

Interesting Ways to Spend the Summer Holidays

As a teacher I am extremely fortunate, as I can spend the whole of the holiday with my child. However, as lucky as I am, the holidays can be an expensive time if you are looking for interesting ways to spend six whole weeks!

Like most people with young children I am on a budget, one that I am likely to exceed over the coming weeks, so in order to combat this I have decided to research how we might spend those precious days, to maximise the fun and minimise the cost!

There are many free activities around the country. A simple Google search will enable you to search in a particular area or for a specific activity. Other websites such as www.enjoyengland.com are a fountain of information. You can search for 60 minute, day, or even week activities, accommodation, tickets for events, and tips on walks and places to visit. There is even a section on myths and legends, which sounds very exciting!

If you're thinking on a more local scale then your local country park is a good place to start. They often provide services for charitable donations, especially during school holidays. Weald Country Park in Essex has Ranger services for children and adults. I took my little one to Thorndon Country Park in Brentwood, Essex where, for free, he marvelled at deer and rabbits. Another great place to visit for free wildlife is Hangingfield Reservoir, Essex, where there is an abundance of geese and ducks, not to mention a rather nice cafe on the edge of the water. Valentine's Park in Ilford, Essex is another beautiful place to visit, with fantastic views, gardens, ponds and wildlife. Feeding squirrels with monkey nuts was for us a highlight of the day.

The RSPB website, <http://www.rspb.org.uk/> has a list of reserves that you can take the children to and tips on what to do in the area surrounding the reserve and what to look for when you're there. Even at two years old, I managed to keep my son entertained for a good couple of hours, walking and watching birds. Children really enjoy seeing wildlife and the best thing is it's free!

A great weekend tradition for us is visiting a farmers market. Stall holders are often more than happy to explain the process of making their products to a willing audience and keep your children captivated offering them tasters of fabulous cakes, pies and cheeses, whilst you do some shopping! Why not combine your visit with a picnic afterwards to enjoy your purchases?

I think the most important thing to emphasise is to do a little bit of planning. I don't intend to have a minute by minute itinerary, but a few minutes on the net and a brief outline of what you would like to do over the holiday can be a real asset. My husband and I spend an hour or so after bedtime researching the kind of places we would like to visit. We write the postcodes and details down, pack a picnic and the SAT NAV and we are all set!

After your holiday, why not write about it and submit your articles to magazines? But before you submit anything, have it [proofread by experts](#) at Words Worth Reading Ltd.