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Summer Fun

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How to maximize weekend getaways



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BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Extended summer vacations may get all of the glory, but individuals and families needn't feel pressured to go away on week-long trips to get the rest and relaxation they deserve. There is plenty to be said for weekend getaways as well.

Working oneself ragged is no way to enjoy life. In fact, a person could be doing harm to his or her health by working too much, which may lead to lost productivity and burnout in the long run. Experts agree that getting away could be good for mental health. According to psychotherapist Jonathan Alpert, who is the author of "Be Fearless: Change Your Life in 28 Days," a weekend trip can boost mental and emotional health. Alpert says smaller vacations even "pack a bigger punch" than longer ones. Neuroscientists have found that getaways can

evoke feelings of calm, banish stress and enable the mind to heal. Furthermore, according to a Gallup study, those who make time for regular trips score higher on the Gallup-Well-Being Index. Weekend getaways simply may be easier to schedule than longer vacations.

The following are some ways to make the most of weekend getaways and why these getaways are so beneficial.

- **Plan ahead.** Weekend getaways generally do not need extensive planning. The logistics are much easier when there are only one or two nights involved in an overnight stay. Sometimes weekend getaways are only day trips, which makes them even easier to set up.

- **Bring pets along.** Short stays may mean it is easier to bring pets. Quite often hotel chains and even homestay accommodations allow pets with the inclusion of a pet cleaning fee. This saves on having to find a pet sitter or a boarder to watch pets while you are away.

- **Book a different locale a few times a month.**

Weekend getaways are more affordable than lengthier trips, which means you can see various sights without a big investment. Unlike longer vacations that tie

travelers to a specific destination for the duration of the trip, weekend jaunts are short stops at different spots. Try various cities and towns on for size.

- **Avoid boredom.** Anyone who has booked an extended trip away has at times had some boredom set in when the initial wow factor of the resort or trip wears off. In some instances, it may seem as if you've exhausted the list of things to do. Weekend getaways are anything but boring because you're packing so many things to do into a short amount of time.

- **Keep a to-go bag packed.** When the mood hits you, you can dart off to a weekend escape. Keep a packed bag with some essentials at the ready so there's no overthinking the vacation process.

- **Become a loyalty member.** Investigate the loyalty programs of various hotel chains. This way if you find a chain you like and book stays regularly you can earn rewards points. These points may be redeemed for upgrades or even free rooms over time.

Weekend getaways are great ways to rest and recharge without the commitment of time and planning required of longer excursions.



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Thursday: 4:00pm - DJ Afficial
5:30pm - **Jim Barron** Magician/Comedian
7:00pm - **Keegan Ferrell**, former contestant on The Voice & Fort Wayne native

Friday: Noon - Indiana Wild Animals Noon - DJ Afficial
1:00pm - **Jim Barron** Magician/Comedian and Radio personality heard on WBCL.
7:30pm - **Red-Eye Lorelai**

Saturday: 10:15am, 1:30pm & 3:00pm - **The Spoon Man**, former 2nd round contestant from America's Got Talent.
11:00am - Indiana Wild Animals
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The importance of water safety

CONTRIBUTED

This time of year, many families head to the pool or lake to beat the heat and make memories together.

While we often think about sunscreen and bringing ample water, thinking about water safety is also important.

Lifejackets

Lifejackets should be worn by anyone participating in boating, paddling, or towed water sports regardless of swimming ability, said Alex Pruett, Director of Aquatics at the JAM Center in Garrett.

They should also be worn by inexperienced or non-swimmers in both pools and open water, and any child younger than 5 years old who is not within arms reach of an adult.

Choosing the right lifejacket is important as well, Pruett said.

All lifejackets should be Coast Guard approved, she said. Adults should check the size and weight guidelines for lifejackets as well to make sure they fit the person who will be wearing them. All lifejackets should be checked as well to see if they fit properly, with all buckles and zips secured.

Know Before You Go

Adults can help kids stay safe by knowing where water will be and keeping an eye on them, Pruett said.

The safest places to swim are those with lifeguards on duty, safety equipment, and posted signs with rules such as “No Running” or “No

Diving,” Pruett said.

Home pools should have a fence or barrier around it to make sure children do not walk or fall in, she said.

In natural bodies of water there are a variety of factors to consider, such as currents or moving water, waves, water temperature, the depth of the water, objects or debris below the surface of the water and the possible presence of aquatic plants or animals.

“You should always walk into new water and check the floor or ground underneath before jumping or diving in,” Pruett said.

It is always best to swim in a group, she added.

