

Summer Recreation Guide



Participate in a Beach Cleanup

Beaches are synonymous with summer, but they've come under increasing threats that can spoil them for both humans and the marine life that live in lakes and oceans.

Marine debris and litter are polluting our coastlines and threatening fragile ecosystems. Fortunately, beach cleanup initiatives offer an opportunity for individuals and communities to come together in the spirit of conservation and make a tangible difference in preserving coastal environments.

Coastal ecosystems, including beaches, dunes and mangroves, are vital habitats that support a diverse array of marine life and contribute to global biodiversity. However, human activities such as littering, improper waste disposal and marine pollution pose significant threats to these sensitive environments. Debris, including plastics, glass and other materials, can harm ocean and lake animals through ingestion, entanglement and habitat destruction, causing harm to marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

Beach cleanup initiatives empower individuals and communities to take action and become stewards of their local coastlines. Organized by



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environmental organizations, non-profits, schools, businesses and community groups, beach cleanups bring together volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to remove litter and debris from beaches and coastal areas. By participating in beach cleanups, volunteers contribute to cleaner shorelines and raise aware-

ness about the importance of marine conservation and environmental stewardship.

Some organizations, such as the Alliance for the Great Lakes, sponsor groups that want to adopt a specific beach. They ask team leaders to organize volunteers, pick up debris and then enter litter data into a database that helps

the organization understand the extent of issues on the Great Lakes.

Beach cleanups have a tangible and immediate impact on coastal environments, helping to reduce the harmful effects of marine debris on marine life and ecosystems. Every piece of litter removed from the beach represents a

step towards a cleaner, healthier coastline. Additionally, beach cleanups provide valuable data on the types and quantities of litter collected, which can inform policy decisions, raise public awareness and support efforts to address the root causes of marine pollution.

The Ocean Blue Project encourages beach cleanups as a part of eco-tourism, explaining that the cleanups safeguard marine life and its habitats. It's a way of maintaining the ecological balance and integrity of endangered regions while ensuring long-term marine biodiversity.

Getting involved in beach cleanup initiatives is easy and rewarding. Check local environmental organizations, community groups or online platforms for upcoming beach cleanup events in your area. Join organized cleanup efforts or gather a group of friends, family or colleagues to initiate your own beach cleanup project. Remember to follow safety guidelines, wear appropriate attire and bring gloves, bags and other cleanup supplies.

Individuals can raise awareness about marine conservation and environmental issues through education, advocacy and community engagement. Share information about the importance of reducing plastic consumption, recycling responsibly and adopting sustainable practices to minimize waste and protect our oceans. Encourage others to join the movement and promote healthy coastal environments.

DIY Outdoor Movie Nights

Transform your backyard or local park into an enchanting outdoor cinema with a DIY outdoor movie night.

Whether you're planning a cozy movie night for family and friends or hosting a community gathering under the stars, here's a step-by-step guide to setting up an unforgettable outdoor movie experience.

First, choose a suitable location for your outdoor movie night. Ideally, you'll want a flat and spacious area with enough room for seating and a clear view of the screen. Your backyard, patio or a local park are great options. Consider factors such as access to power outlets, nearby lighting, and potential noise disturbances.

Next, select your equipment. You'll need a projector, a screen (or a blank wall) and a sound system. Invest in a high-quality projector with sufficient brightness and resolution to ensure clear and vibrant visuals, even in outdoor settings. Opt for a portable or inflatable screen that's easy to set up and provides a smooth viewing surface. For audio, a pair of external speakers or a portable sound system will enhance the movie-watching experience.

Set up your outdoor movie theater. Positioning the projector and screen in the desired location, ensure that the screen is securely anchored and free



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from wrinkles or creases. Connect the projector to your media source, whether it's a laptop, DVD player or streaming device, and test the audio and video to ensure everything is working correctly.

Now, create a cozy seating area for your audience. Arrange blankets, cushions, lawn chairs or bean bags to provide comfortable seating options.

As the sun sets and the sky darkens, it's time to start the show. Dim or turn off any surrounding lights to minimize

distractions and enhance the viewing experience. Cue up your chosen movie, grab some popcorn and snacks, and settle in for an evening of cinematic magic under the stars.

To add a touch of ambiance to your outdoor movie night, consider incorporating themed decorations, string lights or lanterns to create a festive atmosphere. You can also enhance the experience with fun activities such as pre-movie trivia games or themed costume contests.

