer Square area. Hearing the "call of the wild?" See the giant undersea "Wall of Wonder" at the Seattle Aquarium www.seattleaquarium.org or the animals, large and small, at the spacious Woodland Park Zoo www.zoo.org And when you're ready to relax, browse through one of Seattle's many bookstores, grab one and find a comfortable seat at a coffee shop. Take your pick from a host of national and local roasters. Seattle's diverse cultures provide for restaurant fare with something delicious for every taste.
- Speaking of cultures, the Italian Festival, the Korean Cultural Celebration, Seattle Fiestas and Bumbershoot all take place during September. Bumbershoot <http://www.bumbershoot.org/history.htm> "embodies an eclectic mix of artists that has inspired summer festival-goers for nearly four decades!"
- As you can see The Emerald City has the appeal and the attractions to create your memorable adventure. We look forward to your visit. I'm sure Seattle will exceed your expectations. Enjoy!!

WISCONSIN

Northwest corner

The northwest corner of Wisconsin – lots and lots of lakes...which by September should be even warmer.

<http://www.nps.gov/sacn/index.htm> (Also recommended Cowichan Valley, Vancouver Island – see above)

PLAYING WITH WATER (CONTINUED)

Wisconsin Dells

RUNNER UP

I just got back from a trip to my home state of Wisconsin where I went to the Waterpark Capital of the World, the Wisconsin Dells. If you want a trip with water with lots to do, see, and eat, this is the place for you. It's only a couple hours from Milwaukee. Also, this is the place where last year an entire lake (Lake Delton) was drained due to flooding and a dam break so there are some hydrologic issues and work that has been done there to restore the manmade lake. Go to wisdells.com for more info, and I wear an XL t-shirt. Good luck and have fun on your vacation.

WYOMING

Yellowstone National Park

Just an idea. Yellowstone National Park. Awesome.

AS SO MANY OF YOU SIGNED OFF ON YOUR
SUGGESTIONS TO ME ...

WHEREVER YOU GO, ENJOY!

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING!