

Summer Recreation GUIDE



Staying Safe in the Heat

This summer, enjoy your time outside while staying safe by taking proper precautions to protect yourself from the heat.

As the temperatures rise, the American Red Cross reminds us that hot cars can be deadly. Remember to never leave your children or pets in a vehicle, as interiors can quickly reach 120 degrees. You should always make it a habit to check your back seat before leaving the car. According to the organization No Heat Stroke, 743 children have died due to pediatric vehicular heatstroke since 1998. These deaths all could have been prevented.

Don't forget these other safety tips to keep you and yours safe during your summer adventures.



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IMPORTANCE OF WATER

Staying hydrated is important all year but can be especially crucial during summertime. When your body temperature rises, you need more fluids. The American Heart Association says that keeping the body hydrated helps the heart more easily pump blood through vessels and muscles.

It is easy to confuse thirst and dehydration. In fact, the AHA says that if you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Rather than monitoring those

levels, they recommend monitoring the color of your urine – pale and clear means healthy hydration and dark means you need more fluids.

While enjoying the summer weather, it is important to replace the sweat you will perspire during outdoor activities.

WEAR SUNSCREEN

The sun is a welcome sight for many Americans who face brutal winters and chilly springs. Even though it pro-

vides us with many benefits, it is crucial to protect our skin with proper sunscreen.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. Follow these recommendations from the Academy when choosing the sun block to keep you safe.

- Choose broad-spectrum protection that protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Only use a product with an

SPF of 30 or higher.

- Sunscreen must be water resistant.

The sun's rays are not the only way people contract skin cancer. Artificial rays from tanning beds also have dangerous effects on Americans. Check local salons for other options, like spray tans, for getting a truly healthy summer glow.

WATCH THE MERCURY

Prolonged exposure to hot temperatures can cause heat

exhaustion, heat cramps and even heat stroke. This is caused when your body tries to cool itself by pushing blood to the surface of your skin. As a result, important components like your brain and other organs don't get the flow they require to operate correctly. Pay attention to how hot it is and, most importantly, how you are feeling. If you have to stay outside, check your local sporting goods stores for products to help keep your cool.

Stargazing in the Summer

Relaxing on a summer evening to stare in wonder at the universe above us is a tradition many families enjoy. The background of shooting stars and beautiful constellations will lead to lifelong memories for everyone. Stars are not the only thing you'll notice during a summer stargaze.

In fact, NASA says you can easily notice several satellites as they pass overhead. The International Space Station and flare-ups of a passing Iridium satellite are the most noticeable.

GAZING TIPS

Depending on where you live, summer nights may still feel brisk and chill. Especially if you are planning to stargaze far from home, make sure you pack extra supplies and follow the advice from NASA for a successful adventure.

Bring a blanket and extra clothes: Areas like deserts and mountains can cool down drastically, even if the temperatures were warm all day. Bring along an extra set of clothing and a blanket to wrap yourself up in or to lie on and enjoy the view overhead.

Bring bug spray: Spending much time outdoors introduces risks of contracting illnesses from mosquitoes and other insects. Make sure you have enough repellent for everyone in your group. Check your local sporting goods store for a selection of products for all ages.

Plan for rain: Rain can be unpredictable during the summer. Don't let the water ruin your fun or equipment. Plan to bring along plenty of



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rain-repelling clothing and protection for your stargazing tools.

DON'T BLINK

You don't necessarily need expensive equipment to enjoy a night of stargazing. Especially if you're new to the hobby, it's best to gauge your

interest by watching the sky with your naked eye. Learn how to find popular constellations like the Big Dipper, Little Dipper, Scorpius and the Summer Triangle. You will also be dazzled by shooting stars and meteor showers. Educate yourself on the legends of the star patterns to impress your

gazing partners and teach children about the stories behind the constellations.

DEEP-SPACE ATTRACTIONS

If you have a pair of binoculars or a telescope handy, they can show you parts of space that aren't visible to the naked

eye. NASA recommends looking for great globular clusters in Hercules and Scorpius, the elusive Veil Nebula and the Ring Nebula.

Whether you choose to stargaze in your own backyard or travel to a desolate location, you will be treated to a rewarding experience.

Visit the Ocean

The ocean is considered the lifeblood of our planet. It covers more than 70 percent of the surface, encourages weather conditions, regulates temperatures and supports every living thing. Summer vacations have long been associated with oceans and the beach.

