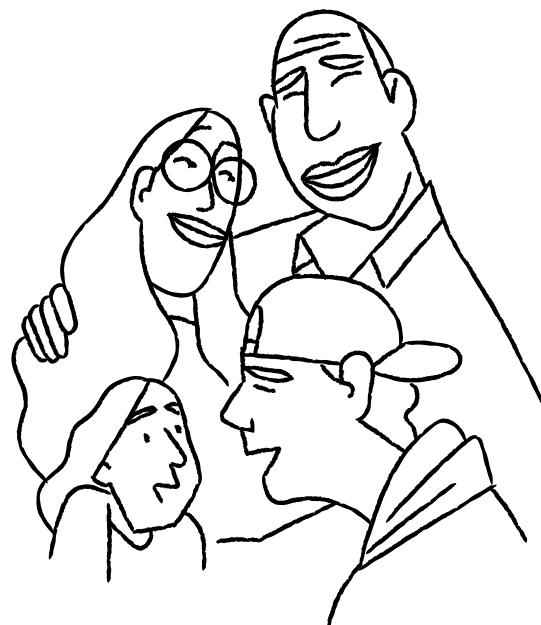


Unexpected Summer



Creative ways to stay entertained close to home.

By Taylor Hugo

Summer is here, but it may look different than you expected. With COVID-19 sweeping the world, our lives have dramatically changed. Stay-at-home orders and social distancing have forced us to spend more time at home. You may have canceled your summer trip or family reunion. But there are plenty of ways to enjoy summer close to home.

“Summer is an opportunity for experiences and memories,” says Alan O’Donnell, director of advice and financial planning at Thrivent. He encourages people to prioritize activities that mean the most to them by thinking about the memories they’re making. Here are some ideas for having fun this summer as a family.



Get Outside

After months of being cooped up inside, summer is a time to get out and explore. Plus, soaking up some vitamin D comes with a pretty low price tag.

- » Encourage sunscreen over screen time by cutting the cable cord and temporarily canceling streaming services. “Not only are you helping your wallet, but your family is also coming closer together. Enjoy the outdoors, enjoy your family rather than sitting in front of the TV,” says Dustin Miller, a Thrivent financial professional in DeKalb, Illinois.
- » Whether the gyms are back open or not, take advantage of the summer weather and run outside on real pavement.
- » Pending social distancing recommendations, “make a checklist of all the parks in your area and challenge your kids to go to each one,” says Britta Reder, senior vice president of marketing at Thrivent Credit Union. “Then it’s as simple as packing a snack or a picnic, and it can be a fun adventure over the course of the whole summer.”



Amp Up the Entertainment Indoors

If you’ve played every board game in the house, it’s time to get creative with your family activities. Pinterest is a goldmine for out-of-the-box project ideas.

- » Make a scavenger hunt. Choose some items from around the house to hide indoors or outdoors. Make a list of clues that lead you from one treasure to the next. If you have a big family, divide into groups.
- » Tackle a creative project together. Do you have a big box of unorganized family photos? Now is the time to put them in scrapbooks or digitize them and share with other family members.
- » Host a family talent show. Each family member can showcase a skill—maybe

it’s dancing, karate or singing. You could even record it and send it along to relatives who live out-of-town.

- » If you aren’t able to see loved ones in person as much as you’d like, write letters and make cards to send to them.
- » Take a digital field trip. Since museums and national parks have been closed for the past several months, some have created opportunities to explore them online, such as The Louvre, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yellowstone National Park.
- » Make a time capsule. Put together a collection of memorable photos and items to bury in the backyard that you can dig up in years to come.

- » Spend a weekend camping in your backyard. Immersing yourself in nature benefits both your physical and mental health.
- » As a bonus to all this outdoor time, you'll save money on energy costs since you won't be home as much, and you can turn the air conditioner down, points out Zola Theodore, a Thrivent financial professional in Brooklyn, New York.

Eat Well

Eat healthy, save money and bond with your loved ones in the kitchen.

- » Fire up the grill for a barbecue night at home. Cook up some patties and links, then lay out all the toppings for a do-it-yourself "burger/hot dog bar."
- » Pack a picnic for your next family outing. "My kids love getting involved," Reder says. "It could just be cheese, crackers and a summer sausage, but packing that up and taking it somewhere makes it more fun for them."
- » That \$5 latte or \$10 salad may not seem like much, but over time it adds up. Make it a goal to brew your own coffee and pack a lunch during the workweek.
- » Fresh produce is at its peak in summer. Save money while supporting local businesses and farmers by shopping at your local farmers' market or signing up for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, where you pay a membership fee in exchange for fruits and veggies delivered weekly. Or if you want to flex your green thumb, start a garden in your backyard.
- » Cut back on the money spent going out for ice cream by making your own frosty treats at home (see right). ■

Taylor Hugo is a freelance writer in Colorado.

Photo by Dolphia Nandi/Stocksy

Beat the Heat

There's nothing like enjoying a refreshing treat on a hot day. With just a few simple ingredients, these homemade ice pops are delicious, healthy and easy to make.

Recipe by Karen Linden



Key Lime Ice Pops

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups Greek vanilla yogurt
- 3 Tbsp. bottled key lime juice
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 6 ice pop molds and craft sticks

Directions:

In medium bowl, whisk together yogurt, lime juices and zest. Divide the mixture between ice pop molds. Cover and insert craft stick. Freeze 4 hours or until firm.