

summer fun

The buzz about bees

Remarkable creatures in small packages

Warm weather and extra hours of sunlight spark flowering trees and plants to bloom anew. This is the time of year when the air is sweet with the aroma of blossoms and the familiar hum of insects can be heard all around.

Not all "bugs" are the same this time of year. While you probably won't want ants invading your backyard grill fest, the presence of bees nearby can be a good thing – even if those curious yellow and black critters get a little close for comfort from time to time.

That's because almost 90 percent of wild plants and 75 percent of the leading

global crops depend on animal pollination, indicates the World Wildlife Federation.

Bees are remarkable creatures in small packages. The following are some bee facts to buzz about, courtesy of the WWF, Save the Bees, NASA and the Texas A&M University Honey Bee Information Site.

- There are roughly 20,000 species of bees around the world. Most of them are solitary bees.

- Bees have five eyes. Two of the eyes are large compound eyes with hexagonal facets. The other three are small, simple eyes.

- Honeybees have a move called the "waggle dance." It is a clever way of communicating to tell them where to go to find the best sources of food.

- Bees can carry up to 122 times their body weight in pollen and nectar.

- Bumblebees leave footprint scents behind. They are able to distinguish between their own scents, the scent of a relative and the scent of a stranger as they look for food.

They also can avoid flowers already visited.

- Should a queen bee perish, the hive workers will select a new young

larva and feed it a special food called "royal jelly." The larva will develop into a fertile queen.

- Bees flap their wings 190 to 200 times per second.

They can fly up to 15 miles per hour.

- Female bees can sting; males do not. Losing the stinger will cause the bee to die.

The honeybee only can sting once because its stinger is barbed. Bumblebees and hornets can sting multiple times because they have smooth stingers.

- It can require nectar from two million flowers to make one pound of honey.



- Many bees are not aggressive. Simply moving away from them can prevent a person from being stung.

Generally, bumblebees and honey bees will only sting by accident or if a nest is being disrupted.

- Wasps are different from bees in that they are mostly known to be predators. They eat other

insects and often food that people eat, which is why wasps are more likely to be found around your cookout.

Bees tend to be covered in hair, while wasps (which include yellow jackets) are smooth.

Bees are remarkable creatures and should be celebrated as the weather warms up.

Weekend getaway ideas for summer fun

Few things embody a summertime vibe better than a day spent soaking up the sun and enjoying a warm breeze in the great outdoors. Warm weather and generally dry conditions are one reason why summer is so popular among vacationers.

Even individuals who can't get away on vacation this summer can still look to the weekend as a great time to hit the road or the friendly skies for weekend getaways.

Convenience and proximity are two selling points when choosing

weekend getaway destinations. The following are some weekend getaway ideas that are tailor-made for summer fun.

- Take yourself out to the ballgame. The pandemic forced millions of baseball fans to stay home as their favorite team battled it out on the diamond. No fans were allowed during the shortened 2020 season and the 2021 season began with many teams allowing only limited attendance.

Some fans might not have felt comfortable returning to packed stadiums last summer.

Now that attendance restrictions have been lifted, what better way to enjoy America's pastime than in person? Take a weekend to follow your favorite team on the road or visit a stadium you've never been to.

Many ballparks are now surrounded by restaurants and five-star hotels, making a ballpark trip an ideal way to experience a new city in style.

- Make it a water-based weekend. No matter where you live, a body of water is no doubt nearby. Though the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration indicates that roughly 40 percent of the United States population lives in a coastal region, oceans aren't the only places to find some sand and enjoy a warm summer breeze.

Lakes and rivers are great places to relax and getaway seekers can utilize sites like Airbnb and Vrbo to find short-term waterfront rentals.

- Soak up the city lights. Big cities tend to clear out on summer weekends, which can make this an ideal time to visit. City

visitors won't have to contend with the sizable crowds that descend on metropolises in winter, when indoor entertainment is in high demand.

That means savvy travelers also may find discounts on live theater and local concerts. It also won't be as difficult to book reservations at the latest culinary hotspots, particularly for travelers who book early.

- Hit the slopes. Skiing might be the furthest thing on people's minds in summer. However, skiing hotspots can make for the

ideal summer getaways for individuals looking for a quiet respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Instead of traversing slopes on skis, visitors can hike their way through the mountains before retiring to their resort for a more laid back evening of relaxation.

There's no wrong way to get away. Summer travelers who don't have much time to escape can look to some unique weekend getaway ideas and enjoy a relaxing taste of something new.

Frosty facts about the banana split



Ice cream aficionados enjoy it in many different forms – from cups to cones – but sundaes truly can be the ultimate treats. The impressive and often enormous "banana split" may be the king of all sundaes, with ice cream shops scooping them out in record numbers when the weather warms. Because banana splits are so large, they're often the perfect desserts to share.

When taking a spoonful of banana split, some people may ponder where this sweet reward came from. As with many food origin stories, various people lay claim as the inventor of the banana split. A trusted historical account points to Latrobe, Penn., as the home of the first banana split. Legend has it that Latrobe pharmacy owner David Strickler sliced a banana in two, added scoops of

vanilla, chocolate and strawberry ice cream, three kinds of flavored toppings and whipped cream in 1904. Strickler also enlisted the help of a glassmaker to create the first "banana boat" vessel to house his newfangled dessert.

Other cities, including Boston and Wilmington, Ohio, also claim to be birthplaces of this beloved dessert. In fact, Wilmington holds fast to their banana split creation story and even hosts its annual Banana Split Festival.

Even though these dessert giants battled it out as banana split inventors, Walgreens pharmacy is credited with helping to make banana splits popular across the country after adopting the dish as the pharmacy's signature dessert.

There's never a wrong time to enjoy a banana split, but they're especially tempting in summer. Dig into these other fun banana split and ice cream facts.

- The banana is scienti-

fically classified as a berry because a berry must contain seeds inside the flesh and not outside.

- Around 0.074 pounds of bananas per person per day are consumed in the United States.

- The first banana split cost 10¢. That may seem like a bargain, but it was double the cost of other sundaes.

- Romans purportedly sent people into the mountains to collect snow that they flavored with fruits and juices to create an early version of ice cream.

- Around 50 percent of the volume of ice cream is air, which gives the dessert its light and creamy texture.

- You'll want to make

your banana split with a ripe, yellow banana. A green banana starts out very starchy. As the fruit yellows, the starch turns into sugars.

- A traditional recipe for a banana split contains around 1,000 calories.

Dairy Queen lists their banana split at 510 calories per serving.

Banana splits are delectable desserts that may have originated in Pennsylvania, but are now known across the globe.

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