



LOVELY LAKE GEORGE

Lake George, New York, is the kind of place that's so accessible and filled with history and beauty that it'll be sure to steal your heart away.

By Andrea Jehn Kennedy



The first time I visited Lake George, New York, was in 2001 for the wedding of my future sister in law, Allison. Having been many places both domestic and abroad, including many childhood trips all over New York, and being from the East Coast myself, I never expected to have my heart usurped by this beautiful area. But I can say with authority that the area now takes a proud second place to our paradise in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

The lake was one of the largest I'd seen—I didn't get to Lake Michigan until 2005—and my first experience was a ladies' tea at The Sagamore in Bolton Landing, a gorgeous 125 year-old historic landmark of the area. Immediately the history of the area began to sink in. My husband's family has been in the area for generations, and its history dates back into the late 1600s. Originally named the Horican, a name that you'll still see around town, by the Mohicans, it was discovered by a surveyor in 1609 but wasn't renamed until 1646 when missionary Isaac Jogues named it Lac du Saint-Sacrement. In 1755 British colonial leader William Johnson named the lake after King George II, and just 10 days later the battle of Lake George began. In 1791 Thomas Jefferson described the lake as the most beautiful body of water he'd ever seen.

LINGER AND LEARN

Lake George is a long finger of a lake that extends 32.2 miles from Lake George Village to Ticonderoga, about two miles from the border of Vermont in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains and the Adirondack Park Reserve, and it's a short drive from the border of Quebec, Canada, as well. Despite more than 10 small towns and villages all along both sides of the lake, the area is spread out and not overbuilt, and the surrounding forest and greenery are lush in the warmer months. Many of the towns are simply clusters of homes, so most of the suggestions in this article will be either in Lake George Village or Bolton Landing just a few miles up Lakeshore Drive. In the winter the lake always freezes, melting sometime in mid-April. Home to nearly 400 islands, and 200 feet deep in the center, the lake is an impressive feat of nature.

Lake George Village is so quaint and historic that it pulls you back to the 1950s; neon signs illuminate the activities from boating to mini golf, hand-carved wooden signs direct you to the dozens of restaurants, and the area is filled with museums and forts for continued education on the truly fascinating 400 years of history of the area. The ambiance has always felt like camp to me; like something you haven't seen in a long, long time, yet it still looks exactly the same.

Fort William Henry Museum on Canada Street should be your first stop for the full-costumed Yankee welcome. The fort was in operation for only two years, from 1755 to 1757, protecting the lower section of the lake during the final and bitter-cold years of the French and Indian War. The fort, educational tours, and the lecture series are accessible, but unfortunately the ghost tour treks over stairs and hills.

Primary photography by Andrea Kennedy



The hills surrounding Lake George are bright with color each fall, above, and tour boats ply its waters, at right. The town is friendly and reminiscent of an earlier time, opposite page.



Lake George Links

In fact, despite its dated history, a great portion of this area is accessible. There isn't an adaptive program for sporting located in the village of Lake George, but there are several options nearby. Adirondack Adaptive Adventures operates out of Lake Placid a few hours northwest into the Adirondack Park, and it is a new program looking to assist in boating, camping, fishing, and tours of the park. Make sure to contact them about information if you're looking for experts to take you into the backcountry of this gorgeous park. Lake Placid Adaptive also operates out of the local ski area there for winter fun, as well. In addition, Lake Luzerne—about an hour west of Lake George—does have an adaptive horseback riding program at Double H Ranch for children with disabilities and life-threatening illnesses.

For local adventure, however, the friendly folks at the Adirondack Extreme Adventure Course in Bolton Landing have taken many strides to make sure that all abilities can participate in this ropes and platform-climbing course. Groups and individuals are welcome to test their abilities, strengths, and teamwork while “monkeying around” in the trees.

One “sport” that seems to be an East Coast standard is mini golf, yet it's hit or miss when it comes to accessibility depending on how many windmills, bridges, fire-breathing dragons, and other obstacles the course has to keep you from that eluding hole in one. But Lumberjack Pass Mini Golf has your barrier-free option: at only \$5 per person, it's Lake George's biggest bang for your buck.

