

# 10 ADVENTURES YOU SHOULD BE PLANNING FOR THE SUMMER OF 2016

BY DANIELLE TAYLOR JUNE 1, 2016

## 1. Pick a different beach.



Photo: [John Goode](#)

Nothing's more stereotypically "summer" than a day spent lying on a towel at the beach, but there are plenty of ways you can kick your traditional seaside vacation up a few notches. Pick a different coastal destination than your old standby — like one from [this list](#) — and plan some offbeat excursions in addition to plenty of relaxing time in the sun.

Think somewhere less tourist-y, like Alabama. Gulf Shores has white-sand beaches, yes, but the area also hosts some really kickass concerts (The Wharf at Orange Beach brings Jimmy Buffett, Keith Urban, and Train, among others this summer) and serves as a base for excellent offshore fishing. If it rains, stay in at the Flora-Bama Bar drinking Bushwackers on the Alabama and Florida state line, or spend the afternoon learning how to captain cargo ships at the new GulfQuest Museum in Mobile. Not all beach experiences need to involve being lazy on a towel.

## 2. Check out a music festival — big or small.



Photo: Luke Addison



The summer of '16 has plenty of groove to go around. The big ones like Bonnaroo (June 9-12 this year in Manchester, TN) get lots of press, but plenty of other gatherings offer just as much fun.

Take FloydFest (July 27-31 in Floyd, VA), for example. Big names and undiscovered acts play provide the soundtrack for rafting trips on the nearby Little River, workshops on homesteading skills like beekeeping, medicinal herb walks, and other activities. Music festivals now are far, far more than what they used to be. For more ideas that are a little less mainstream, check out these [8 underground music festivals](#) — while they're still underground.

### 3. Go on a national parks road trip.



Photo: [Brandon Satterwhite](#)

The US National Park Service celebrates its 100th anniversary on August 25, 2016, but the agency is making its centennial a yearlong celebration — which means this is probably the best summer ever for a national parks adventure. And by best, we mean *free*. Only 127 of the 411 NPS sites charge an entrance fee, but even these will be waived on the 16 fee-free days this year.

Your options? Sled down the 275 square miles of snow-white dunes at White Sands National Monument in southern New Mexico. Snorkel along the 225-yard-long underwater trail in US Virgin Islands National Park.

Climb to the top of Cadillac Mountain in Maine's Acadia National Park to see one of the first glimpses of the sunrise in the country. Hike beneath the world's largest trees in California's Sequoia National Park. Pack your [Chacos](#) and head from a dusty hike to a kayak launch to après-adventure beers at the bar.

## 4. Hit the Summer Olympics in Rio.



Photo: [Alexander Martins Rodrigues](#)

Wanna get the heck out of Dodge in exchange for the summer of a lifetime? Head south to Brazil for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, held August 5-21 in Rio de Janeiro, to watch the world's greatest athletes compete for glory in track and field, gymnastics, aquatics, volleyball, weightlifting, and lots more (and you can try to get on TV to boot). While you're in the area, visit the Amazon River Basin, the [Pantanal](#), Iguazu Falls, or the Chapada Diamantina for some of the world's most spectacular natural attractions.

## 5. Exchange your local swimming pool for a swimming hole.





Photo: [Kevin Muncie](#)

When the weather's hot, a pool sounds good, but that's so...normal. A better way to cool down is to let yourself fly from a rope swing and splash into the water below. Havasu Falls at the bottom of the Grand Canyon gets photographer cred as one of the most picturesque swimming holes one could imagine, but you'll have to work for it: The blue pool complete with waterfalls can only be accessed after a hot and dusty 10-mile hike or pack mule ride (or an expensive helicopter trip).

But others, like Hamilton Pool an hour west of Austin, TX, give your eyes just as much to soak in as your body. Check in advance for off-peak times to avoid the crowds.

## **6. Sign up for grownup summer camp.**



Photo: Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Visitors Bureau

If some of your happiest childhood memories came from summer camp, you're in luck — they can be relived without all that pre-teen angst and phone calls from mom and dad. Several camps across the country have been created just for adults, which means you can still enjoy the kickball games, ropes courses, and bonfires you loved as a child — plus the snack bar now serves alcohol.

Options range from Camp Grounded (with sessions in North Carolina, Texas, New York, and California), which allows you to totally disconnect from the digital world, to Adult Space Academy (in Huntsville, Alabama), which is exactly what it sounds like: Space Camp for grownups.

