

wild summer

HANDBOOK





Win a Wild Summer



Join us for a Wild Summer

Full of wild camping, wild swimming, canoe adventures, hidden beaches, woodlands, foraging, wildlife wonders, and exploring lost ruins.

Win some incredible prizes from our friends in our summer sweepstake ...

- A short break for 4 in the Knightstone Safari Tent courtesy of Classic Glamping
- An adult swing chair from Cacoon
- A travel hammock from Hammock Heaven
- SueMe® Beech trunks or shorties and two t-shirts from Kit Shack
- A hammock, tarp & accessories from UK Hammocks
- A picnic hamper from Higgidy
- An EzyStove from Wild Stoves
- £100 worth of Wild Things books

Closes on Friday 4th September 2015

Click here to enter the prize give-away

Try our Challenges

For more chances to win ...

To make summer even more fun we've compiled some of our favourite Wild Summer challenges in this handbook. Experience star-filled nights, foraging missions, boat trips and dips in secret lakes.

Share your wild summer photographs with us on:

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

To enter your wild summer photo simply include:

1. the hashtag #wildsummer
2. a link back to the competition page: bitly.com/1CNIG3B

and each week throughout the summer we'll pick our favourite #wildsummer pictures and award £100 book vouchers.

Enter your photos for more prizes





Wild Summer

CHALLENGES



Rivers, lakes and waterfalls

- Dance naked in the rain
- Take a moonlit swim
- Swing on a rope-swing
- Make a skipping stone bounce five times
- Make a raft and travel half a mile on it
- Skinny dip in a remote place
- Make a dam in a stream from stones, leaves and mud, and then knock it down again
- Follow a river from source to sea
- Walk behind a waterfall
- Go canoeing for the first time

Beach and Coastal Adventure

- Swim under a sea arch or into a sea cave
- Swim through a sea kelp forest
- Skinny dip from a secret beach at sunset
- Catch a crab
- Build a sand sculpture
- Have a mud fight or build a mud slide
- Build a den from driftwood
- Jump into the sea from at least 4 foot (only if its safe!)



Trees and Climbing

- Make a rope-swing
- Climb a tree with a friend and share a secret
- Identify a bird from its song
- Spot a bird of prey
- Listen to the dawn chorus
- Go bouldering or scrambling

Campfires, growing and Foraging

- Make a campfire and leave no trace
- Cook a campfire cake or pie in a tin
- Make dough twists
- Pick berries from a Pick Your Own
- Make wild mint tea
- Make nettle soup
- Plant some windowsill herbs

Dens and Wild Camping

- Build a den that can keep out the rain
- Camp out on a week night
- Sleep in a bivvy bag in the woods
- Hook up a hammock and sleep under the trees
- Watch the sunset from a hilltop
- Go for a night walk under the moon
- Sing to the man in the moon
- Climb your highest mountain or favourite peak

Natural and Wild life Wonders

- Collect 10 different bugs in a jar
- Press some flowers and make a card
- Make a metre long daisy chain (or more)

- Make a natural collage from found objects
- Write a message in a bottle
- Collect leaves from 10 different trees
- Photograph a butterfly

Walking and Wondering

- Go barefoot for a day
- Learn a constellation
- Try geocaching
- Watch a film outdoors
- Roll down a hill



Lost Ruins and the Mysterious

- Climb an ancient hillfort
- Visit a ruined chapel or church at night
- Dance around a stone circle at dawn
- Explore a cave, cavern or grotto
- Discover a labyrinth or mizmaze

For more chances to win

...share your wild summer photographs. Simply link back to the Wild Summer Give-Away using the hashtag #wildsummer. Each week we'll pick our favourite #wildsummer pictures and award £100 book vouchers.



Water ADVENTURES

Secret coves and caves await the adventurous, while precipitous cliffs and rugged coastal paths offer a challenge that rewards and invigorates in equal measure. Equally, the beautiful, natural waterways that shape our verdant landscape offer wonderful wild corridors that are ideal for swimming, canoeing, fishing and embracing a slower pace of life.

