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# READY, SET, ☺ SUMMER ☺

THE NO RESERVATIONS GUIDE  
TO YOUR BEST SUMMER EVER

Don't let fear, lack of planning, inability or  
inertia get in the way of seizing the moment  
and making the most of summer.



# GET ADVENTUROUS

It's time to get over yourself, stop making excuses and do something that scares you.



Most of us have one thing we've always thought about doing but have held off on *actually* doing for any number of reasons, though one huge reason is more than likely because the thought of actually going through with it scares off the proverbial pants. But many experts would argue that's precisely why you *should* do it. Aside from getting the feeling of being a total badass while you're out there dangling off a cliff or what have you, research has shown that taking physical risks has positive psychological effects. Engaging in adventure activities increases overall self-confidence and bolsters our ability to deal with the unforeseen situations we encounter in the course of an otherwise unremarkable day. It turns out that getting in touch with your inner extreme athlete is good for your constitution.

There are so many adventures to be had round these parts that trying to choose the right one to start with can induce anxiety in itself.

If you're not sure where to start, how about getting high (not *that* kind of high). Fear of heights is one of the most common phobias and, as such, nothing gets the adrenaline pumping like getting a bird's-eye view, such as the one from the via ferrata adventures at Mount Norquay ski resort, just up from the town of Banff.

Norquay debuted via ferrata — a style of guided alpine climbing that uses secured hand-holds, ropes and suspension bridges — in 2014. Last summer the resort added two new routes to the program, building upon the 2.5-hour adventure and the four-hour adventure with five- and six-hour tours.

Via ferrata adventures at Norquay start with a ride up the sightseeing chair lift to a staging area near the Cliffhouse Bistro, the historic eatery perched at just below 7,000 feet. (It's a popular gathering spot for post-via ferrata celebration beverages and the six-hour tour includes a packed lunch and Cliffhouse après.) Those who are *really* nervous about heights (like almost didn't ride the chair lift nervous) can opt for the 2.5-hour Explorer tour, which includes walking across a suspension bridge but doesn't go to the summit, unlike the four-hour Ridgewalker route. The five- and six-hour routes are slightly more technically challenging, and, by virtue of their length, more physically demanding.

All tours are led by Association of Canadian Mountain Guides-certified guides, whose skill set includes getting Calgary-based day trippers to release their white-knuckled grip on the suspension bridge ropes and take that crucial first step. —S.A.

For more information on via ferrata at Norquay visit [banffnorquay.com](http://banffnorquay.com)





# 3 MORE WAYS TO SCARE YOURSELF THIS SUMMER

## Get on the Rocks

Rock-climbing offers the kind of personal and physical challenge that fuses precision moves with pure adrenaline. Mountain Skills Academy & Adventures offers a two-day course in Canmore to get you on the rocks. No prerequisite skills are required outside of a generally good level of fitness. [mountainskillsacademy.com](http://mountainskillsacademy.com)

## Go Solo in a Cave

If heights ain't no thing to you, then perhaps your fear factor involves going underground. Canmore Cave Tours' Solitude adventure allows you up to four hours alone in a cave below the earth (with a guide) where you can really see what you're made of. [canmorecavetours.com](http://canmorecavetours.com)

## Walk with Wolves

Perhaps the thought of coming face to face with a real-live wolf makes the hairs on the back of your neck prick up. You can walk with the wolves (just don't dance with them) at the Northern Lights Wolf Centre, a wolf sanctuary in Golden, B.C. —S.A. [northernlightswildlife.com](http://northernlightswildlife.com)

TOP Mountain Skills Academy rock-climbing.  
MIDDLE Canmore Cave Tours.  
BOTTOM Northern Lights Wolf Centre.





Calgary Folk Music Festival  
at Prince's Island Park.

There's much ado about the abbreviated summer season here in Calgary, but what people forget is what this latitude-endowed city lacks in the number of summer days it makes up for in the number of hours in those days. The first two and a half weeks in July see day lengths (the amount of time between sunrise and sunset) of over 16 hours. And if you include "civil twilight" (the time when the sun is just below the horizon so there's usually enough natural light to do outdoor activities) you get about 17-and-a-half hours. Even Labour Day, the spiritual end of summer, which falls this year on Sept. 3, will log just under 13-and-a-half hours of daylight before sunset at 8:17 p.m. The best thing about having daylight until 9 p.m. is that a world of possibility opens up in the way of evening recreation. Ever heard the saying "there are not enough hours in the day?" Calgary's summer days offer the opposite. With that in mind, here are five things you can do to make the most of it.

