Packing for a Lake Day at a Vermont Marina Resort

A day on the water at a lakeside resort in Vermont is one of those simple pleasures that rewards a bit of forethought. Whether you plan to launch a boat, paddle a kayak, or simply lounge on the shore with a book, having the right gear makes the difference between a relaxed afternoon and a scramble for shade or dry socks. The goal is to pack smartly so you can focus on the water and the views rather than on problems you could have solved before you left your RV site.

Start With the Vessel

If you are bringing your own boat, kayak, or paddleboard, the first thing to confirm is that the launch is open and that your equipment is ready. Check the weather forecast and water conditions before you hitch the trailer or strap the kayak to the roof. Wind on Lake Champlain can pick up quickly, and a forecast that says light breeze in the morning can mean chop by midday. For a small powerboat, make sure the battery is charged, the fuel is fresh, and the drain plug is in. For paddle craft, inspect the hull for cracks and check that all bungees and deck lines are secure. A few minutes of inspection at the RV site saves you a frustrating trip back to shore.

Safety Gear Is Non-Negotiable

Life jackets are not just a legal requirement; they are the single most important item on any boat or paddleboard. Every person on board needs a properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Children under a certain age have specific size and fit rules, so check those before you go. It is also wise to carry a spare. Beyond life jackets, a whistle or air horn attached to each jacket lets you signal if you become separated from your vessel. A waterproof floating flashlight or strobe is useful for unexpected delays near dusk. If your boat has a motor, confirm that the fire extinguisher is onboard and not expired. For paddlecraft, a paddle leash keeps your paddle from drifting away if you flip, and a small repair kit with duct tape and a patch can handle minor punctures on an inflatable kayak or paddleboard.



Sun and Weather Protection

Vermont sun on the water is intense even on overcast days. Bring a high-SPF, water-resistant sunscreen and apply it before you step onto the dock. A wide-brimmed hat and polarized sunglasses cut glare and protect your eyes. A long-sleeve rash guard or lightweight sun shirt is more comfortable than reapplying sunscreen every hour. If the forecast includes a chance of rain, pack a waterproof jacket or poncho. A sudden afternoon shower on the lake can be refreshing, but being wet and cold in a breeze is unpleasant. A dry bag or two is essential for keeping your phone, keys, wallet, and any electronics dry. Even if you are just paddling close to shore, a dry bag is cheap insurance.

View the location on Google Maps

Hydration and Food

Being on the water dehydrates you faster than you might expect. Bring more water than you think you need. A one-liter bottle per person per hour of activity is a reasonable guideline, though you can adjust based on heat and exertion. A reusable insulated bottle keeps water cool. For food, pack snacks that do not require refrigeration and are easy to eat with one hand: trail mix, granola bars, fruit, and sandwiches. Avoid anything that melts quickly or creates a mess. A small cooler with ice packs can hold drinks and perishable items, but keep it shaded or under a seat to extend its cooling. If you are mooring at a marina slip or tying up at a shoreline access point, you might also walk to a nearby store or cafe, but having your own food means you are not dependent on its hours or menu.

Comfort and Convenience Items

A few extras turn a good lake day into a great one. A lightweight towel or a camp towel dries quickly and takes up little space. A change of clothes in a dry bag means you are not stuck in damp shorts for the ride back to your RV. For paddlers, a waterproof phone case or a pouch with a lanyard lets you take photos without worry. A small first-aid kit with bandages, antiseptic

wipes, and blister treatment handles minor scrapes. A multi-tool or a small knife can cut fishing line, open a snack package, or tighten a loose screw on a piece of gear. If you plan to fish, check the Vermont fishing regulations and bring a valid license, a basic tackle box, and a net. For those who prefer to stay on shore, a camp chair, a beach blanket, and a book or a deck of cards provide quiet entertainment while watching the boats go by.

Apple Island Resort, located on the shores of Lake Champlain in South Hero, Vermont, offers RV sites with full hookups, marina access, and a nine-hole golf course. The resort also provides a heated pool, a hot tub, and a general store, making it a convenient base for lake day adventures. When you pack for a day on the water, remember that the resort's marina slip and shoreline access are available to guests, so you can launch your kayak or tie up your boat without leaving the property.



What to Leave Behind

Packing is also about knowing what not to bring. Leave glass bottles at your RV site; glass on a boat or beach is a safety hazard and is prohibited in many areas. Avoid heavy, non-essential items that take up space and add weight. A bulky cooler full of ice may be tempting, but it can make a small boat or kayak unstable. Instead, pack a small, soft-sided cooler with just what you need. If you bring a speaker for music, keep the volume low enough that you can hear other boats and voices. And while it is tempting to bring a pet, not all dogs are comfortable on a boat or in a kayak. If your dog is not a strong swimmer or is easily startled, it may be better to leave them at the RV site with a shaded, water-accessible spot.

Apple Island Resort is also on Instagram.

A Final Word on Timing

The best lake days start early. Morning on Lake Champlain is often calm, with flat water and cooler temperatures. By midday, the breeze picks up and the sun is high, which can make paddling or boating more tiring. Plan your most active time for the morning, and save the afternoon for swimming, reading, or a nap in the hammock. Check the weather forecast again before you head out, and if thunderstorms are predicted, stay off the water. Lightning on an open lake is dangerous, and the safest place is inside a vehicle or a building. The same goes for high wind warnings: if small craft advisories are in effect, it is better to enjoy the lake from the shore and save the boat trip for another day.



Apple Island Resort is open seasonally from May 1 through October 20. For more information about rates, reservations, and amenities, contact them at +1 802-372-3800 or visit their location at 71 US-2, South Hero, VT 05486, USA.