River walking

Walking is one of the best ways to explore rivers, so head to a shallow, rocky river with friends. You can either walk barefoot or even better wear light plimsolls to protect your feet and always tread carefully. A low current means you can easily walk up the river but make sure not to lose sight of one another.

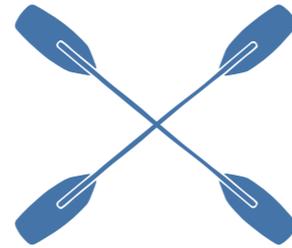
You can discover hundreds of wild swimming adventures with our books

Tree swing

Make a tree swing for plunging into the deep, cool waters of the river. If you come across one it usually indicates a popular swimming spot. Find a tree with plenty of space around it for you to swing from, and with a branch that supports your weight and is fairly easy to get to. Tie a thick piece of rope around a branch – make sure it's wide and not rotting – and secure with a knot.

Canoe camping

Everyone has a right to canoe on tidal waters, so if you're a beginner head for sheltered estuaries and creeks. The safest are 'sit-on-tops' made of hard plastic, which are unsinkable and self-draining. Inflatable canoes are the easiest to transport, but don't use them if you plan to venture far from the shore. Travel the river by canoe and camp over night with more swimming first thing in the morning.



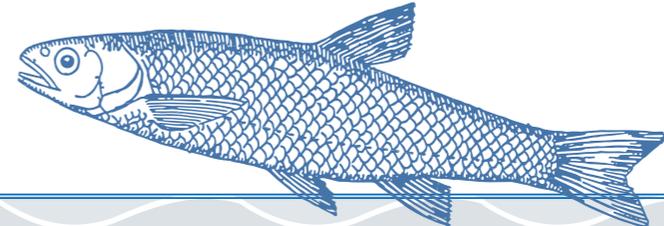
A cold swim can boost your immune system, soothe aching muscles and relieve depression.

Raft building

There are many ways to build a raft. Wear a lifejacket as you might not be able to make it to the shore if your raft breaks up. A barrel raft uses polystyrene or plastic barrels to float. The longer the raft, the faster it will go and the more difficult it will be to steer. Use a frame to attach four barrels, one on each corner, and secure tightly with rope. Similarly, an inner tube raft can be constructed by using several inner tubes from truck tyres tied to the bottom of a sheet of plywood. Afterwards be sure to dismantle and recycle all its parts.

RIVERSIDE SAUNA

The pleasures of cold water plunges can be heightened by getting hot in a riverside sauna first. Creating a temporary, natural sauna involves filling an impromptu tent with the steam generated from hot rocks.



Trees and CLIMBING

Trees are the oldest living organisms and our ancient forests are remnants of the pre-mordial wild woods that once covered the UK. Making your way into new leafy heights and imagining their history is a thrilling experience. Build a den, set up a rope swing or hide in a hollow trunk. Practice your climbing and set up lookouts across the forest, or buy a hammock tent and sleep out in the canopy.



Best tree to climb?

The 45 foot high Nootka Cypress evergreen at Wallington Northumberland, was named the best tree to climb by The National Trust, thanks to its trunk height and branches, and smooth bark – which is ideal for micro adventures.



Learn more in our Wild Guide



Old Knobbley

Furze Hill Wood, Essex

Great for climbing, this contorted 800-year-old oak is thought to be England's oldest and has a girth that measures almost 10m. Hunted witches once hid inside its hollow trunk. More oaks and tree swings can be found here, plus a lake.

Park at Mistley Football Club (Shrubland Road, CO11 1HS). Walk south west across football pitches (in the far right hand corner) to find a path into the wood (to the left of a split oak). After 100m bear right to see Old Knobbley ahead.
10 mins, 51.9383, 1.0813

Campfires and FORAGING



When the working day ends jump on a train, take to the hills, cook your supper with the sunset and sleep out under the stars, lulled by hooting owls. Singing songs, watching the glowing embers while huddled in woollen blankets around the campfire is what it's all about. There can be something satisfying about cooking over an open fire – the smells, flavours and textures you don't find anywhere else.