Consider logistics such as restroom facilities, parking and weather contingency plans. Keep an eye on the weather forecast and be prepared to reschedule or relocate your outdoor movie night in case of inclement weather.

If you are doing a movie night in a park for a public audience, you will likely need to obtain public performance rights from the film's distributor or rights holder. Find out whether you need to obtain a license or pay a fee.

You may be able to contact local filmmakers to show their films.

Parade Magazine made a list of the top 50 summer movies of all time. The top ten were "Jaws," "Dirty Dancing," "Ghostbusters" (both the original and the remake are on the list) "The Sandlot," "Now and Then," "The Graduate," "Wet Hot American Summer," "Booksmart" and "Beaches."

If none of those appeal, consider polling those who will be attending the movie night.

Go Birdwatching

Birdwatching, or birding, offers nature enthusiasts a captivating opportunity to connect with the avian world and appreciate the beauty and diversity of bird species in their natural habitats.

Birdwatching.com claims that birding is the fastest-growing outdoor activity in the U.S. They cite a survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that says 51.3 million Americans report that they are birdwatchers.

Selecting the right location is key to a successful birdwatching expedition. Research and identify birding hotspots known for their rich biodiversity and abundance of bird species. National parks, wildlife refuges, wetlands and coastal areas are often prime birdwatching destinations. Consider visiting local bird sanctuaries, nature reserves and eBird hotspots, which provide valuable data on bird sightings and species distribution.

Plan your birdwatching expeditions during optimal times of the day when bird activity is at its peak. Early mornings and late afternoons are prime birding hours when birds are most active, singing, foraging and displaying their vibrant plumage. Consider seasonal migrations and breeding patterns to maximize your chances of spotting migratory birds and nesting activities.

Invest in quality birding gear and equipment to enhance your birdwatching experience. Essential items include binoculars or a spotting scope for magnified views of distant birds, a field guide or birding app for species identification, a notebook and pen for recording observations and comfort-



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able outdoor attire suitable for the weather and terrain. Consider bringing along a camera or smartphone for capturing memorable bird sightings

and moments.

Birdwatching requires patience, keen observation skills, and a sharp eye for detail. Be prepared to spend

time quietly observing birds in their natural habitats, using stealth and camouflage techniques to avoid startling them. Listen for bird calls, songs and alarm signals to locate hidden or elusive species, and pay attention to behavioral cues and flight patterns for species identification.

Being able to identify a bird is a journey, according to Audubon. They say you will need to get to know a bird's habitat, note its field marks and consider its calls. They offer an extensive guide on their website to help birders distinguish between different birds.

Practice ethical birdwatching and respect the welfare of birds and their habitats. Keep a safe distance from nesting sites and sensitive habitats to avoid disturbing birds or causing unnecessary stress. Stay on designated trails and paths, avoid trampling vegetation, and refrain from feeding or approaching wild birds. Leave no trace and minimize your impact on the environment during your birdwatching expeditions.

Consider joining local birding groups, clubs or guided birdwatching tours led by experienced naturalists and birding experts. Birding groups provide opportunities for shared knowledge, camaraderie and mentorship, as well as access to exclusive birding locations and events. Guided tours offer valuable insights into bird behavior, ecology and conservation efforts while exploring diverse ecosystems and bird habitats.

Embark on thrilling birdwatching expeditions and discover the fascinating world of birds in their natural habitats. With careful planning, essential gear and a passion for observation, birdwatching enthusiasts can enjoy memorable encounters with a wide variety of bird species while fostering a deeper appreciation for the wonders of nature.

Explore Local Farmers' Markets

Summer is a great time to indulge in the fresh foods and goods of local farmers' markets.

These bustling hubs of community activity offer a delightful array of fresh produce, artisanal goods and unique culinary treasures, all sourced directly from local farmers, artisans and small businesses.

Research and locate farmers' markets in your area. Many towns and cities host weekly or bi-weekly markets in designated locations such as parks, plazas or community centers. Check online directories, community calendars or social media platforms for information on market schedules, vendors and special events.

Once you've identified a market to visit, plan your trip accordingly, keeping in mind the market hours and any specific items you're looking to purchase.

Arriving at the farmers' market, you'll be greeted by a bustling scene of colorful stalls brimming with fresh fruits and vegetables, fragrant herbs, artisanal cheeses, baked goods, flowers and more. Take your time to wander through the aisles, engage with vendors and sample their offerings. One of the unique pleasures of shopping at farmers' markets is the opportunity to meet the people behind the products, learn about their farming practices, and discover the stories



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behind the food you're buying.