### Go for an Evening Swim

Most of the outdoor pools in the city stay open until 7 or 8 p.m. during July and August so an after-work swim is totally doable. One of the best things about evening swimming? No crowds (all the wee kiddies have gone home for din-din by then), which means lots of free lounge chairs and less chance of getting bopped on the head with a pool noodle (at least by a stranger). All the city's outdoor pools have their charms, but the South Calgary pool is particularly charming, with

a grove of trees along the south fence creating an urban-oasis effect. It's also just across the field from the Giuffrè Family branch of the Calgary Public Library, so you can pop in and check out some magazines if you need poolside reading material. Most of Calgary's outdoor pools are run by the Calgary Outdoor Swimming Pools Association (COSPA), so visit [calgaryoutdoorpools.ca](http://calgaryoutdoorpools.ca) if you're looking for schedules and other information.

### Take in the Super-touristy Parts of Banff National Park

There's a reason why natural attractions in Banff National Park such as Johnston Canyon, Moraine Lake and Lake Louise draw busloads of tourists during the summer months — they're amazing. What's not amazing is trying to take in the wonder of your surroundings amidst selfie-stick-bearing throngs. Rather than becoming jaded about going at all, just go later in the day. Time your arrival for around 6 p.m. and you'll still have two-to-three solid hours of daylight to enjoy your surroundings, but with ample room to breathe.

### Take Up Photography

Photographers refer to the time when the sun begins to lower in the sky as the "golden hour" or "magic hour." Technically speaking, having longer days doesn't mean a longer magic hour, but that said, the extended evenings of Calgary summers mean you can take your sweet time driving out to find beautiful things to capture. The mountains



## FOR THE EARLY BIRDS

Not only does Calgary have more sunshine in the summer evenings than many of our more southerly metropolitan peers (we're looking at you, Toronto), we also get a jump on the day in the a.m. In early July the sun rises here around 5:30 a.m. While getting up earlier to enjoy more of the sunlight is not everyone's idea of a summer well spent, if it's for you, here are some suggestions of ways to take advantage.

### Tee Off

Summer tee times can be hard to get at City and private golf courses, but early risers can benefit from being wide-eyed for the first tee-off of the day at 5:45 a.m. during the month of July at the Confederation Park, Maple Ridge and Shaganappi Point public golf courses, as well as at many private courses. Many courses offer early-bird rates as well.

### Watch the Other Early Birds

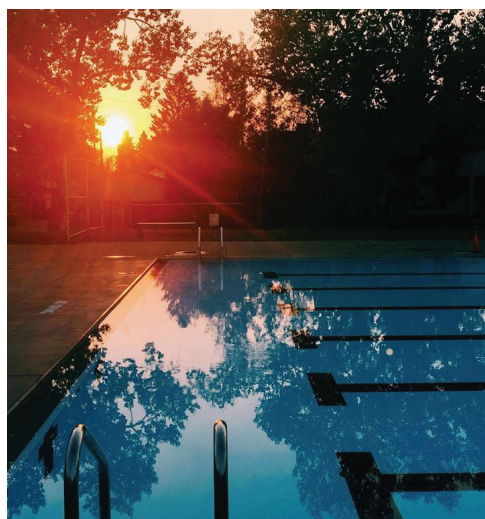
Add to your life list by heading out to City parks to see the literal early birds catching worms. Ralph Klein Park and the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary are both good spots to spot birds and other wildlife and open at 5 a.m. and sunrise, respectively.

### Beat the Breakfast Rush

Catch the proverbial worm by going for breakfast before the hordes arrive. Hotel restaurants are often the best bet for an early delicious breakfast and, fortunately, local hotels are really stepping it up these days. The Fairmont Palliser's Rimrock Dining Room Sunday brunch starts at 11:15 (and is so popular you should make reservations), but both buffet and à la carte menus for breakfast start daily at 6:30 a.m. Yellow Door Bistro at Hotel Arts also starts serving at 6:30 a.m. and offers an amazing buffet. Right on the Jack & Jean Leslie River Walk in East Village, the Simmons Building is a busy spot for lunch and dinner. But the Phil & Sebastian location there opens at 6:30 a.m. and has great offerings to-go or to-stay for breakfast. OEB's downtown location also opens for breakfast at 6:30 a.m. And at the west end of downtown, Alforno Bakery & Café opens at 7 a.m. — grab something delicious and take it for a breakfast picnic along the Bow before work. —K.L.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT  
Evening tennis at Haultain Park outdoor courts; OEB breakfast; Bowview outdoor pool.



are always a reliable source of photographic grandeur, but try heading east instead and opening your lens to the amazing lemon-yellow canola fields just beyond the city limits that take on an otherworldly glow in the evening sun. If you want to up your game beyond point-and-shoot, the Camera Store presents a monthly Intro to Photography seminar. Catch the next one on the evening of Thursday, July 26, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

### Tennis, Everyone!

You don't have to be part of a fancy private club to play tennis in Calgary. There are decent community courts in neighbourhoods throughout the city, providing myriad options for an evening game. The endless twilight means that even if you have to wait a half-hour or so for a court to open up, you'll still be able to get in a good rally before sundown. Ace your evening of tennis by heading to a patio for post-game gin and tonics — you can't do much better than the "Super Sonic" version served up at Joey Restaurants, which is enhanced with thirst-quenching

citrus slush. (And check out our patio guide at [AvenueCalgary.com/patios](http://AvenueCalgary.com/patios) for more après-tennis ideas.)

