

# Summer Fun Guide





# Feel Like a Kid Again

## ENJOY A DAY AT YOUR FAVORITE AMUSEMENT PARK

Whether you are looking for an affordable vacation close to home or an exciting adventure halfway across the country, a day at the amusement park should be part of your plans.

Most people have at least one amusement park within driving distance, so you can start planning those day trips as soon as the kids get out of school for the summer. And if you are planning a full summer vacation in Florida or California, you will literally be surrounded by amusement parks of every size, type and description.

In fact, in these vacation Meccas your hardest task may be choosing the right one.

### CONSIDER AGES

Of course choosing the right amusement park is always important, whether you are staying close to home or traveling further away. Some amusement parks cater to smaller kids, with lots of fun yet gentle rides and lots of things for the smallest travelers to enjoy.

If you are traveling with your young kids and grand-kids, be sure to seek out these hidden gems for a day of fun in the sun.

If the kids in your family are a bit older, they are probably looking for few more thrills at the amusement park. If you have a roller coaster enthusiast in your family, you can plan your summer vacation around the list of the best



PHOTO: VSURKOV / YAYMICRO.COM

roller coasters in your area.

Just take a look at the list of the world's tallest, fastest and steepest coasters, then seek out the ones that lie on your vacation driving path. Many roller coaster enthusiasts travel all around the country every summer, seeking out the biggest thrills and the newest and baddest rides at

the amusement park.

### LOOK LOCAL

If your time is more limited, you can still find plenty of thrills at local parks. If you have an amusement park in your back yard, take the time to visit that park and see what it has to offer.

Many of us fail to take advantage of the attractions in our home towns. It would be a shame to repeat that mistake. You might even want to invest in a season pass for the family and give them a fun and affordable vacation that lasts all summer long.

But whether you are vacationing close to home to save

money or embarking on a road trip across the country, it would be a shame to let the summer go by without at least a few trips to the amusement park.

These fun factories are not just for kids. In fact, the parents often enjoy the thrills and spills just as much, if not more, than their children.



# Find Some Excitement

## ATVs, PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OFFER THRILLS ON LAND, WATER

If you are looking for a great way to have some fun as a family, it is hard to beat a weekend on the water or a day spent on the trails.

With a personal watercraft (PWC) or all terrain vehicle (ATV), you can enjoy the great outdoors, spend some quality time with your family or just get away from it all.

With an ATV, you can enjoy miles of trails as you bask in the beauty of nature. Whether you ride through your local state or national park or just hit the trails in the woods beside your home, you can have a lot of fun for not a lot of money.

Compared to the cost of many other hobbies, ATV riding is a relative bargain. All you need is some basic equipment and enough gas to head down the trail.

A personal watercraft can also provide fun and excitement for an affordable price. Unlike a traditional boat, with its high docking fees and con-

stant maintenance, a personal watercraft gets you out on the water quickly, so you can pack up the kids and head down to the local river whenever you want.

A day on the water can be a lot of fun, and it is a great way to teach the kids about everything from the beauty of nature to the importance of safety on the water.

### COMPETITIONS

Some ATV riders and personal watercraft owners will want to take things a step further, engaging in fun and friendly competitions with other ATV and PWC owners. There are competitions held all across the country for ATV owners, from races and endurance rides to safety competitions.

Personal watercraft owners

have their own competitions, with races and other events, often held in conjunction with summertime festivals in towns and cities across the country.

If you want to learn all there is to know about riding an ATV or personal watercraft, you can show off what you have learned while winning prizes and making new friends at these competitions.

### SHOPPING ADVICE

If you are in the market for an ATV or a personal watercraft, you need to know what to look for, and that means assessing your needs and thinking about how you will use the equipment.

If your eventual goal is to

compete on your ATV or personal watercraft, you might want to look for a higher level of equipment than if you just plan to hit the trails.

But no matter what type of ATV or personal watercraft you choose, it is important to learn to ride safely by taking a training course and following the established rules of the road.

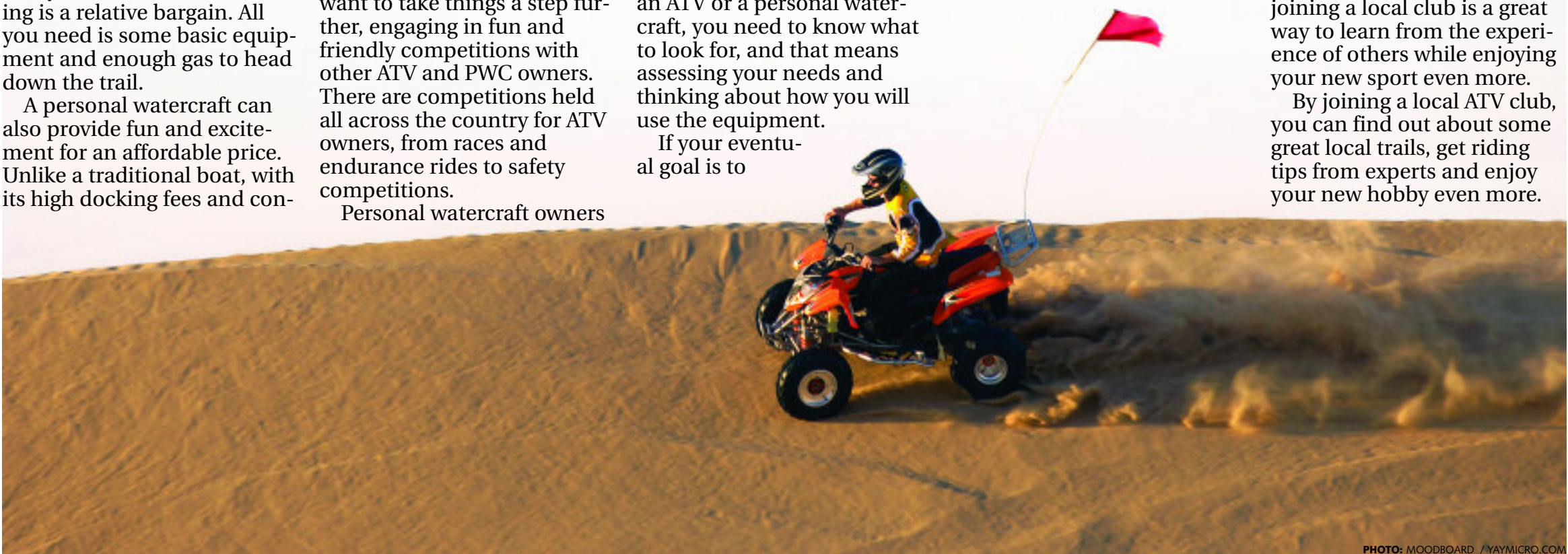
Riding with other more experienced ATV and personal watercraft owners can be a big help as well. Every sport,

### Safety Tips for ATV Riders

- Buy an ATV that is the right size for you. Never let children ride ATVs designed for adults.
- Invest in a helmet specifically designed for ATV riders. Always insist that all members of your crew wear their helmets.
- Practice safe towing when moving your ATV.
- Always ask permission before riding on private land.

including ATV and PWC riding, has its enthusiasts, and joining a local club is a great way to learn from the experience of others while enjoying your new sport even more.