If you've never witnessed the magnitude of this blue wonder in person, this year is a great time to plan a trip.

When visiting the ocean, there are certain safety measures to consider and plenty of fun things to experience.

SWIMMING SAFETY

Swimming in the ocean requires more responsibility than trips to a neighborhood pool or lake. Wildlife, random shifts in weather and remaining in designated swimming areas are just a few concerns you should consider. It's important to know these other important tips from the American Red Cross before jumping in.

- Young children or inexperienced swimmers must wear United States Coast Guard-approved life jackets in and around the water.

- Avoid diving headfirst, especially in areas where you are unfamiliar with the depth or obstructions that may cause you to seriously injure yourself.

- Never let a young child or an elderly person out of your sight. Even shallow water can have unpredictable waves that may cause someone to lose their footing.

HUNT FOR SEASHELLS

Collecting seashells will help you remember your visit



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to the ocean each time you look your seaside treasure. Remember these tips to enhance your chances of finding beautiful shells on your visit to the ocean.

Try to look for shells when the tide is either low or going

out. Also, tides are much stronger after a full moon or strong storms and tend to bring more shells to the beach.

Try to find areas that aren't packed with other beach-goers. It's likely that they will

have picked through most of the available shells.

BRING YOUR CAMERA

Don't forget to document your vacation. The ocean can create once-in-a-lifetime memories that you will want

to revisit when you're back at home. Visit a local sporting goods store or camera shop for waterproof bags to protect your delicate gear, or even for easy-to-use underwater cameras to capture your aquatic adventures.

Indoor Entertainment

Once the temperatures get too uncomfortable to spend much time outdoors, there are still plenty of things to do inside. Search for an event to attend locally or within driving distance for a family road trip. Entertainment in an air-conditioned building may be just what you need to enjoy the dog days of summer.

VISIT AN AQUARIUM

A great way to scratch the itch of curiosity about nature and the ocean is to visit an aquarium.

You'll get a first-hand glance at what occurs underwater while you stay safe and dry (and cool). For those who don't feel comfortable scuba diving, this is ultimately the only chance to see wet wildlife up close and personal.

Thanks to the unique visual appeal of some of the most beautiful fish and aquatic animals, it's no surprise the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums says these facilities receive more than 700 million annual visitors. Aquariums are also great places to instill respect of wildlife and responsibility to children.

SEE A PLAY

Witnessing a live-action play is a great way to unwind. If you have never been to a play, you may be surprised at the vast differences between watching a performance and seeing a movie on a screen. In this environment, both the actors and audience are a part of the event. Those on stage will feed off the enthusiasm and enjoyment of their spectators. Since live performance doesn't have the luxury of editing out their errors, each play is truly unique and spe-



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cial. Find a venue that is holding a performance that appeals to you, and you may also find your next hobby.

ATTEND A CONCERT

An indoor concert is another awesome event to attend during the summer. Being sur-

rounded by a large group of like-minded people as you sing along to your favorite anthems creates a community experi-

ence that is not easily duplicated. Look for listings in a community calendar or at your favorite venues.



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Take a Trip to the Zoo

Unless you are brave enough to travel to the natural habitats of dangerous animals, a zoo is the only way people can witness the beauty of large cats, scaly reptiles and powerful apes.

Watching these incredible animals communicate with one another and even the

people who are there to see them is simply amazing. Aside from it being an awesome learning experience for both adults and children, a trip to the zoo can give people a deeper respect for the different species that accompany us on Earth.

This summer, gather a group of your closest friends and family and prepare to have your breath taken away.

TOP ZOOS IN AMERICA

When planning a summer trip to the zoo, Americans have many options.

Depending on how far you wish to travel, different facilities may feature animals you won't see anywhere else. The Travel Channel says these are the top zoos in the U.S.:

San Diego Zoo, California: With more than 4,000 animals representing 800-plus species housed on a 100-acre park, you'll have your work cut out for you to see it all. Visitors encounter giant pandas, polar bears, elephants and cheetahs.

Philadelphia Zoo, Pennsylvania: The country's oldest zoo, this 42-acre facility opened in 1874 and is home

to more than 1,300 animals. Its small size makes it easy for visitors to see the entire park in just a day – highlights are the gorillas, orangutans and First Niagara Big Cat Falls.

