

## **Rangeley Lakes: Snapshot of Woods, Water, and Wildlife**

The Rangeley Region, known for majestic mountains and its sprawling system of pristine streams and lakes, has been luring visitors for over 150 years to experience both its natural beauty and its rich outdoor sporting heritage.

Suggested months for this itinerary: June through September (great winter sports here too!)

This itinerary involves very little driving time to primary sites.

### **Day One**

If you can start your first day in the Rangeley Region early, why wait? Get out on the water as soon as you can. Call ahead to arrange a guide - Clearwater Camps or River's Edge Sports – who can lead you to Rangeley's fabled brookies.

Now that you've got your feet wet, proceed to the Rangeley Region Historical Society's museum to explore the area's golden era of sporting camps and grand hotels, fishing, hunting, logging, and railroads. Also on display here - a unique bird egg collection, tools for cutting 30 inch blocks of ice, not to mention the old jail cell that was used in the town office.

While you are downtown, enjoy a Reuben sandwich at The Club House Restaurant and take advantage of the area's unique shopping opportunities. Call ahead to see if the Mad Whittler is open, Rodney Richard's has amazing chainsaw carvings! Proceed on to Ecopelagicon for a nature lovers gift store or Books, Lines, and Thinkers, a great source for local art and books about the area – including "The Rangeley and its Region," wherein Maine author Stephen Cole tells the history of the world renowned Rangeley boat and "We Took to the Woods" by Louise Dickenson Rich, who wrote of her life and the lives of her neighbors on nearby the Rapid River near Richardson Lake.

Overnight in Rangeley: The Rangeley Inn has been offering guests comfortable lodging, excellent food and memorable vacation experiences for over 90 years (many once arrived by train straight from New York City) or try the North Country B&B in the historic Furbish Mansion, originally home of one of Rangeley's oldest and most prosperous families. Pleasant Street Inn Bed and Breakfast offers a full concierge service for a truly relaxing and luxurious stay. Supper at Loon Lodge Inn and Restaurant to enjoy a sunset over Rangeley Lake or the Country Club Inn for a hilltop view.

### **Day Two**

Again, an early start is best if you want to get a look at the Rangeley Region's most fabled wild inhabitants – the moose! Call ahead to arrange a guided kayaking trip with Mookwa Guided Tours. They offer a wildlife viewing tour in the South Bog on Rangeley Lake or a paddle on the Cupsuptic River where you encounter rich aspects of the region's history.

After lunch (try any one of several cafes in downtown Rangeley), consider a visit to the Wilhelm Reich Museum, the home, laboratory, and research center of controversial physician/scientist Wilhelm Reich M.D., whose books were banned and burned by the United States government in the 1950s. Reich's Orgone Energy Observatory, part of the museum and now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, was devoted to the study of orgone energy (or life force energy) and its practical applications. The museum has 175-acres of field and forest with kid-friendly walking paths and free nature programs are offered on Sundays.

Overnight in Oquossoc: Try Oquossoc's Own (reasonable prices and warm family atmosphere) or Bald Mountain Camps for rustic, authentic camp experience with fine dining available in an 1800's sport fishing camp. Supper at the Gingerbread House (slowly braised, fork-tender St. Louis style pork ribs are a specialty!) or Four Seasons Café (fresh seafood, salads straight from the garden and of the course the world famous mudslide).

## Day Three

Before heading home, and just so that you don't think the people of Rangeley have spent the last 150 years fishing, make a stop at the Rangeley Logging Museum. Here visitors are introduced to traditional woods life as well as to changes in timber harvesting technologies that have revolutionized the timber industry over the past century. Of particular interest is a collection of paintings by Alden Grant, a self taught and wonderfully talented local artist. The paintings portray Grant's own work experiences in the Maine timber woods. (The museum sponsors Logging Festival Days – see sidebar.)

On your way home, if heading east on Route 16, check out the Dead River Historical Society featuring exhibits with artifacts from the 1850's belonging to original Dead River region families, including those from the former village of Flagstaff, the remains of which now rest below the waters of Flagstaff Lake. Or if heading south on Route 17, stop at Coos Canyon for a quick dip.

## Sidebars

### 1) Events

- Logging Festival Days, Beanhole beans, logging camp style; parade of floats, bands, and logging equipment, woodsmen's competition with chain sawing, pulp piling, axe throwing. Last weekend in July
- Outdoor Sporting Heritage Days. Fly-casting competition and instruction for adults and youth, trap and sporting clay shooting, archery instruction, muzzleloader demonstrations, exhibition of hunting dog handling, pond ecology and a critter cave.
- Rangeley Friends of the Arts

### 2) Local Products

- Threads Galore Quilts Shop  
Features extensive fabric offerings, notions & books, kits & tools, as well as a showroom of quilted items for sale. Enjoy Quilt Camps in autumn, classes year round, or the "Quilts In the Garden" show in August.
- The Gallery at Stony Batter  
In the Adirondack style log planked building, you will find unique art by area artists, elegant blown glass, ceramics, antiques, garden items, specialty lamps and shades, and much more.

### 3) Kids and Learning

- Rangeley Library and surrounding playgrounds  
A wide variety of children's programming exploring the mysteries of origami, riddles, pirates and hidden treasure, dinosaurs, rainbows and motion!
- Ecoventure during the week or Hatchery Brook trail on weekend

### 4) Getting Outdoors

- Bald Mountain Hike  
The one-mile trail to the summit gains 1,000 feet in elevation, and takes about an hour one way. It's an easy and enjoyable hike that provides just the right amount of challenge. And the hike is suited to all levels of age and ability. It is truly a family hike. Be sure to proceed to old fire tower for beautiful views of surrounding mountains and lakes. Picnic table at both top and bottom of trail.
- Saddleback Mountain  
Pickup a trail map and a picnic lunch at the base lodge. Guided hikes are also available. There are pristine ponds and Saddleback Lake for a scenic view.

### 5) Photo opportunity: Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway

- Photo opportunity & location: Height of Land (west)
- Photo opportunity & location: Whip Willow Farm (Route 4)

6) Fun Facts

- Fun Fact 1: Doc Grant's in downtown Rangeley is halfway between the North pole and the equator. (3107.5 miles)
- Fun Fact 2: An 11 pound 2 ounce brook trout was pulled from Upper Dam in 1897.

7) Mileage (and driving time)

- From Portland: 131.48 miles/2 hours 41 minutes
- From Bangor: 120.30 miles /2 hours 36 minutes
- From Boston: 242.88 miles/4 hours 40 minutes
- From Rangeley to Oquossoc: 7 miles/11 minutes

For more information about restaurants and accommodations, events, and activities go to:  
Rangeley Lakes Chamber of Commerce at [www.rangeleymaine.com](http://www.rangeleymaine.com) or call (207) 864-5571.