

SUMMER RECREATION



Surfing

If you have ridden a gnarly wave or been stoked over a choppy bomb, then you know: Surfing is the thrill of a lifetime. If you haven't experienced it for yourself, make this the summer to do so.

The sport is an enjoyable endeavor for all ages and skill sets, and is described by many surfers as one of the most challenging activities in existence.

This doesn't mean you can't have a calm, pleasant experience if you decide to take it up for the first time. Professional surf shops and instructors are available at every major beach, ready to help you get ready for your first time on the board.

CHECKLIST

Adventure awaits you for your next — or first — surfing excursion, but so does the potential to forget something important. Doing so can turn your experience from fun to frustrating in no time.

Follow this checklist to make sure you bring the essentials.

- **Your board:** There are different styles and sizes of boards, so if you're unsure of what you'll need, quiz an expert or surf shop professional. They will be able to point you in the right direction.

- **The clothes:** Neoprene wet suits are a popular choice for surfing attire because they are durable, waterproof and difficult to rip. Don't forget some proper



© FOTOLIA

storage for them when you're finished, such as a large plastic container or tote.

- **Repair and maintenance:** If you're planning on surfing for multiple days, there are some maintenance products you'll want to remember. Make sure you have a good supply of wax, a spare leash

and a ding repair kit to keep your board in optimal shape.

PLAN A TRIP

Once you have everything you need to hit the waves, it's time to figure out where you'd like to board. Check with your travel companions to see if

there are any ocean spots they have been wanting to try.

You also can do some research by reading online reviews or joining surfing chat forums. You can find valuable tips from surfers who are not only experts in the sport, but also in where to find the best waves for any

skill level.

It's recommended that you take a few classes before taking on the ocean yourself. Many oceanfront outfitters offer packages that include a crash course on surfing, as well as an assisted ride until you are ready to battle the waves on your own.

Taking a Cruise

Imagine yourself lounging on the deck of a giant cruise ship, drink in hand with the sound of gently crashing waves ringing through your ears.

Yes, a cruise is a great way of escaping the summer heat for milder temperatures in the Caribbean or European coastlines. And taking a cruise may be more affordable than you think.

PLANNING

With so many details, travel arrangements and potential add-on packages, deciding how you're going to spend your cruise budget can be a bit overwhelming. That's why planning is so vital to an enjoyable experience.

If you're in the initial phases of choosing a cruise company, start by reading reviews online or in your local travel publications. You should consider the time of year you will be traveling, the size of your group and how long you want to be at sea when making your arrangements.

OFF THE BOAT

There is plenty to do on your cruise ship — dancing, eating and even gambling, if you are so inclined. But some of the best experiences are waiting for you off the boat when you make a destination stop.

Scuba diving, historical tours and days on the beach are great ways to stretch your legs after an extended period



© FOTOLIA

out at sea. Check in with your cruise liner before your trip to see if it offers these types of activities.

If so, budget accordingly. The overall cost of most cruises includes the meals and drinks on the ship itself, but you will likely be paying a little extra

for additional experiences.

CRUISE SAFETY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has some basic safety tips for travelers to make sure the cruise experience is a safe and

healthy one. Regardless of your itinerary, the CDC says, the first thing you should do when planning a cruise trip to making sure you're up to date on your vaccinations, such as measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and seasonal flu.

The CDC also urges people

to prepare accordingly for dealing with nausea, especially if you haven't been on a cruise in the past.

Without knowing if you are apt to become seasick, it is best to have an ample amount of anti-nausea medicine at the ready.

Have a Staycation

Great summer memories can be made in your own local community — or right down the highway. Save money and support local businesses by attending local fairs, festivals, campgrounds and concert series.

Best of all, they offer you the opportunity to stay close to friends and family members this summer while you soak in the summer fun together.

FIND GOOD TIMES

Having trouble figuring out where or how to spend your summer fun time? Your city, county or state tourism bureau can be an expert source of upcoming events, times and details.

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.

RENT A CABIN

Do you have a national forest or waterway in your neck of the woods? Check your local newspaper for advertisements or conduct a simple online search to find locations and rates for local lodging.

You may stumble across a unique bed and breakfast or treehouse cabin that you didn't know existed. You'll save the time usually spent taking a long car or plane ride to your destination, allowing you more quality experiences with your



© FOTOLIA

spouse, friends or family members.

SAFETY TIPS

Do you have a long-run-

ning fair or festival in your area that you haven't been to in a while? The time is now to revisit it to see how it has changed and what kind of impact it has on the local

community.

We all know that by spending local, you are re-investing more money back into your community.

But by supporting local

fairs and festivals, you also are helping event coordinators create extra jobs, meaning you are doubly impacting your local economy by doing your part.

Zip Lining

When you think summer vacation, your mind may automatically wander to water, sand and suntan lotion. Many enthusiasts are instead opting for trees, speed and flying.

That's right, zip lining is picking up momentum as a fast-growing summertime favorite across the world. It's an affordable, easy-to-do activity — if you're not afraid of heights, that is.

Some of the most scenic zip-line adventures take place high in the jungles and rainforests in tropical countries such as Costa Rica. The natural beauty of the environment, coupled with the sounds and sights of native wildlife, can offer a stunning backdrop for your next zip-line experience.

TAKE A TOUR

Many businesses offer zip-lining tours or destination experiences for the entire family to enjoy. And you don't have to leave the country to have an amazing adventure.

From the West Coast to the East and many rural areas in between, zip-lining tours await you. Given their diverse locations and environmental surroundings, they all offer something a bit different for you to experience.

