

# SUMMER Recreation

GUIDE



# Summer Camps

**I**n the summertime, finding an outlet for children's energy — and boredom — can be a challenge for parents. That's why summer camps are a great option.

This type of summer recreation has been a mainstay for decades. Summer camps offer great opportunities for educational and recreational activities. They also teach social and behavioral skills through various programs, events and activities.

If you're looking for a summer camp in your area, there are a few questions you should ask before settling on the one that's right for your children.

## WHAT KINDS OF CAMPS CAN I FIND?

No matter what type of interests your child has, it's possible to find a summer camp to match. From traditional nature and horseback riding camps to science and sports clinics, there are organizations putting on amazing experiences for children of all ages.

A great resource for checking on local and national camps is the American Camp Association. Through the organization, you can find out if a camp is accredited and its accreditation history.

According to the ACA, an accredited camp has gone through an in-depth process to comply with 250 standards in health, safety and program quality. Knowing that your



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camp was committed enough to go through this intensive process can give you confidence that you're sending your child to the right place.

## WILL MY CHILD BE HOMESICK?

Summer camp offers many life lessons and chances for

socialization, but they also require an extended period of time away from home. For your child to truly enjoy camp, you'll want to do everything you can to prevent homesickness during their stay.

If your children have spent plenty of nights away from

home — maybe at a grandparent's house — this likely will not be an issue for them. Talk this over with your child before signing them up for camp.

Feel out their emotions toward being away from home for several days or even weeks and try to sense cues of

nervousness, tenseness or sadness.

Many camps are staffed by professionals trained to handle these types of issues, so check with your camp to see what kind of measures they have in place to make sure your child has an exceptional summer camp experience.

# Boating



**S**ome families like to hit the pavement during the summer for a road trip. Others prefer to hit the water. Boating is one of the most popular summer activities.

With the diverse array of boats you can purchase, there is no shortage of activities for water enthusiasts to enjoy during the year's hottest months.

If you're considering purchasing, the type of boat you select should be influenced by how you plan to use the watercraft. Going to do any fishing in the ocean? Looking to leisurely cruise around your local lake? How and where your boat will operate can determine what type of purchase you should make.

For the most part, the types of boats on the market are classified as cruising, fishing or watersports vessels.

Cruisers are for boaters seeking to spend time relaxing or entertaining on the water.

Fishing boats are more open and allow for more front deck space to make it easier to fish. Watersports vehicles are equipped with strong towing capacity and a design to accommodate water skiers and wakeboarders.

Here are the most common boats within the three categories listed above:

## CRUISING BOATS

The most popular types of boats to fall under this description are sailboats, pontoon boats and trawler boats. Each has its own distinct characteristics, but riders tend to enjoy sitting in the bow across the board because of the great view, nice breeze and open platform.

Among these options, pontoon boats may just be the most popular boat in the world. These types of watercraft rely on pontoons — resembling large tubes — to float. They offer wide decks and couch-like seating that make them perfect for some Saturday afternoon grilling while you take breaks from cannon-balling into the lake.

## FISHING BOATS

Bass boats are the most widely known and purchased fishing boats because of their great access to shallow water and accommodations for multiple anglers. You can outfit your bass boat with your engine of choice depending on how

much power you need for zipping across your local lake. Lightweight aluminum fishing boats offer another great choice, especially if you're in the sport of freshwater fishing in tight spaces.

Center console boats also make for great fishing options because of their ability to handle offshore waters. If you're planning on fishing for bigger catches on rougher waters, this is the type of boat for you.

## WATERSPORTS BOATS

Designed for fishing and watersports, fish-and-ski boats are ideal for families who love having fun in the water. Most feature a spacious sun-pad area that can convert into a fishing platform.

Other fun watercraft include wakeboard boats and jet boats, each of which offer ample seating and are known for their maneuverability in the water. Check with your local boat dealer to see what type of watercraft fits your needs this summer.

# Extreme 5Ks

**D**oes running through miles of mud and challenging terrain sound like the ideal recreational event for you? If so, joining an extreme 5K should be on your to-do list this summer.

These types of races have become all the rage in the world of health and fitness over the past few years.