By joining a local ATV club, you can find out about some great local trails, get riding tips from experts and enjoy your new hobby even more.





# Take Time to Chill Out

**NOTHING BEATS THE HEAT LIKE A DIP IN YOUR BACKYARD POOL**

If you want the perfect gift for your family, look no further than your own back yard.

Adding a pool to your back yard is the perfect way to create a summer-long vacation for your family and friends.

Instead of spending hours driving to the beach and staying in overpriced hotels, you can vacation in your own back yard, relaxing by the pool, enjoying a barbecue or cookout or just taking a quick swim.

## SUMMER ENJOYMENT

Having a pool in the back yard is also the perfect way to promote exercise and encourage your kids to get out of the house and move around.

Getting kids to exercise can be a huge challenge, but with a pool in the back yard they can get the healthy exercise they need without even knowing it.

Once you have that pool in your back yard, your home can quickly become the gathering place for your loved ones, your kids' friends and others in the neighborhood.

You can spend the summer enjoying pool parties, cookouts, and back yard get-togethers with family and

friends. There is nothing like a pool to promote family fun and excitement.

## DESIGN

The beauty of a back yard pool is that you can make the design as simple or as elaborate as you want. You can purchase an above ground pool in a kit and spend an afternoon getting everything set up, then enjoy a healthy swim that evening.

Or you can invest in an in-ground pool, decorating it just so and using it to create a virtual oasis from the stresses of modern life. You can even add a customized deck, or build an access walkway leading directly from your home to the waiting pool.

If you are feeling particularly adventurous, you could even add a gazebo with a hot tub to your back yard creation, perfect for year round relaxation.

## SAFETY

No matter what type of pool you choose for your family, you need to take some important safety factors into consideration.

For starters, many munici-



PHOTO: GOLDENANGEL / YAYMICRO.COM

palities place limits on the types of pools their residents can install and where those pools can be located on the property. You need to research your local zoning ordinances and obtain the proper building permits before you begin.

You also need to make sure

you have a proper fence in place for your pool, and that the fence has a self-locking mechanism to prevent unauthorized access. You need to keep your pool a back yard oasis and a spot for relaxation, not danger.

But once those practical things are taken care of, you

can start building your pool and looking forward to a summer full of fun and adventure.

For less than the cost of a one-week vacation for yourself and your family, you can enjoy summer after summer of fun in your own back yard pool.



# Make The Summer Hot

## FIRE UP A BARBECUE GRILL FOR CLASSIC FLAVOR, FUN

**W**hen you own your own barbecue grill, you can transform your home into the most popular restaurant in town, with friends and family members stopping by to indulge, share stories or just enjoy a warm summer evening under the stars.

Whether you are a barbecue purist with a genuine charcoal grill or a connoisseur with a state-of-the-art gas grill, you can enjoy your favorite meals more by cooking them in the great outdoors.

### PRECISE COOKING

The great thing about a barbecue grill is that it gives you far more control over your cooking than a traditional stove. You can control the cooking of steaks, chops and other meats more precisely, ensuring that everyone in your party gets a meal cooked to their exact specifications.

Whether you want to quickly sear a tuna steak or cook a filet mignon to medium rare perfection, you can do it all without ever setting foot inside your kitchen.

### MONEY SAVER

You may think that a top-of-the-line gas or charcoal grill is an indulgence, but in fact the purchase can save you thousands of dollars over the lifetime of the appliance.

Just take a few minutes to

### Grill Safety

- ▶ Never leave your grill unattended while you are cooking.
- ▶ Cover the grill when not in use.
- ▶ Never store propane tanks indoors or in areas prone to excessive heat.
- ▶ Supervise children when they are near the grill.
- ▶ Tie your hair back while you are cooking.

add up all the money you have been spending on meals out at your local restaurant. Chances are a good steak dinner for your family at your local eatery carries a tab of \$100 or more.

You can cook those same steaks at home for a fraction of the price, even if you indulge in a fine bottle of wine to go with that premium beef. Over the years those savings can really add up, giving you more than enough to pay for the cost of that grill.

### FAMILY FUN

Having a grill in the backyard also promotes family



PHOTO: DAN70 / YAYMICRO.COM

togetherness, encouraging family members to gather

together and enjoy a healthy meal every night.

In this age of cell phones, text messages and endless distractions, getting the family together is no mean feat, but you can do it if you take the time to fire up the barbecue grill and call everyone to supper.

Barbecue grills are also perfect for cookouts, pool parties and other summer get-togethers.

Whether you are celebrating a birthday, a holiday, an anniversary or just a sunny day, you can fire up the grill, invite a few good friends over and talk long into the night. Your grill can literally transform your patio or deck into the favorite room of the house.

But you do not have to put your favorite appliance away when the weather turns cold. With a covered patio or deck, you can cook outdoors, then bring that great food right into the kitchen.

Cooking on the grill can be a great alternative to firing up the oven, even in the wintertime.

No matter what the season, grilling is the perfect way to create healthy and delicious meals your whole family will love.



# Go to the Ballpark

**NOTHING IS AS AMERICAN AS THE GAME OF BASEBALL**

**T**he great thing about the sport of baseball is that it can be as much fun to watch as it is to play.

If you are a baseball fan, you can wile away the hours watching your favorite team, whether it is a farm team or a Major League franchise.

And when you tire of that, you can play a pickup game with friends at the park down the street, or watch your kids and grandkids play Little League at the local ball field.

## BASEBALL ROAD TRIP

If you are planning a grand summer getaway, you can even make baseball the star of the show.

You can roam from town to town and city to city, taking in a baseball game at every stop along the way. Or you can retrace the roots of famous baseball movies like *Field of Dreams* and *Bull Durham*, stopping at each landmark made famous in those films.

If your traveling companions are baseball lovers, they are sure to have the time of their lives on your summer road trip.

## MINOR LEAGUES

If you want to stay a little closer to home, you could delight your family members with season tickets to the minor league baseball team in your area.

Minor league baseball provides an economical alternative to the majors, and you can spend one enjoyable day at the ballpark after another watching future stars perform and picking the players you think are destined for the big time.

Tickets for minor-league games are typi-

cally far less expensive than the major leagues, and you can often get a closer look at the action. And the talent level is phenomenal, with players that are both former and future major-league athletes.

## GET INVOLVED

You can also enjoy the sport a little more up close and personal by joining a local baseball team or forming one of your own.

For the price of a bat, a glove, a helmet and a few other pieces of equipment, you can enjoy a summer time filled with fun and adventure.

Unlike many other sports, getting started in the sport of baseball does not have to break the bank. You can start out as simple as you want, with all the equipment you need available for a reasonable price.

As you get more serious about the sport, you can purchase better gear, but you can get started with very little money.

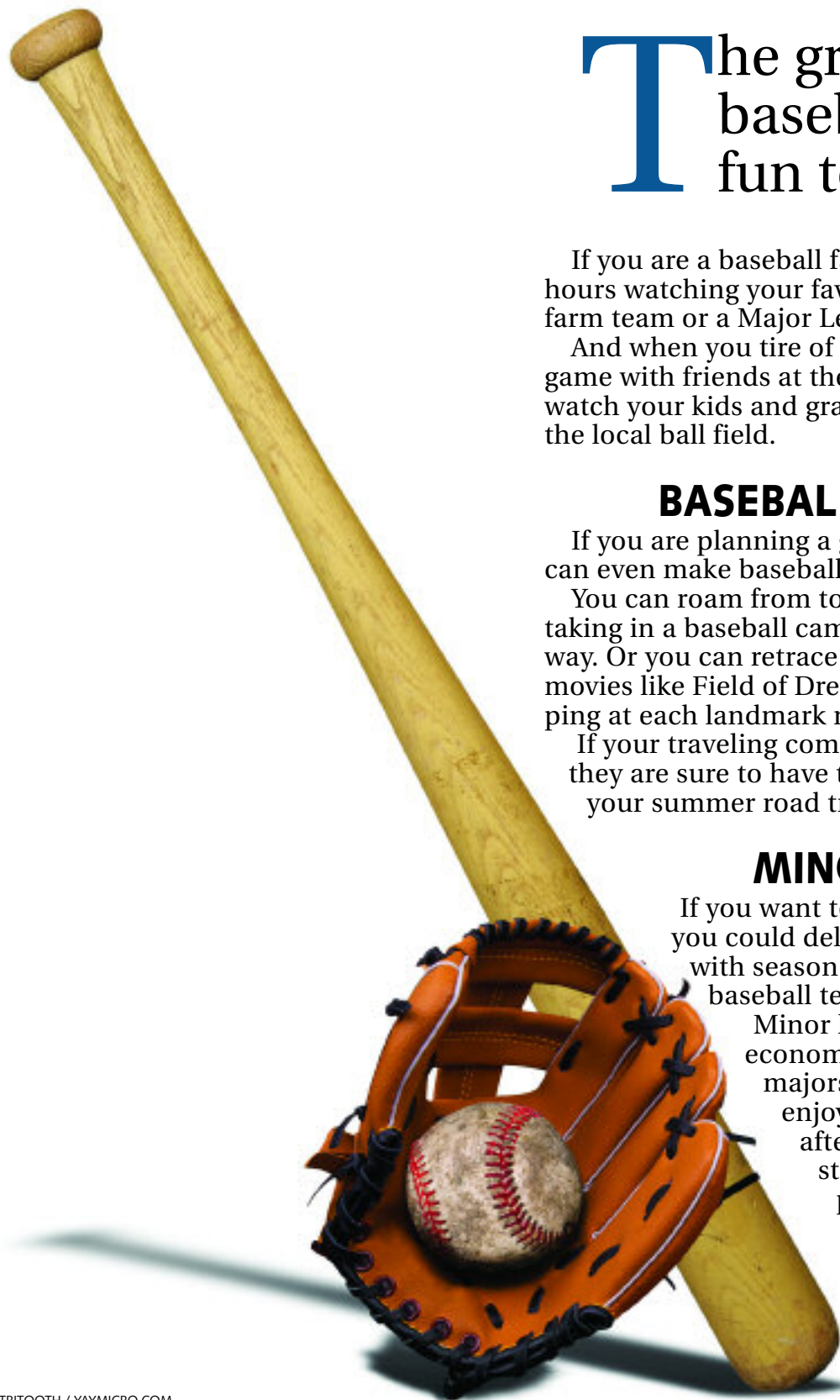
Baseball is the perfect sport for your kids and grandkids as well, since the sport promotes teamwork and cooperation, and helps the kids be part of something bigger than themselves.

Playing baseball is also great exercise, and a great way to get the kids outdoors for some sunshine and good times.

Whether you want to play the game or just watch the professionals do what they do best, baseball is truly a great sport.

You can spend one afternoon watching your grandson hit a grand slam at the local Little League game, and the next night hitting a home run of your own at your local pickup game.

It's a summer classic.



# Stay Healthy by Biking

## BICYCLES CAN MAKE FITNESS FUN FOR THE FAMILY

**A**lthough there's nothing quite like a picturesque bike ride on a pleasant summer day, research shows that biking regularly is actually a great form of exercise that promotes many health benefits.

A summer of biking is a fantastic way to enhance fitness and health in both children and adults. It's an enjoyable activity that can be done independently or with family and friends.

### EXERCISE

Once you've got a bike, and possibly some protective gear, you are ready to roll into one of the easiest forms of exercise. Cycling does not require advanced skill levels to achieve its many health benefits.

A half hour anytime throughout the day and some chosen terrain has all the makings of a great workout session without any health club fees.

Burning calories is one of the most important health benefits of cycling. One hour of biking can allow a person to burn as many as three hundred calories.

Although the cycling should be steady in order to achieve the maximum calorie-burning benefit, it can be at your own comfortable pace.

Moreover, most people who bike become so caught up in

the scenery and their destination that they may barely notice that they are, indeed, shedding some unwanted pounds.

### BUILDING MUSCLE

Biking is an excellent way to strengthen muscle tone, increase endurance and improve overall physical strength.

Many people might think that the legs get all the benefits of the cycling workout, but truth be told, many parts of the body are busy doing something whether it's pushing pedals or swiveling hips.

That being said, biking certainly increases muscle strength and promotes mobility of knee and hip joints.

Biking is excellent fitness for the body's cardiovascular system too. Research has demonstrated that biking 20 miles per week can decrease the risk for heart attack by as much as 50 percent.

Biking helps to raise the heart rate and provides many of the same benefits that aerobic exercise can provide. Additionally, biking on a regular basis increases a person's

endurance so that fitness levels actually get better over time.

### MENTAL BENEFITS

Research suggests that biking, as well as other forms of regular exercise, is actually good for the mind.

Biking can help reduce stress levels and even decrease depression naturally and safely. The combination of exercise with the summertime

beauty of the great outdoors can be an emotionally uplifting part of each day.

Remember, as with all exercise, it is advisable to consult a health care provider before embarking on your cycling routine. Wearing protective gear is also

recommended for added safety.

Finally, begin at a comfortable level of exercise and increase your cycling endurance slowly for optimum benefits and safety. Most importantly, choose to ride on terrain you are comfortable maneuvering your bike across and be sure to follow bikers' rules of the road.





