

# LAKE POWELL - THE VACATION OF A LIFETIME

Grand Canyon River Trips

Book your trip online

Enter to win a FREE trip!

View our Special Offers



## Travel & Explore

### Attractions

#### Book your trip:

- Trip Packages
  - Hotels
  - Las Vegas
  - Golf
- 
- #### Hot Deals
- Arizona
  - Las Vegas
  - San Diego
  - Lake Tahoe

#### Guides:

- Flagstaff
- Grand Canyon
- Kartchner Caverns
- Lake Powell & Lake Powell
- Monument Valley
- Northwest AZ
- Phoenix
- Prescott
- Sedona
- Southeast AZ
- Tucson
- White Mountains
- Other Cities

#### Outdoors:

- Hiking
- Ski Arizona
- Hunt & Fish

#### Arizona Videos

#### AZ Highways TV

#### Online Postcards

#### Scenic Drives

#### Tourist Toolkit

## out-of-state destinations

### California

- So. Calif. Guide
- San Diego Guide

## Lake Powell

An oasis in the desert

### Darren Marcy

The (Farmington, N.M.) Daily Times

FARMINGTON, N.M. - Lake Powell, which lies in Utah and Arizona, straddling the state line between the two, has been called one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Those who have been there would probably find it hard to disagree.

The crystal-clear water reflects the towering red canyon walls that rise hundreds of feet straight up from the depths of the blue-green waters. Magnificent spires, arches and sandstone bluffs create a visual contrast with the waters below.

It's a desert oasis with a little something for everyone - a rugged landscape enveloped in a softness that has to be seen in person to be believed.

Boating and fishing lead the list of activities at the lake, but plenty of people show up to tour some of the 96 side canyons and take in the sights, relax on houseboats, zip across the water on personal watercraft, water ski, scuba dive, camp, hike, mountain bike or take photos.

Boating accounts for 400,000 visitors annually and 325,000 people come to see Rainbow Bridge.

Nearly 3 million people visit Lake Powell annually. Most, if not all, come for the water - 90 percent of which is in Utah. Glen Canyon Dam, the structure that holds the 27 million acre-feet of water in place, and a small portion of the lake lie in Arizona.

Covering 266 square miles, Lake Powell is 186 miles long and has 1,960 miles of shoreline.



Monica Almeida/New York Times

A jet skier rides past the canyon walls of Lake Powell in the early morning. Photo at right is Glen Canyon Dam.



Sarah E. Richards/AP

Rainbow Bridge National Monument is a star attraction at Lake Powell on the Utah side. Two hundred ninety-foot tall and spanning 275 feet, the river-carved arch is made of Navajo sandstone.

### if you go

**Where:** Page, just a few miles from the Arizona-Utah border, serves as the main gateway to Lake Powell. It's 134 miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. 89. You can't miss the lake. Proceed to Wahweap Marina.

### Where to stay:

Houseboating is by far the most popular way to experience the lake, so much so that rentals through the National Park Service-appointed concessionaire, ARAMARK, are booked up to a year and a half in advance.

Those wanting to go sooner should call in case of cancellations, 800-528-6154. Prices are lower and availability higher October through April.

ARAMARK also rents powerboats, water skis, knee boards and personal watercraft. The company operates hotels and rents family trailers, tent and RV campsites at Wahweap, Bullfrog, Halls Crossing and Hite marinas. Hotels and motels also abound in Page. On the lake, camping is free.

**Details:** Carl Hayden Visitor Center at Glen Canyon Dam in Page, (520) 608-6404, or Bullfrog Visitor Center at Bullfrog Marina in Utah, (435) 684-7400.

**Nevada**  
**- Lake Tahoe**  
**- Las Vegas**  
**Hawaii**

QUICK CLICK

[Register](#) | [Log In](#)  
What is this?

SEARCH TRAVEL

  

• [Advanced search, tips](#)



Much of that shoreline is made up of brilliant red, pink and brown vertical canyon walls, rising hundreds of feet straight up in the air. Those walls also extend straight down into the water, sometimes hundreds of feet. Places in the lake are 500 feet deep.

Between the rock walls are sandy beaches, popular camping and picnic spots. Boaters often beach their craft for the evening and then resume their recreational activity the next day.

Those who stay the night are treated to a brilliant night sky featuring some of the darkest skies in the west. On a moonless night, the sky explodes with astronomical delights.

Small arches dot the canyon walls and a few archaeological sites can be seen.

Named for Major John Wesley Powell, a civil war veteran and explorer, the lake is completely surrounded and protected by the Glen Canyon Recreational Area, operated by the National Park Service. Although construction on Glen Canyon Dam began in 1956, the recreation area was set aside by Congress in 1972 and encompasses more than 1.2 million acres.

The praise for Lake Powell would nearly fill the canyons to the same depth as the water it holds.

"There must be more pleasing adventures than a houseboat trip on Lake Powell, but I don't recall any," said Barry Burkhart of *The Arizona Republic*.

More than 275 species of birds inhabit the area, including the peregrine falcon, which now breeds in more than 30 nesting areas in the canyons.

In addition, as many as 45 bald eagles winter in the Lake Powell area, feeding off the fish and soaring high above the water-filled canyons. As many as 11 eagles have been seen at one time, soaring above the Big Bend area of the San Juan River arm of the lake.

More than 750 species of plants occur within Glen Canyon Recreational Area, and a wide variety of animals is known to inhabit the area as well. Bobcats, fox, black bears, coyotes, mountain lions, sheep, jackrabbits, ground squirrels, beavers, wood rats, badgers, kangaroo rats, porcupines, lizards, snakes and bats are all common in the area.

With temperatures reaching into the 50s, many people take houseboat trips in the dead of winter. During the slack period of the winter, the water is often glass-smooth.

Fall may be the prime time for boating, with temperatures reaching into the 70s, yet cool enough to make a campfire a cozy way to head into the night.

[travel & outdoors](#) | [arizona travel guide](#) | [out-of-state destinations](#) | [grand canyon guide](#)

[site map](#) | [azcentral.com main](#) | [news](#) | [sports](#) | [money](#) | [entertainment](#) | [style](#)  
[travel](#) | [health](#) | [families](#) | [food & home](#) | [shop](#) | [español](#) | [weather](#) | [maps](#)  
[classified](#) | [jobs](#) | [cars](#) | [real estate](#) | [apartments](#) | [merchandise](#) | [personals](#)

[customer service](#) | [terms of service](#) | [contact The Republic](#) | [subscribe to The Arizona Republic](#)  
[Newspapers In Education](#) | [The Republic in your community](#) | [about The Republic](#) | [about KPNX-TV](#)

Copyright 2004, azcentral.com. All rights reserved.  
USA Today | Gannett Co. Inc. | Gannett Foundation | Real Cities Network