Think So You Don't Sink

If an emergency does happen, it is important not to

panic, Pruett said.

“Panic is a sudden and overwhelming terror that can make you unable to help yourself or others,” she said.

Because people can panic in the water, if you see someone struggling in the water it is best to throw something to them rather than go into the water yourself, as they can pull you underwater with them, Pruett said. Items that can be thrown include designated safety devices as well as noodles, lifejackets, kickboards, or other floating devices.

If a person finds themselves in an unsafe situation in the water, there are ways they can help themselves, Pruett said.

First, call for help and try

to relax, she said. Float on your back or, if your boat overturned, try to hold onto that. If you are in cold water, try to get out of it.

Learn to Swim

“Swim lessons are a great way to teach your children how to be safe in the water and learn swimming strokes,” she said.

The JAM Center is home to JAM Swim School, which offers group and private lessons to children and adults starting at six months of age. Lessons are focused on human development and are personalized based on the needs of the individual.

For more information or to register, call 260-357-1917 or visit myjamcenter.org.

8 tips to make for a fun day at the water park

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

When summertime temperatures are hot and climbing, people look for ways to cool off. Trips to the beach or a pool often top the list of ideas, but water parks also make for great places to spend a hot summer day.

Water parks may be stand-alone facilities in town or components of larger amusement parks. They often feature a combination of wading pools, slides, lazy rivers, and splash zones to cater to visitors of all ages. Water parks can be great family fun for those who do their homework and prepare for visits accordingly. Certain tips can make the experience that much more enjoyable.

1. Pack light. Belongings can be tricky when it comes to water parks because most items cannot get wet. Leaving them beside rides also leaves you vulnerable to theft. Bring only the essentials and plan to stash car keys,

mobile phones and minimal cash in lockers. Lockers in many modern facilities are paid for with your credit card and work by entering a self-generated code. This way there are no keys or locks to worry about.

2. Bring three bags. Bring a backpack or a tote bag that is filled with a change of clothes. Unless you dry off for the last hour by walking around the park, you likely will not want to get in your vehicle in your swimsuit. Leave the clothes in the aforementioned locker. Stash a plastic shopping bag or garbage bag inside the backpack, as it can hold wet swimsuits and other damp items after you've changed. Bring a mesh or breathable shoulder bag that can hold a few essentials, like towels and water bottles. The mesh will enable air flow so that you don't end up with a sopping, mildew-riddled towel by the end of the day.

3. Wear comfortable swim gear. It's hard to get



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out of the sun at a water park, so covering up is key. A rash guard or swim shirt can be paired with swim trunks or one- or two-piece swimsuits. Avoid any swimsuits that have flimsy straps, as they're more likely to come undone while crashing through waves or during high speed water slide excursions.

4. Plan locker trips strategically. Aim to visit your locker at least two or three times if you're spending a full day at the water park. This gives you chances to reapply

sunscreen (which you should always wear at the park) and grab a few dollars for snacks and beverages. Remember to stay hydrated while out in the sun, even if you are in the water most of the time.

5. Utilize water shoes.

Water park pavement can get hot and slippery. Water shoes are ideal so that you do not injure your feet. Many rides prohibit flip flops, but secured water shoes are allowed.

6. Arrive early. Try to get to the water park shortly after it opens. Crowds will

be sizable on hot days. You don't want to waste all of your time waiting in line for rides. Plus, the earlier in the day you arrive, the less steamy and the greater chance you will find parking near the entrance.

7. If budget allows, rent a cabana. Some parks rent cabanas. A cabana can be a family's home base and a place to cool off and relax. For an extra cost, some cabanas come with food service.

8. Have extra adults on hand. When the kids outnumber the adults, it can be tricky keeping eyes on everyone, especially in larger attractions like wave pools. Plus, there's bound to be some kids who are more adventurous than others. An extra adult or two can wait with children who do not want to go on particular slides or other rides.

Water parks are entertaining ways to cool off on hot days. Following certain tips can make visits even more fun.

Key components of a fun picnic

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Dining al fresco is often associated with securing outdoor seating at a local restaurant. However, anyone can enjoy al fresco dining at home, in a park or even on the beach.

Picnics make it easy to enjoy a meal in an idyllic setting. Though there's no rules governing picnics other than those posted by local park officials, the following are some essential components of a fun picnic.

