

All the way from Alaska to the Florida Keys, our country abounds in great fishing areas where solitude, sunshine, and sea make testing your skill or just watching the sport pure pleasure.

THIS SUMMER nearly one in every four Americans will participate in some form of pleasure-boating. Neither baseball, football, nor basketball—even all three together—can match our mushrooming interest in boating.

In the last generation alone, boating has changed from a pastime for millionaires to a sport for millions. About eight million boats are afloat nowadays, and their owners include butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers—corporation executives with plush cabin cruisers and laborers who carry dingies on car tops to a special fishing hole.

What caused this boom in boating?

Everyone has more leisure, of course, and there's a trend away from the stadium sports to the do-it-yourself kind. Of the latter, boating is one of the most versatile. A modern boatman can go fishing, camping, water-skiing, cruising, exploring, or simply escape to a new world.

It's a perfect family sport, and today there's a boat to fit any budget.

The efficient outboard motor certainly is an important factor in the boom. So are the new trailers which make it possible to take a boat on any vacation. But more important, perhaps, is the vast amount of navigable water in every part of our land. Here is a list of some of America's most exciting boating areas. At least one, and perhaps several, is within a day's drive of every FAMILY WEEKLY reader:

CALIFORNIA'S GOLD RUSH CREEKS: This is an intricate, endless network of waterways formed by the meandering Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers which would

require months to explore. Once, a century ago, only the sailing bark *Eliza* traveled with supplies to Sacramento. Now it's possible to launch boats at many points from California's capital downstream to Suisun Bay—or even down to San Pablo and San Francisco Bays. Many relics of the region's rowdy past remain, such as the rusting skeletons of gold dredges abandoned after the gold rushes of the 1850s. There's good fishing, too.

NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA: Once Oklahoma was a bone-dry state, but nowadays in the northeastern corner it boasts almost as much impounded water as it does land. Three of the largest and most picturesque lakes are Tenkiller, formed by a giant slab of concrete across the Illinois River, and Fort Gibson Lake and Lake of the Cherokees just to the north. The last two are formed by dams on the Neosho River. Besides good fishing and ample boating facilities, the rolling hills all around have the flavor of Indian and "bad man's country," thanks to Cole Younger, Pretty Boy Floyd, and others who once roamed here.

KEY WEST, FLORIDA: For the more adventurous boating fans, especially those interested in fishing the salt or skin diving, the many docks and marinas of Key West are perfectly situated. All of the lower Keys are within easy reach. So are the so-called "out-islands"—the Marquesas and, still farther, the Dry Tortugas. From here, it's also possible to cruise the Cape Sable country and the Everglades on the tip of Florida's mainland. There are even a few shipwrecks and lost treasures still to be discovered.

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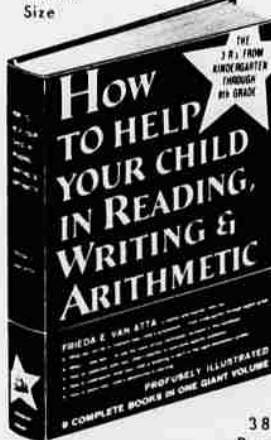


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