

# Two Tickets to Paradise Happiness



**By Megan Jones**

## Mile Marker: 20.5<sup>1</sup>

Dear Reader,

It was quite hard for me to find a topic that I was so passionate about because I have many loves. But there was one word that I couldn't get out of my head: Traveling. Just the word itself brings me excitement and happiness. It is an activity that never fails to amaze me because it is so full of opportunity. You can travel to a place and find yourself and see new things. You can travel to a place and spend time with people and connect to something never seen before. You can travel to a place and have fun and make the best memories.

For me especially, traveling is a time to leave reality for a second and just relax. I put all my worries and stresses aside because it's important for mental and physical health. Lake of the Ozarks has always been the traveling spot for me, so I am going to show you how such a little place can bring such happiness to many.

You might not believe that traveling can make a difference in your life, but I guarantee you will want to take a shot at it after taking this journey with me.

So... let the adventure begin!

Sincerely,

Megan Jones

Mile Marker: 19.5

**V**anish to a world without worries<sup>2</sup>

**A**chieve happiness

**C**apture the moment

**A**dmire natural beauty

**T**ake in every experience

**I**ndulge in new foods

**O**rganize activities

**N**ourish friendships

Mile Marker: 18.5

# *Homemade Happiness at Lake of the Ozarks*

## **Ingredients:**

- ✿ **1 swimsuit/ 1 pair of swim trunks**
- ✿ **1 pair of sunglasses**
- ✿ **1 hat**
- ✿ **Sunscreen**
- ✿ **1 lifejacket**
- ✿ **2 t-shirts & 2 shorts**
- ✿ **Family**
- ✿ **Friends**
- ✿ **Fun**
- ✿ **No more than \$100**



## **Directions:**

- 1. Do not think about anything other than having fun and relaxing.**
- 2. Make great memories and cherish them because you only have one life, so make it the best one.**
- 3. Spend the whole day on the lake and don't come inside.**
- 4. Get a great tan, so that you feel amazing, but don't get burnt.**
- 5. Don't plan anything at certain times; just let the day take you to happiness.**

Mile Marker: 17.5

## Ozarks Dictionary<sup>3</sup>

**WaveRunner**- a miniature boat that fits three people on it that rides waves easily and is used as a lake toy.

**Tubing**- a fun activity that involves riding and holding on for dear life to a blow-up tube while being pulled behind a boat.

**Skiing**- an enjoyable, challenging activity that involved balancing on two skate-like objects while being pulled behind a boat.

**Parasailing**- an amazing, eye-opening experience that involves being pulled by a boat in the air while in a parachute.

**Knee boarding**- a crazy, fun activity that involves being pulled by a boat while balancing on your knees on a board.

**Kayaking**- rowing around in little boats, that don't have a motor, around your dock.

**Water Mat Floating Pad**- a huge mat that floats in the lake that is tied up to the dock and many can sit and play on it.

**Tanning**- laying out in the sun until sweaty and then jumping into the cool water.

**Relaxing**- taking a break and not thinking about any stresses or worries.

Mile Marker: 16.5

## Schedule of Fun

**THURSDAY:** Begin driving to the lake from Granite City at 5:00pm & arrive around 8:00pm.

**FRIDAY:** Wake up around 9:00am, eat breakfast on balcony, & ride on the boat all day long. Tube, ski, or knee board while on the boat. Pack lunches & drinks and enjoy the beautiful lake all day. Eat dinner at lake house around 7:00pm. Watch a movie in living room.

**SATURDAY:** Wake up around 9:00am. Eat breakfast on balcony, & then lay out on the dock all day while playing in the water. Kayak, swim, lay on a mat, paddle boat, or jump off the dock into the water until around 5:00pm. Clean up and shower for dinner in town at 7:00pm. Go get ice cream & play mini golf.

**SUNDAY:** Wake up around 9:00am. Eat breakfast on balcony, & ride wave runners until 2:00pm. Begin packing up to leave around 4:00pm. Get back home at 7:00pm for dinner.



## Mile Marker: 15.5

### *Let's go for a Ride<sup>4</sup>*

As I  
Sit on  
Boat, I feel the

Burning	sun rays
Tan my skin	Laughter fills
The air from my	family and friends.
The waves are soothing	as they crash against
The maroon boat, and for	once, I am at peace. My
skin feels slippery from sun-	screen, and my hair tangles
With the wind. The air tastes of	lake water as it sprays from
Each side of the boat. The smell of	gas lingers in my nose as many

boats pass by. My eyes wander around to take everything in. The green water, uneven waves, towering houses, clear skies, sparkling blue pools, colorful trees, and docks full of toys.