### Folkin' Eh

The Calgary Folk Music Festival, which runs for four days starting on the Thursday before the last weekend in July, has been around for 38 years now, and a big part of the reason for its longevity is that there's nothing quite so lovely as a peak-summer evening at Prince's Island Park. The tarpie set might insist that you have to get there early to stake your claim to stage-front real estate, but that's only one way to Folk Fest. The other is to show up in the late afternoon and meander the grounds, maybe catching a late-day set on one of the side stages and browsing the boho jewellery offerings in the market tents, before ordering up something from a food truck and taking it back with you into the beer gardens. There, you can down pitchers of sangria under the trees until it gets dark — that's when you'll know it's time to get off the island. —S.A.





LEFT Red Lodge Ropes Course near Bowden.  
BELOW Good Knights Entertainment near Three Hills; Canada 150 diorama at the Gopher Hole Museum of Torrington, Alberta; Fallentimber Meadery near Water Valley.



# DAY TRIPPERS

You don't have to go far from home to feel like you're a world away when you head to these destinations.

## Bowden

What do you think of when you think of fun? If you said “rope,” have we got the place for you! All kidding aside, the Red Lodge Ropes Course just over an hour’s drive north of Calgary near Bowden, is a climbing-adventure playground fit for groups large and small. The ground elements and low ropes can be booked in advance for team-building purposes. Or take on the high ropes. And fear not — certified challenge course practitioners are on hand to help you prepare for your time on the ropes. [redlodgeropescourse.com](http://redlodgeropescourse.com)

## Three Hills

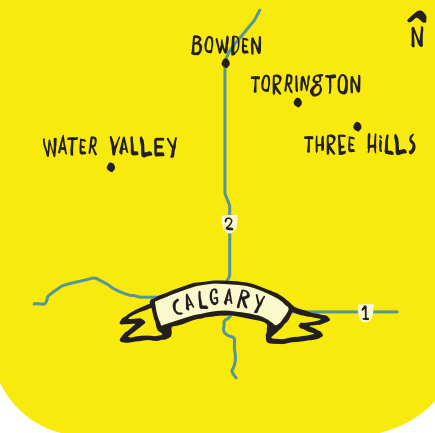
Just 10 km south of the town of Three Hills, Good Knights Entertainment offers deluxe immersive experiences to suit the swords-and-sorcery crowd. The Encampment, open May 18 to Sept. 4, offers a medieval glamping experience in canvas tents. Activities include sword-fighting demonstrations, supervised longbow archery and long-table medieval feasts. Tents aren’t your thing, you say? The newly opened underground accommodations, The Burrows, offer a hobbit home plucked straight from the pages of *The Lord of The Rings*. [goodknights.ca](http://goodknights.ca)

## Torrington

The Gopher Hole Museum of Torrington, Alberta, is that one attraction you keep hearing about, promise to make a point of seeing, and then never check out. Well, when you do make the drive, you’ll find a place out of time, where even the admission fee, (two dollars for adults, 50 cents for kids under 14) is part of the charm of this self-described “world-famous” destination. You may not know it, but dioramas of stuffed ground squirrels living out scenes of small-town life is something you need to experience, so gopher it! [gopherholemuseum.ca](http://gopherholemuseum.ca)

## Water Valley

Good things come in small packages, like the tiny Fallentimber Meadery near Water Valley. Open weekends from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the meadery and apiary offer tours and tastings for between \$10 and \$15, depending on how much you want to do. Tours take place at noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m., but they’re willing to set out at a different time if things happen to be quiet. (Repeat customers who bring their own Fallentimber glass get their tour fees waived.) Before you leave pick up some beeswax candles, honey or one of the many varieties of mead. *Meadjito*, anyone? —A.G. [fallentimbermeadery.ca](http://fallentimbermeadery.ca)



Ropes course photograph courtesy of Red Lodge Ropes Course; Good Knights Entertainment photograph by Grant Zelych; museum photograph courtesy of Gopher Hole Museum; Fallentimber Meadery photograph by Alex Ramadan





Oak & Olive Athertyn two-person **basket**, \$140; **blue blanket**, imported from Nicaragua, \$42; Ridley's Five-of-a-Kind **game**, \$25; Pocket Disc crochet **frisbee**, \$14 to \$20; DecoLite Starry **string lights**, \$11 to \$13.50; Bohemia Cotton Pom Pom **white blanket**, \$145; all from **28 Blankets**, 1317 9 Ave. S.E., 403-263-8088, 28blankets.com.

