

## Budget-Friendly Summer Fun

The temperature outside is climbing, kids are out of school and the family needs something fun to do! However, keeping everyone entertained can put a strain on your wallet. Water park excursions, grill-outs and Fourth of July parties can all add up to an expensive summer! Here are a few ideas to keep your budget from exploding like fireworks this summer:

**Create a spending plan.** As with any budget, creating a plan for how you will spend your money and when is critical to enjoying a cost-effective summer. One method is to allot each child a specific amount of “fun money” for each week. The kids will learn good financial habits by determining how they will spend their portion. A spending plan also helps reduce spontaneous purchases that can add up throughout the summer. For example, planning meals for the week can prevent the potential cost incurred by ordering pizza or fast food as a last-minute dinner.

**Create your own summer camp.** Get the neighborhood families together to create a mini-summer camp for the kids. The adults can rotate taking the kids out to do something fun once per week, whether it’s a visit to the park or the library. Choose a couple of free activities and a couple of activities at a reasonable cost like a water park or the science museum.

**Research budget-friendly activities.** Many towns and cities in Wisconsin offer inexpensive or free activities during the summer. Your city’s Chamber of Commerce or Travel & Visitors Bureau will have a full list of movie theater specials, park activities, zoo schedules and outdoor concerts. Many local libraries also have free reading sessions for kids on weekdays during the summer, which can be a nice break from the heat if the rest of your time is spent outdoors.

**Have potluck celebrations.** Throwing summertime parties can get expensive very quickly, especially if you’re getting food catered or hosting at a restaurant. To keep costs under control, organize potluck dinners so each attendee only has to bring one item to share.

With a little research, careful planning and some creativity, you can have an exciting and enjoyable summer without squeezing your budget!



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