

Welcome to

# summer camp

Put the tech and the gadgets away and get outside for the summer

**N**ature has so much to offer. So summer holidays are the perfect time to head outside to appreciate it all. Be inspired by these (mostly free!) ideas for fun – for children of all ages.

We've enlisted the help of Jane Worroll, co-author of *A Year of Forest School* (Watkins), who shares her favourite 'back to nature' activities, from wild-fruit foraging and camp-stove cooking to sleeping under the stars. Summer camp: here we come!

## REAP THE REWARDS

Spending time in the open air benefits children in so many ways...

- Greater strength and agility from climbing and running around on uneven terrain.
- Better sleep from playing outside in the fresh air.
- The sunshine-boosted essential vitamin D levels (sunscreen is still vital – for both adults and children).
- A deeper connection to the world around you, which in turn brings increased confidence and higher self-esteem.





## PROJECT HAVE A (MASKED) BALL

Let imaginations run riot creating masks made from nature's materials. Fallen bark is brilliant as you can find so many different colours, textures and patterns. 'Shed bark causes no damage to trees, while picking flowers means plants have to divert essential energy into repair, which is why we should leave those alone,' says Jane. Provide soft card templates, scissors for cutting out eye holes, PVA glue to stick on the scavenged finds and string to fasten the finished mask. This project will provide hours of fun, way beyond the actual making of the mask!

**Safety first** Do not allow young children to use scissors themselves.

## ACTIVITY CARRY ON CAMPING

What could be more exciting than a night under the stars? When the weather allows, letting older children camp in a secure garden is a win-win treat: low on hassle (compared to a camping trip), big on adventure. And if you have younger children who want to camp, why not join them in the tent? It's fun for everyone!

### ESSENTIAL KIT

- ☐ A tent. If you don't have one, ask around and borrow one.
- ☐ A torch. Rechargeable or wind-up ones mean you won't need to worry about batteries.
- ☐ Sleeping bags. Tesco kids' sleeping bags start at £12 and are machine washable too.
- ☐ Insulated foam camping mats. They provide more comfort than simply sleeping on hard ground.



## PROJECT GO THE WHOLE 'HOG'

Voted Britain's favourite wild animal, hedgehogs are sadly on the endangered species list – but we can help. Create a 'hedgehog house'. Hedgehogs make nests in compost heaps, piles of leaves or behind log stacks, so ask children to collect suitable materials. Team up with neighbours to create small holes in fences to form a 'hedgehog highway' so they can roam. Find out more at [hedgehogstreet.org](http://hedgehogstreet.org).

## GAME X MARKS THE SPOT

It matters less what the treasure is, more that a hunt gives children the chance to explore, use their brains and work as a team. Try giving older children printed maps to let them work out the treasure spots. Younger children might be more suited to a scavenger hunt where they are challenged to find a list of items from nature without clues or a time limit. Find lots of printable scavenger hunts on Pinterest.

## ACTIVITY WONDERFUL WOODS

Woodlands make the best playgrounds, so log on to [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk) to find woods close to you, download free activity sheets and find out about local events. Children can join the Woodland Trust's Nature Detectives club, where for just £1.50 a month they receive an activity folder, stickers and a membership card, plus new activity packs every season. It'll give your kids lots of excitement about going to the woods, while you'll also be supporting a charity that campaigns to protect our country's woods, ancient woodland and wildlife for generations to come.



## ACTIVITY FORAGING

No, foraging isn't just for trendy chefs and foodies, it's also a brilliant adventure for kids. Even a seemingly unpromising open space might hide sweet wild strawberries that can be turned into a smoothie or jam, or juicy blackberries, ripe for a crumble (see recipe, right). 'Not only does collecting wild food develop children's awareness of plants and how they change through the seasons, it also increases their sense of self-reliance and confidence, and collecting food together and sharing creates a sense of belonging,' says Jane.

### SAFETY FIRST

- Always supervise children when foraging.
- Do your research and choose a public space where foraging is permitted (see last tip).
- Only pick what you know is 100% safe to eat.
- Never pick from a rare or

endangered plant – select plentiful species.

- Only pick a little and leave plenty for wildlife.
- Be careful not to damage any of the surrounding habitat.
- Wash your foraged food thoroughly before eating.
- For more advice on foraging, including information on spaces where foraging is permitted, visit [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk).

## CAMPFIRE BLACKBERRY & PLUM CRUMBLE

Place peeled, stoned and chopped **plums** (foraged or store bought) and foraged washed **blackberries** in a pan over a camp stove. Add **sugar** or **honey** to sweeten and let the fruit stew for 15 mins until soft. Turn off the flame and divide the fruit into cups or mugs. Let children crush **digestive biscuits** over the fruit to make the 'crumble', then top with **Greek yogurt** and tuck in!

### GET INVOLVED

*All these activities are suitable for a wide age range, from pre-school to children up to about 12, with a different level of adult guidance needed for different ages.*



## ACTIVITY WHAT'S COOKING?

Hot chocolate tastes even better when you make and drink it outdoors!

### HAZELNUT HOT CHOCOLATE

Heat **whole milk** in a pan until it starts to bubble (grown-ups should do this), then take off the heat and stir in squares of **chocolate** and a little **hazelnut chocolate spread** until it melts. Divide between mugs and top with **lighter real dairy spray cream**.

**Safety first** Supervise camp stove cooking at all times and do not allow young children to take the lead.

## WIN!

If these ideas inspire you, find lots more back-to-nature fun for kids for every season with *A Year of Forest School*, by Jane Worroll and Peter Houghton, £12.99. We have 25 copies to give away. For your chance to win one, visit [tes.co/forestschoolorwin](http://tes.co/forestschoolorwin) by 23.55 on 31 August.



The prize draw is open to UK residents aged 18+. Normal exclusions apply. Closing date 23:55 on 31 August 2018. Only one entry per household. 25 winners randomly drawn. Prize is one copy of *A Year of Forest School* book. Promoter: Tesco Stores Limited, Tesco House, Shire Park, Kestrel Way, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 1GA. Please read the full terms and conditions online at [tes.co/forestschoolorwin](http://tes.co/forestschoolorwin) before entering.

