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8.18

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Cool Off In Phoenix's Desert Lakes



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Cover Photo By Julia Hill



Cool Off In Phoenix's Desert Lakes

BY JULIA HILL



Bartlett Lake is only an hour away from Desert Ridge. Lake-goers here are big on boating, but if you're visiting without a craft, there's still plenty to see. Head to the west side for designated picnicking and camping, or explore the coves along the sloped beaches for prime dispersed camp spots (Bartlett Flats) or easy swimming access. It's a beautiful area for soaking in the sights of rolling hills and saguaros from the cool water. The Bartlett Marina offers boat, Jet Ski and paddleboard rentals if you're feeling adventurous.

The traditional summer season might be coming to an end, but in Phoenix, high temperatures are here to stay. So what's there to do on the weekends besides air-conditioned movie theaters and knocking down pins at bowling alley? What about a cool water oasis for boating, kayaking or just kicking back on the beach?

You might be surprised how many lakes are in driving distance from Phoenix. So grab the family to beat the heat for a few last summer hurrahs, shoreline-style. Just remember to get the correct recreation pass before you go.

You've likely heard of (or even dipped your toes in) popular Lake Pleasant, just a quick 35-minute drive from your community. This regional park offers fantastic Sonoran Desert hiking in cooler months, but in the summer, the water's perfect for kayaking, boating, paddleboarding, and swimming—you'll love relaxing in a floatie near Fireman's Cove, Coles Bay and Humber Cove. Stay for a beautiful summer sunset, and keep an eye on the shoreline for a sight of wild burros.

You might be familiar with the Salt River reservoirs, created from dams along the Salt River. Saguaro Lake is the closest to town at about a 50-minute drive from Desert Ridge, and notable for its rugged canyon walls. Hop on the Desert Belle tour boat for a narrated cruise of the landscape, where you might catch a view of bald eagles and big-horned sheep. Fishing is a popular past time here, as well as cooling off at the beach or shaded picnic areas.

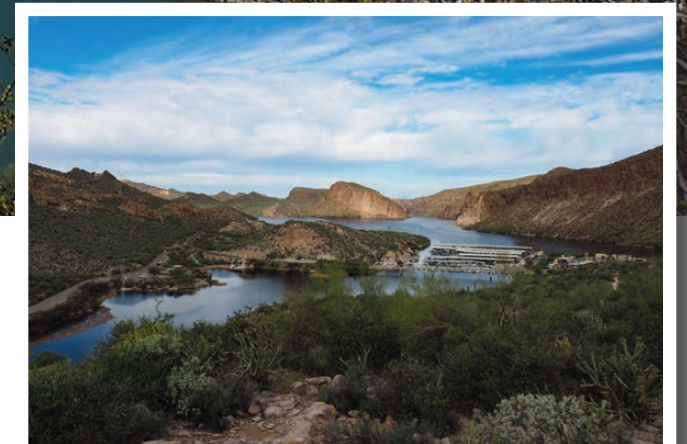
Canyon Lake is just east of Saguaro Lake, but you'll have to access it from a different direction – make sure to check the route before you go. Among the steep canyon cliffs, you'll find two boat launches and a designated swimming area to launch off for some fun. Secluded coves offer amazing fishing opportunities, and you can even explore the sights and sounds of the wilderness around you aboard a tour on the Dolly Steamboat. Head east on the road after for a stop at Tortilla Flat, and grab prickly pear ice cream from the general store to refuel.

Apache Lake is accessible only along the scenic Apache Trail, a winding and beautiful drive through rugged desert vistas—but not for those uncomfortable with bumpy unpaved roads and sheer cliffs. It makes the lake a pristine spot for boating and exploring without crowds. You can dine at the restaurant and even grab a drink at the famous Big Horny Sheep Saloon, and stay the night in the motel or camping on the beach.

Roosevelt Lake is Arizona's largest and boasts 21,500 acres of water recreation, plus camping right on the water's edge. Swimming is allowed by the campground, and there are views to be found everywhere you look. The huge size of the lake



Get right to the water's edge at nearby Bartlett Lake.



The sights at Saguaro Lake are just an hour away.

gives visitors a chance to find a secluded cove, camp spot or boat adventure to view wildlife, fish and cool off without crowds. Roosevelt Lake is accessible in two hours via AZ-87 and AZ-188.

With any summer outdoor recreation in the area, it's important to stay hydrated and watch the weather. Have fun and enjoy our desert oases!

Top Photo: Views at Arizona's largest lake, Roosevelt, extend for miles. Cover Photo: Boating is a great way to explore Roosevelt Lake. Lake Photos By: Julia Hill

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Email Julia: jhill@bestversionmedia.com

SUMMER SAFETY... TAKE A HIKE - DO IT RIGHT

By Julia Hill



We're in the full swing of summer heat - but did you know our nearby Phoenix Sonoran Preserve has trail hours as early as 5 a.m. and late as 11 p.m.? If you're looking for a scenic hike out of the sun, you can enjoy the cooler morning temps, or grab a headlamp and take an after-dark moonlit walk. Phoenix Parks & Recreation advises to "Take a Hike. Do it Right." for any of your outdoor adventures, especially during the hotter summer months. These checklist items will help you stay safe when planning your outdoor activities this season.

Watch for heat warnings. Avoid hiking in the triple digit heat - even if clouds offer shade. Our "dry heat" is deceptive and can catch you off guard. Enjoy an early morning on the trails when temps are lower, or well after the sun sets. A nighttime hike is a unique way to experience our Sonoran Desert and enjoy a beautiful starry sky.

Bring water. You should pack more than you need (at least 1 liter per person). Turn around when you finish half of your water, no matter how much of your intended hike you've completed.

Notify or hike with someone. Let another person know where and when you'll be hiking, or go with friends. Bring your phone to stay in touch.

Stay on the trails. The Phoenix Sonoran Preserve alone offers 36 miles over 18,000 acres of unspoiled Sonoran Desert, but that doesn't mean you can blaze your own path. Stick to designated trails to ensure your safety and the protection of the landscape.

Leave your pup at home. Dogs are strictly prohibited on all city of Phoenix hiking trails when the temperature is over 100 degrees, but it's good advice no matter where you're walking your pet. Dogs don't sweat or cool off from a breeze the same way humans do, and in monsoon season when the humidity rises, it's especially dangerous for them. Remember: If the ground is too hot to place your hands on, it's too hot for your dog's paws.

Know your limits. Be honest when planning your hike and don't push yourself to complete a hike or tackle a difficult trail if you sense something is wrong. You can get dehydrated much quicker than you expect if caught off guard. In triple-digit temperatures, Phoenix Parks & Recreation officiates that all trail difficulty ratings are raised one level.

Consider a guided hike. While the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve currently does not have programming for the summer, you can check the website at Maricopa County Parks for an event schedule including ranger-led night hikes, evening mountain biking, morning fitness hikes and blacklight scorpion hunts (yes, you read that right)!

Summer doesn't have to keep you stuck inside. Enjoy a safe outdoor adventure and remember to "Take a Hike. Do it Right."

