

A Perfect Winni Weekend

A tour around New Hampshire's largest lake has something for everyone.

by MICHAEL CARLTON
photography ROB BOSSI

WINNIPESAUKEE IS A BRUTE OF A lake. It embraces 274 islands in its 72 square miles of surface water, and it takes you 182 miles and several hours to drive the mostly country lanes that encircle Lake "Winni."

There are many layers—from the sublime to the mildly ridiculous—along the lake and its shores. You can walk along the lake and be nearly alone, save for the company of a pair of loons, or you can play miniature golf with legions of screaming kids. You can indulge in innovative cuisine on a candlelit deck where the only noise is the wind whispering, or you can kick off your shoes and down a boilermaker (a shot of whiskey in a stein of beer) chased with a cheeseburger while a raucous crowd roars like a 747 on takeoff.

The cool thing about Lake Winni is that everyone can find his or her place. The disparate communities of the lake tend to appeal to distinct clientele: Wolfeboro to an upscale, quiet crowd interested in fine lodging and dining; Moultonborough to folks who want to soak up country flavor; Center Harbor to laid-back vacationers; Meredith to

people who crave casual sophistication; and Weirs Beach to families. These are just a few of our favorite towns. As you explore the area, you're sure to find something that appeals to you.

WOLFEBORO

Since 1812, the heart of Wolfeboro has been the Wolfeboro Inn, with its snug rooms and the pleasant Wolfe's Tavern, where regular customers' pewter mugs hang from the ceiling. For a different experience, try the nearby Mirror Lake Bed and Boat, which offers stunning views of Mirror Lake, comfortable accommo-

dations, and your own canoe or boat.

Restaurants worth noting are Wolfecatch Fish Market, featuring shrimp, steamers, and lobsters; Wolfetrap Grill & Rawbar, wonderful for watching the parade of vintage wooden boats leaving from the Back Bay Marina; Garwoods, with its waterside deck, colorful umbrellas, and terrific Boat House Grill sandwiches; and Lydia's, which serves coffee, tea, and lighter fare. Mise En Place is the place to snag a takeaway meal or linger over the bistro menu.

If you like shopping, visit the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen's gallery,

The town of Meredith boasts some of the finest lodging on the lake. The Inn at Bay Point (above) is part of The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls complex.

Meredith

The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls, Mill Falls Marketplace, 312 Daniel Webster Hwy., Meredith, NH. Rates: \$99-\$409. 800-622-6455, 603-279-7006. millfalls.com

Abondante Tuscan Trattoria, 30 Main St., Meredith, NH. Open for dinner Memorial Day-Labor Day daily, Labor Day-Memorial Day Wed.-Sun. Entrées: \$12.95-\$20.95. 603-279-7177. abundantenh.com

Sunshine and Pa's, 11 Main St., Meredith, NH. Open for breakfast and lunch daily. Prices: \$5-\$10. 603-279-5280.

Moulton Farm, 18 Quarry Rd., Meredith, NH. Open May-Dec. daily. 603-279-3915. moultonfarm.com

Oglethorpe Fine Arts & Crafts, Mill Falls Marketplace, 312 Daniel Webster Hwy., Meredith, NH. Open daily. 603-279-9909.

Vintage Diversions, Mill Falls Marketplace, 312 Daniel Webster Hwy., Meredith, NH. Open daily. 603-279-4300. vintagediversions.com

The Etcetera Shoppe, Center Harbor Rd. (Rte. 25), Meredith, NH. Open daily. 603-279-5062. etc-shop-nh.com



which showcases the work of some of the state's finest craftspeople. Hampshire Pewter stocks Christmas ornaments and candlesticks, along with other pewter items.

Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy the Russell C. Chase Bridge Falls Path, an easy half-mile walking trail, which starts beside the railroad station and leads to Wolfeboro Falls. The more challenging 12-mile Cotton Valley Trail begins at the falls and meanders around three lakes, across many trestles, and through lovely scenery.

MOULTONBOROUGH

The village's Old Country Store is on

Wolfeboro

Wolfeboro Inn and Wolfe's Tavern, 90 N. Main St., Wolfeboro, NH. Rates: \$95-\$315, including continental breakfast. Tavern open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Entrées: \$6-\$25. 800-451-2389, 603-569-3016. wolfeboroinn.com

Mirror Lake Bed and Boat, 25 Governor Wentworth Hwy., Tuftonboro, NH. Open mid-May to mid-Sept. Rates: \$95-\$150. 603-569-3836. mirrorlakebedboat.com

Wolfecatch Fish Market, 31 Bay St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open Memorial Day-Labor Day daily. 603-569-9900. wolfetrap.com

Wolfetrap Grill & Rawbar, 19 Bay St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open Memorial Day-Labor Day for lunch and dinner daily. Entrées: \$10-\$20. 603-569-1047. wolfetrap.com

Garwoods Restaurant & Pub, 6 N. Main St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open for lunch and dinner

the National Register of Historic Places and is worth a look if only to pick up a memento and walk on floors aching with age. Nearby is the Olde Orchard Inn, a lovely place to relax, enjoy a bountiful breakfast, and amble through the property's two orchards. Loons are an integral part of Winnepesaukee. To learn about these summer visitors, visit The Loon Center, where you can walk along quiet lakeside paths and listen for their call.