Food

The menu for a picnic need not be elaborate, but there's also room for foods that are a little more fancy than sandwiches. Sandwiches are still acceptable picnic fare, but those who want to expand their horizons can prepare cheeseboards, salads, fresh fruit, and other items that are easily prepared and packed in a picnic basket. It's best to avoid hot foods, as they can be difficult to keep warm. Small grills might be allowed in certain parks, but it's



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best to keep in mind that others may not want to deal with smoke from burning coals. So individuals who plan to grill during a picnic should choose a remote spot that won't affect those around them.

Beverages

Cold beverages, including water, can ensure no one is overcome by heat. Individuals who want to bring alcohol should only do so on private property, as many local laws do not allow consumption of alcoholic beverages in public spaces like parks and beaches. A cooler with cold beverages stored

in ice can be a good idea if a lot of people will be attending the picnic.

Reusable containers

Reusable containers decrease the chances of creating litter. All it takes is one stiff wind for single-use, resealable plastic bags to blow away, and it's not always easy to track those bags down. Picnickers should aspire to take out everything that they take in, and reusable containers make that easier to accomplish.

Basket and tablecloth

A tablecloth does more than just set the scene for a picnic. Tablecloths collect crumbs and keep them off the ground, which can decrease the likelihood that uninvited guests like ants will join the festivities. Tablecloths also ensure utensils can be set out and put down without getting dirty.

Comfortable seating

Though it's entirely possible some guests will want to sit on

the ground throughout the picnic, some comfortable seating can provide the perfect respite when the hard ground begins to feel a little less accommodating. Instruct guests to bring their own foldable lounge chairs, and don't forget to bring a picnic blanket or two so anyone who wants to nap can catch a few winks. When hosting a beach picnic, look for blankets that dry quickly. Some are even made of fabric that filters out sand to keep it off of food.

Miscellaneous items

Bug spray, sunscreen, a bluetooth speaker, biodegradable waste bags, some sports equipment and other items to keep adults and kids occupied, and even a portable fan to keep guests cool and repel mosquitoes are some additional must-haves for a fun picnic.

A picnic in the park or on the beach can be a great way to dine outside and relax in the summer sun.

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Grill safely this summer

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Grill safely this summer. Plenty of people can be found working their grilling magic year-round. But the vast majority of people do the bulk of their grilling over the summer, when warm temperatures contribute to a relaxed atmosphere that makes outdoor cooking and dining that much more appealing. The relaxing nature of summer can make it easy to overlook safety, particularly when grilling.

However, the right safety measures when cooking over an open flame can prevent home fires and other accidents that can cause injury and even death. In recognition of the many things that can go wrong when grilling, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Fire

Administration offer these simple fire safety tips that every grill master can keep in mind as summer grilling season hits full swing.

- **Only use a grill outside.** Grills should never be used indoors, and that includes in garages with the doors open. Before lighting a flame, make sure the grill is at least three feet from siding, deck rails and eaves.

- **Establish a safe zone around the grill.** A three-foot safe zone around the grill can decrease the likelihood that pets will run into and potentially tip over the grill. Kids can be taught to respect this zone as well so they avoid being burned.

- **Open a gas grill before lighting it.** Charcoal grills, hybrid grills and smokers cannot be lit unless the lid is lifted. That isn't the case with gas grills, but gas grills should never be



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lit with the lid closed. If a gas grill is lit with its lid closed, gas can build up inside and that could cause an explosion. Even if there's some summer rain falling, open the lid on a gas grill before turning the ignition switch.

- **Keep an eye on the grill at all times.** It's

tempting to walk away from a grill while food is cooking, but someone should always be tasked with staying close to the grill. If cooks must walk away, ask another adult to stay close to the grill until you return. All it takes is a few seconds for a fire to start.

- **Clean the grill regularly.** Regular cleaning of the grill is both healthy and safe. Cleaning helps to ensure the cooking surface is clean and unlikely to cause food poisoning. But a grease-free grill also poses less of a fire hazard than one that hasn't been cleaned.

- **Let coals cool before discarding them.** Coals from the grill should be given ample time to cool before they're removed from the grill and discarded.

- **Remember to turn the gas valve to the off position after cooking.** When cooking with gas grills, cooks must remember to turn the valve to the off position once all the food has been cooked. Simple safety measures can ensure summer grilling season goes off without a hitch.



