



# PPM's Summer Survival Guide

Summer's here and I don't think anyone enjoys the season more than Canadians. As soon as the days start to get longer we're out auditioning patios to find our new home away from home, shopping around for this year's sexy new swimsuit, driving up to the cottage to get it all set up, turning our balconies into little urban oases, and of course, revving up for Pride.

With so much to do and so little time to do it in (summer always seems to be the shortest season, doesn't it?), grab your favourite fruity drink and peruse the official Pink Play Mags Summer Survival Guide. We've got you covered, so you can get the most out the sunny season with a minimal amount of work, because after all, summer is best spent soaking up the rays, while sipping a cocktail with friends.

## Summer

It's important to know what you want in a patio. Do you like to see and be seen as you watch the world go by? Or do you prefer an urban retreat in the heart of the city? Maybe a free BBQ and ass-less chaps are more up your alley. Our thriving metropolis is known for its patio culture, so I can guarantee you, no matter what your tastes for outdoor wining and dining, there is at least one public backyard tailored just for you and your crew.

If you keep a couple of things in mind, your patio hopping will be the social hub of your summer. Look for a place with umbrellas or some shade. You'll want to stay the whole day and alcohol is very dehydrating—nothing will ruin your day more than sunburn or sunstroke. And don't forget to give your fair skinned friends a break from the harsh rays. A good view is paramount, whether it's lush greenery or sexy pedestrians, just make sure you're not sitting across from the garbage dumpster. One last thing, the railing seats around the edge are always prime spots, just be sure to watch for run-by thieves; keep any eye on your valuables like purses, cell phones, iPods and cameras.

## Pools & Beaches

The first thing you need to know is the Toronto Parks and Recreation Pool Hotline—yes there is a hotline to tell you when your pool opens for the season and what the hours are: 416.338.7665.

The gayest pool in town is the Riverdale Pool, in the lush Riverdale Park, just south of the Danforth on Broadview. It's really quite funny to arrive and see all the families with splashing, screaming kids in the shallow end and then the row upon row of Speedo clad beefcake lounging around the deep end. The other popular pool with the guys and gals is the D.D. Summerville Pool

(1867 Lake Shore Blvd. East), a full-sized Olympic pool, where many a ripped athlete can be found. Whichever your choice, be aware the lifeguards are extremely strict about what you can bring out on deck with you, which is typically little more than your towel, flip-flops, a bottle of water and a book or MP3 player. Food can be tricky and bags are prohibited, but I've gotten away with a small murse that I smuggled grapes in to snack on.

If you'd rather avoid the kids, then the beach is a sure bet. Hanlan's Point, with clothing optional section, and Cherry Beach are the popular choices with the babes and dudes. The secret to getting the most out of the beach, and not on you personally, is an old bed sheet laid down first and then topped with the biggest towel you can stuff in your bag—dollar stores are fantastic for picking these up so you won't be ruining those great deals you scored at Bed, Bath and Beyond. Even better, for a nominal fee you can rent lounge chairs and umbrellas, mere feet away, installation and delivery included.

The beach makes the perfect mini-getaway. You feel like you've left the hubbub of the hectic city behind for a day and all it'll cost you is the price of a ferry ride. It takes less than an hour to be sprawled on the hot sand, listening to the water slap on the shore. If you've been there all day, be sure to leave yourself some time for a quick shower before heading out again; nothing gives you unwanted rash more than sand in the wrong crevasses.

One last piece of advice: avoid the island on long weekends, unless you have infinite patience. The lines are long and full of swarms of families with kids. If you absolutely cannot pass up the gorgeous weather, head a block west to the Second Cup and hire yourself a water taxi—the extra money is well worth avoiding the frustrating wait.