# Cool Off at the Lake

**NOTHING IS MORE ENJOYABLE THAN YOUR OWN BOAT**

**W**hether you love to fish, swim or just take in the beauty of nature, there is nothing quite like hitting the lake on your own boat.

Standing on the shore is fine, but you can only see so much from the land. When you take off on the water, you can truly get back to nature and enjoy the natural world in all its beauty.

## INSTANT FUN

When you own a boat, you can vacation in your own back yard every weekend, without the expense and hassle of air travel or the cost of a hotel room.

You can simply hook up your boat trailer, grab your boat and head off to your favorite fishing hole. Or you can head down to the state or national park for a weekend spent fishing and camping out under the stars.

No matter what you like to do, if it involves the water you can enjoy it more when you own your own boat.

## AFFORDABLE

Owning your own boat does not have to be expensive. You can find some great deals on boats, and some great financing offers as well.

And when you compare the cost of boat ownership to many other hobbies, you will find that owning your own boat can be extremely affordable.

Of course you do need to have the right equipment, and you

should not skimp on the essentials just to save money. You need to have proper safety gear on board your boat, both for your own protection and to stay in compliance with the law.

Before you head off on the water you will want to make sure everyone on board has their own life jacket, and that you have all of the safety equipment your state laws require.

You also want to make sure the trailer you use to tow your boat is properly inspected, and that you check the security of the hitch and all the connections before and after every trip.

Learning to tow a boat safely is a big part of boat ownership, and one you want to take seriously.

## ENJOYMENT

After all those practical considerations are out of the way, you can start enjoying the beauty of nature every single day.

If you like to fish, owning your own boat allows you to find your own private fishing hole, the spot where you can go again and again in search of that trophy bass or giant trout.

Whether you love the taste of a good fish or are strictly catch and release, you can enjoy your favorite sport even more when you own your own boat.



PHOTO: LEAF / YAYMICRO.COM

## Boating Safety Tips

- Make sure everyone is trained in the use of on-board safety gear.
- Never operate your boat when you have been drinking.
- Check the lights on your boat trailer before every trip.
- Comply with all applicable watercraft laws.



# Get Close to Nature



PHOTO: MONKEYBUSINESS / YAYMICRO.COM

## TAKE A BREAK FROM CITY LIFE WITH A CAMPING TRIP

If you are looking for a way to escape the stresses of everyday life and return to a time when things were simpler, nothing beats camping in the wilderness.

You can park your camper or RV at the local campground, then head off into the wilderness for day hikes or full-fledged overnight camping trips. Or if you prefer you can really get back to nature, with an extended trip into the back country few get to see.

Just grab your backpack, your tent and a couple of good friends and head off into the wilderness for the adventure of a lifetime.

### CONNECTION TO EARTH

Camping close to nature and enjoying the beauty of the natural world is even more important today than it was

when our parents and grandparents were growing up.

In those not-so-long-ago days, many people still had a strong connection to the land. Back then, many people still lived on farms, or at least helped to work the land that grew their food.

Our parents and grandparents probably hiked in the woods behind their homes and schools, spending countless hours communing with nature or just enjoying some quiet downtime with friends.

These days the connection to nature is a bit more tenuous, with many of us living in the suburbs and working in big cities. Getting back to nature is a lot harder for our kids and grandkids

than it was for our parents and grandparents.

These days few of us have the luxury of a stand of trees just off the backyard, and many parents are understandably wary of letting their kids walk unaccompanied through the woods.

### INVESTMENT

There are things parents can do to make sure their kids do not miss out on the beauty of nature and the simple pleasures of playing outdoors.

With an investment of a few hundred dollars, you can give your family the experience of a lifetime, and create

special memories they will always cherish.

All you need is a simple tent, a good backpack, a sturdy pair of hiking boots and a sense of adventure.

The next time you are looking for the perfect getaway, forget about that expensive trip to Disneyland, with all the hassles of plane tickets, costly hotel rooms and endless waiting in line.

Instead, head down to your local state park, or one of the country's beautiful national parks. Grab your hiking gear, put the kids in the car and head off for the adventure of a lifetime.

The beauty of nature is closer than you think.



# Find Gaming Thrills

## ENJOY AN EXCITING TIME AT THE CASINO



PHOTO: MONKEYBUSINESS / YAYMICRO.COM

**N**ot too long ago, you had to go to Las Vegas or Atlantic City to spend a day at the slot machines or poker tables.

But these days more and more states are legalizing gaming, making it possible for their residents to spend an exciting day at the local casino, and maybe even win some money in the process.

### RESORT ATMOSPHERE

Some of these new gaming parlors are simply repositories of slot machines and a few card tables, but others are virtual resorts, complete with day spas, high-end restaurants, Broadway shows, concerts and all the amenities one would expect in a great Atlantic City or Las Vegas casino.

All you need to do is decide which type of casino you prefer, then head off in search of fun and excitement.

### BUS LINES

If you do not want to drive to the casino, you can seek out a local bus trip. Many bus lines run special excursions, or even scheduled service, to casinos in major cities, and that can be a great way to get there.

You do not have to worry about the hassles of driving and the expense of parking. You can simply take a seat on the bus and plan your gaming strategy as the miles roll by.

And best of all, many casinos offer special bonus packages to bus passengers, bonuses you would miss out on if you drove yourself.

### LOOK FOR DEALS

If you are lucky enough to have a casino

in your own home town, you can visit any time you want. Just be sure to set a limit for each trip, and remember that the purpose of gaming is to have fun and meet other interesting people.

If you do have a local casino, be sure to check out their Web site for upcoming specials, giveaways and other prizes. With the gaming action so close, you can take advantage of those special offers and make the most of your casino experience.

### PLAYER SERVICES

If you are traveling to a new casino for the first time, be sure to stop by the player services booth before you put the first dime into a slot machine.

Signing up for the players card gives you a host of special benefits, from free slot play and free drinks to discounts on meals and room. Even if you never plan to return to that casino, signing up for the players card is a good idea.

Who knows – you might get lucky and win the jackpot with the money the casino gives you.

Gaming is transforming cities and small towns all across the country. As casinos move into town, they bring jobs and new entertainment opportunities for local residents and visitors alike.

As long as you remember that gaming is primarily entertainment, you can have fun at the casino without losing your shirt.



# Relax by Going Fishing

## TIMELESS HOBBY CAN BE FUN FOR ENTIRE FAMILY

**T**hese days so many of us lead stressful lives, with the demands of work, home and family all competing for our time.

With so much stress in our lives, it has never been more important to take up a relaxing hobby. Indulging in a hobby like fishing is the perfect way to banish the stresses of the day and get back to the beauty of nature.

