

Summer in the City

What to do when the Rhode Island heat gets you down



For the average Rhode Islander, summer generally consists of longingly staring out the window at work, braving beach traffic (has this term been recognized by the dictionary yet?), or hiding from the heat wherever air conditioning exists. I understand — the heat mirage that radiates off of the Providence skyline is a bit disconcerting. Breathe, we're here to help.

For the Summer Vacation Warriors

If you're a parent, nanny or a poor soul who gets stuck with some

one else's child for no monetary compensation, chances are that by July you're running out of cheap things to do with the kids on summer vacation, likely getting a little weepy at the thought of hauling children, two coolers and 10 pounds of sand toys to the beach (I'm starting to sound like Kim Kinzie). Don't let the Xbox tempt you. Bring the gang over to the India Point Park playground.

Nestled under shady trees alongside the breezy bay, this maritime-themed playground has the classic swings and slides accompanied by one small, one rather large and one massive set of geometric climbing ropes and nets. These interactive pieces of architecture are home to a series of obstacles, bridges and hammocks suitable for small children or energetic 12-year-olds.

India St., Providence

Cool Off ... Locally

There comes a point in the summer when you start saying to yourself, "To hell with fun in the sun, I'm damn hot." I know what you're thinking. But please ... say no to the mall. And please, for the love of all

that is sane, don't spend any more money on another *Transformers* movie. Get your air-conditioned cinematic kicks at The Avon on Thayer or The Cable Car on South Main Street. Both of these Providence staples screen award-winning indie flicks seven days a week. Keep an eye on The Cable Car's schedule for special events and screenings of local films.

The Avon, 270 Thayer St., Providence, avoncinema.com

The Cable Car, 204 South Main St., Providence, cablecarcinema.com

Go Culture Yourself

It's not any sort of best kept secret in town — Providence is home to the RISD Museum. You've seen billboards, you know it's got the giant Buddha statue, and it likely never comes up as an option on the Saturday morning, "I don't know, what do you want to do today," conversation, but when was the last time you actually went? The summer's feature exhibit focuses on the freakish glamour of the 19th and early 20th century circuses. Bask in yet more air conditioning and get lost (possibly literally, but there are maps) in visual stimulation.

If you 1) have a short attention span, 2) want to peep some locally grown art, or 3) prefer your art with a side of wine and cheese, Providence Gallery Night is for you. Hop on the free gallery shuttle and cruise to a set of participating studios and galleries around the city. Choose between six different guided tours or visit any of the 26 participating galleries by foot on your own.

RISD Museum, 224 Benefit St., Providence, risdmuseum.org

Gallery Night shuttle stop, 1 Regency Plaza, Providence, gallerynight.org

Boozing, Cruising

My go-to summertime weekend, "I'm bored, it's 3pm, there's no way I'm actually going to the gym today," activity is heading to a bar with a deck on the water and grabbing a cocktail in the sun. And if said bar has a boat docked outside, and if you can take said cocktail onto this boat and take a scenic tour of the Providence River. does it get much better? This exists. The Providence Riverboat Company is the only one of its kind on the river and leaves from The Hot Club daily. The riverboat tour is a slow cruise from the storm barriers to the basin of the Providence river and back again for a perspective most locals have never seen before. And the mini history lesson is interesting regardless of whether you've finished your drink. Hang on the Hot Club's newly renovated deck with a drink, and bring it onto the boat when it's time to set sail. Bon Voyage.

Tours leave from The Hot Club, 575 South Water St., Providence, providenceriverboat.com

Go For a Posh Dip

Lounge on a plush chair beside the pool and cabana bar surrounded by greenery, escaping the harsh city concrete. This isn't a scene out of "Sex and the City." Actually, I'm fairly certain this exact scene did occur in "Sex and the City." This could be you. This really exists downtown. AQUA Marriott is the city's only poolside lounge. Stop by for a drink or get real elegant with it for the afternoon in a private cabana, perusing the cigar and cognac menu. PS: Salsa dance party every Thursday night. Andale!

AQUA at the Providence Marriott, 1 Orms St., Providence, marriottprovidence.com/aqua