



Endless summer

Stretch out the sunny season with these 11 ideas for warm-weather fun. By Fiona Wagner

Remember when you were a kid and the lazy hazy days of summer seemed to last forever? There was plenty of time to run around barefoot, jump through sprinklers and lick ice cream as it melted down your hands. Now, it seems weekends pass in a blur and September comes all too soon. But you can extend your summer with a little advance planning. Check out these warm-weather pastimes and sweet summer indulgences – some you’ve probably never attempted before and some you may have forgotten to try again. Pick your favourites and rediscover all the fun this season has to offer! ▷

early summer

The birds are singing, green thumbs are twitching and the temperature is rising. Break out the sunscreen and recharge your batteries with some good old outdoor fun.

Blow bubbles Act like a kid. Go to the playground. Be creative and colour your driveway with sidewalk chalk. Get out there and try anything you'd normally consider child's play – and stop worrying about looking silly. "One of my favourite summer memories is of a Saturday afternoon spent at the local water park with my two young nephews," says Melissa Kell, a forensic biologist. "I'm not sure who had more fun running through the spraying water: them or me! Afterwards, we sat in the backyard eating Freezies and then we played some more in the lawn sprinkler."



Let your toes twinkle You've been encased in winter boots and heavy socks for months. Now that the warm weather is finally here, it's time to free your feet. Paint your toenails with this season's hot nail colour: brilliant fuchsia (what could be more summery?).

TIP Try It's All Greek to Me from OPI and slip on a pair of strappy sandals for an instant energy lift.

Soar to new heights What better way to experience a warm windy afternoon than with a high-flying kite? From simple paper bags to elaborate three-dimensional shapes, kites come in an amazing variety of designs

and hues. "Flying a kite takes me back to my more carefree days, watching the colourful kite swoop and dive in the breeze," says Jennifer Foster, a freelance writer and editor and mother of one. "It gives me a calm peaceful feeling each time I see it darting about in the air, playfully enjoying the warmth of summer as much as I am."

Pop a wheelie Jump on your bike just to feel the wind rushing against your face and the sense of go-anywhere freedom. Jennifer Kwan remembers her weekly mountain trail rides during her summers in the Yukon. "We'd have to climb uphill for a good part of our route," she says. "But that was OK because afterwards we had the downhill spin to look forward to. I liked riding at the back of the pack because it gave me a chance to get used to the flow of the trail. I'd be completely drenched in sweat, but the landscape and the sound of twigs cracking underneath my front tire made up for it."

TIP If you don't own a bike, check your local Yellow Pages for shops that offer day rentals, which could range from about \$7 to \$20 per hour, depending on the type of bicycle you want. Why not bring a friend and go tandem? ▷



midsummer

The days are at their longest – and sometimes the hottest, too. Check out these distinctly July ways to heat up and cool off.



Turn trash to treasure Arm yourself with a pair of comfortable shoes, a city map and the Saturday paper and prepare to hit the yard-sale circuit. “I love to pick up a good friend and a cup of coffee and visit the local garage sales,” says marketing manager Catharine Cooper. “It’s fun to check out someone else’s goods, and there’s nothing better than stumbling upon new treasures for a great price.” Another bonus of garage sales? They’re usually over by noon, leaving you with a wide open day ahead.

Take a hike Set your alarm for a pre-dawn wake-up call and make your first coffee a double cappuccino to go. Head out for a morning hike and you’ll notice how places that look ordinary during the day appear extraordinary in a different light. As you walk, savour the smell of damp dewy earth or the melodic call of a bird. Cap off your hike by watching the sun rise and drinking in the swirl of cotton-candy colours.

TIP Here’s another reason to get active early in the day: a recent study found that women who exercise in the morning generally sleep better than women who exercise later in the day. So, get moving early and you’ll sleep soundly that night. ▷

Pretend you’re a tourist You don’t need to leave town in order to do a little exploring. Whether you’re interested in art history or modern theatre, your local tourist bureau will tell you everything you need to know to plan a mini stay-at-home vacation. “Usually there are all sorts of events that promote the city, be it concerts in the park, tours of artists’ studios or museums,” says Kingston, Ont., resident Wendy McAdoo Smale. “I took my nephew on the Alexander Henry, a small ship that is docked here. His excitement was contagious. An eight-year-old really does give a whole new perspective to an old boat.”



GETTY IMAGES; BOSS ANANIA; PHILIP & KAREN SMITH

end of summer

September may be just around the corner, but that doesn't mean it's time to put away your wide-brimmed sun hat. Embrace these last few weeks so the memories will keep you warm all winter.

Be the queen of your castle "I like to build sand sculptures with my daughter, just like my father used to with me," says Holly Ripley, a teacher. "My daughter likes to chase the seagulls and search for feathers and stones to add her special touch to our creations." And while you're in construction mode, keep an eye out for pastel-pretty shells; they're the perfect memento of an idyllic August day.

TIP For sandcastle-building inspiration (and how-to instructions), check out *Sandcastles: Great Projects From Mermaids to Monuments* (Chronicle Books).



Wish upon a star Make an event out of the Perseid meteor shower, an annual summer-sky show that peaks around Aug. 12. When the sky is moonless, dark and clear, you can see as many as 100 meteors per hour. And with everyone's eyes turned upward to this spectacular show, no one will notice if you're in your pyjamas.

TIP For best viewing times, go to www.space.com and type "shooting stars" into the search engine.

Down on the farm Spending an afternoon at a farm can be one of summer's decadent pleasures. Go for a hayride, then pick your own berries, apples, peppers or corn. For city dwellers, a rural getaway may be closer than you think. Toronto's Riverdale Farm is a favourite summer haunt for Felicity Corelli and her grandkids. "It feels like a day in the country," she says. "There are newborn lambs and froggy ponds plus cows, horses, sheep and goats - and all the associated smells and noises. If you get there early enough, farm-fresh eggs are a bonus, and there are great homemade cookies."

Set up camp Many of us have fond memories of summers spent in musty tents, with the hypnotic chorus of crickets delivering us to dreamland. But this year, forget hauling out the duffel bags, packing up the car and then listening to the barrage of "Are we there yet?" Camping out can be as simple as stepping into your own backyard. Fire up the barbecue and roast marshmallows, catch fireflies, sing favourite songs and tell ghost stories. Sleep in a tent or a hammock or better yet, snooze under the starry sky. You'll wake up feeling refreshed and rejuvenated in your makeshift home away from home. **C**

