

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
IN A MODERN WORLD

relating

5 Ways to Really Dig into Summer

WITH TINY TWEAKS AND
MINIMAL PLANNING, YOU CAN
TURN ORDINARY ACTIVITIES
INTO AWESOME ONES.

By Sharlene Breakey



PROP STYLING BY CAT DASH

Photograph by
Christopher Testani

1
-**Soak up nature...
after dark.**

Bring a flashlight—but for emergencies only. Instead, notice your night vision kick in. As you stare at a tree, your eyes will adjust and you'll soon be able to pick out 10 leaves, then 100. Now look up at the moon. Walking toward it is how you'll see best—it acts as a spotlight, illuminating details: small stones, gnarled roots, branches stretching to the stars. As you gaze up, find the Big Dipper. The middle star in the handle? Look closer: It's actually two, side by side. Finally, as long as you don't live in bear country, tiptoe with the wind at your face (so wildlife won't smell you) and you may surprise a deer or a rabbit.

TRISTAN GOOLEY IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE LOST ART OF READING NATURE'S SIGNS*.

2
-**Build a sandcastle...
like a pro.**

The key: Spend a third of your time making a big pile of wet sand. Pack buckets and shovels, but also carving tools, like a spatula, paintbrush, and melon baller. Form a sand pile that's about a foot or two high and flat on top with a small lip, like a shallow volcano. Pack it down—step on it!—and pour water on top so it pools in the middle and seeps into the sand. Repeat until the pile is the height you want. Now carve shingles, windows, and so on (look for design ideas online). Use the paintbrush to smooth and the melon baller to add decorative half scoops.

MARK MASON IS A PROFESSIONAL SAND SCULPTOR WITH TEAM SANDTASTIC.

3
-**Go bike riding...
but make it “bike packing.”**

You can easily hop on the fun trend that combines mountain biking and backpacking: Take a leisurely bike ride, then stay at a hotel, a bed-and-breakfast, or even a friend's house. Just fill a backpack, and a bike ride becomes a terrific way to see your area in a new light. We suggest that beginners travel 25 or 30 miles, but even 10 is enough. Look for things to do along the way—a cute lunch spot, historical sites you've never visited. You don't need to carry much, especially if you drive your suitcase to your destination the day before.

EVA DUNN-FROEBIG IS THE EVENTS AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR FOR THE ADVENTURE CYCLING ASSOCIATION.

4
-**Throw a barbecue...
with no grill.**

A “campfire” cookout, which trades a backyard grill for a firepit, makes an outdoor meal more special. Roasting precooked bratwurst or hot dogs on a stick is easy, but you can cook just about anything if you use a grate. The trick is to cook over embers, not roaring flames. My crew loves pizza, so I prep one in the kitchen, toss it together outside, then place it in a cast-iron skillet over the fire. Eat your meal on picnic blankets. And for dessert, of course, let everyone make their own s'mores. Sometimes, for fun, we substitute sandwich cookies for graham crackers.

MARNIE HANEL IS A COAUTHOR OF *THE CAMPOUT COOKBOOK: INSPIRED RECIPES FOR COOKING AROUND THE FIRE AND UNDER THE STARS*.

5
-**Revel in cherry season...
with a DIY delight.**

Friends love my easy recipe for maraschino cherries, which are totally worthy of your ice cream sundae! Buy a pound of deep red cherries. Remove the pits but leave the stems. Mix 1½ cups of water, a cup of pomegranate juice, a cup of sugar, the juice of three lemons, the peel from an orange, a pinch of salt, and a star anise. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Drop in the cherries and simmer for 10 minutes. Put the whole mixture in an airtight container in the fridge for three days so the syrup soaks in. Voilà! A sweet treat that lasts about two weeks.

STEFANI POLLACK IS A BAKER IN ST. LOUIS AND THE FOUNDER OF CUPCAKE PROJECT.