

[refresh] Pride & Jewel

Lazy Days on Lake Murray

Spread like the intricate fingers of a snowflake, Lake Murray's innumerable coves and inlets allow for both quiet solitude and family enjoyment. Found just west of the Columbia city center, the lakeshore encompasses nearly 80 square miles. Lakeside rental homes, multiple marinas and easily accessed boat launches sit perched on its warm-water shores.

Water, Water Everywhere. While the majority of Murray's shoreline is rocky, a few prime beaches do exist — if you know where to look. One of the lake's most popular is Sandy Beach. Found in the southeast section of the lake — a few miles from the earthen Saluda Dam — this white-sand oasis is ideal for barbecues, swimming, tanning or reconnecting with your family. As small waves lap the shore, visitors can't help but feel they've been transported to a coastal beach. If you've rented a boat at one of the lake's full-service marinas, you can beach it right on shore and save yourself the hassle of anchoring.

In addition to sandy beaches, secluded coves and inviting inlets, Lake Murray also features a peppering of tiny islands. Among the most interesting is Goat Island. And oddly enough, goats do meander around this particular island, perfect for a quirky photo opportunity.

The lake itself is a self-contained tourist attraction. Shore-side vacation rentals provide easy and anytime access to

Murray's banks, while restaurants overlook its placid waters.

On select occasions, including the Fourth of July, the lake hosts floating concerts. During these much-anticipated events, a dock is moored in the lake and bands take to the stage, with crowds cheering from their own boats and floats.

Water Wise. The best time to take a dip is March through November, when the water is at its warmest.

For anglers, consider purchasing a seven-day fresh-water fishing permit and try your luck against large-mouth, striper and crappie.

The Dreher Island State Recreation Area is composed of three islands in Lake Murray. Each is linked via bridges. This park system is ideal

for those who want to enjoy the lake sans watercraft. Camping, hiking, fishing and picnic sites are all available.



Photos: Playing on the waters and shores of Lake Murray.
All photos ©Suzette Morganelli