

3 GREAT TRIPS

Interested in going beyond your home territory? Try one of these getaways



1 BOBS LAKE COTTAGES

THE TRIP

An eastern Ontario angling getaway for the whole family.

COST

Prices vary but summer prices start at \$1,800 CDN per week for four people.



GETTING THERE

Located between Ottawa and Kingston, north of Godfrey along Route 38. Detailed directions are available on their website.

GREAT FISHING WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS

BY LONNIE KING

When looking for an eastern Ontario fishing vacation, it's not difficult to find lakes and outfitters within driving distance of Toronto or Ottawa. More challenging is finding accommodation that will impress your travelling companions who want an outdoor experience that includes big-city trimmings. As tall an order as this may be, Bobs Lake Escapes & Cottages delivers, with impeccable accommodations and fantastic fishing.

If you haven't heard of Bobs Lake, you're not alone. Despite its impressive size, there are few community boat launches, resulting in far less boat traffic than other lakes this close to major urban centres. It has prompted many lodge owners, this one included, to offer launching facilities as part of their service.

Intriguing accommodations

Bobs Lake Escapes & Cottages offers six cottages that accommodate everything from a single person to parties of up to 60 people. Each building includes Wi-Fi, modern-cooking facilities, and even ice-cream makers — a big hit with kids and this dad. All cottages are dog friendly and include an electric or wood-burning fireplace. What struck me most about the accommodations was the many unique, fun features that have been incorporated into the units.

For our visit this past summer, my wife and two sons opted for the seclusion and close-to-nature ambiance of the main Badour Island cottage. It has a tree fort and half-size basketball court, along with a host of amenities nicer than many homes — mine included.

PHOTOS: LONNIE KING

The Isaacs Acres cottage, also situated on an island, features a deck built around existing trees and boulders. It offers a sleeping area for the kids that is only accessible by a retractable staircase that pulls down from the ceiling.

Interesting water

The real draw for us was the lake. At approximately 16 kilometres long, and with over 200 kilometres of shoreline, there was more water than we could explore during our short time there.

Bobs Lake was created almost 150 years ago when a dam was built at Bolingbroke in 1870 with the aim of forming a large reservoir to supply water to the Rideau Canal during summer. The higher water level merged four lakes into one and created a number of fertile, vegetated bays, which are hotspots for bass and panfish. But Bobs also holds pike, walleye, and even lake trout in deeper sections.

Knowing that the lake was too big to cover in one visit, I spoke with local guide Sebastian Kowalchuk prior to our trip. He told us to seek out emergent vegetation in 10 to 12 feet of water adjacent to islands and bays close to Badour Island. This information turned out to be a real trip-saver, as we were able

to zero in on a working pattern right away, even though it rained almost non-stop during our stay.

During breaks in the weather, we scanned deep structure with the sonar looking for healthy vegetation. We then quickly worked the weeds with bucktail jigs and other fast moving search lures, like spinnerbaits and rattlebaits.

This approach was remarkably effective, yielding consistent action from largemouth bass, pike, and the occasional walleye. Pike were the most plentiful fish caught using this pattern almost everywhere, and all the walleye we landed were larger than the allowable 40- to 50-centimetre slot size. Given more time we would have loved to explore the many seductive looking shallow bays, larger weed flats, and deeper lake trout habitat, but we were content with the way we played the weather we were dealt.

Family fun

It was heartening to see just how much fun the kids had in spite of the rain. The Badour Island cottage is best described as a spacious playground. The kids passed the time playing ping-pong on the main floor, and kept in touch with friends via Wi-Fi. When the sun came out there was kayaking, paddle boarding, and swimming — not to mention loads of panfish caught right off the dock.

Bobs Lake Escapes & Cottages is probably fancier than most anglers are accustomed to, but my wife and kids greatly appreciated those extra amenities and finer touches. More appealing for the angler is the sheer size of the lake and limited public access, which certainly contributes to the quality fishing.

Next trip >>



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ACCOMMODATIONS

We stayed at the main cottage on Badour Island, which sleeps 12. There are four mainland cottages, plus a fish-cleaning hut. A new handicapped-accessible cottage sleeps 12.

CONTACT

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TRIP NOTES

- Bring a boat or rent one — various craft are available
- Consider hiring fishing guide Sebastian Kowalchuk (www.cottagefishingadventures.com) to speed up the fish-finding process
- Each cottage is equipped with an ice-cream maker. Bring your own ingredients
- For ice fishing, mainland facilities are open
- The ramp for the island cottages is not at the main lodge, so get directions when you book your trip