Whether you love to fry up your catch at the end of the day or throw them back and have more fun tomorrow, fishing can be a relaxing and very rewarding hobby.

The beauty of fishing is that it does not have to be an expensive hobby. You can, of course, spend tens of thousands of dollars on a new fishing boat if you wish, but you can also spend less than a hundred bucks for a good fishing pole, a couple of lures, a tackle box and a some bait.

You can make your fishing hobby as simple or as extravagant as you want it to be. It is all up to you.

### FAMILY TOGETHERNESS

These days it seems family members all seem to go their separate ways, and it can be difficult for parents to get their kids interested in anything other than video games and text messaging.

Fishing is a sport that can bring families together for a day of fun and adventure, and that is simply priceless.

Teaching your kids to fish is also a great way to instill a love of nature that can last a lifetime. These days many of us are far removed from the natural world.

We get our food from the grocery store instead of the local farm, and the only trees we see on a daily basis are the heavily land-

### Checklist

- Wading boots
  - Bait
- Tackle box
- Fishing pole
  - Lures

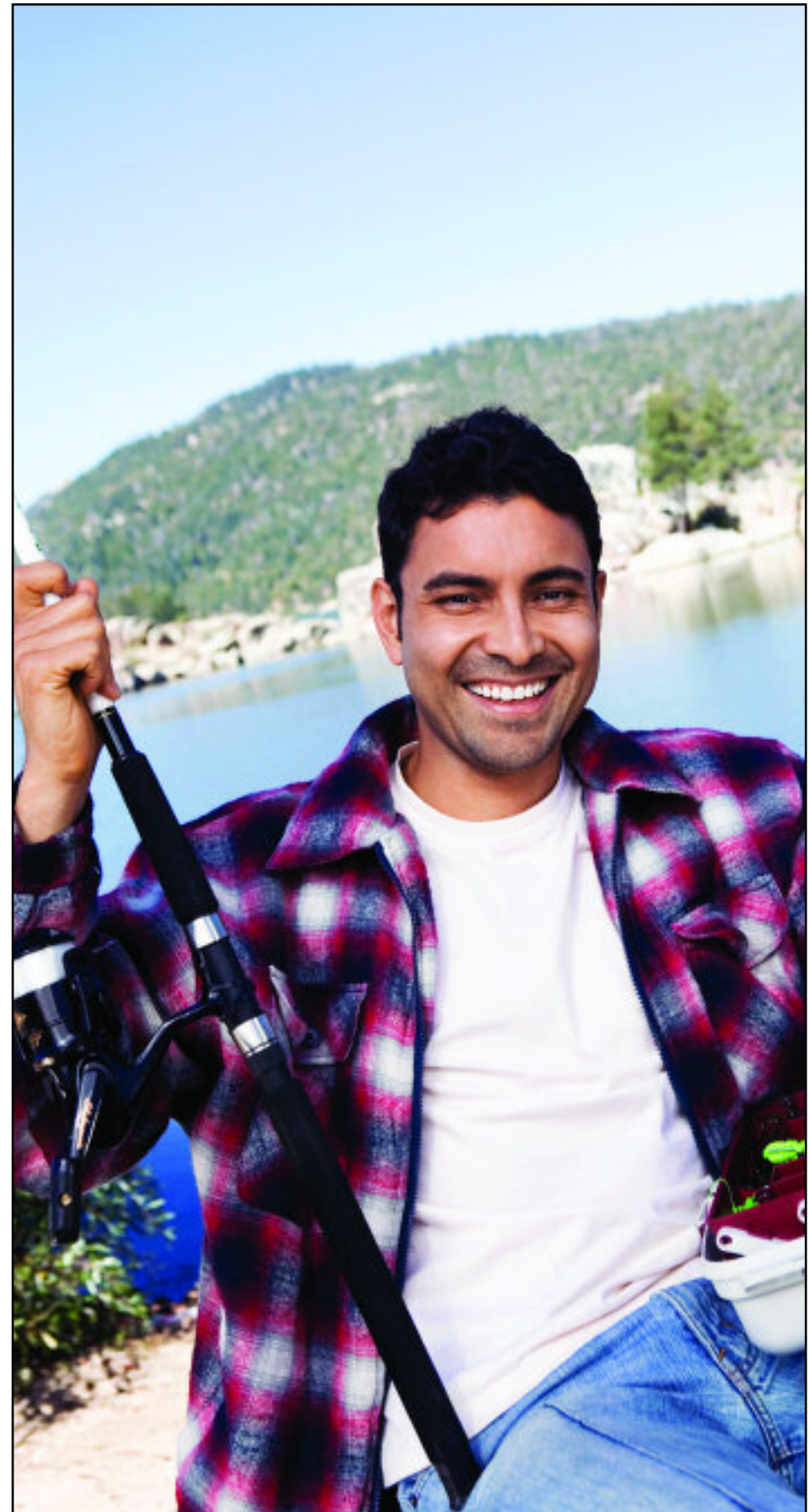
scaped ones lining the roads in our developments and subdivisions. Leaving all that behind, even for just a few hours, can be liberating, and there is no better way to get back to nature than spending the day fishing.

### NICE BREAK

The great thing about fishing is that you can do it whenever you want. If you have a few hours of daylight left at the end of a hard day at work, you can relax and unwind on the shores of your favorite lake or stream.

If you want to get away for a weekend of family fun, you can head down to the local trout stream to try your luck. Or if you really want to get away from it all, you can pack your favorite fishing pole in your backpack, grab your tent, and head out to the back country for a week spent fishing and camping under the stars.

Every time you dip your line in the water, you are communing with nature and going back to a world before TV, before cell phones and before the stresses of modern life.





# Work on Your Game

## SPEND A DAY UNWINDING WITH GOLF

**T**here are plenty of reasons why golf is such a popular sport. It is relatively easy to get started, with a limited amount of equipment to buy.

Golf can also be a fun game to learn, relatively easy to understand yet difficult to master.

You can spend endless days honing your golfing skills, from developing the perfect swing to learning how to putt like a pro. Learning new things makes the sport exciting, and there are plenty of opportunities to learn new things in the sport of golf.

Even professional golfers spend their off time learning new things about the game, and this constant learning is one of the chief attractions of the sport.

### SOCIALIZE

Many people also love the fact that golf is primarily a group activity. You can spend lots of time by yourself at the driving range, seeking the perfect swing, but when you head out on the links you do so with friends and colleagues.

A day on the golf course is the perfect way for old friends to catch up, and for new friendships to be forged.

And we all know how many business deals have been sealed with a handshake on the 18th hole.

### GET TRAINING

If you are new to the sport of golf, it pays to seek the help of a more experienced golfer before you get in too deeply. An experienced golfer can give you valuable pointers on what equipment you need to buy, and perhaps even help you find some great deals on those golf clubs and other items.

