

# Memphis: Families Dip Into Cool Summer Fun

By Lisa Matte

The Guest House at Graceland is a one-stop-shop when it comes to cool ways to while away the lazy, hazy days of June, July and August. Claim a poolside chaise longue, check out an Elvis classic in the air-conditioned movie theater or take a short stroll to Elvis Presley's Memphis. The new, and fully air- conditioned, state-of-the-art entertainment and exhibit complex offers an immersive experience into the life and times of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. When you're ready to head out, visit the hotel concierge for chill ways to explore Memphis in the heat of summer. Pick up the fixings for lunch at Shake, Rattle & Go or order a to-go picnic through room service. To get started, check out these ideas for summer in Memphis with kids in tow.

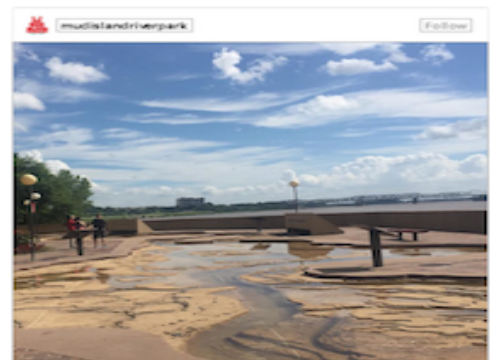
## My Big Backyard



The sun may be shining, but it rains every 30 minutes at My Big Backyard, a dedicated children's garden at Memphis Botanic Garden. Comprised of 16 unique themed areas, My Big Backyard encourages kids to explore the world of gardening. Highlights include Leaping Lawn (open space to run, jump and play), Treetop Adventure (a kid-sized birdhouse) and Pond Out Back (a mini-bog). Every half hour, a roll of thunder signals the start of a rainstorm at Raindrop Stop, a crescent-shaped shelter with a tin roof, inviting visitors to cool off in the gentle spray.

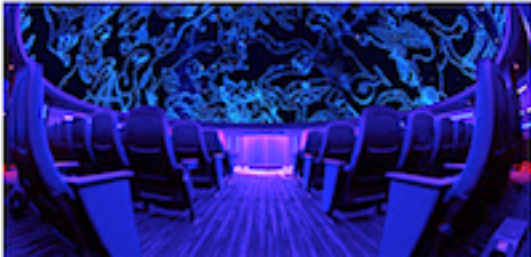
## Mud Island River Park

Among the most unique attractions in Memphis, Mud Island River Park is home to the Riverwalk, the Mississippi River Museum and an amphitheater — and half the fun is getting there. From Front Street, take a ½-mile stroll across Skybridge or hop aboard a Swiss-made monorail for a sky-high ride across the river. The Riverwalk is an exact scale model of the Lower Mississippi



River, tracing a 954-mile run from where it merges with the Ohio River in Illinois all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Wading is encouraged and pedal boats are available for rent at the southern end of the “river.” Also on site, the Mississippi River Museum is comprised of more than a dozen galleries and exhibits tracing 10,000 years of the river’s history.

## AutoZone Dome at Sharpe Planetarium



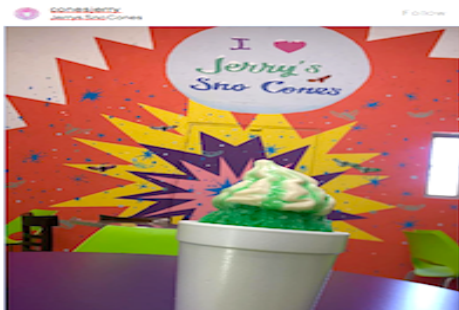
With astronomers predicting nearly total coverage, Memphis is one of the premier destinations to view the Great American Eclipse of 2017. On Aug. 21, the moon will begin to pass in front of the sun at 11:52 a.m. with maximum coverage occurring at 1:22 p.m., so it’s particularly timely to brush up on our solar system at the Sharpe Planetarium. Sit back in the 130-seat AutoZone Dome and get ready to take off on a virtual journey through the universe.

## Levitt Shell

What’s better than an outdoor concert on a summer evening? A free outdoor concert on a summer evening. Built in 1936, Levitt Shell has survived several close calls with demolition to become one of Memphis’s most beloved attractions. The 3,000-seat amphitheater — where an up-and-coming Elvis Presley opened for headliner Slim Whitman on July 30, 1954 — stages more than 50 free concerts each year. Picnic tables and a rotating roster of food trucks are on site or pack a cooler and spread a blanket to enjoy music under the stars.



## Jerry’s Snow Cones



A Memphis tradition for decades, Jerry’s Snow Cones is located in a former gas station where, rumor has it, the original owner once made snow cones for kids while their parents’ cars were in for service. The iconic eatery, featured in the 1989 Dennis Quaid film *Great Balls of Fire*, serves up everything from snow cones to funnel cakes and burgers to nachos.

## Redbirds Baseball at AutoZone Park

Take the kids out to a ballgame at AutoZone Park. The Memphis Redbirds, the Triple-A minor league baseball affiliate to the St. Louis Cardinals, take the field at 7:05 p.m. for most evening home games. The ballpark is within walking distance of Beale Street (The Guest House at Graceland operates a shuttle between the hotel and Beale Street nightly beginning at 6 p.m.) and, inside the park, The Boardwalk is a family-oriented game and amusement area.



## A. Schwab Trading Co.



An authentic trading company dating to the late 1800s, A. Schwab is a novelty in today's world. It's easy to spend hours browsing the wide-ranging inventory for everything from home goods to T-shirts and penny candy to vintage toys. Make no mistake: A. Schwab is memorabilia central. Grab a stool at the old-fashioned marble soda fountain, order a malted milkshake and feel like a kid again.