When planning your tour, start by talking to friends and family members who have zip lined. Ask them about the best places to do so, but also about the experience itself. Was it scary, exhilarating or a little bit of both? Would they do it



© FOTOLIA

again? Their answers may have an impact on your decision.

PAY ATTENTION

Your zip-lining venture will

likely start with a how-to explanation for a safe ride. You will learn how to put on your harness, latch onto the zip cable and properly brake if you want to slow down on the cable.

Some companies will let you practice a few times on a short line that is only a few feet off the ground. This will give you the basic understanding of how the zip-line moves across the

cable.

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you have any concerns for your safety or if you simply need to clarify any part of the activity.

Mountain Biking

Looking to work up a sweat this summer? Striving to reconnect with nature and all of its natural beauty? Mountain biking is your answer.

It provides a combination of adrenaline-packed challenges and scenic magnificence that is unique to the sport.

Whether you're a newcomer or a seasoned veteran, there is an assortment of trail options, likely in your own backyard. Take a multi-day blast across a time-tested mountain track or simply spend a Saturday cruising through a wooded trail. Whatever your preference, mix in some mountain biking this summer to make it one to remember.

TOP 5 TRIPS

There are countless trails across the world waiting for you and your bike. Here are five of the best, according to Adventure Cycling Association.

- **C&O Towpath:** A 184-mile trek from Georgetown to Pittsburgh that gives a scenic view of the Potomac River Valley.

- **Katy Trail:** Snaking along the Missouri River, this trail is America's longest at 225 miles.

- **Kettle Valley Railway:** The ACA calls this remote, long tour the most epic rail-trail on Earth. It is located in British Columbia and fields a collection of rivers, lakes and mountains.

- **Colorado Hut Systems:** This route is like a choose-your-own adventure, with options for all skill levels and at varying altitudes.

- **White Rim Trail:** Head to the back-country of Utah to find this gem with tough climbs and a system of campsite options.

ESSENTIALS

Whatever trip you decide to take this



© FOTOLIA

summer, don't forget the essentials:

- **Safety gear:** Helmet, reflective lighting and gloves can make all the difference in protecting you from injury. Remember that mountain biking can be a relatively dangerous sport, so

take proper precautions and always bring the essential gear.

- **First-aid kit:** Load your kit with small alcohol pads, bandages, tweezers and anti-infection spray. This will help keep any minor cuts or scrapes

under control.

- **Repair equipment:** A broken-down bike equals the end to your day, unless you bring tire levers, spare tubes and a patch kit. Keep your bike functioning with these invaluable tools.

Fishing

Fishing on a warm, sunny day with cloudless skies is a quintessential summertime activity in America. It is the perfect pastime for all ages, requiring only a simple assortment of equipment.

Fishing has forever offered a memorable bonding experience between parents and children, as well.

CHECK YOUR GEAR

While you technically only need a pole and a container of bait to have an enjoyable fishing experience, there are some technical details to check before you hit the lake.

What you need depends on the type of fishing you're looking to do. Will you be fishing from the banks of a small creek or pond? An inexpensive spin-cast rod and reel combination should suit you just fine.

Fly fishing requires a special kind of rod that may take some getting used to, as will deep ocean fishing. Research which type of fishing you'd like to tackle this summer and build your equipment stockpile accordingly.

Don't forget to find out what kind of fish are likely swimming in the water at your destination. Knowing this will determine what kind of bait or lures you will need to reel in the big one.

BE SAFE

Wherever you go, understand your local and state fishing regulations. You can bring a copy of the rules pam-



© FOTOLIA

phlet to consult during your trip so you are fishing within various laws and limits.

Especially if you're bringing young children with you, be sure to adhere to all and any

safety standards. Children should always wear a life jacket, no matter if they are on a shore, dock or boat. Make sure it fits properly and the child is comfortable wear-

ing it.

Also be careful allowing young children to handle hooks. Consider using barbless hooks for kids and take care of baiting the hook your-

self until your child becomes more practiced in the skill.

Once you ensure that you're safe and following the rules, it's time to head out on your adventure.

Responsible Summer Fun

While having fun this summer, don't forget to respect the environment around you. A fun summer trip can create memories to last a lifetime.

Being a good environmental steward can ensure that families in the future get to have the same type of experience. What is an environmental steward, you ask?

The U.S. Forest Service helped deliver an outdoor code of ethics — a list that includes promises to not damage natural features, to respect other people's property and rights, to obey all regulations and to lend a helping hand when you see someone in distress.

Learn more and check out the full code of ethics at www.fs.fed.us.

DON'T LITTER

Nothing can ruin the natural beauty of a park or public beach like an empty soda can or sandwich wrapper. Litter is a completely unavoidable stain on our public lands and one that we can work together to remove. It also can be damaging to wildlife and compromise their habitats.

Bring along a trash bag or other receptacle for collecting your trash so you aren't tempted to ditch your trash inappropriately.

Take pride in your environment by reporting any littering activities you see during your outdoor activities.



© FOTOLIA

FOLLOW RULES

Some areas do not allow certain activities, such as fishing, swimming or surfing. It is always a good idea to check with your local land authority ahead of time before risking a wasted trip or

costly non-compliance ticket.

Remember that agencies implement these regulations for your health, safety and well-being. Certain beach areas may have numerous reports of shark sightings. Maybe there is a storm forecasted for a certain region

that could cause injury to people swimming or boating.

Depending on where you plan to relax, there may be protected land around you on which activities or sports are not permitted. These areas are designated off limits in many cases to protect

wildlife and vegetation.

Along these lines, be sure to be mindful of any local hazards that may pose a danger to your summertime fun. Any deep water or snake-infested areas can be extremely dangerous, so it is best to avoid them altogether.