Nothing else is important at this moment. This is the escape from reality. Laying in my swimsuit soaking up the sun takes me to a different world. A world full of happiness just from some water. Adventures and fun calls my name and I answer at the Ozarks.

## Mile Marker: 14.5



### Fun in the Sun

Traveling to the Ozarks has taught me many valuable skills. Many are important and many are just needed to have a little extra fun. Skiing was something my parents did, so I wanted to learn, too. I did get the hang of it pretty quickly, but I will say that it was not anywhere easy. I tried and tried and kept falling on my face. There were many tears and water up the nose. My parents continued to cheer me on despite the defeated look I had on my face. Suddenly, I raised out of the water and held on for dear life. I was so proud as my parents jumped up and down taking pictures. The lake has taught me to ski which I love to do, but it has also taught me to never give up. Now, I enjoy skiing every time I visit the Lake and I teach all my friends this fun skill, too.

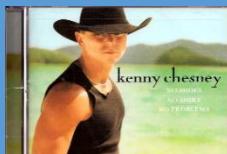
Mile Marker: 13.5**Pandora**<sup>5</sup>**Search**

Tod

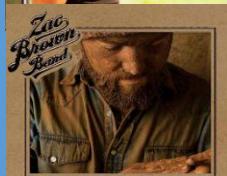
**Today's Country**

Today's Pop

Today's Rap

**No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problem**

-Kenny Chesney

**Toes**

-Zac Brown Band

**Cruise**

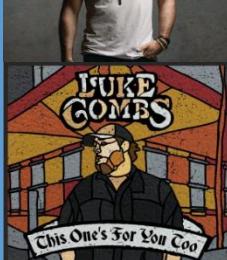
-Florida Georgia Line

**Summer Nights**

-Rascal Flatts

**Crash and Burn**

-Thomas Rhett

**She Got the Best of Me**

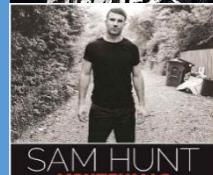
-Luke Combs

**Sangria**

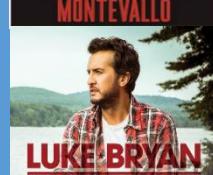
-Blake Shelton

**I Know Somebody**

-LOCASH

**House Party**

-Sam Hunt

**Sunrise, Sunburn, Sunset**

-Luke Bryan

**Mercy**

-Brett Young

**Nothin' Like You**

-Dan + Shay

Mile Marker: 12.5

## Top 12 Feelings at the Ozarks<sup>6</sup>

1. Happiness
2. Excitement
3. Freedom
4. Energetic
5. Peaceful
6. Fascinated
7. Inspired
8. Confident
9. Grateful
10. Relaxed
11. Creative
12. Curious



## Mile Marker: 11.5

### The Golden Fisherman<sup>7</sup>

Once upon a time in a land far, far, away called the Lake of the Ozarks. This land is a beautiful place full of gigantic and vibrant trees, a vast lake full of fish and happiness, and thousands of boats ranging from rowboats to yachts.

There was a man named patches, and Patches was the most renowned fisherman on the lake. It seemed he had a sixth sense when it came to fishing. Anywhere he went, he always came back with a boat filled to the brim with all different kinds of fish. Some were used to feed his family, but a majority of his catch gets sold so he can provide for his family. Providing for his family is no small feat considering him and his wife, Patty who have seven children, five boys and two girls.

Patches has been fishing the Ozark waters for about 45 years since he was a kid. He knows them better than anyone else on the lake and this provides a huge advantage for him. But one day his luck changed...

For the next few months, Patches was having a very hard time catching enough fish to provide for his huge family. He started to get down on his luck knowing that he isn't providing for his family anymore. They were living paycheck to paycheck and barely staying afloat in these troubled times.

