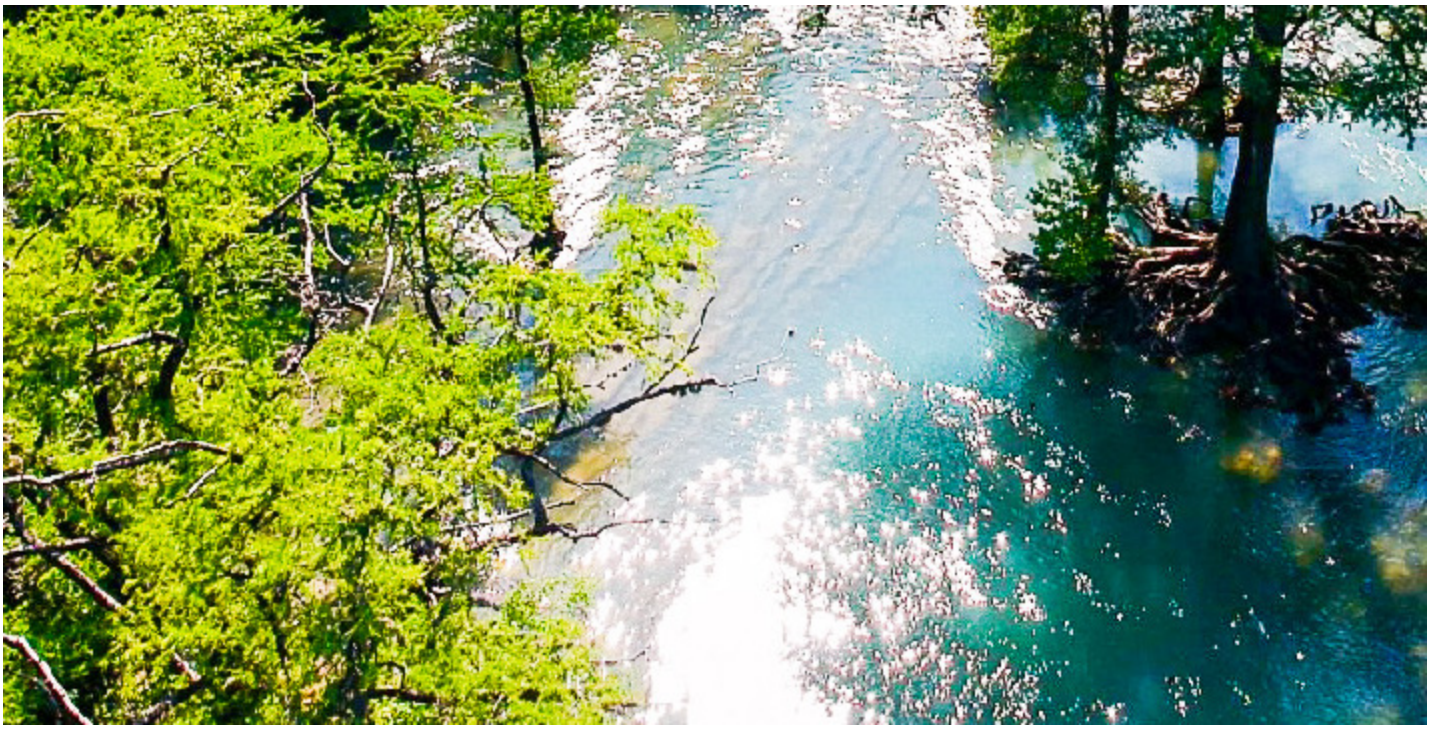

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Things to Do in The Canyon Lake Area

Leap into the cool, clear waters of a sprawling lake or take in views of rolling hills and limestone bluffs as you try your luck at hooking a bass or catfish. Hunt for dinosaur footprints from millions of years ago as you explore a recently created natural wonder. Play a round of golf on a picturesque course before cruising one of the Hill Country's most scenic roads.

These are among the many things to do in the Canyon Lake Area, the Water Recreation Capital of Texas located just an hour north of San Antonio. Whether you're here to beat the summer heat or to savor the cool air of fall, you'll find endless

adventure and remarkable scenery everywhere you look. Read on to see some of Canyon Lake's top experiences.

Escape to Canyon Lake

Sprawling across more than 8,300 acres, the shimmering waters of Canyon Lake offer an endless array of adventures. Rent a pontoon boat and soak up the sun with your friends and family or get a kayak or a stand-up paddleboard and enjoy the solitude of the lake's many secluded coves. For a shot of adrenaline, soar along the water's surface on a jet ski. When you want to take it easy, set out a blanket and open an umbrella as you savor a summer's day on one of the lake's swim beaches, such as those at Canyon Overlook Park, Comal Park, and Canyon Beach. Dive into the turquoise water to cool off, then come back and enjoy a picnic just like you would on the Gulf Coast.

Canyon Lake is fed by the Guadalupe River, which offers a wealth of things to see and do. Get an innertube and float down the river, basking in the shade of towering bald cypress trees along the way. The river also has first-rate fly fishing, so bring your gear and try your luck at hooking a few trout.