## PICNIC LIKE A PRO

Tyler Rygus and Cory Edwards are experts in the art of picnicking. As co-hosts of Calgary's Le Dîner en Blanc (a picnic soiree that originated in Paris and now runs in cities around the world) they have lots of tips for the many guests that take part in the event.

For Edwards, it's the little things that count. "[At Dîner en Blanc] a little bit of decoration goes a long way. When people think of a picnic, they think a basket and a blanket, but if you bring a little bit of decoration, it really sets it apart," says Edwards.

Rygus notes that the one piece of essential gear that picnickers most often overlook is something to carry all their items to their chosen spot.

Laura Rowsell, sales associate at 28 Blankets in Inglewood, suggests packing your picnic in a One Hundred 80 Degrees wicker picnic basket or a Bohemia Design beach bag, then adding battery powered LED Fairie Lites and a crocheted Pocket Disc or a selection of Ridley's games for stylish fun. —V.L.

## PICNIC PARTY

There are plenty of places for picnicking in the city. If you have something more extravagant in mind than a blanket on the grass, consider booking a picnic spot through Facility Bookings at the City of Calgary. The City has 49 bookable spaces in nine parks, and you can see which spots are open at [calgary.ca/liveandplay](http://calgary.ca/liveandplay). Booking cost depends on the number of guests — \$66.95 gets you a cool six hours for you and 24 of your closest friends (with the exception of popular Bowness Park, which clocks in at \$373.45 minimum at particular spots during peak season). Day of, all you need to bring is your permit, your picnic, fuel for a fire and, of course, relief that memories of frigid February are finally melting away. —V.L.

## THREE TOP PICNIC SPOTS

	PRINCE'S ISLAND PARK	BOWNESS PARK	STANLEY PARK
⚖ Bookable picnic spots	0 (no bookable picnic sites, but plenty of picnic tables)	8 (five with shelters; plus three additional non-booking sheltered spots)	2 (plus four other areas with picnic tables)
🍷 Barbecues	No	Yes	Yes
🚻 Washrooms	Yes	Yes	Yes
🎮 Entertainment	Shakespeare by the Bow ( <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> on until Aug. 19)	Canoe and paddle-boat rentals	Lawn bowling, tennis courts, baseball diamonds
👶 For the Kids	Playground, plus a wading park in nearby Eau Claire	Wading pool, playground, mini-train	Outdoor pool and wading pool





## GO RIVER SURFING

Adam Baranec is a Calgary river surfer. "I got into it because I needed something to satisfy my surf cravings while I was stuck in a land-locked city, but there's plenty of surfers in Calgary now that have never surfed in saltwater," Baranec says. "Physically, it's a little like surfing an ocean wave, except the ride lasts a lot longer and you're not actually moving. Kind of like snowboarding in good powder, especially if you're on a nice, clean wave face. The fact that the wave lasts forever is amazing. You can take your time and try a new move over and over, and the wave doesn't disappear on you. Mentally, it really clears my head. During a good session, when I'm really feeling like I'm in a rhythm, it can be almost meditative. And the community is amazing." —D.L.

Visit [albertariversurfing.com](http://albertariversurfing.com) for more information

**"THE FACT THAT THE WAVE LASTS FOREVER IS AMAZING. YOU CAN TAKE YOUR TIME AND TRY A NEW MOVE OVER AND OVER, AND THE WAVE DOESN'T DISAPPEAR ON YOU."**

**—ADAM BARANEC**



“PEOPLE NEED TO FIND SOLACE, WHICH IS WHY THEY GO HIKING AND WHY THEY DO THESE KIND OF THINGS.”

-NOLIN VEILLARD



## GO KAYAKING

Nolin Veillard is the founder and managing director of Trak Outdoors, an Airdrie-based company that makes Trak Kayaks, collapsible skin-on-frame sea kayaks perfect for travelling. Stow it in its carrying case and it will fit easily in your closet, car or as checked luggage.

“We live in very turbulent times,” Veillard says. “People need to find solace, which is why they go hiking and why they do these kind of things. One of the things that’s interesting about paddling and about water sports is that we as human beings are made up of between 55 and 75 per cent water, and so getting to water and being on the water and in the water brings us into alignment with our own nature. Sitting in a kayak — especially this kind of kayak which is a membrane skin on frame — when you’re sitting in the centre and your butt’s actually below the water line (which is different than canoeing), you’re very centred. You’ve got this left-right paddle stroke, you get in this rhythm, and it’s extremely therapeutic. I believe you really connect to the water in your body, to the water around you, and you feel the water through your calf muscles. You’re connected at a very intimate level to the water. It helps ground people from their busy, intense lives.” —K.L.

Trak Kayaks runs discovery days and skills progression training for new owners to learn kayaking skills and tips. Find out more at [trakkayaks.com](http://trakkayaks.com)

## GO SAILING

Debbie Kirkby is a 63-year-old competitive sailing racer who has won the Fireball Canadian National sailing competition five times since 1995, including last year, and also won the U.S. Nationals with Robert Levey last October. She learned to sail on the Glenmore Reservoir.