For both excursions bring a lock, and some change: 4 quarters, 2 loonies and a toonie. You have a combo lock for the gym, so carry it around with you all summer; you'll be amazed at how often you need it. Most places will have lockers for you to ditch your stuff in so you don't have to worry about toting it around when you are in the mood to wander off and check out the sights; those that actually require you to throw some coins in the slot to get the key out, have always used some variation on the change I just listed, so

you'll be all set. You'll even be able to lend some to that hot locker neighbour you just cozied up to, 'cuz there ain't no such thing as a change machine around those places.

## Getting Out of Town

Everyone wants to get out of town in the summer and it seems everyone and their friend's aunt has a cottage. Gridlock is not fun. Being stuck in endless traffic as you watch your precious time relaxing on the water with a cocktail tick away, is enough to give anyone road rage. Pack a lunch with snacks, that way you can drive straight through, stopping only for washroom breaks. Bring entertainment so you are distracted from the mind-numbing pace you seem to be moving at. Portable DVD players are great to keep backseat drivers and kids chillaxed, but even at a leisurely pace, not a good idea for the front seat. The best road trips though, are the ones with their own soundtrack, so bring your fave tunes and you'll never forget this summer because it'll all come rushing back anytime you year "that" song.

Vary your departure and return. Leave for the cottage Thursday night or ridiculously early Friday Morning—I suggest bribing someone else to drive the first shift by offering to spring for gourmet coffee and chocolate croissants. Come home late Sunday night, or early Monday morning—For those



of you who like to negotiate an extra day off from the office with the boss, ask for the Monday off rather than the Friday and you're likely to see half the traffic during your trips.

## Balcony & Backyard Oasis

No car? No friends with a cottage? Looking for a little serenity during the humid weather? Create your own urban oasis on your balcony or in your backyard. Pick up a few planters from your local hardware store and fill them with lots of lush green plants and plenty of flowers to enjoy.

For the really ambitious and creative, nothing says Zen getaway more than a trickling water feature. You can buy ready made ones for under \$100, that are small enough to sit on your patio table, or spend upwards of \$500 or more for the stand alone miniature cascading waterfalls. If you shop around you're sure to find one that suits your tastes and fits your budget. If you've got a DIY streak, or a friend who does, then you can typically pick up all the basic materials you need (tubs, bins, buckets, water pump and stone) to create your own customized fountain.

To complete the look, green Astroturf is cheap, can usually be cut to size at local hardware store and looks like your little outdoor space in the sky has a lawn. Add a favourite wind chime, a few candles, a bright table cloth, et voila! You've got the perfect scene for dinner guests or a quiet retreat for reading.

## Pride

Ah Pride—gay Christmas for so many people. Whether this is your first or your hundredth, here's a few pointers to keep in mind so you can get the most out of this festive time of year. Find some shade to relax in for part of the day. Wear sunscreen, and try for water proof. I can't say this enough, I don't know how many Prides I've been to and seen those people with the painful looking lobster skin. Plan your washroom breaks, especially you ladies with tiny bladders. Just because you suddenly have to go doesn't mean you can—port-a-potty line-ups are the worst! On a float or going wild this year? That body paint you've just covered yourself in most likely doesn't contain sunscreen, so watch out! You will still get



burned, and quite badly, depending on how much sun the pigment you're wearing absorbs.

Bring a camera, because this is one of those events you'll want to look back on and reminisce over. If you don't want to risk losing that expensive digital, or subject it to one too many spilled drinks, go for a disposable. They're cheap, often include picture development in the purchase price and take really great pictures in daylight conditions.

Planning ahead of time, especially if you're trying to coordinate with friends or visitors, will allow you to enjoy the actual week more thoroughly. Take a look at the numerous programs put out; make a rough plan of who and what you want to see. Pick a meeting spot at a friend's place, or nearby on one of the side streets away from the main strip—Church Street turns into a bustling, thrilling circus of people, so it's easy to lose your friends and hard to find them. Cell phones are amazing for a quick text or call to rendez-vous at a designated chillaxing spot to regroup for the next whirl of adventure.

No matter what your pleasure this sizzling season, you'll be all set to get out there and maximize your enjoyment.