Your travel style: Laid-Back Outdoors (Summer)

"the earth laughs in flowers" – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ahhhh... fresh air, spectacular vistas, gurgling streams.

What could be better than a relaxing vacation in the great outdoors of Southwest Idaho? Short answer: not much. It's almost like this area was designed to help you slow down and take it all in. From pristine mountain lakes to grandiose desert canyons and lazy river floats to striking sand dunes, you'll find it here. With so much to do, we can't list it all here, but here are some top picks:

Things To Do

Take a float: We may be known for our whitewater, but Southwest Idaho also offers many flatwater opportunities for those who'd rather chill than thrill. For a wilderness experience, try the North Fork of the Payette River near McCall. The beautiful mountain setting overflows with opportunities for wildlife viewing.

By far, the most popular float in Idaho is the Boise River right through downtown Boise. Thousands of locals and visitors use this family-friendly 6-mile float to beat the heat. The put-in is in Southeast Boise and the take-out is right in the center of town in Ann Morrison Park. Restrooms, equipment rentals, even a shuttle bus are all available.

Fly Fishing: Take your pick: mountain lakes, freestone streams and desert rivers. Southwest Idaho has them all. Choose from guided trips or just grab your gear and head out on your own. Favorite destinations include:

South Fork of the Boise River: a blue-ribbon trout fishery just an hour from Boise and near Pine and Featherville.
Boise River – in town: an excellent tailwater fishery in the heart of town.
McCall area: Bring your float tube or just wade. Numerous lakes and streams around McCall provide great fishing most of the year. Try Louie Lake, Brundage Reservoir, Browns Pond or Upper Payette Lake.

Camping: Your options are nearly endless. Some favorites include camping on the shores (a peninsula, actually) of Payette Lake at Ponderosa State Park, or at the base of North America's tallest sand dune at Bruneau State Park. You can also find dozens of other options along the Snake River or near Idaho City. For a unique experience, stay at Givens Hot Springs or camp on-site at Starlight Mountain Theatre.

Hell's Canyon: You gotta see this. Not only is the canyon a wonder in itself, you can also get in some great fishing, jetboating and wildlife viewing while here.

Where To Stay

In a word, anywhere. Many looking for some laid-back time head for the mountains from Garden Valley to McCall and also the Cascade and Donnelly areas. You should also consider the Hell's Canyon area, either at one of the area's hotels, bed & breakfasts or campgrounds.

Also Consider

Hiking: It's everywhere around here. Check out the Boise and Payette National Forest for some of your best options.

Golf: Blue skies & green fairways.... what could be better? Southwest Idaho has 20+ golf courses. Tee off on elevated high desert mesas or putt beside a lakeside green.

Snake River Birds of Prey: Visit Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey to learn through interactive exhibits and intimate encounters with live birds including the endangered California Condor, Harpy Eagle, and Aplomado Falcon.

Start Planning

Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association
208.338.7830
ioga.org

National OldTime Fiddlers' Contest
208.549.0255
fiddlecontest.com

Birds of Prey
208.362.3716
www.peregrinefund.org

Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau
800.635.5240
www.boise.org

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