An experienced golfer can also help you develop your swing the right way. This is an important consideration, since it is much easier to learn the right way from the start than it is the correct bad habits once they become ingrained.

It is also a good idea to research the local golf courses and country clubs before you get started. Many country clubs and golf courses have specials aimed specifically at first-time golfers.

These specials may include equipment rental, golf lessons and special tee times. These combo deals can save you a lot of money and help you determine if golf is really the right sport for you.

### GOLF LIFESTYLE

If you are already an experienced golfer, you are probably looking forward to the day when you can play as much golf as you want.

When many people think about retirement, they picture days spent on the golf course, enjoying their favorite hobby without the stresses or interruptions of the office.

Whether you are planning to golf all day in retirement or just getting started, you can enjoy your sport even more with the right companions. Joining a local golf club can be a great way to meet other golfing enthusiasts and even get started with local tournaments.

After all, some friendly competition can make your favorite game even better and more exciting.





# Get in the Hunt

## HUNTING BRINGS YOU CLOSE TO THE WILDERNESS

**T**hese days many of us have lost touch with the wild world that used to sustain us. Only a few generations ago, much of the meat that graced the family dinner table came courtesy of the rifle and the woods.

Today, of course, most of that meat comes from the grocery store, sealed in sterile packages and bearing almost no resemblance to those wild meals.

### RETURN TO THE WILD

You can get back to the old days with a hunting trip into the wilderness. Whether you are a new hunter looking for an adventure or an experienced woodsman, a hunting excursion can be the trip of a lifetime.

A hunting trip can also be a great way to get your kids or grandkids interested in hunting.

These days it seems kids are spending less and less time outdoors, encouraged by computers and video games to remain indoors and sedentary. You can correct that problem and get your kids some much-needed outdoor time by taking them hunting.

When kids learn to hunt, they can experience the wonder of nature first hand, learning to respect the natural world and preserve it for their own kids and grandkids.

### INEXPENSIVE

One of the great things about hunting is that it does not have to be an expensive hobby.

While it is true that you can spend thousands of dollars on custom deer blinds and tree stands, rifles, scopes and other gear, it is also true that you can get started with just a simple gun and a good place to hunt.

### LEARNING

If you are new to the sport of hunting, you might want to learn the ropes from a more experienced outdoor person.

If any of your friends or family members hunt, ask them if you can tag along on their next outing. You can bring your gun with you in hopes of that lucky shot, but your main goal will be to learn.

You can learn a lot from an experienced hunter, from how to read the woods for signs of deer and other game, to how to find the best spot to set up that blind or tree stand.

Armed with this knowledge, you will be ready to head off to the woods the next time with more confidence.

### CHECKLIST

But before you head off to the woods there are of course a few practical considerations to think about. You need to make sure you have the license you need, so check with the fish and game commission in your state to see what you need.

Also check the regulations regarding clothing. You will probably need to wear a specific amount of blaze orange so other hunters can spot you easily and avoid accidents.

Once those practical matters are taken care of, you will be ready to hit the woods with confidence and enjoy your newfound sport even more.



## Hunting Safety Tips

- ▶ Tell someone where you will be hunting.
- ▶ Avoid outings alone. If you go alone, be extra careful and hunt in familiar areas.
- ▶ Dress properly and be prepared for the worst possible conditions. Protect against hypothermia.
- ▶ Check the weather forecast before going into the woods.
- ▶ Identify your target before shooting.
- ▶ Check hunting equipment before and after each outing, and maintain it properly. Familiarize yourself with its operation before using it in the field.
- ▶ Always wear enough blaze orange to be highly visible to other hunters.

SOURCE: U.S. Forest Service



# Hit the Open Road

**MOTORCYCLES ARE EFFICIENT, ENJOYABLE FOR ROAD TRIPS**



PHOTO: STEVEMC / YAYMICRO.COM

**W**hether you are looking for a new adventure or just an economical way to get around, a motorcycle can be a great purchase.

A motorcycle gives you far more flexibility and freedom than a car or truck, along with the ability to park virtually anywhere and hit the road with just a small amount of gas money.

## EFFICIENCY

As gas prices rise and traditional vacations become less and less affordable, a summer adventure on a motorcycle is looking better all the time.

With a motorcycle, you don't have to worry about gassing up a big SUV or motor home, and you don't have to worry about pricey hotel rooms and expensive rental cars.

You can simply hit the road, stopping at interesting places along the way and staying overnight at campgrounds and other places popular with motorcycle riders.

For even more adventure, you can simply find a quiet spot, park by the side of the road and spend the night camping under the stars.

## BRING A GROUP

Hitting the road on a motorcycle can also be an enjoyable family activity. You can spend a whole summer bonding with your spouse and falling in love all over again as you travel the back roads and rediscover the hidden beauty of America.

Or you can strap on a sidecar and bring the kids along for the ride. No matter where you want to go in this great land of ours, a motorcycle can take you there.

## PLAN AHEAD

But before you can begin your adventure, there are some practical realities you need to deal with first. For instance, you need to have a special license to drive a motorcycle, so before you get the bike of your dreams you will need to first make an unglamorous trip to the DMV.

Once you have your motorcycle license in hand, you can start gearing up for your trip by buying the safety and foul weather gear you will need to stay safe in any weather conditions.

Without the roof of a car to protect you from the elements, you will need a way to stay dry when the summer sky is less than cooperative.

A quality rain slicker is a must, as is a motorcycle helmet with a visor you can use while riding in the rain or while traversing those dusty back roads.

Speaking of helmets, it is important to research the helmet laws in each state you plan to pass through, since each state has its own laws regarding whether or not motorcycle riders must wear head protection.

It is a good idea to wear your helmet even when it is not required by law, but that is a decision every motorcycle rider will need to make for themselves.

Once those practical realities are attended to, you can hit the open road for the adventure of a lifetime.

Whether you are heading into the mountains, down to the beach for a quick getaway or heading off for a whole summer, nothing beats the sensation of the open road and a good bike.



# Enjoy a Night on the Town

**YOU MAY BE SURPRISED AT THE LOCAL NIGHTLIFE THAT'S ON TAP**

**I**f you are bored and looking for something fun to do, why not look in your own back yard and see what your own home town has to offer?

You might think that there is not much to do in your neck of the woods, but chances are there are bars, restaurants and movie theaters all around you.

If you can look at your home town with the eyes of an outsider, you just might find that there is more nightlife all around you than you realize.

## THINK LIKE A TOURIST

Start by thinking about the kinds of places you would take a visiting friend. If you had a friend coming in from out of town to spend a week with you, where would you take your buddy?

Make a list of the restaurants you would go to, the bars where you could knock back a few beers, the theaters and clubs where you could see some live music and the movie theaters where you could take in the latest blockbuster.

Once you have your list in hand, you can start to explore your home town with the eyes of an outsider.

