

The Top Ten Things to do With Your Kids in Bozeman This Summer

I can still hear the whine of my four-year-old daughter's pained voice as she complained to me one rainy afternoon that she had nothing to do. However, my highly dramatic daughter's attempt to express her boredom came out, "Mommy, I'm *boring!*"

I stifled a guffaw and the ensuing, "Ellie, believe me, you're anything *but* boring!" and went on to suggest an art project to occupy her.

Before *your* child utters those dreaded three words this summer, *Mom, I'm bored...* secure this list to your refrigerator and prepare to have some fun. So, what is there to do for families with children here in Bozeman? Let's take a look.

Take a hike

All you have to do is flip through the book *Day Hikes Around Bozeman* (Robert Stone, Day Hike Books, Inc.) to find a plethora of hiking trails for all ages and capability levels. Even if you'd like to avoid excessive driving times, there are fourteen walking trails *right in Bozeman* detailed in the book. Lynn and Chris Chase of Belgrade have made a habit out of visiting their favorite in town hiking spot each Monday evening for a walk and a pic-nic dinner together with their children, ages 9, 7 and 2, and are still able to make it home before bed time.

Take a Dip

With five swimming pools open to the public (not to mention beautiful Chico Hot Springs in Paradise Valley) it's time to reunite yourself with your swimsuit and make a splash! Our local swimming spots offer special amenities such as swim classes for all ages, play equipment for kids both young and old, and water temperatures to suite the masses. Public swimming pools include: Bogert Park (outdoor), The Swim Center at Bozeman High School, Lone Mountain Gymnastics, The Ridge Athletic Club and Bozeman Hot springs (indoor and outdoor pools).

Learn, baby learn

There is no shortage of learning opportunities for kids of all ages in the Gallatin Valley. While slightly different from the Winter months, the Bozeman Public Library offers a rotating schedule of events as does the Museum of the Rockies and the Bozeman Children's Museum. MOSS (Montana Outdoor Science School) offers classes and day camps for your burgeoning researcher and The Equinox Theater boasts a summer camp for kids in grades 3-8. If your child seeks athletic enrichment, consider enrolling her in swim lessons, dance or martial arts classes, a soccer or tee-ball team. For information on sporting activities offered through the Bozeman Recreation and Parks office, visit: www.infoboze.com/#Sports.

Support Your Local Farmers and Artisans

For the 29th year in a row, the Gallatin County Fairgrounds will host a Saturday morning farmer's market from 9am - noon. While perusing the gorgeous produce and arts and crafts for sale, you can stroll the isles snacking on delicious fresh baked goods and visit with the handful of friends and neighbors you are sure to see there. On Tuesday evenings, be sure to take in the Bogert Farmer's Market between 5 and 8pm. While slightly smaller than the Gallatin County Farmer's Market, the weekly gathering at Bogert has it's own special flair and is not to be missed!

Take in a Festival

Between the Sweet Pea Festival, Hatch Fest, and Music on Main, Bozemanites have a lot of summertime festivity to look forward to. If you're willing to expand your horizons a little, don't forget about the Big Sky Art Festival, Teton Village Summer Festival and the Grand Targhee Bluegrass Festivals, just a hop skip and a jump away. †

Pick a Park, Pack a Pic-Nic

With more than 25 public parks in the greater Bozeman/Belgrade area there's sure to be one in your neck o' the woods waiting for you, your pic-nic blanket and a basket full of PB& J's. For a list of Bozeman parks and reservation information, visit: www.infoboze.com/reservations.html

Splish Splash of a Different Sort

If you didn't make it to the new splash park at Belgrade's Lewis & Clark Park last year...put it at the top of your list! Kids of all ages enjoy running through the jets of water, shooting the water "cannons" and congregating under the two-story high water buckets that dump their contents without warning. The splash park is the perfect place to spend a summer afternoon.

Hit the Beach

"What? The beach?" you say. Yep, you got it. At the 82 acre East Gallatin State Recreation Area you can take a dip in the lake, soak up the sun on the beach, and go for a stroll on the surrounding walking trails. Adjacent covered pic-nic areas can be reserved for large gatherings by calling: 582-3200, or visiting: www.infoboze.com/Bozeman_Parks

Sip & Slurp

Anyone familiar with Bozeman knows we have an awesome array of coffee houses and ice cream shops. Several locations offer "kiddie corners" with toys and books to occupy tots while mom and dad sip their joe. To cool off, visit one of our four ice cream joints where everyone in the group can find their favorite flavor. †

Lunch on the Lawn

Every Wednesday during the months of July and August from 11:30 – 1:30, you can look forward to enjoying music in the play field adjacent to the Emerson Cultural Center for the Arts while noshing on your sack lunch. With a rotating schedule of bands, the entertainment is both live and lively and the toddlers in attendance are known to burn off some energy dancing to the beat!

So whether you live here, or love to vacation here, there is an abundance of activity awaiting you and your family this summer. And the next time you hear those famous three words from one of your charges, close your eyes, point to this list and prepare to set off on an adventure.

† For information on the aforementioned festivals, visit: www.sweetpeafestival.org, www.hatchfest.com, www.jacksonhole.net/events and www.grandtarghee.com/summer/music-festivals, www.bigskyarts.org

‡ For kid-friendly coffee shops, check out: Leaf and Bean locations on Main St. and N. 19th, Wild Joes Coffee on Main, and Rockford Coffee on the corner of 7th and Main. Ice cream shops include: Baskin & Robins, Bridger Ridge, Moo Casa and Cold Stone Creamery.