

LAKE OF THE OZARKS HOME BUYER'S GUIDE



Schrimp
REAL ESTATE GROUP





WELCOME TO THE LAKE OF THE OZARKS

Buying property at the Lake of the Ozarks is quite a bit different from buying real estate almost anywhere else.

Two homes with the same square footage and similar features can have remarkably different values purely because of the water in front of them. A seemingly perfect home can be the wrong choice for a number of unforeseen reasons. The cove waters could be too rough for how your family intends to enjoy it. The water could be too shallow for your boat. Your dock slip could be the wrong size. The fact is, to someone new and unfamiliar with details like this, the risk of being blindsided after falling in love with a home that just doesn't turn out to be the right fit is significant.

Weigh that alongside things like sea walls, septic systems, community sewer, HOA restrictions, road access, topography, water depth, mile markers, boat traffics, and DOZENS of other considerations that don't show up properly in an online search.

THAT'S WHY I CREATED THIS GUIDE.

My goal isn't simply to help you find a property at the Lake of the Ozarks. It's to help you understand the Lake well enough to buy the right property for the way you actually intend to use it.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO USE THE LAKE?

Before choosing an area or looking at properties, determine what you really want from your lake experience.

Is this primarily going to be:

- A weekend and vacation home?
- A full-time residence?
- A gathering place for children and grandchildren?
- A boating-focused property?
- A golf and lifestyle property?
- A low-maintenance condo?
- A vacation rental or investment?
- A combination Of personal use and rental income?
- A long-term investment?

There isn't one "best" area of Lake Of the Ozarks. There is a best area for **you**. A family with young children who wants calm water for swimming may value something completely different than a buyer with a 50-foot cruiser who wants quick access to restaurants and entertainment.



UNDERSTANDING LAKE OF THE OZARKS

Lake of the Ozarks is enormous, and location matters. properties are commonly identified by their mile marker, which refers to their location by water.

Understanding mile markers and the different arms of the Lake will make your search considerably easier.

The Main Channel

The main Osage arm contains many of the Lake's best-known communities, restaurants, marinas and attractions.

Generally, the lower mile markers provide Convenient access to Lake Ozark, Osage Beach and many of the Lake's major amenities.

As you travel farther up the Lake, development becomes less dense and the experience can become quieter and more rural. Neither is necessarily better. They're simply different lifestyles.

The Major Arms

Lake Of the Ozarks also includes several major arms and countless coves.

Depending upon your goals, areas such as the Gravois Arm, Grand Glaize Arm and Niangua Arm can provide completely different experiences.

This is one of the reasons I encourage buyers not to choose a property based solely on what looks good online.

You need to understand both its land location and its water location.

MAIN CHANNEL VS. COVE — ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS

That enormous panoramic main-channel view is hard to beat. But there is a tradeoff.

During busy summer weekends, exposed main-channel properties can experience significant boat traffic and rough water,

For some buyers, that's perfectly acceptable.

For others—especialty families who want to swim from the dock—it may not be.

Main Channel Property Advantages

- Spectacular views
- Wide-open feeling
- Great sunsets depending on orientation
- Immediate boating access

Considerations:

- Rougher water
- More boat traffic
- Greater dock exposure

Cove Property Advantages

- Calmer water
- Better swimming
- Better paddleboarding and kayaking
- More protected docks
- Often quieter

Considerations:

- Views vary dramatically
- Some coves become shallow
- Longer idle time to the main channel in certain location



The Sweet Spot

One of my favorite combinations is a protected cove location with a strong main-channel view and deep water.

You get much of the view without sacrificing the usability of the waterfront.

Those properties tend to be highly desirable for a reason.



WATER DEPTH MATTERS



Never assume that "lakefront" means usable year-round water. Water depth can vary substantially from property to property.

Consider:

- Current water depth
- Seasonal water levels
- Depth beneath the boat slip
- Size and draft of boat
- Whether the cove becomes shallow farther back
- Future boat size

If you're planning to keep a large cruiser at the property, this becomes especially important.

A beautiful house doesn't help much if your boat doesn't fit the water in front of it.

THE DOCK MAY BE AS IMPORTANT AS THE HOUSE

At Lake of the Ozarks, docks can represent significant value. Before purchasing, understand exactly what you're buying.

Consider:

- Number of slips
- Slip dimensions
- Water depth
- Boat lifts
- PWC lifts
- Electrical service
- Dock condition
- Roof condition
- Swim platform
- Wave protection
- Dock orientation
- Permit status
- Ability to modify or enlarge the dock

Don't simply ask whether the property has a dock.
Ask whether it has the right dock for your boating lifestyle.



NIGHTLY RENTALS & INVESTMENT PROPERTY

If rental income is part of your plan, investigate it before falling in love with the property.