When it comes to shopping at farmers' markets, there are a few tips to keep in mind to make the most of your experience. Firstly, come prepared with reusable bags or baskets to carry your purchases, as well as cash, as some vendors may not accept credit or debit cards. Bring a cooler or insulated bag if you're buying perishable items like meat or dairy products.

As you peruse the stalls, be on the lookout for seasonal

produce and local specialties that reflect the flavors of the region. Embrace the opportunity to try new varieties of fruits and vegetables, as well as artisanal products like handmade jams, honey, olive oil and freshly baked bread. Many farmers' markets feature food trucks or stands offering ready-to-eat meals, snacks and beverages, providing a perfect opportunity to refuel and relax amidst the bustling atmosphere.

In addition to supporting

local farmers and producers, shopping at farmers' markets offers numerous benefits, including access to fresh, high-quality products, reduced environmental impact through shorter supply chains and the opportunity to foster connections within your community. By choosing to shop at farmers' markets, you're nourishing yourself and your family with wholesome, delicious food and contributing to the vitality and sustainability of local agriculture.

Exploring local farmers' markets is a delightful and rewarding experience that offers a feast for the senses and a deeper connection to the food we eat. Whether you're seeking the freshest seasonal produce, artisanal treats or simply a lively community atmosphere, farmers' markets provide a treasure trove of culinary delights waiting to be discovered. So grab your shopping bags and embark on a flavorful adventure at your nearest farmers' market today!

Concerts and Music Festivals

Outdoor concerts and music festivals offer an electrifying blend of live performances, vibrant atmospheres and communal experiences that appeal to music lovers of all ages.

Whether you're drawn to the pulsating beats of a music festival or the intimate setting of an outdoor concert, these events can fill your ears with the musical talents of both local and touring artists.

Outdoor concerts and music festivals showcase a diverse array of musical genres, ranging from rock and pop to jazz, blues, folk, and electronic dance music (EDM). Explore the event lineup and discover new artists and bands across different genres. Embrace the opportunity to broaden your musical horizons and experience the eclectic sounds of both emerging and established performers.

Before attending an event, plan ahead and familiarize yourself with important event details. Check the event website or official social media channels for information on ticket sales, venue location, parking options and any specific rules or guidelines for attendees. Consider purchasing tickets in advance to secure your spot and avoid long lines



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on the day of the event.

Prepare for a day of music and fun by packing essential items to enhance your concert experience. Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat and comfortable clothing suitable for outdoor conditions, including layers for cooler evenings. Don't forget to bring a refillable water bottle to stay hydrated throughout the day and snacks to keep your energy levels up.

Arriving early allows you to secure a prime spot close to the stage and soak up the atmosphere before the music

begins. Take advantage of early entry opportunities or VIP packages for exclusive perks and amenities. Arriving early also gives you time to explore vendor booths, food trucks and merchandise stalls while avoiding crowds and long queues.

Be mindful of venue rules and regulations designed to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all attendees. Familiarize yourself with prohibited items such as outside food and drinks, large bags, umbrellas and illegal substanc-

es. Follow instructions from event staff and security personnel, and be considerate of fellow concertgoers by respecting personal space and observing basic etiquette.

Bring along a camera or smartphone to capture memorable moments and performances during the concert or music festival. Take photos and videos of your favorite artists (if allowed), scenic views, and interactions with friends and fellow music enthusiasts. Share your experiences on social media using event

hashtags and engage with the online community to relive the magic of the event long after it's over.

Outdoor concerts and music festivals offer an immersive and unforgettable experience for music lovers to connect with artists, celebrate shared passions, and create lasting memories. With careful planning, an open mind, and a spirit of adventure, you can embrace the rhythm and excitement of outdoor music events while enjoying the beauty of the great outdoors.

Outdoor Yoga and Fitness

This summer, take your yoga practice or fitness routine outdoors and immerse yourself in the beauty of nature.

Outdoor yoga and fitness classes offer a refreshing alternative to indoor workouts, allowing you to breathe in the fresh air, soak up the sunshine and connect with the natural world while nurturing your mind, body and spirit. Exploring outdoor classes in scenic locations can invigorate your practice and inspire a deeper sense of well-being.

One of the most compelling aspects of outdoor yoga and fitness classes is the opportunity to practice in breathtaking natural settings, such as parks, beaches, gardens and mountaintops. Practicing yoga amidst lush greenery, with the sound of birds chirping and the gentle rustle of leaves in the background, can create a sense of peace and tranquility that enhances your practice and promotes relaxation and mindfulness.

