

Chickamauga Lake Named America's Best Drive-To Lake Getaway

New Lake.com research finds 72% of major U.S. metros sit within a two-hour drive of a great family lake getaway—with zero guest fees to plan around.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lake.com, the travel platform dedicated exclusively to stays and experiences by the water, today released a new study finding that 72 of the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas are within a two-hour drive of a lake getaway. The analysis ranked Chickamauga Lake in Chattanooga as America's top drive-to lake destination.



Americas Best Drive to Destination Report

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Founder & CEO David Ciccarelli

“With family travel costs climbing and summer weekends short, the study shows most American families don't have to choose between a real break and their budget.” said Lake.com Founder & CEO David Ciccarelli. “The lake is closer and more affordable than they think.”

The study found that 72 of the 100 largest metros have a ranked lake getaway within a two-hour drive. Fifty-five percent are within 90 minutes and 34% are within one hour, with an average trip of 1 hour 39 minutes. Each metro-to-lake pairing was scored on drive time, a modeled family weekend budget and active rental listings.

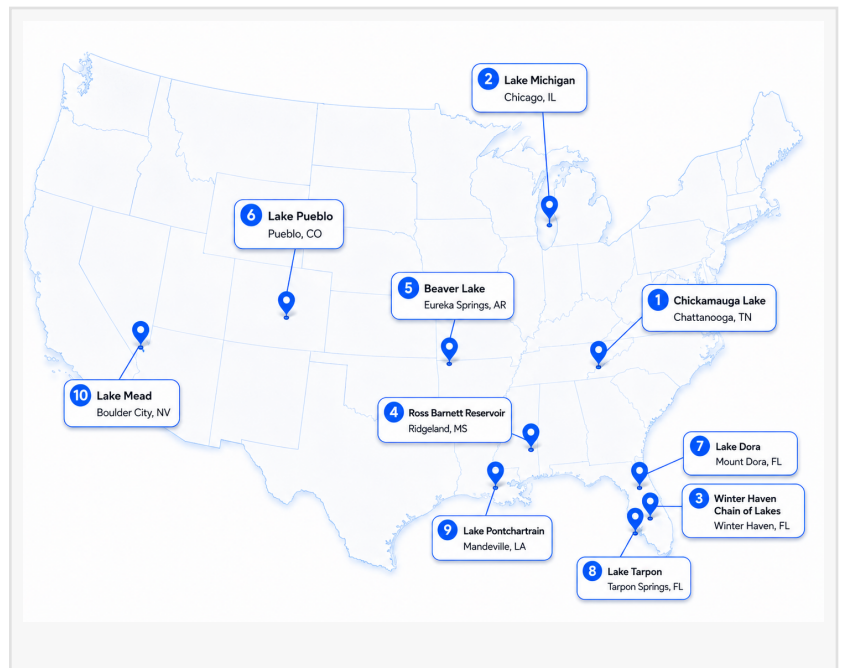
Chickamauga Lake topped the index with a score of 92.8. The trip starts at the water, so it carries no drive time and its 1,078 rentals at a \$201 average nightly rate produced a \$1,130 modeled family weekend.

The portion of Lake Michigan adjacent to Chicago finished second on the same basis. The nation's third-largest metro boasts 6,558 rentals on or near the lakeshore, making it the deepest

choice in the top 10. The Winter Haven Chain of Lakes, situated halfway between Tampa and Orlando in Central Florida, placed third with a 29-minute drive.

The study put the median cost of a lake weekend at \$1,408 for a family of four, covering two nights, fuel, groceries and three days of activities. Colorado Springs to Lake Pueblo was the best value at \$1,043.

Key [Best Drive-To Lake Getaways](#) findings:



Chickamauga Lake in Chattanooga ranks No. 1 with an index score of 92.8, zero drive time and a \$1,130 modeled family weekend.

72 of the 100 largest U.S. metros have a ranked lake getaway within two hours. 55 are within 90 minutes and 34 are within one hour.

The average drive to a ranked lake is 1 hour 39 minutes.

The median cost of a lake weekend for a family of four is \$1,408.

Colorado Springs to Lake Pueblo is the best value in the study at \$1,043.

"Families don't need a flight or a complicated itinerary to create a memorable lake weekend," added David Ciccarelli, CEO and founder of Lake.com. "In most of America's largest metro areas, a practical lake escape is close enough to reach after breakfast and often affordable enough to repeat more than once in a summer. For parents of young children and for families traveling with a dog, every hour saved in the car is another hour they can spend truly enjoying their vacation."

Read the full report - featuring all 100 metro-to-lake pairings at Lake's Best Drive-To Lake Getaways

Notes to Editors

Methodology

Lake.com paired each of the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas with a nearby recreational lake and destination town, using the Census Bureau's 2025 metro population estimates. Each pairing was scored on a Drive-To Index weighting access at 45%, affordability at 35% and rental choice at 20%. Drive times are normal-condition route estimates. Rental counts and average nightly rates come from AirROI 2026 city reports. The modeled family weekend covers two nights of lodging, round-trip fuel at 25 miles per gallon on GasBuddy state averages, USDA-based groceries for a

family of four and three days of activities. It excludes taxes, fees, tolls, meals and pet charges, and is a comparison benchmark rather than a live quote.

About Lake.com

Lake.com was founded by a husband-and-wife team with a shared passion for helping families experience the beauty of God's creation. Today, the platform features more than 75,000 vacation homes across North America and Europe, with a focus on transparent pricing, no guest fees, and family- and pet-friendly stays. By combining trusted destination guidance with a purpose-built marketplace, Lake.com is building the next generation of travel for those drawn to the water. For more information, visit www.lake.com

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