Designed with friends and family in mind, extreme 5Ks are promoted as a healthy, physical and fun experience that will leave your muscles aching and clothes caked in mud. Contact your local newspaper or tourism board for updates on upcoming events.

How They Work Extreme 5Ks are no walk in the park, so if you're looking for a leisurely summertime event, you may want to look elsewhere. Some of the most intense extreme 5Ks are filled with 3.1 miles of obstacles ranging from mud pits and swings to slides and rock walls.

Many of them offer both individual and team signups, so start recruiting your friends and family members as teammates today. Be sure to put in some hours in the gym or out on the trails before competition day arrives.

## HOW THEY HELP

Running in a 5K helps you burn major calories; running in an extreme 5K helps you burn major calories while undergoing a grueling boot-camp-like experience.



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Navigating one requires endurance and lots of cardio as you run, climb, slide and crawl through muddy obstacles.

Find an extreme 5K that gives some of the proceeds to a charitable cause and you

can truly make a difference with your efforts. Many of these types of events are tied to local community causes, so your signup fee helps preserve local land, support the underprivileged or feed the hungry.

## MAKE IT A TRUE EXPERIENCE

The best kinds of extreme 5Ks are the ones around which you can build an entire trip. Find an upcoming event in the largest city near you and line up a hotel room for the night.

Spend time after the race socializing with others from the event or by checking out other local tourism hotspots to make your trip one to remember. You'll revitalize both your body and the regional economy.

# Staycation

**N**o matter where you call you home, odds are there is a rich tourism hotspot in your neck of the woods waiting for you to explore it this summer.

Some of the greatest summer memories can be made in your own community when you choose to plan what many in the tourism industry call a staycation. These types of shorter, localized trips have become more popular over the years because they are inexpensive and offer as much fun as longer excursions.

## **BENEFITS OF STAYCATIONS**

Local fairs, festivals, campgrounds and concert series are excellent events that help you support your local economy by keeping your hard-earned dollars in the area.

Another great benefit of the staycation is the ability to include more of your friends and family members in your summer adventure. While some in your social circle may not be up for traveling to Europe or even across the country, they may be more inclined to renting some local cabins or staying at a local campsite. After all, the more the merrier when it comes to summertime fun.

## **STAYCATION RESEARCH**

If you're having trouble figuring out where to spend your staycation, check in with your city, county or state tourism bureau. Professionals within



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these organizations are experts in the local tourism scene and can help you uncover some of the most interesting opportunities for fun.

Find the organization's website to see if it posts an

updated calendar of events. You also can find them on social media to keep tabs on upcoming events and tourism-related information.

## **ENJOY LOCAL HISTORY**

Do you have a rich histori-

cal landmark in your community? It is likely that local lodging and recreational activities aren't far away. Check your local newspaper for advertisements or conduct a simple online search to find locations and rates for local

tourism opportunities tied into historical events or figures.

History-based staycations are both entertaining and enlightening — the perfect combination for summertime enjoyment.

# Snorkeling

Snorkeling trips allow you to experience stunning serenity and vibrantly colored creatures underwater. There is nothing quite like descending 50 feet into crystal clear waters to take in the natural beauty of reef and marine life.

Whether you're diving in from a boat or wading in from the shore, you should research various aspects of snorkeling ahead of booking your trip. Your comfort level in the water and what types of sites you hope to see should both be factors in your decision.

Collaborate with your local travel agent for advice on where and when to book your next snorkeling excursion. They will have information on peak seasons for snorkeling in different areas of the world and will be able to guide you through the experience of properly planning for the trip.

## THE EQUIPMENT

Snorkeling gear is relatively inexpensive and is obviously a necessity to the experience. While an operator may include or rent gear, the available sizes and fits may be limited. That's why your best option is purchasing and breaking in your own equipment ahead of time.

Having your own gear also helps give you peace of mind about how well it has been cleaned and sanitized between uses. It's not advisable to purchase your equipment one or two days — or even weeks — ahead of your trip. Give yourself more time to test it out and acclimate



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yourself to how it fits. This will lead to a seamless experience when it's time to jump in for real.

