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Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Dive in to divine weather by the lake

By Larry Olmsted
Special for USA TODAY

Weather is not the first criterion most people consider when shopping for a vacation home, but maybe it should be. Weather is something that needs to be dealt with every single day — and in Coeur d'Alene, they deal with it by boating, biking, hiking and playing golf.

Winter is not a highlight, but the other three seasons are not only good, they're great. Almost every day from early spring to late fall is sunny and warm. It rarely rains, but droughts are no worry, thanks to ample winter snowpack in the mountains. Moreover, biting insects are remarkably absent, something virtually unheard of in lake communities.

"A lot of second-home owners come for the three seasons, and winter someplace else," says Sandi Bloem, mayor of Coeur d'Alene and owner of a downtown jewelry store. "We have plenty of sun, but no extremes, no hurricanes, no tornadoes, no bugs, but very clean air and very clean water."

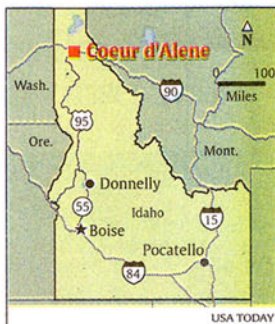
"Second-home activity has definitely increased," she adds. "We've been discovered, I think, and I'm fourth-generation here."

Located in the panhandle of northwestern Idaho, just minutes from the Washington state border, Lake Coeur d'Alene resembles a small Lake Tahoe. But not too small. It's more than 25 miles long, 1 to 3 miles wide, with about 135 miles of shoreline.

The town of Coeur d'Alene sits at the northern end of the lake, a quaint village with a large downtown waterfront park, a few blocks of shops and restaurants, and the Coeur d'Alene Resort, a large complex of lakefront buildings, shops and marinas.

The rest of the lake is lined with homes, small coves boasting boat-accessed restaurants, large patches of undeveloped open space, and a few new golf-centric residential developments.

Like Minnesota and the shores of the Great Lakes, many lakefront properties are vacation cottages that have been in families for generations. Most of the second-home activity is in new homes and condos in town or in large developments.



Best for

Sunny, lakeside living.

Claim to fame

The Coeur d'Alene Resort golf course has the world's only movable island green, one of golf's most famous holes.

Don't miss

The town's triathlon attracts an international field.

Getting There

The airport in Spokane, Wash., is 32 miles away.

Tourism information

coeurdalene.org



Black Rock Development

Just skip winter: The rest of the year is beautiful in Coeur d'Alene, a town on the northern end of the lake of the same name, which is near the Washington border.

A look at three Coeur d'Alene neighborhoods:

- **Downtown.** The heart of Coeur d'Alene is small but features a mix of properties. Older cottages and small homes sell for as little as \$165,000. New, larger townhouses sell in the mid- to high \$300,000s. And condos in the luxurious 30-unit lakefront Terraces building run from \$3.4 million (unfinished) to \$5.9 million (finished and furnished).
- **Black Rock.** The premier residential development outside of town, Black Rock (blackrockidaho.com), is a full-service, second-home community where most residents come for the entire summer. It is anchored by a golf course that was rated by *Golf Digest* as the best new course in the nation when it opened three years ago; a second course by Tom Weiskopf opens next summer. Other facilities include a children's club, tennis, equestrian center, marina and two clubhouses. The community encompasses 1,800 acres and has 726 home-sites planned, with about 200 built and occupied. Lots run from \$150,000 to \$2.5 million. Finished, two- to four-bedroom homes go for \$850,000 to \$1.25 million.
- **Bellerive.** Coeur d'Alene's newest waterfront community, Bellerive (belleriveidaho.com), is on the edge of town, and mixes in-town and lakefront lifestyles. The development has a blend of residences and commercial space, including shops and restaurants. The 70 residential units include condos, lofts and single-family houses, priced from the \$400,000s to about \$1.5 million.



Coeur d'Alene Resort

On the market: The Terraces is the only ownership option at the famed Coeur d'Alene Resort — and it is also the priciest option in town.

High price

\$5,900,000

- **Bedrooms:** 3
- **Bathrooms:** 4½
- **Size:** 6,300 square feet
- **Features:** Fully furnished with custom-designer furniture, art, electronics. Two huge lakefront terraces. Large commercial kitchen indoors as well as full-gourmet kitchen outside. Home theater room, mini-office, master bedroom suite with his and her bathrooms. Private elevator, two-car garage. Ownership includes private marina slip, no-fee memberships at golf club, access to all resort services and complimentary chauffeur service.



Black Rock Development

On the market: This two-bedroom golf cottage is in Black Rock, one of the nation's top-rated golf communities.

Midrange price

\$850,000

- **Bedrooms:** 2
- **Bathrooms:** 2½
- **Size:** 1,485 square feet
- **Features:** Traditional Old West design of stone and wood. Fully furnished and outfitted with flat-screen TVs, custom cabinets and more. Great room with fireplace, large covered terrace.