Midwest Lake Vacation Spots: Spider Lake Lodge

Rustic charm on Big Spider Lake

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Stone front patio at Spider Lake Lodge. For more photos, check out the gallery »

HAYWARD, WISCONSIN DRIVE TIME: 8 HOURS

LOCATED BY: BIG SPIDER LAKE BEST FOR: SERENITY SEEKERS

In the early 1920s, the Elgin auto mechanic Ted Moody got some urgent news: His physician told him his health depended on getting out of the city and into some fresh air. Moody bought property in Hayward, Wisconsin, and hired a Native American craftsman to build a fishing

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camp in the style of the compoundlike family summer homes that were being constructed in the Adirondack Mountains. When the lodge opened in 1923, it could be reached only by boat.

Ninetyyears later, a stay at this secluded haven is still just what the doctor ordered. Thoughit's accessible by road now, that doesn't make this picture sque bed-and-breakfast feel any less remote. The seven guestrooms in the lodge are small by today's standards; the smallest hold a queen-size bed



and not much else, with a private bathroom down the hall. Slightly larger rooms—including the Moonahanis, with its canopy bed and original log walls, or Bear's Den, outfitted in red-and-black bear motifs and with a bear pelt resting on the bed—have sitting areas with a wood-burning stove and attached baths. The nearby Curfew Cabin is a tiny two-bedroom cottage with a full kitchen and screened-in porch.

Since 2001, the lodge has been owned by Jim Kerkow and Craig Mason, two interior decorators who also run a design studio in Hayward. They have retained the property's authenticity by decorating with antiques original to the lodge, many dating back to the Moody era, but also adding newer furnishings that they've designed in the Northwoods style. The vibe is decidedly modern camp-chic. Quirky pairings—such as the chandelier made of antlers hanging over a giant elegant floral arrangement in the main dining hall—keep things light rather than oppressively rustic. The screened-in porch on the second floor of the lodge is the perfect place to start tackling your reading list, and the dock is ideal for relaxing in the sun, taking a dip, or going for a paddle.

Quiche, roasted potatoes, and poached fruit might be on the menu for breakfast, the only meal served on the premises. When hungerstrikes later in the day, guests must hop in the car and make the 20-minute trek into town. We recommend The Angry Minnow (10440 Florida Ave.; 715-934-3055, angryminnow.com) for dinner and a brewery tour—all the incentive you need to leave the cozy lodge.

DAY TRIPS

Soak up the old-fashioned charm of Hayward's Main Street for an afternoon. Skip lunch and snack your way through town: pickle popcorn at Main Street Gourmet Popcorn (10546 Main St.; 715- 934-8444), maple-walnut fudge at Tremblay's Sweet Shop (10569 Main St.; 715-634-2785), and sweet, fruity blends at HookStone Winery (10588 Main St.; 715-634-9463, hookstone.com). Down the block on Second Street, unwind at West's Hayward Dairy (15848 W. Second St.; 715-634-2244, westshaywarddairy.com), an old-school creamery. For a more rambunctious afternoon, try Fred Scheer's Lumberjack Show (15642 County Hwy. B; 715-634-6923), where men in plaid wieldaxes. Hayward also hometothe Fresh Water Fishing Hallof Fame (10360 Hallof Fame Dr.; 715-634-4440, freshwater-fishing.org), a mecca for the muskie lover in your party.

THE DETAILS

10472 W. Murphy Blvd., Hayward; 800-653-9472, spiderlakelodge.com

Rooms are \$159 to \$350 per night, year-round.

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