“Sailing a dinghy is like being in a sports car compared to sailing a big keelboat, which is like driving a Winnebago,” Kirkby says. “They’re small, they’re fast, they’re really manoeuvrable and they’re really thrilling to sail. When you’re in a race with a lot of other boats, it’s a chess match from start to finish. When you tack, where you position your boat in relation to the wind and where you’re going against all the other boats that are also making strategic decisions places you either in an advantaged or disadvantaged position. And then there are all the rules to keep everyone safe. So there’s a chess match, and the thrill of going fast, and the wind, and the waves, and the water and you’re working together as a team. It’s one of the sports where you don’t have to be 18 to 24 and then you have to quit. You can sail for the rest of your life.

“I like the feel of going fast in a boat. You can feel the air moving past you. You’re trying to create or minimize speed. And then you’re also steering your boat through the waves and over the water. To be fast, you have to steer to keep the boat engaged with the water, you don’t want it to bang and jump around too much. You’re constantly feeling the pressure through the mainsheet of your sails in your hands and you’re also guiding the boat through the waves and over the water. There’s a sort of communion that’s happening that you’re trying to bring all these elements together to synthesize this motion and it can be hypnotic.

“I’m 4 foot 11 and a half. If I can do it, lots of people should be able to do it.” —K.L.

Learn to sail with the Glenmore Sailing School (run by the City of Calgary) or the Glenmore Sailing Club, which also hosts a weekly Wednesday-night race series. [liveandplay.calgary.ca](http://liveandplay.calgary.ca), [glenmoresailingclub.com](http://glenmoresailingclub.com)





# WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Whether you're a swimmer, a fisher, a boater or a committed sun bather, there is nothing better on a hot summer day than to be in, near or on some water. As a land-locked city, it may appear that Calgary doesn't have much water on tap, but that couldn't be further from the truth. If you aren't lucky enough to be able to access one of Calgary's private lake communities (either through living there or finagling an invitation), check out these other opportunities.

## ACTIVE



**1** Try stand-up paddleboard (SUP) yoga on Chestermere Lake with Wild Spirit. [wildspiritsupyoga.com](http://wildspiritsupyoga.com)

**2** Rent a kayak from The Paddle Station's location at Shouldice Park and then kayak to their location at St. Patrick's Island. [paddlestation.ca](http://paddlestation.ca)

**3** Carburn Park is one of the few City parks that allows stand-up paddleboarding on its three man-made ponds. It's a great calm spot to SUP perfect for beginners. 67 Riverview Dr. S.E.

**4** Learn to canoe on the Bow with Rocky Mountain Paddling Centre. [rockymountainpaddling.com](http://rockymountainpaddling.com)

**5** You can't swim in or SUP on the Glenmore Reservoir, and this summer only boats that can be launched by hand will be allowed. But you can canoe. The Calgary Canoe Club will teach you how and rent you a canoe. [calgarycanoeclub.com](http://calgarycanoeclub.com)

**6** Raft the Bow and make it easy with rentals from Lazy Day Raft Rentals. For those who *really* love rafting the Bow, the U of C Outdoor Centre does a two-day rafting trip. [lazydayraftrentals.com](http://lazydayraftrentals.com), [ucalgary.ca/outdoorcentre](http://ucalgary.ca/outdoorcentre)

**7** Shallower water makes the Elbow a less stressful rafting experience, especially with small kids. Remember that you still need lifejackets by law, though. Start at Sandy Beach and end in Mission near Repsol Sport Centre.

**8** At only about two metres at its deepest, man-made Sikome Aquatic Facility (usually called Sikome Lake) in Fish Creek Provincial Park offers up warm water perfect for a summer swim.



**9** Yes, you can surf in Alberta; just ask the “surf anywhere” pioneers of the Alberta River Surfing Association, who suggest you start by learning at the Louise (10th Street) Bridge. [albertariversurfing.com](http://albertariversurfing.com)

**10** Only certified divers (or those training with an instructor) should go scuba diving at Lake Minnewanka. Those who do get to see the townsite of Minnewanka Landing, which was submerged in 1941. Banff National Park

**11** After an \$11.9-million redevelopment, Prairie Winds Park re-opened last summer, though the splash park was delayed in opening until this year. There’s also a wading pool and lazy river (as well as washrooms, a tandoori oven and other features).

**12** If you’re up for a chillier swim, drive out to one of the glacier-fed lakes of K-country and Banff National Park. Johnson Lake, Chain Lakes and Cascade Pond are all suitable for warm-blooded swimmers.

