

Lake Powell: Discovering the Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona

by Jane Price, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Have you ever been on Ellen's Energy Adventure and seen that [gorgeous vista of a dam and lovely blue lake behind it](#)? Perhaps you thought it was Hoover Dam and Lake Mead? Think again! It is Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell. The lake was also featured in the film, *Maverick*, starring Mel Gibson and Jody Foster. Although the lake is well known in the west, it is virtually unknown in the east. This is a shame.

Glen Canyon Dam was built from 1956-66 in order to protect Lake Mead from filling up with silt from the Colorado River. With approximately 1,960 miles of shoreline, it has done its job. At the time it was built, and it continues on to this day, the dam and lake were very controversial. Much of Glen Canyon was flooded, burying habitat, ancient artifacts, and lovely rock formations.

Lake Powell is quite off the beaten path for a tourist destination. Going from Flagstaff, Arizona, you must travel along U.S. Route 89 through Navajo Reservation land, with few facilities along the way. This used to be a dangerous road to travel, but it has been widened to four lanes in most places to improve this. The one big plus is most of the route parallels the incredible Painted Desert, so there is much to see as you drive. Also, there is an interesting Navajo trading post in Cameron to stop and visit along the way.

While there is more than one place to stay along the lake, the Wahweap/Page, Arizona area is the main one. It is close by the dam and the Carl Heyden Visitors Center, a huge marina at Wahweap, the Lake Powell Resort, and several tours of the lake and nearby Antelope Canyon.

One of the more interesting "time travel" experiences converges on the area during Daylight Savings Time. Arizona does not observe Daylight Savings Time, but the Navajo Reservation and Utah do. Thus you can pass back and forth through time (zones) very easily from Arizona to the reservation, back to Arizona, and to Utah in less than an hour. Just make sure when you book a tour that you know what time zone the operator is using!

As mentioned above, several tours are offered in the Page area. One that never fails to inspire awe is the Rainbow Bridge Tour. This is sacred ground to the Navajos and is located on their land. Before the lake, it was only accessible by a grueling hike or horseback ride into Navajo out

country. Now, a boat takes you on a tour of the lower part of the lake, passing by rock formations that take your breath away, to dock within a short half-mile to one mile easy hike (depending on lake levels) of Rainbow Bridge. This is the world's largest natural bridge, spanning 275 feet, standing 295 high. Truly a natural wonder of this earth.

While at Wahweap, you'll notice a selection of really cool houseboats at the marina. Most have some kind of water slide attached to them and are privately owned, but Lake Powell Resorts offers a nice selection for rent. Most accommodate 6-12 people, and at the prices they charge, you'll want to share the fun/expense with friends or relatives. They give you navigational maps and houseboat instructions for beginners. I have never done this, but it sounds like fun, especially if you enjoy sleeping under the stars on the top deck, swimming, fishing, and jet skiing, all on a clean, blue lake surrounded by majestic towers of rock. Just book a year to 9 months in advance for the summer months.

Page is also a good center for touring several national parks and monuments: Grand Canyon North Rim, Monument Valley, Canyon De Chelly, Escalante, Lee's Ferry, Navajo National Monument, Wupatki, Vermillion Cliffs, and Pipe Spring are all within easy reach.

I took this easygoing trip with my sister and kids. It was a cool, relaxing afternoon and I got the best "dam" picture I ever took!

About The Author: Jane lives in southeast Arizona with her husband, three granddaughters, and the family parrots. She is an Annual Passholder for Disneyland as well as a Disney Vacation Club member.

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