Many outdoor yoga and fitness classes are designed to cater to practitioners of all levels, from beginners to experienced yogis and fitness enthusiasts. Experienced instructors lead classes that incorporate a variety of yoga styles, including vinyasa, hatha, yin and restorative yoga, as well as high-intensity interval training (HIIT),



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Pilates, and boot camp-style workouts. These classes offer a dynamic and challenging workout while providing modifications and adjustments to accommodate individual needs and abilities.

In addition to the physical benefits, outdoor yoga and fitness classes offer an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and build a sense of community. Practicing in a group setting fosters a supportive and uplifting environment where partic-

ipants can share their experiences, celebrate their achievements and encourage one another to reach their fitness goals. Many outdoor classes incorporate elements of mindfulness, meditation and breathwork, allowing participants to cultivate inner peace and mental clarity amidst the beauty of nature.

When participating in outdoor yoga and fitness classes, it's important to come prepared with the right gear and equipment. Wear comfortable,

breathable clothing that allows for ease of movement and proper footwear suitable for the terrain. Bring along a yoga mat or towel to provide cushioning and support during yoga poses and floor exercises, as well as a water bottle to stay hydrated.

Before attending an outdoor class, check the weather forecast and dress accordingly. Apply sunscreen to protect your skin, and consider bringing a hat, sunglasses and insect repellent. Arrive a few

minutes early to set up your mat and familiarize yourself with the surroundings, and be mindful of any safety guidelines or instructions the instructor provides.

Outdoor yoga and fitness classes offer a rejuvenating and invigorating way to enhance your well-being and connect with nature. So grab your mat, step outside and embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery and self-care amidst the natural wonders of the world.

Perfect Picnics in the Park

Picnics in the park offer the perfect opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors while indulging in delicious food and quality time with loved ones.

Whether you're planning a romantic date, a family gathering or a leisurely afternoon with friends, here are some essential tips to ensure your picnic is a memorable and enjoyable experience.

Choose a picturesque spot with ample shade and comfortable seating options, such as picnic tables, blankets or lawn chairs.

Check the weather forecast beforehand and pack accordingly, bringing sunscreen, hats, sunglasses and extra layers in case temperatures fluctuate.

When it comes to food, opt for portable and easy-to-eat dishes that can be enjoyed outdoors. Pack a variety of finger foods, sandwiches, salads and snacks that are simple to prepare and transport. Don't forget to bring plenty of water and refreshing beverages to stay hydrated throughout the day.

Pack a frisbee, soccer ball or deck of cards for some outdoor fun, or bring along a Bluetooth speaker to enjoy your favorite tunes while you dine al fresco.

Clean up after your picnic and leave the park as beautiful as you found it. Bring along trash bags or recycling



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bins to dispose of any waste responsibly, and be sure to pack out any leftover food or belongings.

Here are a few portable recipe ideas to spice up your picnics.

CAPRESE SKEWERS

Recipe is from Allrecipes.

Ingredients

20 grape tomatoes
10 ounces mozzarella cheese, cubed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, chopped
1 pinch salt
1 pinch ground black pepper
20 toothpicks

Directions

1. Gather all the ingredients.
2. Toss tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, olive oil, basil, salt and pepper together in a bowl until well coated.
3. Skewer one tomato and one piece of mozzarella cheese on each toothpick.

WATERMELON FETA SALAD

Recipe is from The Pioneer Woman.

Ingredients

5 Persian cucumbers, sliced
1/2 small seedless watermelon, cut into 1-inch chunks (about 12 c.)
1/2 cup fresh mint, chopped, divided

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup rice vinegar or white balsamic vinegar
4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (about 1 cup)
1/3 cup chopped roasted pistachios

Directions

1. Combine the cucumbers, watermelon, 1/4 cup mint, the salt and a generous amount of pepper in a large bowl. Drizzle with the olive oil and vinegar and toss well.
2. Spoon the salad onto a platter. Sprinkle with the feta, pistachios and remaining 1/4 cup mint. Grind a little more pepper over the top.

EASY FRUIT COBBLER

Recipe is from Allrecipes.

Ingredients

1 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 cup white sugar
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup butter
2 cups sliced peaches

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Melt butter in a 9x9-inch baking dish.
2. Blend together flour, baking powder, sugar and milk.
3. Pour batter in baking dish over the butter. Sprinkle fruit on top of the batter, do not stir. Bake for one hour or until golden brown.