Rental rules can vary by:

- Municipality
- Subdivision
- Condominium association
- HOA
- Property type



You should understand:

- Whether nightly rentals are permitted
- Minimum rental periods
- Licensing requirements
- Occupancy restrictions
- Parking requirements
- HOA fees related to rentals
- Property-management costs

Then determine whether the projected income actually makes sense after expenses.

Never purchase based solely on someone's gross rental-income projection.



SEPTIC, SEWER & WATER SYSTEMS

Many Lake properties aren't connected to traditional municipal water and sewer systems.

You may encounter:

- Private septic systems
- Central sewer systems
- Community sewer systems
- Private wells
- Shared wells
- Community water systems

Before purchasing, understand exactly what serves the property, who maintains it, what it costs and whether any agreements are recorded.

For shared systems, documentation matters.

TOPOGRAPHY:

BEAUTIFUL VIEWS SOMETIMES COME WITH STAIRS

Lake of the Ozarks is located in the Ozark Hills.

That means elevation changes.

A steep lot can produce an incredible view—
but also 100 stairs between your house and dock.

Think about:

- Number of stairs
- Driveway grade
- Parking
- Golf-cart paths
- Trams
- Elevators
- Ability to walk to the dock
- Long-term accessibility.



A steep property may be perfect when you're 45.
Ask yourself if you'll still enjoy it at 65.

ROAD ACCESS

This is frequently overlooked.

Some incredible Lake homes are accessed by narrow, steep or winding roads.

Ask yourself:

- Is the road paved?
- Is it county maintained?
- Is it privately maintained?
- Who pays for maintenance?
- How steep is the driveway?
- Can guests easily find the property?
- Can delivery and service vehicles access it?
- What happens during winter weather?



BUYING IN A SUBDIVISION

Some buyers want privacy and few restrictions.

Others want a premium community.

Lake of the Ozarks offers both.

Communities such as Porto Cima, The Villages at Shawnee Bend, Four Seasons and others can provide amenities and neighborhood consistency that appeal to luxury and second-home buyers.



Depending upon the community, amenities may include:

- Golf
- Pools
- Tennis
- Pickleball
- Fitness facilities
- Marinas
- Clubhouses
- Restaurants
- Security
- Community docks



The tradeoff is usually HOA dues and restrictions.
Understand both before buying.

INSPECTING A LAKE HOME

A traditional home inspection is important—but Lake properties deserve additional attention.

Depending upon the property, investigate:

- Dock
- Dock electrical
- Seawall
- Septic system
- Well
- Sewer System
- HVAC
- Roof
- Retaining Walls
- Drainage
- Decks
- Foundation
- Crawlspace
- Moisture
- Water Depth
- Easements
- Road Agreements
- Irrigation
- Pools
- EIFS

Waterfront property has additional systems and structures that can be expensive to replace.





THE VIEW

Views are subjective—but they absolutely affect value.

Consider:

- Main-channel Width
- Cove orientation
- Sunrise vs. sunset
- Neighboring docks
- Islands
- Bridges
- Seasonal foliage
- Future construction possibilities

Two homes located 500 feet apart can have dramatically different views. **At the Lake, you aren't just buying the house. You're buying everything outside the windows.**

LOCATION BY LAND AND WATER

This is one of the most important Lake Of the Ozarks concepts for an out-of-town buyer to understand.

A property can be:

Excellent by water and inconvenient by land

OR

Excellent by land and a long boat ride from your favorite places.

Think about where you'll spend your time.

Restaurants?

Golf?

Shopping?

Family?

Nightlife?

Quiet coves?

Fishing?

Your ideal location should work for the way you'll actually use the property.



THE BUYING PROCESS

Step 1 — Define Your Lake Lifestyle

Tell me how you intend to use the property.

Step 2 — Establish Your Budget

Include the property itself plus boats, lifts, furnishings, HOA dues and anticipated improvements.

Step 3 — Narrow the Lake

We'll determine which communities and mile markers fit your lifestyle.

Step 4 — Identify Properties

I'll help separate the properties that simply look good online from the ones actually worth seeing.

Step 5 — Tour Strategically

Rather than driving randomly around the Lake, we'll organize showings geographically.

Step 6 — Evaluate the Entire Property

House + lot + waterfront dock neighborhood restrictions + future resale.

Step 7 — Make the Offer

We'll evaluate comparable sales and current competition before determining strategy.

Step 8 — Due Diligence

Inspections, title, HOA documents, dock information, sewer/septic, well and other properWpecinc issues.

Step 9 — Closing

Once everything is complete, you become a Lake property owner.

Step 10 — Start Enjoying the Lake

This is the good part.

READY TO FIND YOUR PLACE AT THE LAKE?



Buying at Lake of the Ozarks should be exciting—not confusing.

The right property isn't simply the one with the prettiest photos.

It's the property that fits your family, your boating lifestyle, your budget, and the way you want to enjoy the Lake for years to come.

That's where local experience matters.

Tell me what your perfect day at Lake of the Ozarks looks like, and we'll start there.

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