**13** Wade into “the breach” on St. Patrick’s Island or the paddling pool at Riley Park.

**14** Go on a walk-and-wade fly-fishing trip with Hanson’s Fishing Outfitters on the Bow and learn more about the river and how to read the water. [hansonsoutfitters.com](http://hansonsoutfitters.com)

**15** Seasons of Bowness Park restaurant in Bowness Park overlooks the lagoon and if you suddenly decide to have a more active water experience, you can rent a pedal boat, canoe or kayak from the boathouse next door. [seasonsofbownesspark.ca](http://seasonsofbownesspark.ca)

**16** The old quarry in Canmore has been reclaimed and made into Quarry Lake. The area includes a sandy beach at the shallow end. Because it’s more than 100 metres deep in some areas and fed by underground springs, the water can be quite cold, so swim at your own risk. But the beautiful setting is perfect for relaxing on the beach. [quarrylakecanmore.ca](http://quarrylakecanmore.ca)

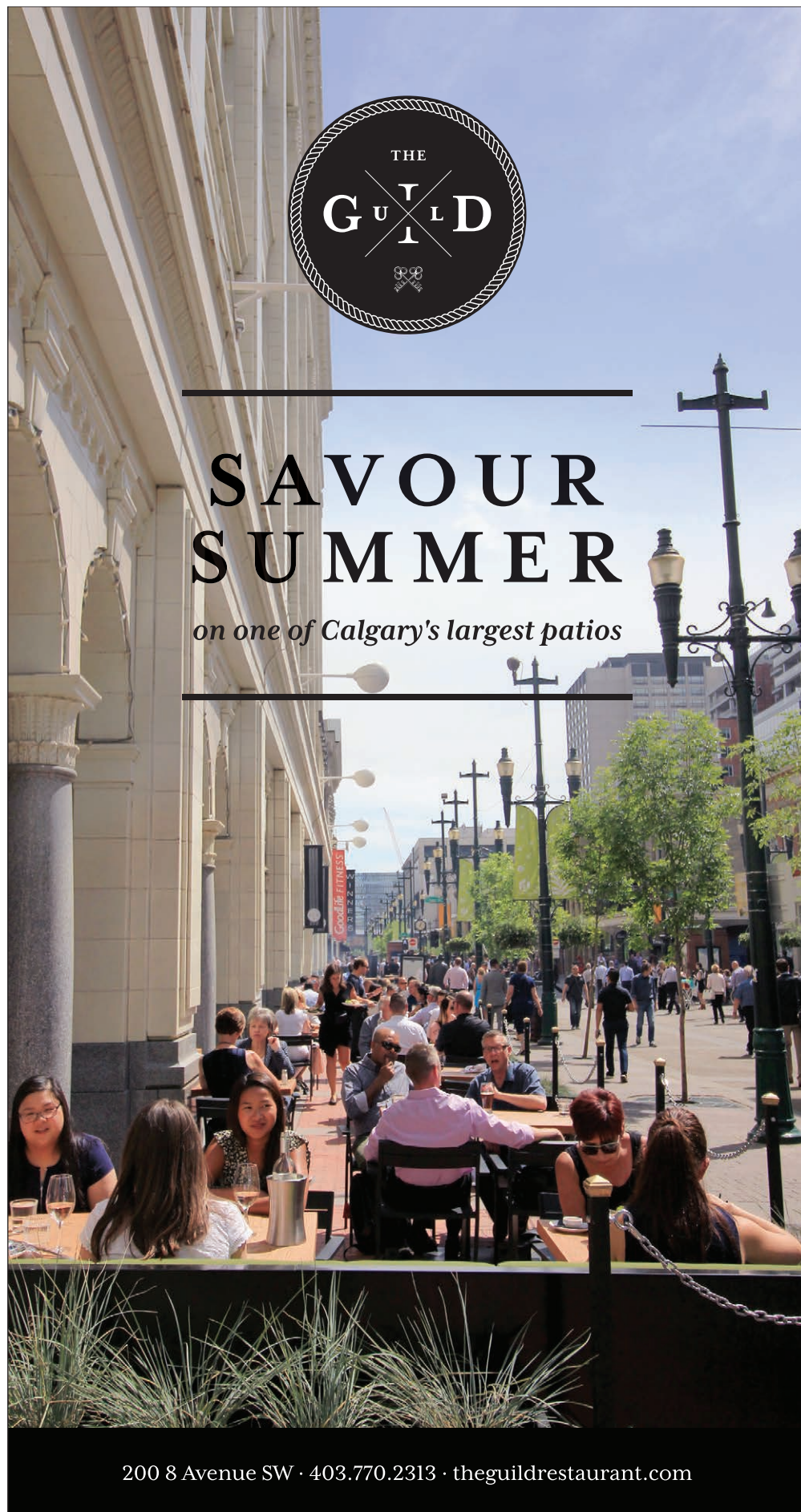
**17** Arguably, there is no more beautiful lake in the country than Lake Louise. Admire it in style, even if the weather isn’t hospitable, from the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise Lakeview Lounge. [fairmont.com/lake-louise](http://fairmont.com/lake-louise)

**18** If you like the look of water, but not being wet, there are few better spots in the city than the pool deck at Hotel Arts. Order some appies and cocktails from Raw Bar and relax in style. [hotelarts.ca](http://hotelarts.ca)

**19** Stand in the mist at the Stampede midway.

**20** You can sit in a lawn chair with your feet in the river in lots of spots along the Bow and Elbow. But the south bank of the Bow in Edworthy Park, across the footbridge from Angel’s Cappuccino & Ice Cream Café has the advantages of great people-watching and easy access to parking, washrooms and nearby snacks.