## **7. Thru-hike one of America's trails — or at least spend a weekend.**





Photo: [Miguel Vieira](#)

A day hike can be rejuvenating, but a longer trek can really clear your head. Consider taking a multi-day walk on the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide Trail, North Country Trail, or another extended system near you. You don't have to be hard core about it — even a day or two spent with Mother Nature and the pack on your back will provide a kickstart both mentally and physically. And we all need some time away from our cell phones.

## **8. Get on the water in a new way.**



Photo: Bill Reynolds

Another option when the weather gets hot is to spend a day on the river, whether on flatwater in a canoe or kayak, on whitewater in a raft, on a slow-flow stream in a tube, or on a stand-up paddleboard. Most medium-to-large rivers nationwide have a variety of outdoor outfitters sprinkled on their shores, and you can rent your own watercraft for the day or take part in a guided trip.

And the kicker is, you don't really have an excuse — most people live within driving distance of some kind of river adventure. Paddle down the New or Gauley Rivers in central West Virginia. Float down the Salt near Phoenix, AZ. Get on the Snoqualmie in Washington. Even if it's on a tube with a drink in hand, it still counts.

## 9. Get your hands dirty on an organic farm.

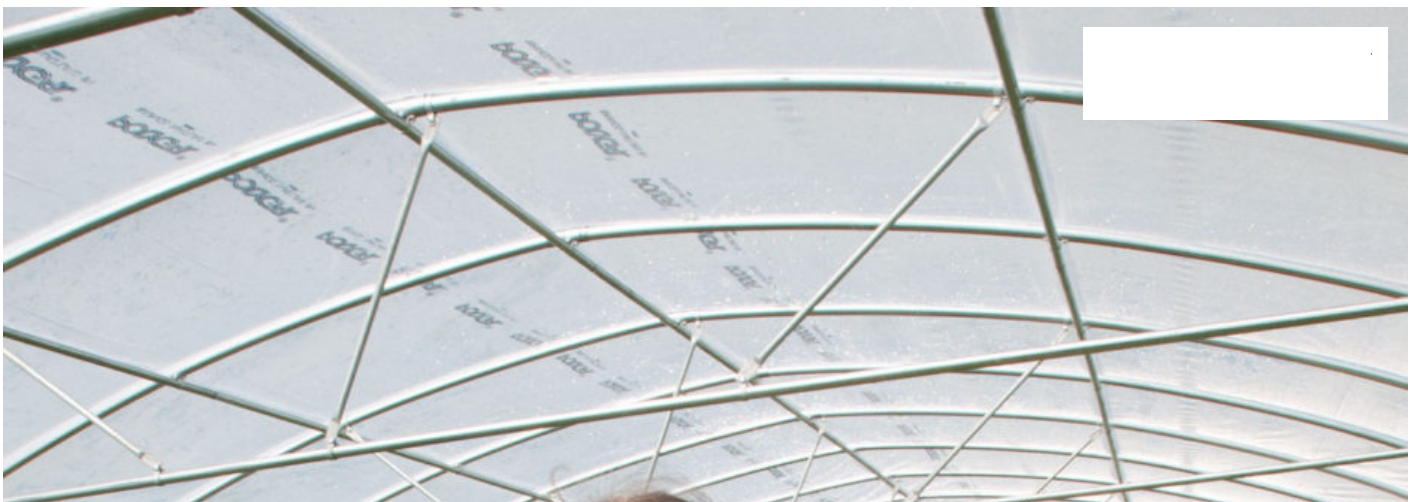






Photo: US Department of Agriculture

Two of the biggest expenses on an adventure tend to be lodging and food, and you can get both of those for free by pitching in at a WWOOF farm. WWOOF, World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms, connects organic farmers with willing volunteers, and the program offers a great opportunity for travelers looking to combine service with their adventure.

Generally, WWOOF farmers ask for half a day of help on their farm in exchange for that day's room and board, but many allow you to rack up hours so you can have more days off in a row while still having earned your bed and meals. You can find WWOOFing opportunities all over the world, and many farmers are willing to work with your travel schedule.

## 10. Catch your dinner — and eat it, too.



Photo: [Dave Doe](#)

Blue crabs reign supreme in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, and crawfish take the cake on the Gulf Coast. In many parts of the US, you can enjoy the regional culinary specialties by catching them yourself. In Maine, take a lobster boat trip and help haul in your own crustaceans. The Great Lakes are home to countless varieties of fish, and you won't know just how delicious they can be until you've worked for it.

After you've amassed your daily catch, host a crab picking, crawfish boil, lobster bake, fish fry, or whatever's appropriate, and enjoy a meal made possible by your labor — and an authentic taste of your destination. 🍷