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DESTINATION WISCONSIN

From rustic to just Wright

5 Wisconsin lodgings with a different twist

By Mary Bergin | Special to the Tribune
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As the weather cools, travelers have unique choices about where to snuggle and snooze in Wisconsin. If they're looking for more than a place to stay -- say a place with a "theme" -- there are accommodations that deliver the goods. Here's a selective look at five.

Spider Lake Lodge, Hayward

For those in search of a stylish fishing camp -- which may seem like an oxymoron -- there's Spider Lake Lodge near Hayward.

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swathed in phyllo dough, with a cinnamon glaze. Another is creme brulee French toast.

Rates start at \$159, including breakfast.

Spider Lake Lodge, 10472 W. Murphy Blvd., Hayward. 800-653-9472; www.spiderlake lodge.com.

Stout's Island Lodge, Birchwood

The aura of perfect privacy on these 26 acres dates back to 1903, when lumber baron Frank Stout turned Stout's Island into his playground. He called it his Island of Happy Days.

The 39-unit getaway resembles an Adirondack camp, rooms to cabins for rent, some with antiques, many with a fireplace or screened porch. Picture thick plank floors, carved ceiling beams from Germany. The mood is one of charming nostalgia, not thoroughly

Besides boating and fishing for musky, leisure choices include mountain biking and hiking on the 32-mile trail that Birkebeiner cross-country ski racers use in winter competition. Too strenuous? You can always book a massage or nod off with a book on the cushy screened-in porch.

Each of seven guest rooms in this 1923 hand-hewn log building, enveloped by woodlands and Chequamegon National Forest, has an engaging personality. The Birkebeiner feels like a ski lodge. Letr' Buck harnesses the Wild West. A bearskin rug sits -- logically -- in the Bear's Den. In Moody's Camp, a corner room named after the building's original owner, quaint woven tackle boxes and a mounted fish dress up walls.

Lake views are plentiful. Rustic decor -- tall and wide fireplaces, an antler chandelier -- blends with plush furnishings in vibrant colors. The owners are interior designers whose specialty is lodge design; this property is a showcase for the upholstery designs and accessories that the duo have created.

Breakfast becomes a three-course meal. One specialty is baked pear, swathed in phyllo dough, with a cinnamon glaze. Another is creme brulee French toast.



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modern living. Rooms have no TV, telephone or central air. Play croquet or bocce ball on the front lawn. Kayak, hike or nap in a hammock. The boathouse rec room has a TV, billiards and table tennis. Bonfires occur in the evening.

Fine dining means moderate prices for steak, roasted trout and lamb kebabs in the vintage lodge restaurant, which also serves sandwiches, soups and salads for lunch. Breakfast is continental and complimentary for overnight guests. This is the only dining option on the island. Meal reservations for outsiders are possible, but limited.

The only way to Stout's Island Lodge is on the resort's ferry, and a reservation is required to board it.

Rates start at \$179, which includes continental breakfast.

Stout's Island Lodge, 2799 27th St., Birchwood; 715-354-3646; www.stoutslodge.com. The lodge closes in late October, reopens in late May.

The Washington Hotel, Washington Island, Door County

On an island at the tip of Door County, this two-story house/hotel, with eight guest rooms, has a grand nautical history as a home to Great Lakes ship captains. Linens are made from organic materials, and that includes comfortable bathrobes. Shared bathrooms contain relaxing steam showers.

Chef/proprietor Leah Caplan takes the local/sustainable food mantra to new heights. She grinds island-grown wheat into flour for breads and muffins, baked in a wood-fired brick oven. The wheat also ends up as beer and vodka.

Whitefish takes on more than one role, on the typical menu. It is smoked, for a fish dip or a pizza topping (with spinach, boiled egg bits and sour cream). It is broiled, and served in an escabeche.

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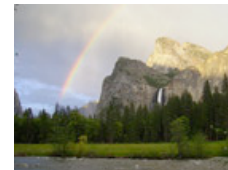
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