

A review by LakeLubbers.com about LEACH LAKE, MICHIGAN

A hidden treasure awaits at Leach Lake. This small lake lies in the Southwest Region of Michigan and is often overshadowed by larger, more well-known lakes. But the mostly-private 125-acre lake offers a world of water enjoyment for the lucky visitor. Actually three small lake basins connected by narrow channels, this lake was formed when retreating glaciers left huge blocks of ice behind. These kettle lakes often have odd shapes, varying depths and are often both spring-fed and gain water from small streams. The smallest, westernmost lobe of the lake and the middle basin hold most of the cottages along the shore. The easternmost lobe is less populated and surrounded by wooded wetlands. The wooded shoreline attracts a variety of wildlife, making canoeing and kayaking on the small lake a delight.

Located about five miles north of Hastings, Leach Lake is an ideal spot for a close-to-home lake vacation. Only 45 miles from Lansing, 37 miles from Kalamazoo and 38 miles from Grand Rapids, Leach Lake can easily be reached in an afternoon from much of Michigan. However, those who arrive here often find it hard to leave . . .there is so much to see and do!

Leach Lake is an all-sports lake. Residents and visitors enjoy water skiing, pontooning, paddle-boating, kayaking, and canoeing on the normally quiet waters. The shape of the three basins is such that sailing and windsurfing can be very enjoyable along the northeast-southwest stretch of water. Because there is no public beach and only a small public boat launch, the water is seldom crowded. The lake supported a small resort for many years in the 1950's into the 1960's which has recently been completely renovated and is now open under the original name, Leach Lake Cabins. The resort offers fun for the whole family. With high speed internet, cable tv, telephones and fully furnished kitchens, bedrooms and baths, it makes a great place for a last minute stay or a family vacation. Although the lake offers some deeper areas, the descent is gradual, making for ideal swim conditions. One couldn't ask for a more delightful, peaceful Michigan vacation than a week or even a month at Leach Lake.

Anglers report the lake offers excellent fishing for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill, pike, perch and crappie. The gravel boat ramp at the northeast corner of the lake opens at four a.m. for those who hope to offer breakfast to the local fish population. The lake is nearly as popular in winter, when ice fishing takes over. Leach Lake makes an ideal base camp for nearby cross-country ski trails, snowmobiling and snowshoeing. A small stream connects Leach Lake with Middle Lake to the east. The stream is not navigable, but there is a public boat launch on Middle Lake also. With the town of Hastings only a few short miles away, Leach Lake is an ideal choice for the self-catered vacation cottage; Hastings is the typical small rural town, with restaurants, movie theaters, grocery stores and all services.

The small size of Hastings belies the opportunities for outdoor recreation and activities the area is known for. Besides several in-town parks and even recreation trails, nearby Charlton Park offers a wealth of history. An entire small village has been restored here along the scenic Thornapple River, including homes, businesses and local landmarks that have been moved here and restored to their original state. All are furnished with original antiques and relics of Barry County's early history. In addition to the village, Charlton Park offers 310 acres of river and lake frontage, with a public bathing beach, boat launch, picnic shelters, volleyball and softball fields. The park is the site of many special interest events during the year, including car shows, Civil War re-enactments, Pow Wows, antique gas and steam engine shows, and flea markets. The Thornapple River itself is a popular canoeing and kayaking destination. As Leach Lake is only eight miles away, the lake makes a great spot to stay for a weekend of flea markets or antique shows.

Just 15 miles southwest of Leach Lake, Yankee Springs Recreation Area And Barry State Game Area offer 22,000 acres of public land for nature observation, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and bird watching. Gun Lake, located within the Recreation Area is available for camping, fishing and swimming. Some trails in the area are barrier-free. Wild turkeys and sandhill cranes are numerous in the area, as are deer and smaller mammals. Much of the area is available for hunting during the appropriate season.

Those choosing to enjoy the occasional bigger-city amenities during a stay can drive to Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo in about 30 minutes. The Frederic Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids holds 132 acres of outdoor sculpture along with manicured landscape gardens in many configurations. Kalamazoo holds a variety of nightlife and sports venues of particular interest to young adults. As a university town, Kalamazoo offers an eclectic assortment of shops, restaurants and unusual entertainment activities sure to please everyone in the group.

A vacation rental on Leach Lake could easily start a family tradition: it's not unusual for families to return to a favorite cottage or cabin year after year. Both rustic cabins and luxurious year-round residences can be found along the lakefront. Those wanting more organized activities can choose a resort cottage. Hotels and motels can be found in Hastings and in the larger cities nearby, or families can choose one of the many local campgrounds on nearby lakes. And the occasional bed-and-breakfast can provide a special romantic get-away in the area. Real estate is often found near Leach Lake, although not often with lake frontage. So make your reservations and start your newest family tradition now. We know you'll be back year after year!