Making a Campfire

If you're planning on finding wood at camp, be sure to stay away from fresh or green wood. It will just smoke and not burn. Look for smaller pieces of dried branches about as long as your arm. Bend the wood in half to make a tepee shape and light in the middle. Add kindling to help set the fire.

Tinfoil Cooking

Place heavy-duty foil on a flat surface and put your ingredients in the centre of the foil. Bring the short ends of the foil together and fold twice to seal; fold in the sides to seal, leaving room for the steam which cooks the food. Now add a second layer of foil, with looser folds.

Bringing foraged produce into the kitchen is a satisfying and wholesome feeling. A peaceful countryside wander on a sunny afternoon can provide you with goods to make your own scrumptious summer beverages. Think of lazy picnics, fresh picked fruit and homemade cordials.

Foraging



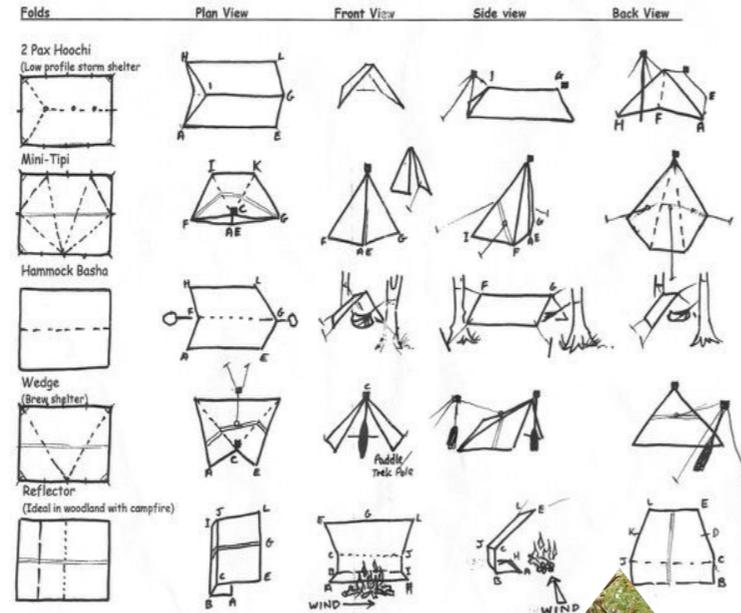
The most abundant treats, including mussels and line-caught mackerel, can be found at the beach - perfect when cooked up on a little driftwood fire! Search for samphire, pick young nettles for soup, or seek out elderflower for homemade Champagne. Indulge in soft fruit at a pick-your-own or gather your picnic supplies from one of the many farm stores or pop-up roadside stalls selling homegrown produce.

Dens and WILD CAMPING

Put your boots on, and retreat to the woods to enjoy a tranquil adventure with friends and family. Sit and listen to nature's sounds, clear the mind and gather friends around your outdoor den. If you want to get really close to nature, camping outside is the best way. When choosing a location, it's best to keep away from animal trails as you don't want deer wondering through your camp!

Build a den

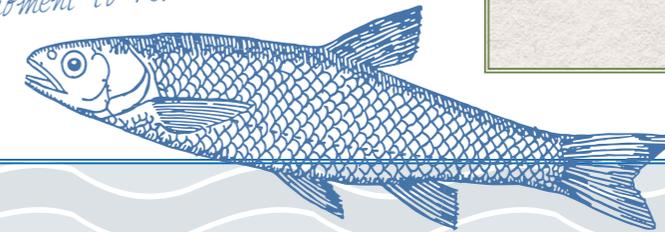
There is no greater adventure than wild camping – but you will need to be discreet, as technically it is only legal with the permission of the landowner. For the ultimate lightweight experience, invest in an adventure 'tarp' or a 'bivvy bag' which allows you to see the stars and is less likely to offend the early morning farmer. Most importantly, leave no trace. If you plan to sleep higher up – atop hills and downs – make sure you have enough layers, including a hat and a thermal mat to insulate you from the cold ground.