Head down to that local nightclub and catch the latest hot band. Seek out an eclectic movie theater and enjoy a few art films. Stroll the local art galleries and museums. Eat in that great local restaurant you heard so much about.

If you take the time to look,

chances are you can find something to keep you busy and entertained every night of the week.

## ASK THE LOCALS

You can do the same thing when you go on vacation. In fact, exploring new places can be even more fun when you do not have to worry about getting up for work the next day or meeting a rigid schedule.

When you travel, talk to the locals and ask them for their recommendations. If you rely on the guidebooks alone, you could miss out on the best the place has to offer.

By seeking the recommendations of locals, you can find some truly hidden gems, places the guidebook writers might not even know about.

From the theater showing the latest avant-garde play to the concert hall featuring the best in classical music and ballet, you can discover some real hidden treasures on your next vacation if you know where to look.

So whether you are vacationing across the country or spending time in your own home town, open your eyes and look at the world around you.

Chances are you will discover a whole new world — one that was previously hidden but is now revealed in all its nighttime glory.





# Luxurious Outdoor Living

## EXPAND YOUR LIVING SPACE INTO YOUR YARD THIS SUMMER

**F**or most of us, a home is the biggest single investment we will ever make, so it pays to make the most of that big financial commitment.

One of the best ways to increase both the value and the comfort level of your home is to expand your indoor living space to the great outdoors.

Instead of being stuck inside in front of the TV on a sunny day, you could be outside, enjoying a backyard barbecue on your patio, relaxing with friends on the deck or even taking a dip in your own in-ground or above-ground pool.

Creating an outdoor living space can make your home more livable and your life more enjoyable.

### SAVE MONEY

In the long run, creating an outdoor living space can even save you money.

When you create an outdoor living space with a patio, deck or pool, you can enjoy wonderful weekend getaways in your own backyard, without spending a cent on gas, airfare or hotel rooms.

Instead of going away with friends, you can invite everyone over to your home for a pool party or barbecue, saving yourself a lot of time, money and hassles in the process.



PHOTO: MONKEYBUSINESS / YAYMICRO.COM

### SUMMER PROJECT

Creating an outdoor living space does not have to be time-consuming or expensive.

In fact, creating that patio

or deck you have always wanted can be a fun summer project for yourself and your family. You can find the plans online, design the living space you want, and

watch the project slowly come together.

After the patio blocks have been laid and the deck is in place, you can take pride in your creation and

enjoy it summer after summer.

### HIRE A PRO

If your talents lie elsewhere, you can hire a professional to create the outdoor living space you want.

There are many contractors who specialize in this kind of work, and they would be happy to help you bring your outdoor living plans to life in your backyard. Just look for a contractor whose work comes highly recommended, or ask a friend whose deck and patio you admire for recommendations.

The great thing about building an outdoor living space is that it is a one-time expense that yields lifelong benefits.

You might have to put out some money and put in some sweat to make your dreams of outdoor living a reality, but once that work is done and the money is spent, you can continue to enjoy your new space year after year.

With an outdoor living space, you can essentially double the usable space around your home for far less than the price of an addition.



# Explore the Nation

## RV TRAVEL CAN GIVE YOU THE COMFORTS OF HOME

Whether you are an average worker looking for adventure on your next vacation or a recent retiree with an urge to see the country, a recreational vehicle (RV) can be just what you have been looking for.

With an RV, you bring your hotel room with you, relieving you of the burdens and high cost of staying in a different room every night.

When you drive an RV, you can simply roam from campground to campground and park to park, enjoying the beauty of America for a fraction of the cost of a traditional vacation.

### TRAVEL THE NATION

RV travel is perfect for retirees who put off seeing the world around them while they were busy earning a living and raising a family.

Now that you have the time, why not roam around and explore every inch of the country, from the shores of Maine to the beaches of San Diego?

There is nothing stopping you, and RV travel can be quite economical if you know the right tricks.

### MEET PEOPLE

Talking to other RV enthusiasts is one of the best ways to learn the ropes, from where to stay and what to see to how to



PHOTO: MOODBOARD / YAYMICRO.COM

stay in touch with loved ones at home.

If you are new to the RV world, you might want to join a local RV enthusiasts club or look for a national organization on the Internet.

These clubs bring together people from all walks of life who are connected by their love of the open road and their thirst for adventure.

In fact, one of the best things about the RV lifestyle is

the fact that it is such a great way to make new friends and meet new people. When you travel in an RV, you meet real people in all the towns you visit, not just other tourists.

No matter where you go,

you will be making memories that will last a lifetime.

### FAMILY TRIPS

An RV vacation is also the perfect choice for families and children.

Whether your summer vacation lasts one week or three months, you can hit the road and start building memories your children will cherish forever.

When you hit the road for an RV adventure, your kids will go back to school with stories to tell and adventures to remember, and you will enjoy spending time with your family and seeing the world around you.

No matter what your travel style, there is an RV that suits that style perfectly. If you are used to traveling in style and styling at five-star hotels, you can find luxury RVs that are veritable hotel rooms on wheels.

If you prefer the more rustic style of travel, you can find budget RVs designed to be lean and mean.

Regardless of what you are looking for in a vacation lifestyle, you can find it behind the wheel of an RV.



# Give the Kids a Break

## ENJOY TIME OFF WITH A VACATION AT A SUMMER CAMP

Summer camps can be a great way for your kids and grandkids to relax and unwind after a hard year at school.

Those camps can provide fun, interesting things to see and do, and the best kinds of learning experiences. At summer camp, kids can get back to nature, hike through the woods, learn how to swim, go horseback riding and just enjoy time being a kid.

### SPECIALTY CAMPS

Kids can also attend a host of specialty summer camps designed to help them hone their skills and explore their interests.

From fitness camps and sports training camps to computer camps and even astronaut camps, there are plenty of ways to keep your kids entertained and engaged as the long, hot days of summer roll around.

Choosing a camp should be a family activity, with both parents and kids taking an active role in the discussion.

As the parent, you may have your heart set on the type of camps you loved as a kid, but it is important that your child be interested in that type of camp as well. After all, your goal is to help your son or daughter forge his or her own

memories, not to relive your own.

### SHOP AROUND

Cost is unfortunately a factor as well. As much as you might like to send your kid to Houston for astronaut camp, if it is not in the budget you might have to aim a little lower.

The key is finding a camp that is affordable, nearby enough to be convenient but still lots of fun. Fortunately, there are plenty of camps that fit that category, some run by church groups, others run by non-profit and civic organizations.

You can find information about these camps in your local newspaper and by talking to other parents.

### LEAVING HOME

As the parent, you also need to decide whether a day camp or a sleepaway camp works best for you and your child.

Many young children are reluctant to spend the night at camp, but after they get over those initial jitters they



PHOTO: ELENATHEWISE / YAYMICRO.COM

may find that they love it.

