

Boat Day Soundtrack

Four hours on the water, sequenced — plus the ride back to the dock

Breezy, indie, electronic, hazy hip hop, and an unembarrassed amount of yacht rock. Sequenced to the shape of the day rather than shuffled — the lake at 11 AM is a different room than the lake at 2:30.

Geographically appropriate, as requested. [Toro y Moi](#) lives in Berkeley. [Tycho](#) is San Francisco. [Sonny & the Sunsets](#) and [Vetiver](#) are both SF. Half this list was made within an hour of the boat ramp.

1 · Cast off — 11:00 AM

Bright, forward, nothing demanding. You are still stowing coolers.

Artist	Start with
Toro y Moi	"So Many Details," "Girl Like You," "Ordinary Pleasure"
Poolside	"Harvest Moon," "Next To You" — literally files itself under daytime disco
Khruangbin	"August 10," "Time (You and I)"
Men I Trust	"Show Me How," "Numb"
Mild High Club	"Homage," "Windowpane"

2 · Anchored in the cove — noon

Lunch, the first swim, people talking over it. Keep it low and warm.

Artist	Start with
Digable Planets	"Rebirth of Slick (Cool Like Dat)," "Where I'm From," "Nickel Bags"
A Tribe Called Quest	"Bonita Applebum," "Electric Relaxation"
Nujabes	"Feather," "Aruarian Dance"
Blu & Exile	"Soul Amazing," "Dancing in the Rain"
Madlib	Anything off <i>Shades of Blue</i>

3 · Yacht rock hour — 1:00 PM

Non-negotiable. You are on a boat. Play it entirely straight — the bit only works if nobody winks.

Artist	Start with
Steely Dan	"Peg," "FM," "Aja"
Christopher Cross	"Sailing" — the actual thesis statement
Michael McDonald	"I Keep Forgettin'"
Toto	"Georgy Porgy," "Africa"
Hall & Oates	"I Can't Go for That," "Rich Girl"
Nicolette Larson	"Lotta Love"
Kenny Loggins	"This Is It"

4 · Second swim, sun dropping — 2:00 PM

Wider, more electronic, less lyric. The part of the day where nobody is talking much.

Artist	Start with
Tycho	"Awake," "A Walk," "Horizon" — SF, and built for exactly this
Bonobo	"Kerala," "Cirrus"
Four Tet	"Two Thousand and Seventeen," "Baby"
Caribou	"Odessa," "Never Come Back"
Washed Out	"Feel It All Around," "Amor Fati"
STRFKR	"Rawnald Gregory Erickson the Second"

5 · Going back to land — 2:30 PM

The last stretch to the dock. Sun-drenched, slightly wrecked, nobody wants it to end. This is the side that has to carry the whole feeling, so it is groove first and wistful second — you want people swaying, not moping.

Open with the two anchors:

Artist	Track	Why
OutKast	"SpottieOttieDopaliscious"	

That horn intro is a seven-minute sunset in song form. Start the run home here and let it play out in full — no skipping.

[Beck](#) "Debra" From *Midnite Vultures*. Absurd, tender, and completely sincere underneath. Perfect for a boat full of people who have had some sun.

Then the groove home:

Artist	Start with
The Isley Brothers	"Footsteps in the Dark," "Between the Sheets"
Bill Withers	"Lovely Day," "Hope She'll Be Happier"
Curtis Mayfield	"Move On Up," "The Makings of You"
War	"Summer" — a song explicitly about this exact feeling ending
Bobby Caldwell	"What You Won't Do for Love"
The Meters	"Cissy Strut," "Just Kissed My Baby"
D'Angelo	"Really Love," "Untitled"
Erykah Badu	"Didn't Cha Know," "Otherside of the Game"
Steve Miller Band	"Fly Like an Eagle" — San Francisco, and it lands

The last three, as you come into the dock:

Artist	Track
Khruangbin	"So We Won't Forget"
Mac DeMarco	"Chamber of Reflection"
The Beach Boys	"Til I Die" — genuinely the most wistful thing ever recorded about water

Time it. Start this side at **2:30**, not 2:55. SpottieOttie alone is seven minutes, and the point is to be inside the song when the dock comes into view — not fumbling with a phone while someone ties off.

6 · The drive south — coda

Sunburnt and quiet, windows down on 101.

Artist	Start with
Real Estate	"Talking Backwards," "It's Real"

[Beach House](#)

"Myth," "Space Song"

[Vetiver](#)

"Everyday," "Can't You Tell"

[Sonny & the Sunsets](#)

"Too Young to Burn"

[Allah-Las](#)

"Catamaran" — yes, really

[Harry Nilsson](#)

"Everybody's Talkin'"

Practical notes

- **Download it before you leave Healdsburg.** There is no cell service on the last twelve miles and none guaranteed on the water. A streaming playlist is a silent playlist out there.
- **One phone, one speaker.** Ten people with aux privileges is not a democracy, it is a hostage situation. Pick a DJ at the dock.
- **Charge it.** Four hours of playback plus sun plus a hot phone is how you arrive at 3 PM with 4% battery and no map.
- **Bring a real speaker** and keep it out of the splash zone. Phone speakers lose to open water and engine noise every time.

Sources

- [Apple Music](#)