Our book *Wild Garden Weekends* recommends nearly 400 of the best secret gardens, wild flower meadows, kitchen garden cafes and the best places to spot birds, bees and butterflies

GATHER THE KIDS...

...and head outside for a magical summer walk. When the sunlight floods the landscape, or just starts to fade into dusk, and heat hangs in the air, take a moment to revel in the nature on our doorstep.



Wonderful Wildlife

To be surrounded by wild, unspoilt beauty, from clouds of butterflies to the uplifting sight of a falcon swooping overhead, is to be reminded of the power of nature. It can help to reconnect us and reawaken our sense of wonder.

The abundant sea-life in the water attracts many birds, including gannets, fulmars and puffins.

Look out for ponies and their foals on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor, grassland dotted with wild flowers, woodland glades alive with butterflies, and on warm summer evenings you might see glowworms, too!



Explore a LOST RUIN



There are so many relics of Britain's history to inspire us, from stone circles to lost villages, strange follies to wartime forts. Ruins offer adventure and romance, and transport us to another world and time. Wander around lost village settlements, visit ceremonial stone rows, and explore mysterious underground burial chambers.

Bronze Age, Prehistoric

(2,500 – 700 BC)

Stone circles

Over 900 stone circles still survive in England to this day. They were most likely built for tribal ritual ceremonies celebrating the seasons and fertility of the earth.



Roman

(AD 43 – AD 410)

From the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall to the lesser known villas and forts that once dotted the land, Britain has a surprisingly large amount of Roman ruins.

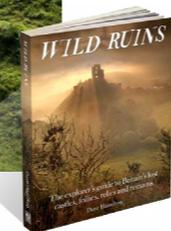


Iron Age

(700BC – AD 43)

Hill forts

These hilltop enclosures are the youngest of the prehistoric remains. They are defensive structures enclosing high places with rings of ditches and banks.



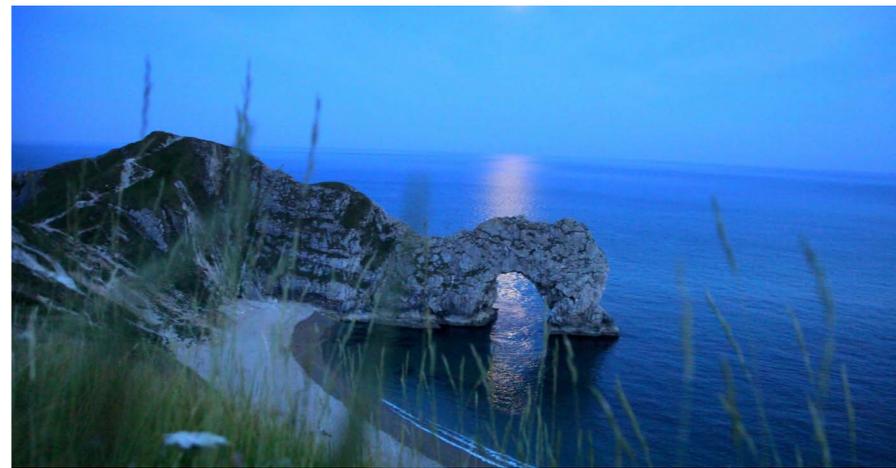
You can discover Britain's lost castles, follies relics and remains in Wild Ruins

Walking and WONDERING



Night Walks

Sharpen your nocturnal senses on a wildlife-rich twilight ramble because at night, the landscape shows its true character: familiar outlines blur, nightjars call and overhead the stars begin to shine.



