

BALLING ON A BUDGET

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Photo: Elise Cifor

Being poor sucks big time, especially in the summer when you just want to do hoodrat things with your friends. But don't despair, it is possible to have a lot of fun for little or no money if you're willing to get creative. To be clear, we do not advocate breaking the law, just bending the rules to work in your favor.

Deal with the oppressive heat by hitting the pool. If you don't have your own, you probably know someone who can be bribed with a six-pack of beer to let you use theirs. If you want to live that lux life though, head to the nearest fancy hotel. The key is to pretend you belong. Pack your bathing suit and arm floaties in a suitcase and stroll right through the lobby looking like you just stepped off a plane from Iowa. Wave politely at the front desk staff, and get in the elevator. Go to a random floor, change your clothes behind the ice machine, then come back down and dive in. No one will ever suspect a thing (probably).

Aside from sweet pools, fancy hotels also have fancy bars. The bartenders at certain fancy hotels in the Beaches area have a habit of simply asking for your room number without verifying your identity. Remember to look confident and talk about the misery of life in Iowa. They'll just charge your order to the room. Don't be a huge dick and get a bunch of people drunk on someone else's room tab, but it's likely that the wealthy Midwestern tourists in room 221 won't even notice if you have a cocktail or two on their dime.

Not a fan of moral grey areas? One of the most fun and cheapest things you can do on a hot summer

day is start a water balloon fight. It's OK to act like a kid sometimes. You can score hundreds of balloons for a few bucks at the dollar store and go fill them up at the foot wash station by any public beach access. Definitely do not hit obnoxious tourists with your balloons — that would be rude.

At some point, you're going to get hungry. Summer is a great time for having a cookout at the park or the beach. Visit one of our fine local recreational areas and find a friendly looking group of people who are grilling up lots of burgers. Find at least one person to talk to and try to blend in. If anyone asks, you went to college with Jimbo. This is Jacksonville, so literally every social circle has a guy named Jimbo. When the time is right, get in the food line and load up. Free lunch and new friends ... what could be better?

This last tip only works if you're a girl, but it works well. Skating down 1st Street is a treasured Jax Beach summer pastime, but a decent board can be pricey. Luckily, men are easy to manipulate. Find a guy with a nice board, adopt a look of flirtatious bewilderment, and ask him if he will teach you how to skate because it looks so hard and he must be really good at it. As soon as he lets you step on, ride away and leave him in the dust. Now you have a rad skateboard ... and he has a deep mistrust of women. Don't worry, he'll work it out in therapy later.

Now that you're feeling inspired, go have some fun. Good luck, and don't call the Void office for bail money.

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