

Circling Raven, ID



It's too early in the year to play, but not too soon to plan a visit to one of the finest two-course combinations in Idaho. [Circling Raven](#) and the course at the nearby [Coeur d'Alene Resort](#) are memorable independently. But a tandem visit makes for a wonderfully scenic and challenging golf weekend.

Grab a National Rental Car in nearby Spokane, Washington, and make the short drive (less than an hour) east to tiny Worley, Idaho. It is there you'll find Circling Raven, owned and operated by the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe.



Image via [Circling Raven](#)

This is a large scale, links-style prairie-land course set on a hundred cultivated acres. But more than 600 acres of fescue, wetlands and Palouse grasses, old-growth forest filled with Ponderosa pines and aspens, and shimmering, endless fields of meadow grass surround

the fairways. Set as it is among 345,000 acres of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, it's still a relative matchbook on a football field. Turn your head right or left on most every golf hole and you'll see room for a half dozen more in either direction.



Image via [Circling Raven](#)

Everything about this 7,200 yard Gene Bates design is oversized. The fairways are boulevard-broad, the bunkers gaping, greens generous. The one-shot holes are uniformly daunting, the entire quartet playing some 200 yards in length from the penultimate markers. From the tips they average closer to 220. There's a bit of sameness in that they all play downhill, but each of the four, the seventh and thirteenth in particular, playing over gaping chasms of impenetrable vegetation, is a heady experience.



Image via [Circling Raven](#)

Many of the holes are lovely, though none as fine as the tumbling 15th, a par-4 with a skyline green. This 400-yard gauntlet is backed by a ferocious lateral hazard that compels even the boldest player to reach for one club less. When the light filters just right through the hardwoods it's a bit of Ireland in Idaho, fifty shades of green on the hillsides, in the surrounding forests, through the meadows.



Image via [The Coeur d'Alene](#)

A short distance away is Idaho's most famous golf course, and one of the most popular resort courses in the west—the Coeur d'Alene. This is the home of the floating green, sitting out there in that namesake lake, tugged around daily, so it'll play anywhere from 100 to 200 yards, depending on the tee box selected or where the superintendent drops anchor. It sounds contrived, but it's a gorgeous hole, obviously very dramatic, and because the green is so large, a far easier tee shot than the notorious 17th at TPC Sawgrass, a far-more-famous island green.



Image via [The Coeur d'Alene](#)

Only a small percentage of golfers have had the opportunity to take a boat ride to and from a golf course. It's the most efficient way to access some courses in the Caribbean, for example. But one hasn't done it all until the boat ride comes mid-round, puttering with your putter in hand, a two-minute trip to and from this unique novelty act in western Idaho.

The floater is a microcosm of the course itself, which, while beautifully conditioned and obviously very scenic, is just a bit Disney-esque. It's also a complete contrast to the sprawling acreage at Circling Raven. The lake, the confines of the resort property and the adjacent suburban neighborhood in the town of Coeur d'Alene help to shoehorn this resort course into a piece of property that could be just a little larger in scope.



Image via [Tony's On The Lake](#)

All that compelling golf will engender an appetite, so be sure to check out the immodestly named [Adventures in Deliciousness](#), one of the best burger joints in the state. Beautiful views and tasty Italian food are hallmarks of [Tony's on the Lake](#). Both eateries, and dozens of other worthy options, are found in the town of Coeur D'Alene.

Famed explorers Lewis and Clark passed about a hundred miles south of this rugged landscape during the latter stages of their epic cross-continent journey in 1805. Now more than two centuries later, avid golfers with a similar sense of exploration would be well served in making the far-off trek to Spokane and putting both courses on the itinerary.