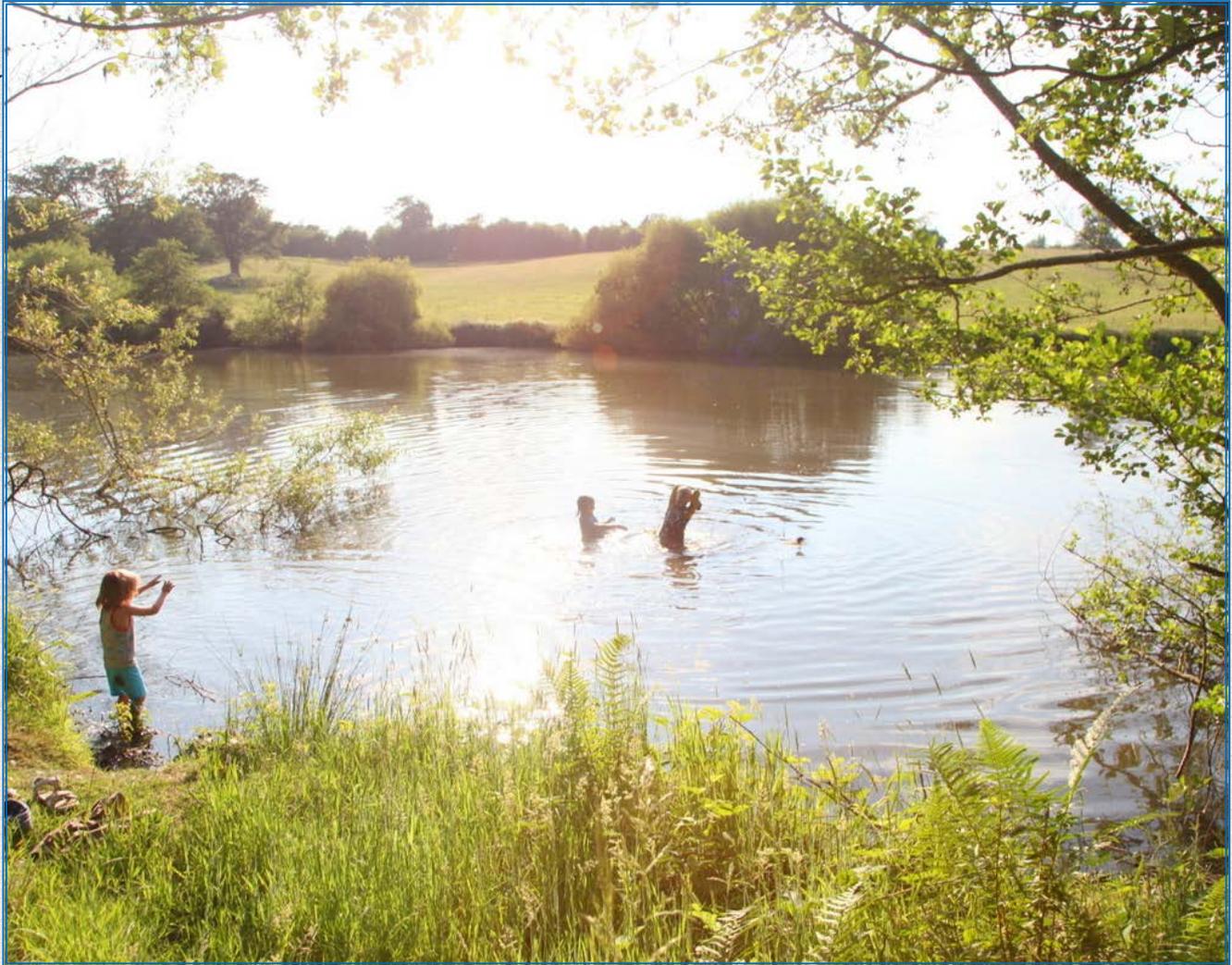
Take a jumper, woollen blanket and a torch and you're set! Nightwalking can prove a mysterious, thrilling adventure. If you start with a sea-side sunset and look out to sea, you might even see the 'green flash' that occurs in the last few seconds before the sun disappears.

Let your eyes adjust to the dark – this should take around 20 minutes and try not to use your torch. Start by taking slow, careful strides until you can just about make out your surroundings. Listen carefully to the noises around you. Who knows what creatures will be lurking in the dusk?

STAR SPOTTING

For thousands of years, humans have found meaning in stars. Constellations are images formed by groups of stars in the indigo sky, and their meanings have varied between cultures and eras. The stars of a constellation may look close together but in fact can be many light years apart.





compiled by Joelle Forrester, Hannah Hargrave and Tania Pascoe