

Go on a long bike ride, explore caves and swim in the sea: The 50 adventures every child should have by the age of 11¾

By Nick Mcdermott

Climbing trees, building dens and flying kites were all once common childhood pleasures. These days, however, the popularity of computer games combined with over-cautious parents has put paid to such outdoor adventures.

More than four in five adults say their children spend less time playing outside than they did at their age, according to research by the National Trust.

 <p>1: Climb a tree (Wallington, Northumberland)</p> <p>2: Roll down a big hill (Croome, Midlands)</p> <p>3: Camp out in the wild (Gibside, Yorkshire)</p> <p>4: Build a den (Lyme Park, Stockport)</p> <p>5: Skim a stone (Fell Foot Park, Cumbria)</p>	 <p>16: Make a daisy chain (Lacock Abbey, NWilts)</p> <p>17: Set up a snail race (Lyveden New Field, Midlands)</p> <p>18: Create some wild art (Sheringham Park, Norfolk)</p> <p>19: Play Pooh sticks (Mottisfont, Hants)</p> <p>20: Jump over waves (Compton Bay and Downs, Isle of Wight)</p> <p>21: Pick blackberries in the wild (Castle Ward, Co.Down)</p> <p>22: Explore inside a tree (Hatfield Forest, Essex)</p> <p>23: Visit a farm (Cuckmere Valley, E.Sussex)</p> <p>24: Go on a walk barefoot (Strumble Head to Cardigan, Pembrokeshire)</p> <p>25: Make a grass trumpet (Hare Hill, Cheshire)</p> <p>26: Hunt for fossils and bones (Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters, E.Sussex)</p> <p>27: Go star gazing (Tyntesfield, Bristol)</p> <p>28: Climb a huge hill (Ashridge Estate, Herts)</p> <p>29: Explore a cave (Yorkshire Dales, Yorkshire)</p> <p>30: Hold a scary beast (Clumber Park, Notts)</p> <p>31: Hunt for bugs (Hardcastle Crags, West Yorks)</p> <p>32: Find some frogspawn (Springhill, Mid Ulster)</p> <p>33: Catch a falling leaf (Rowallane Garden, Co. Down)</p>	 <p>34: Track wild animals (Castle Drogo, Devon)</p> <p>35: Discover what's in a pond (Florence Court, Co.Fermanagh)</p> <p>36: Make a home for a wild animal (Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal, Yorks)</p> <p>37: Check out creatures in a rock pool (South Milton Sands, Devon)</p> <p>38: Bring up a butterfly (Anglesey Abbey, Gardens and Lode Mill, Cambs)</p> <p>39: Catch a crab (Plas Newydd, Wales)</p> <p>40: Go on a nature walk at night (Nostell Priory and Parkland, Yorks)</p> <p>41: Plant it, grow it, eat it (Tredegar House, S. East Wales)</p> <p>42: Go swimming in the sea (Llyn peninsula, Wales)</p> <p>43: Build a raft (Borrowdale, Lake District)</p> <p>44: Go bird watching (Kingston Lacy, W.Dorset)</p> <p>45: Find your way with a map and compass (Chartwell, Kent)</p> <p>46: Try rock climbing (Brimham Rocks, Harrogate)</p> <p>47: Cook on a campfire (Stackpole, Pembrokeshire)</p> <p>48: Learn to ride a horse (Clanton Park, London)</p> <p>49: Find a geocache (finding hidden containers using GPS technology) (Sizergh, South E.Cumbria)</p> <p>50: Canoe down a river (Brancaster Millennium Activity Centre, Norfolk)</p> 
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In an effort to entice youngsters away from their TV screens, the charity asked children to name their favourite outdoor activities. As a result, 15 fresh ideas – including running barefoot in the grass, star-gazing and exploring a cave – have all been added to last year's list of '50 things to do before you're 11¾'. The initiative followed a study that found if children do not form a connection with the great outdoors before they are 12, they are far less likely to later in life. Almost a third of the 1,700 youngsters who took part in the research said going on a long bike ride was their favourite outdoor pursuit.

Other popular additions include bird watching, with one in ten children listing it in their top three outdoor activities. This year, the National Trust has added suggested ideal spots around the country for particular pursuits. Jessica Swales, eight, National Trust Kids Council member and tree climbing ambassador, said: 'I have completed every activity from the 50 things to do before you're 11¾ list and tree climbing is my favourite thing to do outdoors, so I'm really glad other children really like it too.'



Fun: Exploring a cave in the Yorkshire Dales is one of the adventures which children enjoy. This picture shows Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales

'I love playing outside and climbing this big tree at Wallington with my friends was great fun. I can't wait to get outside and start ticking off the new 50 things list!' Andrew Hunt, head gardener at the National Trust's Kingston Lacey, which was selected as the best for birdwatching, said: 'We are passionate about getting children outdoors and we want to encourage kids everywhere to play outside and connect with nature, so we're thrilled at how many under 12s have been engaging with the 50 things initiative.'

'This inspired us to source the nation's best tree to climb and place for bird-watching, and we hope our new list and 'best of' recommendations across the country will encourage even more kids to get into the wild this year.'



Exciting: Building a raft in Borrowdale in the Lake District is also a fun activity for children

Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust, said, "Our Natural Childhood report last year showed that children have lost touch with the natural world over the last 50 years.

'The National Trust wants every child to enjoy nature. Today we are launching the second year of our 50 things to do before you're 11 ¾ list, improved with help from children. The list includes new ideas and matches activities to the best places in the country to enjoy them.'

Over the summer the National Trust has 7,000 activities planned around the country, with a wide selection of events taking place over the upcoming bank holiday weekend.

To find out more visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/50things.