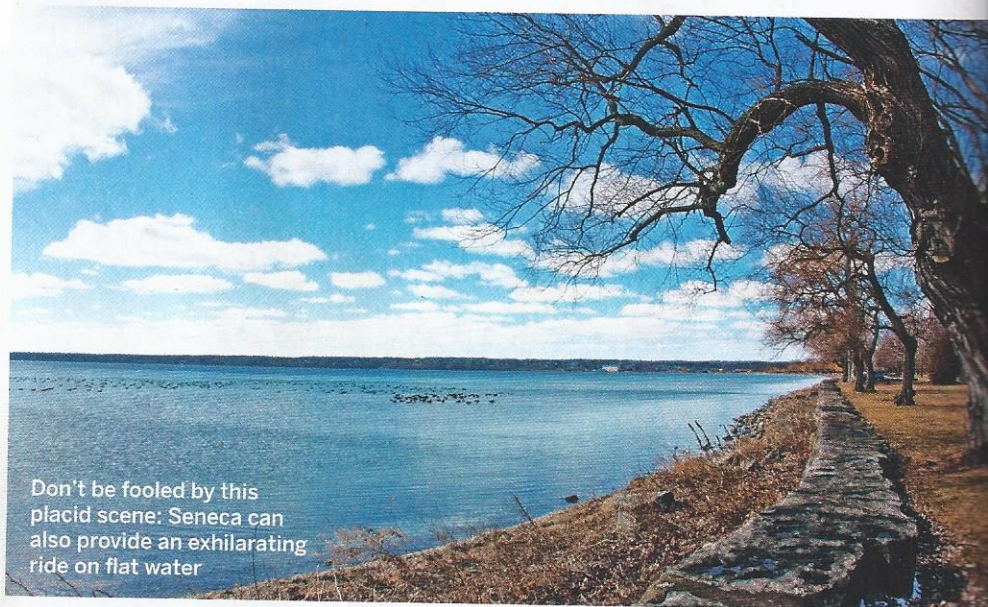


Namesake: Seneca Nation of Native Americans
Size: 66.87 sq. miles

3 SENECA LAKE, NEW YORK
Of the 11 Finger Lakes in northwestern New York State that were carved by receding glaciers approximately 10,000 years ago, Seneca Lake is the sailing hot spot. It's 38 miles long and the deepest of the bunch, at 618 feet, and has very little boat traffic.

Though Seneca Lake doesn't get large swells, the weather conditions in the area will still keep you on your toes. According to Tom Alley, squadron education officer for the Seneca Sail & Power Squadron, "the words 'consistent weather' never appear together" when describing Seneca Lake. Wind shifts and puffs dominate, especially among the hills at the lake's southern end. "When the wind is honking, the biggest challenge is getting in and out of the slip without being blown into nearby objects," he warns. "But with the appropriate sails, it can be an exhilarating ride on relatively flat water."

Seneca Lake is ideal for day sails or weekend cruises, but there are limited anchorages and overnight destinations. To start, Alley



Don't be fooled by this placid scene: Seneca can also provide an exhilarating ride on flat water

suggests checking out some of the wineries with boat access. "Miles Winery is well worth the trip. Weekend trips to the extreme ends of Seneca—Geneva, New York, in the north and Watkins Glen in the south—are also popular. Lodi State Marine Park, located in the middle of the lake, makes a nice stopping point," he says. Alley also suggests sailors check out the Navy Barge, a former military facility located in the center of the lake. "One day as we were sailing past, we could hear pinging through our hull, just like in the old submarine war movies," says Alley.

You can access Seneca Lake from a public

ramp in Watkins Glen on the south side for \$4 or from a handful of marinas and yacht clubs scattered around the lake. The Finger Lakes Yacht Club offers social and racing events throughout the summer, and while the best sailing happens from mid-April through October, there are a few brave frostbiters in the winter months as well. Denis Kingsley, a member of both the Finger Lakes Yacht Club and the Seneca Lake Sail and Power Squadron, sails Seneca Lake as often as possible. "It's a wonderful lake for all types of sailors. Be prepared for a variety of conditions, but the summer is short, so we make the most of it while we can."

Sailors on Lake Champlain can take in all types of scenery from Vermont to New York and Canada



Namesake: French explorer, Samuel de Champlain **Size:** 435 sq. miles

Lake Champlain offers a beautiful backdrop. "There are dozens of nooks and crannies

to explore. I love dropping anchor and taking in the scenery," says Mark Laud, the executive director of Community Sailing Center, located in Burlington, Vermont.

Locals divide the lake up into five sections: South Lake, Main or "Broad" Lake, Malletts Bay, Inland Sea and Missisquoi Bay. South Lake is narrow, eventually transitioning into a narrow waterway leading to Albany and eventually New York City, while Main Lake is the widest, deepest and most accessible part of Champlain, with several harbors, bays and anchorages that make it perfect for cruisers in search of scenery. There, you can sail or hike near Split Rock Mountain to view its beautiful cliffs, or on the Vermont side, check out Red Rocks Park and Lake Champlain Yacht Club in Shelburne Bay. History buff? Be sure to visit Champlain's five famous five-trestle bridges, each varying in construction and age.

There's also plenty of opportunity for racing at Royal Savage Yacht Club, and if boatcamping is your style, sail to Valcor Island State Park. The inner part of Malletts Bay is a popular cruising spot. Near the center is Grand Isle, a group of five islands that played a role in the War of 1812, christening the lake the "birthplace of the U.S. Navy." To explore Grand Isle and sail to the Canadian side, you'll motor through the Sandbar Causeway drawbridge. Along the way, don't forget to birdwatch at Philipsburg Bird Sanctuary near Missisquoi Bay.



4 LAKE CHAMPLAIN, VERMONT
As the sixth largest lake in the United States—120 miles long and 12 miles wide—Lake Champlain has plenty to explore. It's tucked between New York, Vermont and Canada, and reaches from Whitehall, New York, up to the Richelieu River in Quebec where it joins the St. Lawrence River and, eventually, meets the Atlantic Ocean. Here, the spring and fall bring blustery north- or southwesterly winds, and summer storms can provide excitement and enough experience to prepare you for offshore sailing.

With the Adirondacks to the west and Green Mountains to the east,