**21** The day-use lockers have been upgraded at the Banff Upper Hot Springs so the cost is now bundled with the entrance fee, meaning you can “take the waters” without worrying someone will take your stuff. [hotsprings.ca](http://hotsprings.ca) —K.L.



**THE GUILD**

# SAVOUR SUMMER

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McKenzie  
Towne Neighbour Day  
block party.

## HOW TO THROW A BLOCK PARTY

Throwing a block party will give you the opportunity to get to know your neighbours beyond the hello-how-are-you routine while you're wrangling kids and groceries into the house. It may sound like an insurmountable amount of effort to arrange, but follow these five steps and you'll be a block party pro in no time flat.

**1** The first step in organizing a block party is to **get signatures from most of your neighbours to allow you to block traffic on your street.** They'll have the option to say "yay" or "nay" to the event, which will give you insight into who might be an enthusiastic volunteer when it comes time to host.

**2** **Apply for the \$25 permit online at [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca)** (you'll need the petition and a map of the party area/road that needs to be closed).

**3** **Gather your gear** — essentials for a block party include a gigantic barbecue, a bouncy castle, and games designed to break the ice. Large barbecues are available through event-rental companies and range anywhere from \$100 to just over \$200, depending on size and type. If you're thinking of having a bouncy house, be sure to ask about the material. A PVC bouncy house is made for commercial use (and events like a block party with a lot of potential bouncers), while a nylon bouncy house is designed for single-family fun. When it comes to games, Rebecca Dakin, communications and community relations specialist at the Federation of Calgary Communities, recommends activities like water-balloon tosses, bubble battles, a group grill-off or neighbour bingo as activities that will help to get things lively.

**4** **Gather your volunteers** — divide and conquer all of the duties from running games for kids to operating the grill and cleaning up.

**5** For even more block-party tips, **download the Federation of Calgary Communities resource guide, "Love Where You Live: Host a Block Party!"** from [calgarycommunities.com](http://calgarycommunities.com). —V.L.

# THE GREAT INDOORS

You were hoping to hike the Rockies today, but the rainclouds care not for your petty plans. Don't worry, you aren't the first to deal with inconvenient weather conditions, which is why there's a slew of things to do indoors in the city that don't require a reservation.

## Museums

Museums are probably the world's greatest standby in the "things to do on a rainy day" category and Calgary has a number of great indoor spaces displaying cool collections and artsy artifacts. Glenbow is probably the best known and has plenty to offer across its four floors of exhibitions. Just a few blocks east, Studio Bell, home of the National Music Centre lets you play instruments, see rare memorabilia and learn about our country's musical history. Some of the smaller museums in the city include the Firefighters Museum of Calgary, The Military Museums and the Hangar Flight Museum.

[glenbow.org](http://glenbow.org), [studiobell.ca](http://studiobell.ca), [calgaryfiremuseum.com](http://calgaryfiremuseum.com), [militarymuseums.ca](http://militarymuseums.ca), [thehangarmuseum.ca](http://thehangarmuseum.ca)

## Art Galleries

Although Contemporary Calgary is currently without a physical gallery space of its own, there are more than enough public and commercial art galleries in the city to keep you traipsing through displays of paintings and other installations for as long as you want. The University of Calgary's Nickle Galleries focus on modern art, coins and textiles, and are open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with no admission fees. The Esker Foundation Contemporary Art Gallery is open until 6 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and currently has exhibits by Hungarian textile artist Anna Torma and multimedia artist Vanessa Brown. Calgary is also home to a number of private galleries representing local, Canadian and international artists, such as the Collectors' Gallery in Inglewood, Masters Gallery in Mission and Paul Kuhn, Newzones Gallery of Contemporary Art, Herrerger Kiss Gallery and Trépanier Baer,

all of which are within walking distance of each other in the Beltline.