Bronx Zoo, New York: This popular tourist attraction is the nation's largest metropolitan animal park. It rests on nearly 265 acres and provides homes for more than 4,000 animals of 600 different species. Take the monorail to travel through enclosures, housing elephants, rhinos, antelope and deer.

Not looking to hit the road?

Check into a membership at your local zoo for family fun all year round (and usually a few special perks, too).

TREAT ANIMALS WITH RESPECT

When visiting the zoo, it is crucial to show the animals there, proper respect. This keeps you and the animals safe. Always obey signs that warn against feeding the animals, sticking fingers in cages, getting too close or tapping on glass. And, of course, always listen to the zookeepers' orders.

Celebrate Independence Day

On July 4, 1776, the United States adopted the Declaration of Independence and each year, we celebrate America's birthday with food, family, fun and fireworks.

One favorite summer vacation for many families in the country is traveling to a city for a large firework display. While beautiful, the explosives used to celebrate the United States can be dangerous. A professionally staged show gives people the peace of mind that trained experts are there to safely exhibit the glorious colors and patterns in the sky.

FIREWORK EVENTS IN AMERICA

Road trips have a special place in the hearts of Americans and summer is the perfect time to make them. Families travel the highways and witness gorgeous displays of wildlife and forestry before reaching their destinations. Consider packing up and traveling to one of the AARP's must-see firework attractions.

New York: If the city skyline is beautiful enough, consider seeing it as a backdrop to the country's largest firework show, by the numbers.



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Launching from five barges along the East River, displays reach three times higher than the Statue of Liberty.

Addison, Texas: This small town of about 15,000, gets plenty attention on the Fourth – welcoming nearly half a million spectators annually. The impressive firework display is located about 15 miles north of Dallas.

Washington, D.C.: Of course, the nation's capital is

going to make any list regarding Independence Day celebrations. Each year, D.C. welcomes numerous performers and an amazing shower of fireworks.

FIREWORK SAFETY

If you forgo a trip to a national event and decide to host your own show in your backyard, caution is the word of the day. First, check with local officials about regula-

tions regarding fireworks in your area. Some states or cities may have ordinances against explosives that travel in the air but are more lenient to attractions that remain on the ground.

Consider these staggering statistics regarding fireworks and safety as reported by the National Fire Protection Agency.

- Fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires per year,

including 1,300 structure fires and 300 vehicle fires.

- Annual fires due to unsafe firework methods cause an average three deaths, 40 injuries and \$43 million in direct property damage.

Check with your local fireworks vendors about the best displays for your area and your budget, and always ask the experts there about handling these explosive celebrations.

Photograph Nature

As the warm temperatures makes its appearance, so does the wildlife that disappeared during the cold. Documenting the beauty of animals in their natural habitat is a great way to create lasting memories and capture amazing moments to share.

You'll see that photography requires much more than pointing a camera and clicking a button. It is an art form that is developed over time, and summer marks the perfect season to find the furry models you need to improve your skills.

DON'T BE OVERWHELMED BY GEAR

If you're only considering stepping into the world of photography, you are probably confused about the gear you need for a successful shoot. While some of the equipment you may come across can be expensive, it's best to start small while you perfect your craft. Visit a local camera shop for the best advice on what to buy and when. They may also be able to help you discover the best spots for photographic nature.

Remember, nature photography takes patience and you may spend hours outside chasing the perfect shot. Stay protected from the elements of the outdoors with sun-screen and bug repellent, and take along plenty of water to stay hydrated.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Are you mainly interested in taking pictures of wildlife or beautiful scenery in nature? If you answered animals, like birds, you'll want to pack the



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right lens. For landscape photographers, your incredible images will benefit from a wide angle lens. Again, experts at your local camera shop can advise you on the perfect lens for any shooting situation.

A suitable backpack is also important for a fun day on the

trails. You'll need plenty of room to store your equipment and necessities. Also, a good pair of hiking shoes can lessen the strain on your feet and back.

TAKE A LESSON

A lesson or two will allow

you to discover functions of your camera you wouldn't have noticed on your own, what lens to use and how to shoot in different lighting situations. Lessons can be expensive, so take the time to find a professional who you get along with and can teach you

what you need to know to get started.

Don't be surprised when you find how much you enjoy photographing nature. Spending time in the great outdoors and witnessing candid moments from amazing creatures can be humbling.