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Cooking Instructions

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless Miller Poultry Chicken Thighs
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 bunch of Green Onions, white parts cut into 1 inch pieces, green parts sliced thin for garnish
- Sesame seeds, for garnish

Cook chicken to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

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- In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and 1/4 cup water; set aside.
- In a small saucepan over medium heat, add soy sauce, brown sugar, ginger, garlic powder, honey and 1 cup water; bring to a simmer. Stir in cornstarch mixture until thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 2 minutes; let cool to room temperature.
- In a gallon size Ziploc bag or large bowl, combine teriyaki marinade and chicken; marinate for at least 30 minutes to overnight, turning the bag occasionally.
- Preheat grill to medium high heat.
- Thread chicken and green onions onto skewers. Add skewers to the grill and cook until golden brown and cooked through, about 3-4 minutes per side.
- Serve immediately, garnished with sesame seeds and sliced green onion, if desired.

5 fun facts about the month of July

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

July is synonymous with fun in the sun. In the northern hemisphere, July is typically characterized by sunny days, warm weather and long hours of daylight, making it an ideal month to enjoy a little rest and relaxation. Though it might be a great time for some R&R, July also boasts an interesting history. As revelers soak up some sun this summer, they can ponder these fun facts about the month of July.

1. July is named after a person whose been famous for thousands of years. According to the Farmer's Almanac, Roman dictator Julius

Caesar developed the precursor to the Gregorian calendar used today. Though that made him worthy of a month named in his honor, it didn't do much to protect him during his life, as Caesar was famously assassinated in 44 B.C.

2. July is a celebratory month for fans of revolution. American Independence Day (July 4) and Bastille Day (July 14), which commemorates the storming of the Bastille and the dawn of the French Revolution in 1789, are among the notable revolutionary moments celebrated in July.

3. Baseball historians know

that many significant events in the game have taken place in July, and some records set in the month have withstood longer than others. On July 12, 1931, Mel Ott of the New York Giants hit his 100th career home run, becoming the youngest player to reach that milestone. Ott was 22 years and 132 days old when he set the mark, which still stands today.

4. One of the more famous statements in United States history was uttered in July, though it wasn't within American borders or even on the planet Earth. On July 20, 1969, American

astronaut Neil Armstrong, after stepping onto the surface of the moon, declared, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

5. Two men who played integral roles in the American colonies gaining their independence from Great Britain both passed away on July 4th, the day that celebrates that very independence. On July 4th, 1826, former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, who were once friends, then political rivals and, finally, friends again, passed away within hours of each other.

Keep summer days fun and busy when camp ends

BY METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Many adults have fond memories of attending summer camp when they were children. The American Camp Association reports that each year more than 14 million children and adults take advantage of the camp experience. Summer camp is a place for kids to learn new skills, make new friends, experience being away from home for extended periods of time, and explore new locales.

Summer camp program lengths vary. Some children

attend local camps that may last a week or two, while others attend sleep-away camps that last a little longer. Since summer vacation typically lasts between eight to 10 weeks, parents may discover there still is plenty of downtime after summer camp ends. Here are some ways to fill the gap between the end of camp and the start of a new school year.

Schedule a vacation

What better way to keep the magic of summer going than by rolling summer camp right into a family

vacation? Give kids time to enjoy a few days to relax at home, but then buckle up for the next adventure. This can be a trip away from home, or a series of day trips or activities guided by all members of the family.

Organize a sleepover exchange

Parents of school-aged children can coordinate with one another to fill up a week or more with sleepovers. Each family can take a night or two, and the kids can jump from house to house extending the fun with one another. Sleepovers can occur inside the home or under tents in the yard.

Recreate favorite camp activities at home

Why not take what makes camp entertaining and try it at home? Copy the camp's itinerary and engage in similar activities, such as canoeing or nature hikes. On nights when the weather cooperates, everyone can gather around a fire pit to roast marshmallows.

Enroll in a recreational program

Some towns offer free or low-fee activities to

residents through their parks and recreation departments. If budgeting does not allow for a camp experience, there are likely town-wide activities that can fill the gaps

until it's time for children to go back to school. Some even may offer after-hours childcare options for parents who have scheduling conflicts with work.



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Hydrating is key in summer heat



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Summer is a season to enjoy some fun in the sun, but it's imperative that people remember to take steps to reduce their risk for heat illness. Those measures should include efforts to hydrate and remain hydrated throughout the day.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that water will almost always help people remain hydrated even when they're working in the heat.

But food also plays a vital role in preventing heat illness, as the CDC notes eating regular meals can help to replace the salt lost through sweat.

It's also important that individuals avoid energy drinks and alcohol when spending time in the hot summer sun. Many energy drinks contain more caffeine than standard servings of coffee, tea and soft drinks, and excessive caffeine consumption can contribute to dehydration. The same can be said for alcohol, and the CDC reports that consuming alcohol within 24 hours of working in the heat can increase the risk of heat illness.

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