He was about to give up all hope on his fishing career, the once great Patches was soon to be no more. He started skipping fishing days, when he used to go every day, sometimes more than once. He decided to try one more time, he went to an old cove with lots of trash and debris from old docks floating in the water. Not many people went to this cove because of the fear of wrecking their boats into logs and debris and cracking their hulls. But Patches was on the final stretch of his fishing career so he decided he might as well risk it. Hour 1: nothing was biting. Hour 2: still nothing. Hour 3: a few nibbles, but nothing big. Hour 4: Patches was getting restless and about to go home and hang up his poles for good. He started his motor and started heading home, not realizing that he had left one of his heavy-duty catfish lines in the water in hope for a giant score. As he was about to enter open water, his pole caught on the bottom of

## Mile Marker: 10.5

the lake and began to bend. He quickly put his boat in reverse to keep his favorite rod from snapping like a twig.

He thought he was snagged on the bottom, but soon realized he was not. As he picked up his rod and began to reel, he felt something very heavy on the line, hoping it was a massive catfish. As he continued reeling in his mysterious catch, he became sad. After 45 years of fishing, he knew that there was no fish on this line. Assuming he had snagged a branch or some other miscellaneous item that was lost to the dark depths of the lake.

As the line was almost fully reeled in, he saw his catch. To his surprise, it was not a log, it was a chest of some sort. He grabbed his net and pulled the chest into his boat, how he had managed to hook this, not even Patches knows. He could tell the box was once a beautifully ornate chest worth a pretty penny, but now it was water logged and covered completely in moss and algae. He cracked the lock and was in utter awe at what his eyes beheld in front of him. There were jewels, gold, and other miscellaneous valuables.

He closed the chest and went straight home to show his family. All of their money troubles were now over. Patches was overjoyed when his money troubles vanished. And he continued to be the greatest fisherman on the lake. His luck came back and was thriving better than ever. Like I said earlier, the Ozarks is a vast lake full of fish and happiness, and if you don't believe me, ask Patches.

Mile Marker: 9.5

## Ozark Restaurant Reviews

Lil Rizzo's

They have the best pepperoni thin crust pizza & cheesy breadsticks along with great service. You can also order takeout!

Backwater Jacks Bar and Grill

The constant entertainment & view keeps you here for hours with different bands playing while you stare at the busy lake. There is a variety of food and each time I try something different and it never disappoints.

Bobbers Restaurant at Alhonna Resort

You can't go to Bobbers & not have their chicken, bacon, ranch wrap with their delicious waffle fries & tasty lemonade.

Beavers at the Dam

They had a great grilled chicken wrap served with fries. The view is amazing of the lake and the staff is so nice!

Dog Days Bar & Grill

Their savoring wings and enormous nachos left me thinking about them for days. The view is breathtaking and if you aren't hungry, you can sit by the pool and just have a drink.

Stewart's Restaurant

The friendly service brings your meal quick and it's right in downtown, so you can go shop after you are done. Their French Toast is amazing and you will be full all day!

## Mile Marker: 8.5

### **How To/How You Save Money at the Lake<sup>8</sup>**

1. Most people visit from close places, so the only thing there is to pay for is gas to get there.
2. It is easy to buy groceries at the variety of stores, so that many save money by not eating out for every meal.
3. If one already has a house or condo on the lake, they don't have to pay for a hotel every night that they stay.
4. Doing fun things on the lake is free other than buying gas for different things such as boats and wave runners.
5. It isn't a worldwide place to travel to, so the activities around aren't nearly as expensive as activities in somewhere like Florida.
6. Other families can travel with someone that has a place there, so they can all share costs such as gas & groceries.
7. There are many activities that don't cost such as hiking, swimming, and sitting by the bonfire rather than paying to ride go-karts, playing mini golf, or riding in a helicopter.

## Mile Marker: 7.5

### Fun, Friendship, Family, & Fascinating Facts

As I walk through the hallway, all I can think about is getting out of this school for a week.

Spring break cannot come soon enough. I just need a break and to get away for a little bit. My anxiety is at its absolute worst with schoolwork and college stuff that I can't even think straight anymore. My stress levels are out of this world, and nothing helps it because every time I think I'm caught up, teachers add more things for us to do. It's a vicious cycle of constantly feeling so stressed that my body won't even function anymore. I'm not hungry anymore, I don't want to hang out with friends, I am always feeling depressed, and most importantly I don't have time for fun or relaxation. For the longest time, I couldn't figure out what I needed to feel better.

Sleeping, eating, or watching Netflix didn't help. Playing sports just made me more stressed and hanging with friends made me more stressed because they talked about how stressed they were, too. These are supposed to be the best years of my life, but they are feeling like the worst.