Go Fishing on Canyon Lake

Pack your fishing rod and bait and tackle box and find your way to Canyon Lake, where you'll find some truly first-rate fishing. The lake is teeming with catfish and white and striped bass, and there's some good largemouth bass and sunfish fishing to do here as well. You'll find catfish throughout the year, with most congregating near the upper third of the reservoir. Largemouth bass fishing is at its best in the spring, fall, and winter, while angling for white and striped bass is at its most ideal from February through the fall (although you'll need to keep up with migration). Keep in mind you need a Texas fishing license to cast your line on Canyon Lake. Get more details about that here.

Tee Off at Lakeside Golf Club

Set in a cove on Canyon Lake's southern shoreline, the 18-hole, par-72 course at Lakeside Golf Club immerses you in all the remarkable beauty of the Hill Country. Rolling hills, fairways lined with live oaks, and a few holes that serve up stunning lake views make every round here is a treat for the senses, but that's no reason to get lost in all the scenery. You'll need to plan your strokes carefully, as each hole incorporates sand and water hazards to create a layout that will test your long and short game. Sink your final putt on the 18th hole and head to the 19th Hole Bar and Grill for a drink and a bite to eat. And to brag about getting the lowest score, of course.

Explore Scenic Trails

There are many ways you can appreciate Canyon Lake's many scenic charms, especially if you want to get out and stretch your legs. Tie on your hiking shoes and find your way along the area's many hiking trails that

range from short jaunts to more longer distances. No visit here is complete without traversing the 0.6-mile trail at Overlook Park, the end of which overlooks the dam and provides an unobstructed view across the lake. Meanwhile, the Madrone Trail is a one-mile loop that provides a retreat into the shade of a tranquil forest. For a longer adventure, hike the out-and-back, 1.9-mile Guadalupe Park Trail. Take in the impressive bald cypress trees as you stroll along the Guadalupe River, a journey that takes you past popular fly-fishing spots and places to hop into the river.

Whether you're in the mood for a long hike or you want to just get out and enjoy some fresh air, there's a hiking trail in Canyon Lake for you.

Cruise the Scenic River Road

Running just more than 10 miles southeast of Canyon Lake to New Braunfels, the breathtaking River Road is a must-drive no matter how long you are staying here. The road closely follows the Guadalupe River from the North Side of New Braunfels, winding along and over the river; past farms, ranches, and campgrounds; and through tree tunnels. The route ends near Overlook Park, the ideal starting point to your time at Canyon Lake.

Visit The Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country

Millions of years ago, dinosaurs stalked the lands that are now known as Canyon Lake today, leaving behind footprints that have stood the test of time. In a not-so-distant past, horse-drawn buggies transported people and materials in an era when the Hill Country was part of Texas' frontier. Much of the region's history is preserved in The Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country, a fun-for-all-ages museum with plenty to see. Get an up-close look at more than 200 dinosaur tracks and 28 trackways made about 110 million years ago, then check out a collection of fossils from an era when the region was part of a shallow sea.

The museum also displays Native American artifacts, as well as antique and vintage pieces from the 1800's through the 1950's. Don't leave without seeing the vintage farm equipment to get an idea of how the area's first farmers tamed the land. Offering a crash course in the Hill Country's history throughout the ages, The Heritage Museum of Texas Hill Country is a must visit while you're in Canyon Lake.

Catch a Show at the Whitewater Amphitheater

Set on the eastern bank of the Guadalupe River just a few miles from Canyon Lake, Whitewater Amphitheater is an outdoor venue that welcomes some of the top musicians and bands around. Come here during the day to rent an inner tube or go canoeing in the river, then find your spot in front of the stage for the evening's concert. Hit up the beer garden for an ice-cold brew, then kick back and watch the show. The likes of Pat Green, Sublime, 311, Miranda Lambert, and Willie Nelson have played at the Whitewater Amphitheater in the past, so you know you're always going to get a good show here. Concerts are held from April through October, and you can see a schedule of upcoming shows at the venue's website.

Descend into Canyon Lake Gorge

In terms of geological history, Canyon Lake Gorge is a new sensation. In the summer of 2002, torrential rain and flooding uprooted trees, tore away soil, and sliced the ground, creating the 64-acre gorge. In the process,

it revealed fossils, limestone, and footprints as old as 110 million years. Today, the gorge is essentially an outdoor classroom. Schedule a tour and you'll see waterfalls, a lagoon, springs where the aquifer was exposed, and fossils that were undisturbed for millions of years. Each tour is led by a knowledgeable volunteer, and you'll need to be ready for some tough hiking as the excursion can be physically demanding. Book your tour here.

Road Trip to the Hill Country's Top Destinations

Although there's plenty of things to see and do in the Canyon Lake Area, this part of Texas is ideally suited for a road trip. Besides following River Road to New Braunfels, you can reach some of the Hill Country's other top spots with just a bit of time behind the wheel. Shop the day away at the outlets in San Marcos, stroll through historic Gruene, and descend into the subterranean world of Natural Bridge Caverns. Get a true taste of the region by driving 30 miles north to Dripping Springs, home to an abundance of local distilleries and craft breweries or visit one of the many award-winning wineries on the road to Fredericksburg. All these adventures are less than a 90-minute drive, making it easy to experience the best the Hill Country has to offer.