[nickle.ucalgary.ca](http://nickle.ucalgary.ca), [eskerfoundation.com](http://eskerfoundation.com), [thecollectorsgalleryofart.com](http://thecollectorsgalleryofart.com), [mastersgalleryltd.com](http://mastersgalleryltd.com), [paulkuhngallery.com](http://paulkuhngallery.com), [newzones.com](http://newzones.com), [herrergerkissgallery.com](http://herrergerkissgallery.com), [trepanierbaer.com](http://trepanierbaer.com)

## The Rec Room

Remember the halcyon days of youth spent in friends' basements eating comfort foods, watching TV and playing video games? The Rec Room is like that, except you're allowed to drink. With dozens of different arcade and video games, everything from racing to shoot-'em-ups, a climbing wall with interactive games projected onto it, as well as classic games like pool, Ping-Pong and shuffleboard, there's enough to keep you occupied until way past your bedtime.

[therecroom.com](http://therecroom.com)

Hangar Flight Museum.





## Ninja Classes

Cabin fever can infect even the most passive person, so when you start getting restless, take yourself over to InjaNation. An indoor playground that combines a trampoline park with dodgeball rooms and *Ninja Warrior*-style courses with obstacles you have to climb over, jump to and swing from, you can sharpen all the skills you'll need for a future career ninja-ing, or just get a good workout while having fun with friends.

[injanation.com](http://injanation.com)

## Minigolf

When golfing outdoors is out of the question, opt for low-risk, high-fun minigolf. Monster Mini Golf promises not only a weather-independent good time, but also a ghoulishly fun ambiance with cartoon creatures stalking through the black-light course. There's even an opportunity to sink a ball into a giant clown's mouth — where else can you do that? It's open until 11 p.m. most nights (9 p.m. on Sundays), so you can play closer to the witching hour.

[monsterminigolf.com](http://monsterminigolf.com)

## Go-karting

Head to Speeders for drop-in indoor go-karting and burn as much rubber as their eco-friendly electric karts allow. Boasting the fastest indoor racetrack and fastest electric Prokarts in the city with 20 horsepower and top published speeds of 75 kilometres-per-hour, you'll certainly have your need for speed met.

[speeders.ca](http://speeders.ca)

## Axe-throwing

Live out your lumberjack fantasies by heading to one of Calgary's axe-throwing institutions. Axe Throwing Calgary has drop-in hours Wednesdays and Sundays and also features a lumberjack lounge with food and Big Rock beers. Despite its name, the Backyard Axe Throwing League (BATL) does take place indoors, and offers walk-in sessions Friday through Sunday, as well as a fully licensed bar and kitchen with menu items from Diner Deluxe chef Chris Lorenz.

[axethrowingcalgary.ca](http://axethrowingcalgary.ca), [batlgrounds.com](http://batlgrounds.com)

## Calgary Shooting Centre

Whether you're looking to unload some frustration on a paper target or just see what it's like, the Calgary Shooting Centre has got you covered. No license? No problem. The Centre has drop-in rates for groups of two or more unlicensed walk-ins, as well as staff that can train and supervise first-timers.

[theshootingcentre.com](http://theshootingcentre.com)

## Regal Cat Café

Dark and dreary summer days are the perfect excuse to curl up on a sofa and relax. And you know who's excellent at curling up and relaxing? Cats. The Regal Cat Café always keeps four drop-in spots available for their 45-minute kitty sessions, where you can play with cats from the Meow Foundation (and maybe even adopt one if you make a special connection). For those poor souls allergic to felines, the café has a partitioned-off cat-free environment as well, where they serve warm drinks and sweet treats.

[regalcatcafe.com](http://regalcatcafe.com)

Bolder Climbing Community co-owner Zak McGurk on one of his facility's walls.



Breathe Parkour.

## Breathe Parkour

Instead of bouncing off the walls at home, learn how to actually bounce off walls at Breathe Parkour. Both Calgary locations offer drop-in classes for \$30, or go really free-form and explore the open gym for \$18. If YouTube videos of people flipping off walls and jumping between buildings is something you want to emulate, you're going to have to start somewhere, and it might as well be somewhere supervised.

[breathepk.com](http://breathepk.com)

## VRKade

The future of gaming is here, and it has weird headgear. Check out one of VRKade's two locations to get strapped into the virtual-reality matrix. Virtual reality archery, multiplayer shooting games and escape rooms are just some of the experiences available. Though it's best to book ahead, VRKade will accept walk-ins if there is space.

[vrkade.com](http://vrkade.com)

## Go Climbing

When your mountain-climbing plans get nixed by weather, you can still scale to new heights at one of the city's climbing gyms. The Crux Climbing and Bouldering is one of the tallest climbing gyms in North America, with a 72-foot-high wall. The Calgary Climbing Centre's four locations offer both traditional climbing and bouldering options. And for those not practiced at belaying, Bolder Climbing Community offers a straight bouldering experience, which is a lot like rock climbing, but with thick pads on the ground instead of ropes and hitches. —A.G.

[thecrucclimbing.com](http://thecrucclimbing.com), [calgaryclimbing.com](http://calgaryclimbing.com), [bolderclimbing.com](http://bolderclimbing.com) @