

# DIVE RIGHT IN!

Madison's lakes are the perfect launching point to a day of family fun. Here are ten ways to enjoy the water and each other.

By Katie Vaughn



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## 1. Lakeside Lounge

The Memorial Union Terrace is the city's favorite hangout spot for good reason! Snag a table and sunburst chairs, and settle in with popcorn, brats, or a towering Babcock ice cream cone. Soak up the sunshine and watch boats bobbing out on Lake Mendota, or stop by at night for live music or an outdoor movie.

## 2. Cruise Control

It's hard to top a day spent cruising one of Madison's major lakes. Betty Lou Cruises set off every day of the week from April thru September, with special meals (choose among pizza, fish fries, and ice cream sundaes) and great views, while the Madison School & Community Recreation's Pontoon Program offers popular drop-in boat rides. And bigger groups will have a blast on the Pontoon Porch, a two-level house boat-pontoon hybrid that floats around Lake Monona.

## 3. Pizza Party

Come for the pizza (and lasagna, meatball sandwich, and other Greenbush delicacies), stay for the Lake Monona sunsets. Paisan's is perched on a covetable slice of downtown lakeside land. In the summer, its expansive patio is filled with tables topped with red and white checkered tablecloths—and diners ready to linger over a hearty meal.

## 4. Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Take your pick of paddlesports on peaceful, wake-free Lake Wingra. Longtime outfitter Wingra Boats can hook you up with a canoe, kayak, or rowboat. For more of a challenge, give stand-up paddleboarding a try. For major smiles all around, take a swan-shaped paddleboat out for a spin.

## 5. With the Band

The Marquette Waterfront Festival is an annual celebration (this year June 10 and 11) of music, community, and local waterways. Set at Yahara Place Park, where Lake Monona meets the Yahara River, the two-day event features nearly a dozen bands, food vendors, and a wildly popular Fool's Flotilla parade of decorated canoes.

## 6. Urban Oasis

If a sandy stretch just off of Willy Street seems too good to be true, you haven't been to B.B. Clarke Beach! This city-owned beach boasts a playground, a few picnic tables, and grassy area in addition to the Lake Monona shoreline, and a lifeguard on duty daily in the summer ensures safety along with swimming and splashing.

## 7. Live on the Edge

You don't have to be a guest at Madison's iconic waterfront hotel to enjoy Lake Mendota. At The Edgewater, you can grab a bite on the pier of The Boathouse, or enjoy live music in its beautiful public

plaza Friday and Saturday evenings in the summer. Or hop aboard the Edgewater Water Taxi for a fabulous ferry over to the Memorial Union Terrace.

## 8. High Notes

Get ready to boogie down at the most scenic dance parties in town. The Monona Terrace rooftop provides a gorgeous lakeside setting for two summertime concert series: Concerts on the Rooftop features local dance bands Thursday nights in June and July, while Dane Dances, held Friday evenings in August, delights with R&B, funk, salsa, and merengue performers.

## 9. On a Roll

Join the Madison Log Rolling team as they bring 19th-century lumberjack skills into modern times. Hop on a log in Lake Wingra and give the sport a spin—use your feet to roll the log and send your opponent splashing into the water. Madison Log Rolling holds classes, camps, and parties from June through August.

## 10. Show Time

Water skiers young and old have come together since the 1960s to entertain audiences as the Mad-City Ski Team. The award-winning competitive team sets off from Law Park on Lake Mendota to put on a dazzling show nearly every Sunday evening from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

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**PHOTOS** 1. Boys on Union Terrace chairs. Photo courtesy of Jeff Halverson Photography LLC. 2. Kids' first time tubing on Lake Waubesa. Photo courtesy of Tree-Hollow Cottage Photography. 3. Madison Ski Team practice on Lake Monona. Photo courtesy of Jeff Halverson Photography LLC.