

## Houseboating on Raystown Lake

# *Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn?* Not Quite!

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*Mark Twain* never envisioned this when he sent Tom and Huck adrift on a raft.

While the duo of Sawyer and Finn had a raft of logs lashed together and that suited them just fine, the houseboats of today, like the mighty Mississippi itself, have come a long way.

Imagine renting the best lakeside or beachfront cottage. Now imagine pushing that building from the shore onto the surface of an azure lake and setting sail, the scenery changing in front of your very eyes with each passing day. Now picture giggling children, water slides, diving platforms, soothing hot tubs, hours spent fishing, sunning on a private deck with no disturbance save for the sounds of singing native birds.

Now you have an idea of what houseboating on Raystown Lake is all about. Only you just have half the picture. The full panoramic snapshot can

only be obtained by actually booking a vessel and living it. Seventy miles north of Cumberland, MD, Raystown Lake, offers a full docket and wealth of houseboats at the ready for a vacation at nature's pace. Only with perks.

Houseboating at Raystown Lake provides the nature lover — be it water or mountains — with scenery unparalleled to that of any other type of getaway spot. From one of three private decks on board, boat tenants can see wild turkeys, deer, bear, turtles, squirrels, raccoons, beaver, ducks, ravens and even two known nesting families of bald eagles. Family outings on the water allow children and children at heart a chance to slide or dive from the back of the boat. Quiet evenings can be spent anchored in a private cove, allowing the natural rock of the water to lull you into a peaceful slumber.

The menu of activities is endless. You can do it all or nothing. From physical activities such as hot



*Houseboats of various sizes and styles (below) line the docks while others seek solitude anywhere along Raystown Lake's 118 miles of shoreline. Above: A family outing—houseboat style.*



dogging from the back of a boat to just relaxing near an island in the middle of the water with a book and waving to neighbors as they sail by.

For the angler, this is a paradise. Fishermen can cast lines and pull up muskies, small and large mouth bass, strippers, carp, perch, lake trout, brown trout, Atlantic salmon and crappies.

Anchored, travelers can trade their sea legs for land and hike or bike one or all five dedicated trails in the awaiting 21,000 acres of lush uninterrupted forests. In 2004, 10 additional miles of trail will be added with plans for an additional 25 miles in 2006.

Raystown Lake is home to two separate places to rent houseboats for three, four nights or a week. One of them is Seven Points Marina, the largest marina of its kind in the entire keystone state, with a fleet of 16 houseboats that rent from \$1000 to \$2300 per rental period.

Renters can choose from units that sleep up to eight, have four separate bedrooms, ceiling fans, plenty of storage, hot showers, full ovens, microwaves, and cedar lined closets. For the truly adventurous, the boats offer a chance to slide into the water from a large upper deck into pristine waters on a lake with 118 miles of shoreline. Some boats are even equipped with hot tubs, providing the rare sensation of being surrounded by a surge of soothing bubbles while sitting under the stars, all the while floating on a manmade lake. The houseboats range 40 to 58 feet in length. All boats are air conditioned and all have generators.

And there is Lake Raystown Resort, which rents three house boats but extends its season well into the fall, affording a late vacationer a chance to catch the changing foliage in the mountains that surrounds the water.

*The Raystown Visitor Center is a good place to begin your visit to Raystown Lake. The Center features a well designed, educational museum, conference auditorium, gift shop featuring local artisans, an amphitheater and rest facilities. You pass the Center on the main road to the marina and other facilities. For more information on the Raystown Lake Region, contact the visitors bureau at 1-888-RAYSTOWN or [www.raystown.org](http://www.raystown.org)*



*The perfect family outing.*

Lake Raystown Resort has been known to book their vessels a year ahead of time. Seven Points begins taking reservations in December for the following year. Make reservations early is the rule of thumb when planning a houseboat vacation. The Resort boats can sleep up to 10 and have two heads on board in addition to the standard features. Boat owners interested in enjoying this experience often bring their own canoe, kayak, fishing, skiing or pontoon boat to use as a shuttle and to increase the options for water based fun.

People have also been known to purchase these vessels. There is one privately owned boat in the marina that stretches 80 feet long. Still another that has its own interior elevator. Jim's Anchorage, located nearby, sells them but employees here will readily admit that most people enjoy renting them for the thrill of captaining their own ship for five blissful days.

Intrigued? There's absolutely no reason to be intimidated. The

moment a customer arrives at the marina, he is greeted by a friendly staff and given a temporary safe boating certificate, as required by the Fish and Game Commission, and then a mechanic comes on board for a mini-lesson in vessel operations. All boats also have ship to shore radio with help available 24 hours a day. And the Coast Guard Auxiliary is close by and on call. Life vests are supplied for all on board.

*Houseboating offers something for everyone, from hot tubs and slides, to fishing and swimming. Stay at the dock, drift with the breeze, or tie up on an island or along quiet banks.*

*Right: Ben Filson and Jennie Mull enjoy soaking in a hot tub on one of the vacation rental houseboats. Beautiful scenery and the quiet calm of Raystown Lake add to the enjoyment.*



*T.J. Schrack enjoys fishing from his Grandfather's houseboat.*



Resting like a blue sapphire in the emerald mountains of South Central Pennsylvania, Raystown Lake is the only fresh water impoundment between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. And every serene inch of it is open to exploration by houseboat. At Raystown Lake, American and natural history have formed a more perfect union. While the lake is relatively new as far as bodies of water are concerned, its appeal and what can be witnessed by renting a houseboat

is incomparable and the potential for personal adventure limitless. Private coves wait to be explored, fish wait to be caught, breathtaking sunsets on a horizon where water meet sky wait to be witnessed.

And who knows? You just might see ol' Tom and Huck driftin' by one beautiful sunset evening.



*These photos show the various sizes of houseboats available. There are also different hull designs—some are pontoon types while others are more like a very wide boat hull—both are very reliable and stable.*

**NOTE: For information on houseboat sales or vacation rentals, see page 59.**