CENTER HARBOR

Keepsake Quilting, reputed to be America's largest quilt shop, sells quilts and quilting supplies. Ask about its sister

Memorial Day-Labor Day daily, Labor Day-Memorial Day Thurs.-Tues. Entrées: \$6-\$24. 603-569-7788. garwoodsrestaurant.com

Lydia's Café, 33 N. Main St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open for breakfast and lunch daily. Prices: \$3.15-\$6.75. 603-569-3991.

Mise En Place, 96 Lehner St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open Memorial Day-Thanksgiving for lunch Mon.-Fri., dinner Mon.-Sat.; late Nov. to mid-May for lunch Tues.-Fri., dinner Tues.-Sat. Entrées: \$12-\$24. 603-569-5788.

League of New Hampshire Craftsmen Retail Gallery, 64 Center St., Wolfeboro Falls, NH. Open daily. 603-569-3309. nhcrafts.org/shops.htm

Hampshire Pewter, 43 Mill St., Wolfeboro, NH. Open Mon.-Sat. 800-639-7704, 603-569-4944. hampshirepewter.com

Moultonborough

The Old Country Store, jct. Rtes. 25 and 109, Moultonborough, NH. Open daily. 603-476-5750. nhcountrystore.com

Olde Orchard Inn, 108 Lee Rd., Moultonborough, NH. Rates: \$85-\$185, including full breakfast. 800-598-5845, 603-476-5004. oldeorchardinn.com

The Loon Center, Lee's Mills Rd., Moultonborough, NH. Open July-Columbus Day daily, Columbus Day-June Mon.-Sat. Free. 603-476-5666. loon.org

shops, which cater to needlework and knitting fans. Centre Harbor Cellars has a wide selection of hard-to-find wines and a pleasant and knowledgeable staff, who can suggest wine and food pairings. Canoe, A Restaurant and Tavern will meet your lunch needs and make dinner memorable with dishes such as lobster macaroni and cheese and "drunken" grilled pork tenderloin. After a hearty meal, you may want to take on Red Hill. The 1.7-mile hike will reward you with majestic views of Winni and Squam Lake.

MEREDITH

Located on Winni's western shore, Meredith boasts some of the best accommodations on the lake. The newest and nicest is Church Landing, located in the former St. Charles Church and part of The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls

Center Harbor

Keepsake Quilting, Center's Market, 12 Main St., Center Harbor, NH. Open daily. 603-253-4026. keepsakequilting.com

Centre Harbor Cellars, jct. Rtes. 25 and 25B, Center Harbor, NH. 888-947-9463, 603-253-9463. Open mid-Apr. to Dec. daily, Jan. to mid-Apr. Wed.-Sun. centreharborcellars.com

Canoe, A Restaurant and Tavern, 232 Whittier Hwy., Center Harbor, NH. Open for lunch and dinner daily. Entrées: \$8-\$32. 603-253-4762. eatatcanoe.com



A band concert at Wolfeboro's lakeside gazebo.



Weirs Beach

Logs of Fun, 36 Endicott St., Weirs Beach, NH. Open June-Aug. daily, Sept.-May Sat.-Sun. Call or visit Web site for prices. 603-366-2424. logs-of-fun.com

Fun Spot, 579 Endicott St. N., Weirs Beach, NH. Open daily. Call or visit Web site for prices. 603-366-4377. funspotnh.com

M/S Mount Washington, Mount Washington Cruises, 211 Lakeside Ave., Weirs Beach, NH. Open May 20-Oct. 31 daily. Tickets: \$24-\$50. 888-843-6686, 603-366-5531. cruisenh.com

Weirs Beach Smokehouse Restaurant, 38 Endicott

St., Weirs Beach, NH. Open late Apr. to mid-Oct. for lunch and dinner daily. Entrées: \$10-\$22. 603-366-2400. weirsbeachsmokehouse.com

Kellerhaus, 259 Endicott St., Weirs Beach, NH. Open June-Sept. daily, Oct.-Dec. and Feb.-May Wed.-Mon., Jan. Fri.-Sun. Prices: \$1.45-\$11.50. 603-366-4466. kellerhaus.com

complex. The inn offers 58 rooms with lake views, an indoor/outdoor pool, a full-service spa, and fine food on-site. If you can visit only one of the three most popular Italian restaurants in



Church Landing, one of The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls properties, sits directly on the lake.

town, try Abondante, with its copper-topped tables, snug patio, and excellent pasta. Sunshine and Pa's is the best place for breakfast. About two miles out of town is Moulton Farm, a New Hampshire Agriculture Farm of Distinction, with everything from ice cream and baked goods to flowers and fresh produce.

Back in town, the Mill Falls Marketplace, a converted mill, houses a variety of shops, such as Oglethorpe Fine Arts & Crafts and Vintage Diversions, chockablock with one-of-a-kind artisans' items. Just outside town is The Etcetera Shoppe, with a hodgepodge of goods, including vintage jewelry and hand-embroidered linens.

WEIRS BEACH

Home to the famous Motorcycle Week, Weirs Beach is also a center of family entertainment, with attractions such as Logs of Fun (miniature golf, a climbing wall, and arcade games) and Fun Spot (indoor golf, bowling, and bingo). You can also board the huge *M/S Mount Washington* for a lake cruise. Weirs Beach Smokehouse Restaurant provides a welcome barbecue fix, and Kellerhaus has been serving delicious ice cream and candy since 1906. Want a special treat? Try the ice-cream sundae buffet there. ★