For getting on the lake itself, visitors with disabilities have several options in the realm of boating. One of the first sights you'll see is the historic steamboats paddling regularly up and down the lake. The Lake George Steamboat Company has three accessible boats: the *Mohican*, the *Minne-Ha-Ha*, and the *Lac du Saint-Sacrement*, which are all history lessons in themselves. They offer party cruises and lunch and dinner cruises, as well as paddlewheel, moonlight, and fire-

**Warren County
Tourism Department**
www.visitlakegeorge.com

LakeGeorge.com
www.lakegeorge.com

Fort William Henry Museum
www.fwhmuseum.com

Adirondack Adaptive Adventures
www.adaptiveadventure.com

Double H Ranch
www.doublehranch.org

Adirondack Extreme Adventure Course
www.adirondackextreme.com

Lumberjack Pass Mini Golf
www.lumberjackminigolf.com

**The Lake George
Steamboat Company**
www.lakegeorgesteamboat.com

Lake George Kayak
www.lakegeorgekayak.com

Quality Inn
(518) 668-3081

Econo Lodge
(518) 668-2689

Howard Johnson Tiki Motel
(518) 668-5744

Surfside on the Lake
(518) 668-2442

Fort William Henry Resort
(518) 668-3081

Georgian Resort
(800) 525-3436





A panoramic view of Lake George provides a sense of its 32-mile length, above, and Craig Kennedy gets an assist from capable hands in a local waterside park.



works cruises. Only the lower level of these boats are accessible, and some wheelchairs might need assistance across the platforms to the boat. Make your reservations in the village at the Steel Pier Dock, or online.

If you prefer seeing the lake from a smaller craft under your own control, make the short trip up to Bolton Landing to Lake George Kayak for single or tandem sea kayak rentals. They offer guided tours or solo rentals, and no experience is required. They do not provide the padded back rests or rear cushions, so make sure to bring your own padding with you.

BEDS AND BREAKFASTS

After a day full of fun on the lake you'll be hungry, and Lake George has no shortage of eateries. Whenever we're in town we make sure we do two things: get pizza from Capri in the village, and make reservations at the Log Jam in nearby Glens Falls. My husband's mouth waters all summer thinking about the Log Jam, but it's not recommended for the small stomach. I have to make sure I stretch mine out for a week to jam an entire meal from "the 'Jam" in there! The lobsters are fresh, the beef is cooked to perfection, the house potato is well worth the calories, and the service... well, they're practically family to me, so I might be biased, but service at the Jam is always reliably friendly, extremely thorough, and helpfully suggestive if you just can't choose from the exhaustive menu. The servers work in teams of two, so you're never left waiting to ask for more Anjou sauce. Don't forget to grab a handful of those mints on the way out—where do they get those delicious mints?

Additional accessible and memorable dinners out for us in Lake George Village include Grandma's Back Porch for home-style fine dining, Mario's for

the best Italian around—my mother in law worked there in high school!—and The Garrison for pub-style food. Up in Bolton Landing the Algonquin is great for steak and seafood, has a great lunch menu as well, and is right on the water with excellent views and its own boat dock if you travel that way. And if you love home-brewed beer, drive down to Glens Falls for a great dinner and even greater beer at Davidson's Brothers Brewery. Being a resort town, Lake George has no shortage of lodging, unless you're looking for peak dates when the village is packed full of Yankees and Canadians vacationing constantly from mid June to early September. The northern weather only guarantees sunshine during this period, but if you prefer the smaller crowds the brilliant fall colors are breathtaking and peak through the month of October depending on temperatures.

There are several reliable chain inns and lodges in Lake George Village, such as the fully accessible Quality Inn, which is among the best in accessibility in the area with three accessible rooms with two queen beds, roll-in showers with bath benches, an accessible pool (hard to find in Lake George), and a ramp to the modest exercise room. There are two steps up to the Jacuzzi here, however. Other chain hotel options are the Econo Lodge, with two queen accessible rooms on the ground floor, and the Howard Johnson Tiki Motel, with one queen accessible room as well.


If you're looking for something different, the brand-new Surfside on the Lake has four accessible units, two two-bedroom suites, and two standard rooms with two double beds each. Promoting fun, live music, a grand pool, and a club-like restaurant that are all also accessible, this resort beckons wheelchairs with its ADA-standard accessibility, thanks to being a brand new resort. For the older crowd seeking a

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more peaceful atmosphere, the historic Fort William Henry Resort has one accessible room with a roll-in shower and two accessible restaurants. There are stairs to the pool here, however.

There are also three accessible rooms with king size beds at the beautiful Georgian Resort. The bathrooms have tubs, though, and the hotel cannot provide shower benches. But the resort's Bistro Restaurant is accessible and offers a great menu featuring American cuisine.

EVENTS APLENTY

Summers are filled with family festivals, live music, art walks, and annual events such as the Adirondack National Car Show, the Lake George Jazz Festival, the Adirondack Balloon Festival, and Taste of the North Country, all in September alone. October's annual events include the Native American Festival and Oktoberfest, which includes a lunch cruise on the Lac du Saint-Sacrement. So pay Lake George a visit, and tell the folks at the Log Jam I sent you. 

Wheelchair-Friendly Travel

ABLE to Travel is a full-service travel agency specializing exclusively in the needs of individuals with disabilities. In addition to having many years of experience booking accessible trouble-free vacation and business trips, our agents are knowledgeable about the medical and health care needs of people with disabilities. We know the right questions to ask, ensuring that your trip is safe and enjoyable.

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