Even so, you might want to choose a day camp for the first year, then discuss a sleepaway camp for the next year.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Of course, these days camps are not just for kids.

Parents can relive the fun and excitement of their own childhood days by attending theme camps ranging from football and baseball fantasy camps to music camps and computer camps.

No matter what your interest, you can find a camp that can accommodate it. Whether it is spending a week on the trail camping

under the stars on a cattle roundup or spending a week with your favorite musicians learning to play guitar, you can find an adult fantasy camp that can accommodate your interests.

So as you pack little Johnny or Jane off for that first sleepaway camp adventure, why not consider booking an adventure of your own?



# Safety and Sunshine

## SWIMMING LESSONS ARE IMPORTANT, ENJOYABLE FOR CHILDREN

**W**ater fun and summer seem to go hand in hand. So, getting the kids swimming lessons could be high on your summer's to-do list.

Not only can swimming lessons provide seasonal entertainment for youngsters, but they also teach a life-long practical skill that may help ensure their future safety around water.

### SAFETY

The American Academy of Pediatrics stipulates that children are generally “developmentally ready for formal swimming lessons” after they turn four.

They also recommend that children under age four should be provided with “touch supervision” and never be beyond arm's reach of the supervising adult.

After age four, children can benefit immensely from learning to swim and the water safety lessons that coincide with formal swimming instruction. And some people have had success teaching babies to swim under professional supervision, although it's not recommended by the pediatrics academy.

There are many benefits for children who participate in swimming classes. Any attempt to safeguard children around water in order to reduce a risk of drowning is ultimately beneficial.



PHOTO: SWIMNEWS / YAYMICRO.COM

### HEALTH

Kids enjoy many health benefits from learning to swim. Research suggests that children who swim develop both muscle strength and increased coordination.

The health benefits extend even further. Kids who take part in swimming lessons have been shown to demonstrate increased alertness.

Additionally, swimming

regularly is an excellent form of exercise that can enhance kids' fitness levels or even promote healthy fitness for children with weight concerns.

Moreover, swimming can help children build self-confidence and support their ability to self-discipline.

### RECREATION

Of course, participating in

children are likely to learn the various strokes associated with swimming such as the breast stroke and even the doggie paddle.

Kids learn how to float and may even learn how to dive from small or great heights. Kids also learn a plethora of safety tips such as how to help a friend who may be struggling in the water, why they should always swim with a buddy, or what to do if they experience cramping while swimming.

Many communities around the country offer swimming classes for children. One of the first places to consider is the community pool which typically offers summer swimming instruction sessions by age or skill level.

Local chapters of the American Red Cross and the YMCA, which may even have a pool onsite, can provide information about where to find qualified swimming instruction for children in your area.

Area fitness centers and high schools are also venues that may provide instruction. Even some amusement water parks now offer swimming instruction to children during the warm summer months.



# Make Traveling Easy

## WHY YOU NEED A TRAVEL AGENT TO HANDLE YOUR NEXT TRIP

**Y**ou might think that the online world has rendered the travel agent obsolete, but that is far from the truth.

Travel agents still have a valuable role to play, so much so that you should consider letting one of these travel pros handle the details of your next trip.

If you are just planning a quick jaunt into the city or a train trip to visit your kids, you probably do not need a travel agent. But if your plans are more expensive, a travel agent can bring great value to the experience, and save you money in the long run.

### INSIDER DEALS

If you are planning a family vacation to a popular tourist destination like Orlando or Disneyland, a travel agent can give you the inside scoop on everything from where to stay and what to pack to when to go and how to avoid the long lines at popular attractions.

Without the help of a travel agent, you could end up spending half your vacation standing in line, and the other half getting to and from the cheap hotel that looked so much better on the website than it does in real life.

A travel agent is also a must if you are traveling to an exotic location, such as Asia, Africa or the Middle East. These spots can be tricky to book, with so many variables in pricing and accommodations that you really need an expert to handle the arrangements.

If you are traveling to a place like Kenya, Egypt or Israel, it is often

cheaper to book the trip as a package deal, with airline tickets, hotel stay and tours all handled at the same time.

An experienced travel agent will know which trip to book and which tour operators to work with. If you choose to book the trip on your own, you could end up paying more for the plane ticket than you would have for the entire package deal.

### GOOD ADVICE

Travel agents can also be extremely valuable for the travel advice they can give you.

Chances are an experienced travel agent has already been to many of the places you are visiting. He or she can give you valuable insights into what to expect, the best time of year to make the journey and what you should see and not see.

A travel agent can also provide valuable safety tips, from what to do when you get to your hotel room to how to avoid problems when walking late at night.

The Internet can be a valuable source of travel information, and you should definitely research airfares and hotel rooms online. But once you know where you want to go and when, your next call should be to a travel agent.

These professionals are experts at helping you plan the vacation of a lifetime, and they provide valuable services.





# Make a Splash



## HAVE FUN AT AN AREA WATER PARK

If you long for a day at the beach and a swim in the ocean, why not recreate that experience at the local water park?

Water parks are the perfect family getaway, and they can be an affordable alternative to that beach vacation.

The great thing about a water park is that you and the kids can have a great time, but do so safely. Water parks employ lifeguards and other professionals whose job it is to make sure the entire family has a fun, and a safe, time on the water.

You can relax, knowing that your kids can have fun and still be safe.

### RESEARCH

If you are planning a family vacation and want to hit the water parks in the area, it is a good idea to do some research first. If you have children of varying ages, you will want to choose a park that provides attractions suitable for all ages.

Some water parks cater to small kids, with lots of fun activities for the little ones but little for the older kids. Other water parks are built to thrill, which might be great for your daredevil teen but not so great for the toddler in your arms.

Choosing a park with enough attractions for the whole family is the best way to keep everyone happy.

### RELAXATION

You might also want to choose a water park that gives you some downtime while the kids are playing.

Some water parks now include special beach areas designed specifically for parents. The parents can sit on the beach and enjoy some quiet time while the kids play nearby.

This can be a great perk, especially if

you have been busy catering to the young ones all day.

### COMBO DEALS

Another great idea is to combine your water park experience with a local amusement park. Many amusement parks have been busy building full water parks within their gates, so you might be able to enjoy a day on your favorite roller coasters and a day at the local water park all at the same time.

You might also be able to find combination tickets that give you a day at the water park, followed by a day at the local amusement park. These combo passes can save you a lot of money, so it is worth your while to check them out.

No matter what combination you choose, a day at the water park is the perfect way to start out your vacation.

## Choosing a Water Park

► Are there things for all the kids to do, from the youngest toddlers to those hard to please teenagers?

► Are multi-day passes available in case you want to come back the next day?

► Are there other attractions nearby?

► Can you find discount tickets at local restaurants and shops?

► What is the dress code? Many water parks require bathing suits, while others allow shorts as well.