I am certain that I am not the only person that feels like this: a lost teenager because of stress, anxiety, and absolutely no free time to have fun. All of my friends feel this exact same way. Not only kids, but adults too are affected by stress and have nothing that really helps them relieve it. However, I have found one thing that cures all of my problems. The answer for me is traveling to a favorite place and just relaxing for a few days. All of my worries can be washed away at this special place where my only focus is having fun. This beautiful spot is my getaway from reality. It's my spot for finding happiness and having fun. It's my spot for free time and time made just for me. This spot is called the Lake of the Ozarks.

Everyone should have a place that they travel to such as the Ozarks simply because it brings happiness and everyone could use some of that. Taking a break from stress and busy life causes people like me to be happier. Traveling is like magic because it is something that is

## Mile Marker: 6.5

enjoyable that is also healthy for you. It is healthy for you because it is a time that you can just have fun. It's easy to have fun when traveling because there are no constant worries about jobs, school, and other every day responsibilities. According to Elizabeth Scott, "[h]aving regular fun in your life can help you feel less overwhelmed by the stressors you face. This can help you change your attitude toward your lifestyle stressors so that you're less reactive to stress when you experience it" (1). I agree with this because after visiting the lake, I always have a more positive outlook on life. Riding on boats, fishing, and swimming just makes me feel like a new person. It's just some relief because of how much I enjoy myself at a little close-to-home place. When I arrive back home, I feel as if I'm ready to go back to school and learn because I have relaxed for a few days. Sometimes we all just need to do something to fill us with joy because that is what makes us happy. The Ozarks is where I can have fun because I have nothing to worry about.

Not only do I want to travel because it reduces my stress and anxiety with fun, but I also love it because it builds family and friendships that will last forever. It's hard to get everyone together when there is nothing really to do at home and everyone is always worried. However, it's easy to travel with family and friends and find all kinds of things to do at the chosen location. It's crazy how creative people are when they aren't stressed. I am never bored at the lake with many people around because we are constantly doing fun things. We are playing the yellow car game while driving in the car, having belly-flop contests off the diving board, playing UNO in the house, or seeing who can get thrown off the tube first. Doing all of these fun things together bonds people because you are laughing, smiling, and just having a great time together. There is so much to do that there is no time at all to be playing on your phone or laptop. This means that everyone is spending time together rather than spending time on their phones like we all tend to do at home. Kristen Martin tells us that, [w]hen you do travel with someone else, you both find

## Mile Marker: 5.5

yourself having nothing to do but talk to each other. The connection that you have will be deeper, as you find out more about each other and build on the experiences together" (13). This is the important part of traveling to me because there is many opportunities to make memories with people and that builds friendship. This is why the Lake of the Ozarks is my favorite because we can take many friends and family members with us and have an unforgettable time together. Being in a close environment where you are all eating, watching movies, and getting on lake toys together makes for deep conversations and shrieking laughs.

Growing up at the lake has filled my life with excitement, but it's amazing how much I have learned there while having a great time. An author of a traveling article says, "The biggest lesson I've learned through my travels and backpacking is that it's okay to wait and have lag time, and if something happens to go wrong, to be patient when seeking help" (Darian, Nicole 2). I can totally agree with this because I have learned that not everything goes right even when it's supposed to on vacation. At a young age, I understood that I had to be patient when things weren't working. One visit to the lake was disappointing at first because the only thing we had was the boat and we couldn't get it to start. I was so sad because that is all I wanted to do and I had looked forward to it. This is when I learned that I have to be patient because the world isn't perfect and not everything will always go your way. I realized that I had to just improvise and make my own fun. I went out to the lake and just jumped off the diving board and practiced swimming while my dad worked on the boat. I learned a valuable lesson at the lake that no school could ever teach me. I personally know that I am a smarter person because of the Lake of the Ozarks, so it just makes me want to travel there more often to gain new knowledge.

The girl in the beginning that was struggling with stress and finding her happiness visited the lake for spring break and came back better than ever. That girl is me. The lake gave me some time to relax, have fun, make memories with family and friends, and learn some new lessons so

I am now refreshed and ready to take on anything. That is what traveling can do, so I hope everyone finds their own Lake of the Ozarks.

### Mile Marker: 4.5

#### **Condo Rental Application<sup>9</sup>**

*Address: 77 Tara Road Osage Beach, Missouri 65049*

*Description: 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom, full kitchen, living room, dock slip, boat lift, and access to pool.*

Applicant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle:

Do you have any pets?      Do you smoke?

