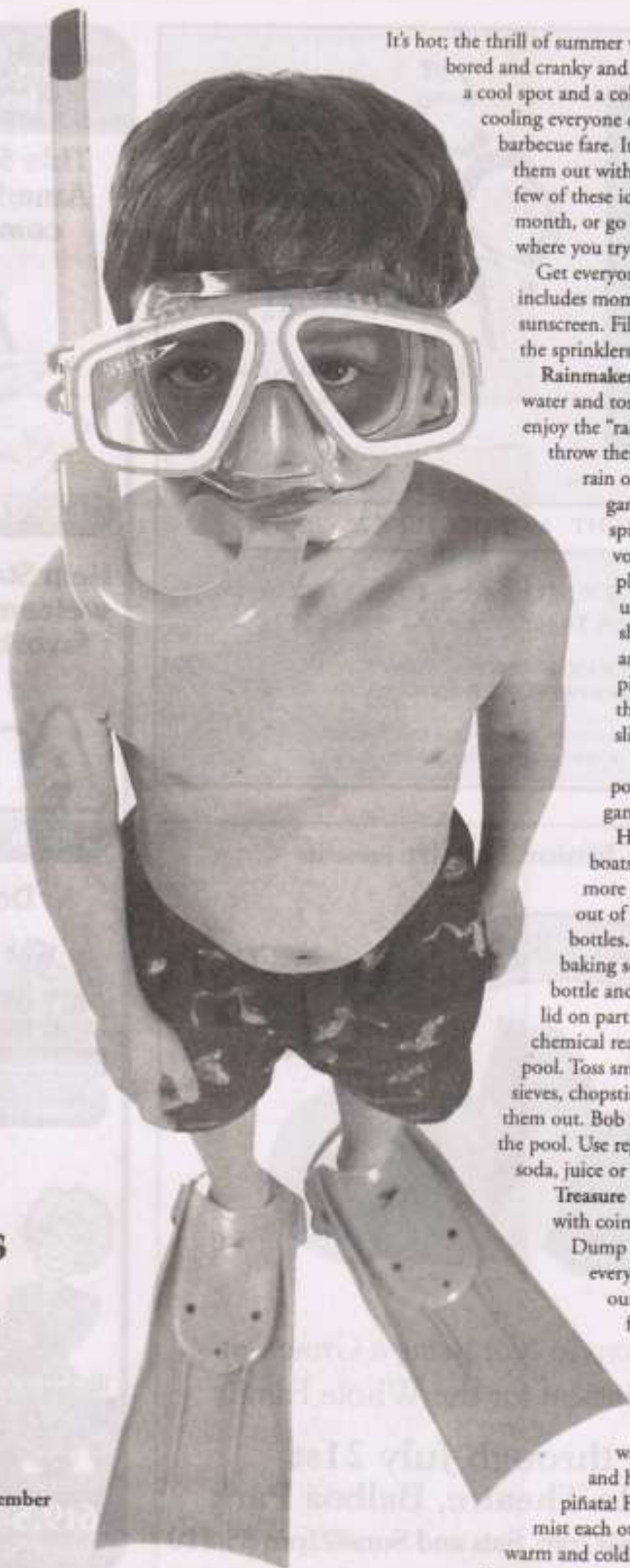


# COOL

## Worlds of Fun With Water

by Brette McWhorter Sember



It's hot; the thrill of summer vacation has worn off; everyone is bored and cranky and the best thing you can imagine is a cool spot and a cold drink. Try these ideas for cooling everyone down and livening up boring barbecue fare. It will cool everyone off and tire them out without any mess in the house! Try a few of these ideas every few days throughout the month, or go crazy and have a water party where you try them all!

Get everyone into their bathing suits (that includes mom and dad) and use lots of sunscreen. Fill up the kiddie pool and hook up the sprinklers and let's go!

**Rainmakers:** Fill big and small buckets with water and toss the water up to the sky and then enjoy the "rain." Have a contest to see who can throw theirs the highest, make the most rain or cover the biggest area. Play a game of Frisbee™ through the sprinkler. Set up the badminton or volleyball net over the sprinkler and play in the mist. Put the sprinkler under the swingset and spray the slide with the hose to make it cool and slippery. Roll out some big pieces of plastic or tarps, spray them with water and go water sliding.

**Water Baseball:** Use the kiddie pool as home plate in a baseball game.

**Home Sweet Lake:** Make paper boats and sail them on the pool. For more excitement, make motor boats out of soda bottles. Use 16 ounce plastic bottles. Wrap a couple of spoonfuls of baking soda in toilet paper, place in the bottle and pour in some vinegar. Screw the lid on part way and have a boat race, as the chemical reaction powers the boats across the pool. Toss small prizes in the pool and use sieves, chopsticks and spoons to try to scoop them out. Bob for small prizes or ice cubes in the pool. Use regular ice cubes or cubes of frozen soda, juice or iced tea.

**Treasure Hunt:** Freeze a big bowl of water with coins and prizes in it ahead of time.

Dump it out on the picnic table and let everyone go at it with spoons to chip out the prizes, or float in the pool for some Titanic fun. Crush some ice and see if anyone can make an ice castle or any other creation with it before it melts.

Fill a small garbage bag full of water, add some prizes, tie it closed and hang it from a tree. Hit it like a piñata! Fill squirt bottles with water and mist each other. Fill water balloons with warm and cold water for something different.

Have a contest to see who can melt an ice cube the

fastest and compare different techniques.

**Include Fido:** Make sure you get the family pets wet, too. Throw the dog's toy into the sprinkler or into the pool. Give your kids disposable cameras and let them take crazy wet photos. Blow some bubbles.

**Cool Beverages:** Everyone is going to get thirsty after all of this activity. Freeze some Koolaid®, lemonade, ice tea or juice in the ice cube tray and run it through the blender for a slushy. Freeze watermelon and strawberries on skewers and eat them before they thaw for an icy treat.

**Food Fun:** It's too hot to cook and everyone is starved, so it's time to head to the grill. By this point in the summer, everyone is sick of the same old boring hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill. Give some of these kid friendly variations a try.

**Stuffed Hamburgers (or Grilled Meatloaf).** Mix cheese, ketchup, herbs, onion, mushrooms and anything else you want into the hamburger, add some bread crumbs, shape into patties and grill.

**Hamdogs and Hotburgers.** Shape hamburger into logs before grilling. Eat them on hot dog rolls. Slice up hot dogs and eat on hamburger rolls.

**Bag 'o Beans.** Fill foil bags with baked beans and hot dog chunks. Grill and eat right out of the bag with a spoon.

**Chili Bags.** Fill foil bags with chili and grill. Eat out of the bag.

**Gobbleburgers.** Use ground turkey instead of hamburger and add cheese or seasonings to liven it up.

**Breakfast Buns.** Grill breakfast sausages and line them up on hot dog rolls.

**Inside Out Burgers.** Grill two thin hamburgers. Place one half of a roll between them and serve. (It may be messy, but you're outside!)

**Chicken Dogs.** Grill some chicken fingers and eat them on a hot dog roll with bleu cheese, honey or barbecue sauce as a topping.

**Grilled Meatballs.** Make meatballs for the grill (large enough that they won't slip through the grates) and serve on hot dog rolls with spaghetti sauce instead of ketchup and some Parmesan cheese.

**Taco Dogs.** Serve hot dogs on taco shells or roll them up in tortillas with Mexican toppings.

Come up with some of your own hot weather diversions and enjoy the rest of your summer! ♦

*Brette McWhorter Sember is a free-lance writer and mother.*

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