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

While there are many stunning snorkeling trips right

here in the United States, many people love checking out the underwater scene elsewhere. If your trip is to a foreign country, it's vital that you secure all necessary travel documentation for the destination. Also, don't forget to

check with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify and understand any public health concerns related to the destination you chose.

The CDC recommends making a copy of your travel

itinerary and leaving it with a non-traveling family member or close and trusted friend. Be sure to list emergency contact information along with names. Preparation is key to any trip, especially if you're planning to leave the U.S.

# Ballooning

**B**allooning is a life-changing experience that allows you to soar above the ground, giving you a birds-eye perspective on your surroundings that can last a lifetime.

Whether you plan your ballooning trip in your local region or perhaps above the rolling vineyards of Tuscany, you will be taken aback by the breathtaking views and sounds that accompany floating thousands of feet into the air.

## PREPARATION TIPS

When it comes to planning your ballooning trip, it's important to understand that adverse weather conditions — particularly wind — can cause cancellations because of their impact on the inflation and flying processes. You may want to hold off on booking the experience until the weather forecast shows that you are likely in the clear.

Also, layers are advised when it comes to your clothing options for ballooning. While you won't be overly chilly because of the propane burners reflecting enough heat to keep you comfortable, the temperature can drop the higher you go.

Ballooning with large groups of friends and family members can be the best option, especially if your ballooning organization is staffed well enough to float several balloons at once. While the expansive landscape below definitely provides a beautiful view, so does peering across the sky to



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see multiple balloons floating.

## SAFETY TIPS

When it comes to getting the most out of your ballooning experience, safety is key. Look for professional organizations that feature equipment and pilots certified by the Federal Aviation Administration. This means the balloons are subject

to the same rigorous FAA inspection requirements as aircraft.

You'll also want to ask which organization makes the balloon and basket you'll be flying in, and do some research on their manufacturing record. Ask ahead of time how many years of combined experience your balloon pilot has accrued,

as well as how many hours and passengers the organization has accommodated in its existence.

## FIND A TOTAL PACKAGE

Many hot-air ballooning tourist destinations include a meal and sparkling toast with the experience. Some even offer a mix of traditional

breakfast dishes, as well as lunch and dessert options. There also may be cooking facilities at the launch site that can be used to cook on the spot.

Find out if your organization offers this amenity and what it entails. This will help you plan your meals accordingly leading up to and following the trip.

# Amusement Park Fun

**H**eading to your local amusement park this summer? You're not alone. According to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, 25 percent of Americans visit amusement parks each year to generate more than \$50 billion in revenue.

These numbers span America's 400 attractions, including theme parks, water parks and family entertainment centers.

## SMART PLANNING

Most amusement parks are open year-round, but their attendance really spikes during the summertime. That's why planning out your budget and schedule is important to making sure your trip to the park goes off without a hitch.

For major parks such as the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando or the original Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif., you will likely benefit from buying multi-day passes that come with lodging included. Depending on your plan, these can save you money in the long run while also limiting the amount of transactions you'll have to coordinate during the planning phase.

Be sure to set a budget for travel, lodging and in-trip entertainment. Stick to your number and remember that expenses such as theme park food and beverages are likely to consume a large portion of your budget. Work with a local travel agency to properly plan your next big amusement park trip.



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## AMUSEMENT PARK SAFETY

While having fun at the amusement park is likely your goal, equally important is staying safe. The IAAPA offers these tips for making sure your trip to the park is as safe as it is enjoyable:

- Obey listed age, height,

weight and health restrictions.

- Observe all posted ride safety rules.
- Keep hands, arms, legs and feet inside rides at all times.
- Remain seated in all rides until they come to a complete stop and you are instructed to exit.

- Follow all verbal instructions given by ride operators or provided by recorded announcements.
- Always use safety equipment provided and never attempt to wriggle free of or loosen restraints or other safety devices.
- Parents with young chil-

dren should make sure their children can understand safe and appropriate ride behavior.

- Never force anyone, especially children, to ride attractions they don't want to ride.
- If you see any unsafe behavior or condition on a ride, report it to a supervisor or manager immediately.