Yes or No

Yes or No

Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mile Marker: 3.5

Name of Landlord or Management Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Residence from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord's phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Landlord or Management Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Residence from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord's phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit Total: \$200

Circle: Credit Card or Cash

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Cash: Send to P.O. Box- 720 Osage Beach, Missouri 6506

\*If any questions, contact me at 1-800-498-4848

## Mile Marker: 2.5

Lake of the Ozarks<sup>10</sup>

71 Sage Road Ginger Cove Subdivision

Osage Beach, Missouri

65049



April 3, 2019

Dear Lake of the Ozarks,

Wow, where do I even start? I'll start with two simple words: thank you. Thank you for being the place that I have grown up all my life. Thank you for bringing me happiness in so many unique ways. Thank you for teaching me new things. Thank you for bringing family and friends together to have a place to grow closer.

Having a close destination that I can always travel to has been a savior to me. While dealing with stress and anxiety, you were the one place that I could feel free to be the girl that had no worries with a huge smile on her face. I never had to worry about what I looked like or what homework I had to do because you are a place that I can escape from all of that. You bring relaxation, a thing that is really necessary in my life. You have always been a place that I knew I could have an amazing time and constantly learn new things. Traveling to you has made the best memories of my entire life.

I have tried new things such as skiing and tubing on your lake and I have also made many close friendships in your town. I have learned to fish, drive a wave runner, and even swim better. I have broadened my food choices by eating at new places and even learned to shop until I drop at the outlet mall. I have had great experiences mini golfing and go karting which has made me the competitive person that I am today.

I can honestly say that you have made me a better person by traveling to you. I can't remember a time that I didn't have a good time at the lake. It's just a cheap little place that brings so much laughter, smiles, fun, and family together. What more could anyone ask for? There are so many more years ahead, but I know I will always continue to spend time at the lake. Traveling to a place like this has brought me happiness and I hope everyone can see that and try it, too.

With so much love,

Megan Jones

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## End Abstracts

1. I wanted my paper to have the feeling that the reader was going on the journey with me through the Ozarks, so I made my unifying element different mile markers on each page. The mile markers go from 20.5 to 2.5 because I wanted the readers to end at my lake house with me. My lake house is on mile marker 2.5, so my paper ends there.
2. These are the guidelines that I follow when I travel to the lake.
3. I wanted to add in a dictionary because readers might not be familiar with some words from the lake if they have never visited before.
4. I really wanted to show what it feels like to be on a boat and how a ride on the lake can overtake all five of your senses.
5. I thought readers could connect to my paper more if they could actually feel like they were with me at the lake. This is why I added my playlist that I play on the dock or boat while I'm visiting the there. It helps give off the vibe because country music is what I listen to in the summer especially.
6. One of my favorite things about this paper is how personal it is, so I thought it was perfect to incorporate many pictures from my many years growing up at the lake.
7. This story might seem random in this paper, but it's not because it shows through fiction the happiness that the lake can bring to people. The lake also brings opportunity and a great deal of fun to many. The lake is full of surprises, so you never know where each day will take you.
8. Traveling worries many people because of all of the costs, so I made sure to tell readers that the lake is a low-cost place to visit. I gave many reasons/ways that people can save money at such a beautiful and fun place.
9. I placed a condo application at the end of my paper to allow readers to see how easy it is to get a place at the Ozarks and I also hope that they want to go there after reading my paper.
10. The ending of this paper is very important because I added a thank you letter addressed to the Lake of the Ozarks to display how much this place has impacted me throughout the years. It's hard to find a place that truly makes you happy, so it was special to me to persuade other people to go there or just find a place that fills them with joy to travel to.

## About the Author



Megan Jones is a senior at Granite City High School and she will be attending University of Missouri-St. Louis next year to play soccer. This hard-working woman hopes to become a Doctor of Optometry and help people with their vision so they can have a better life. After becoming a doctor, she will open her own office in her hometown to give back to her community and help the many familiar faces.

Megan loves to spend her time at the Lake of the Ozarks with her family and friends. This paper is inspired by her growing up at the lake, and learning that traveling is her passion. She finds her happiness through traveling to the Ozarks and boating, tanning, swimming, and fishing. She enjoys writing about the Ozarks because she has made her fondest memories there.