

Top 10 Best Lakes for Dog-Friendly Travel

Lake.com ranks 362 U.S. lake destinations to reveal the top 10 for dog-friendly access, amenities, city proximity and water-safety planning.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From dog-friendly beaches on Lake Michigan to waterfront parks in Seattle and dedicated swimming areas in Ohio, a new study from Lake.com reveals the [10 best lake destinations in the United States for pet-friendly travel](#).



Best Lakes for Dog-Friendly Travel

Lake.com evaluated 362 lakes, reservoirs, Great Lakes shorelines, urban lakes and lake districts across the country, looking at factors including dog-friendly access, destination popularity, proximity to a major city or gateway, and water-safety planning.

“

We visited seven of the top 10 within the last two years during our travels. We have experienced firsthand how powerful dog-friendly destinations can be in creating unforgettable travel experiences.”

Chris Yeloushan of Official Willy Good Dog

Taking the No. 1 spot is Lake Michigan’s Chicago shoreline, followed by Lake Washington in Seattle at No. 2 and Bow Wow Beach at Silver Springs Lake, Ohio, at No. 3.

The Top 10 Pet-Friendly Lake Destinations in America
1. Lake Michigan – Chicago Shoreline, Illinois — 4.80/5

Lake Michigan’s Chicago shoreline earned the highest score in the study, combining one of the country’s most popular lake destinations with easy city access and dedicated dog-friendly waterfront space.

Montrose Dog Beach offers designated Lake Michigan access for dogs, making Chicago an especially convenient option for travelers looking to combine a city getaway with time on the water.

2. Lake Washington, Washington — 4.60/5

Seattle's Lake Washington provides one of the strongest combinations of freshwater access and dog-friendly amenities in the ranking.

The Warren G. Magnuson Park Off-Leash Area includes Lake Washington shoreline access, trails, a large play area and a separate space for small and shy dogs. Seattle Parks identifies it as the city's only off-leash area with Lake Washington water access.

3. Bow Wow Beach / Silver Springs Lake, Ohio — 4.35/5

Near Cleveland, Bow Wow Beach in Stow, Ohio, stands out because the destination is designed specifically with dogs in mind.

The fenced 7.5-acre park includes a sandy beach, grassy areas, waste stations, separate spaces for small dogs and a three-acre lake, giving dogs plenty of room to play both on land and in the water.

4. Lake Norman, North Carolina — 4.30/5

Located near Charlotte, Lake Norman offers travelers a mix of waterfront recreation and dedicated dog amenities at Ramsey Creek Park.

The 43-acre waterfront park includes an enclosed dog park. While dogs are not permitted on the human swimming beach, leashed dogs can enter the water in other permitted areas while their owners remain on land.

5. Lake Champlain – Burlington, Vermont/New York — 4.30/5

Lake Champlain combines a popular waterfront destination with convenient access to dog-friendly recreation around Burlington.

The Starr Farm Park area offers access to a dog park as well as connections to the Burlington Greenway. Travelers should confirm specific shoreline and swimming rules before allowing dogs into the water.

6. Lake Superior – Duluth / Park Point, Minnesota — 4.20/5

Duluth pairs one of America's most recognizable Great Lakes destinations with dog-friendly recreation along the Lakewalk and access to the Park Point shoreline.

Because rules can vary by specific beach and recreation area, visitors should confirm leash requirements and designated dog-access locations before their trip.

7. Lake Havasu, Arizona/California — 4.00/5

Lake Havasu offers warm-weather lake recreation and potential dog-friendly shoreline access, including the Cattail Cove area.

The desert environment makes hydration especially important, and travelers should bring plenty of potable water for both themselves and their pets.

8. Lake Tahoe, California/Nevada — 3.75/5

Lake Tahoe's combination of dramatic scenery, outdoor recreation and dog-friendly shoreline candidates earns it the No. 8 position.

Areas including Kiva Beach and North Zephyr Cove are among the dog-friendly options identified in the study, although regulations can vary between jurisdictions around the lake.

9. Lake George – Adirondacks, New York — 3.75/5

Lake George offers a classic Adirondack lake getaway with a dog-friendly beach candidate close to the village.

Travelers should verify current village and state regulations before visiting with their pets, particularly when planning swimming or off-leash activities.

10. Mirror Lake / Lake Placid, New York — 3.50/5

Rounding out the Top 10 is Mirror Lake and Lake Placid, where travelers can combine a mountain-town getaway with walking trails and potential dog-friendly waterfront access.

The destination includes dog-friendly beach and loop-trail options, although visitors should confirm current municipal rules before their trip.

What Makes a Great [Lake Destination for Dogs?](#)

The ranking shows that planning a pet-friendly lake vacation involves more than simply choosing a popular destination.

Lake.com found that dog-access rules can vary considerably from one beach, park or shoreline to another. Of the 362 destinations initially screened, only 12 emerged as immediate dog-access leads, demonstrating the importance of checking local regulations before traveling.

"We've traveled thousands of miles with Willy Good Dog and Just Jax, exploring lakes, rivers and waterfronts all across the country," said Chris Yeloushan of Willy Good Dog and Just Jax. "In fact, we visited seven of the top 10 within the last two years during our travels. We have experienced

firsthand how powerful dog-friendly destinations can be in creating unforgettable travel experiences.”

Keeping Dogs Safe at the Lake

Even at a dog-friendly destination, travelers should plan ahead before allowing their pet into the water.

“The best lake day with a dog can be as simple as a safe shoreline and fetch with a dog-safe floating stick or tennis ball,” said David Ciccarelli, founder and CEO of Lake.com. “For first-time swimmers, use a fitted life jacket, start in shallow water, bring fresh drinking water and let the dog set the pace — even with water-loving breeds.”

Lake.com recommends that travelers bring fresh drinking water, check local bacteria and harmful algal bloom advisories before swimming, follow leash rules and rinse pets with clean water after swimming. Dogs should not be allowed to drink directly from lakes, rivers or streams.

How the Rankings Were Determined

Lake.com evaluated research-qualified destinations using four weighted factors:

Dog access: 30%

Popularity: 25%

City proximity: 25%

Water and potable-water screening: 20%

Dog-access scoring prioritized official municipal, county, state and park sources documenting dog beaches, off-leash areas, dog parks near lakes and permitted shoreline access.

Water-safety scoring evaluated whether destinations had credible systems for checking bacteria or harmful algal bloom advisories and whether potable water was available or travelers were advised to bring fresh water.

About Lake.com

Lake.com is a vacation rental platform helping travelers discover and book memorable stays by the water. Through its vacation rental marketplace, lake guides and destination research, Lake.com helps travelers find places to stay and experiences centered around life at the lake.

For more information, visit [Lake.com](https://www.lake.com).

Sarah Stahl

Lake.com

sarah.stahl@lake.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/933705630>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.