



Spending summer at the beach (or river) is about as Australian as you can get. So, we thought we'd put together a short list of tips so you can get the most fun out of your next trip to the beach.

1. Invest in a beach shade

Spending a whole day at the beach in the sun can be taxing on the old body. There is only so much relief the odd dunk in the water can provide. And considering there are only a few shady trees on most beaches (few of us splash on tropical islands in the shade of coconut trees), shade must be brought to you.

The humble beach shade is a game-changer. Available in pop-up tent and gazebo and umbrella styles, and Moana-style V/L configurations, there is a beach shade to suit all conditions and even the biggest of families. The main benefit of a sun shelter is that it blocks out the sun. Some will just act as a shade, others go further and offer UPF50+ protection. But beach sunshades are no one-trick pony. They also provide wind protection and privacy from the hoards of other beachgoers. And their use isn't to be restricted to just the seaside. Take your shelter on your next picnic, to watch your favourite team over the weekend, even set it up in the backyard for extra outdoor shelter at your next Sunday BBQ. They also provide wind protection and privacy from the hoards of other people. And their use isn't to be restricted to just the seaside. Take your shelter on your next picnic, to watch your favourite team on the weekend, even set it up in the backyard for extra outdoor shelter at your next Sunday BBQ.



A beach shade is a must-have for staying cool and protected in summer. Image: Hollie & Harrie

2. Slip! Slop! Slap!

Speaking of sun protection: slipping, slopping, and slapping not only protects you and your family from the risks of skin cancer but the painful effects of sunburn. Summer is about enjoying the outdoors and the beach – the last thing you want is a horrible bout of sunburn. What a dampener that would be!

3. Go to a less popular beach

Australia is known for its beach culture. Sydney has Bondi. Adelaide has Glenelg. Melbourne has St Kilda. Perth has Cottesloe. As soon as the temperature slips above 30, these beaches are a hive of activity – you'll struggle to find a spot for your towel let alone some shade. That's why, at the height of summer, heading to a less popular beach can be the key to summertime enjoyment.

Be mindful when selecting a beach that it may not be patrolled by surf lifesavers. Surf Life Saving Australia has a great tool on their website called Beachsafe, which allows you to search Australia-wide and set it to only show beaches that are patrolled by lifesavers. It also provides information as to the best part of the beach to paddle in, amenities (cafes, toilets, etc.), surf conditions, and whether it's a good spot to cast a line as well.

Even at some lesser-known beaches parking can be tricky. Get in early so you score a good park and put a positive spin on the walk from the car to the beach. Make the most of the walk among the fancy beachside mansions that seem to stand over most Australian beaches these days. You might just spot your dream home!

Beachsafe by Surf Life Saving Australia is a great tool to use. Image: Beachsafe

4. Take good food and drinks

Food at beachside kiosks can be expensive, poor quality, and really bad for you. Rather than spending your hard earned cash on fish and chips, consider taking your own food and drinks. And have some fun with it – turn your next beach trip into the ultimate picnic! Don't forget to take an insulated picnic bag or cooler with you to keep your nosh cool and fresh.

5. Take toys and games for the kids

Kids have short attention spans. Keep them entertained by having a range of activities and things for them to do at the ready. Pack a snorkel, a boogie board, the beach cricket set, some colouring-in books, even a deck or two of cards (fun for the adults too). Going to the beach isn't all about swimming and sunbathing. Enjoy the time outdoors and vary up your activities. And don't forget to pack a book!

Get everyone off their phones with a round of beach cricket. Just remember to Slip! Slop, Slap! Image: Sunshine Coast Australia

6. Be prepared

Seems this tip pops up in all aspects of life, doesn't it? There must be something in it. Being prepared can be the difference between having an alright time and having a ripper beach trip!

Have a list, check it twice, and organise your gear in advance. Sure, a trip down to the beach for the afternoon doesn't need military planning. But remembering to pack the bottle opener or sunscreen can have an effect on how much you enjoy your time.

If you anticipate long walks between the car and the beach, make sure you choose light, easy to carry gear. Rather than a large icebox, consider an IceMule bag or wheeled style cooler. Instead of an awkward-to-cart beach shelter, consider something that comes in a small, easy to carry 'yoga style' bag like the Caribee Guardian UV Beach Shelter.

If you want to head to the beach more often, build a small kit of the gear you'll need and store it all together in an accessible spot in the spare room or shed. This way you can just grab it and run out the door when the weather is just right.

How do you like to have fun at the beach when the weather is warm?