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Your Perfect Weekend July 10-12

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Posted By MJ On July 9, 2009 @ 11:34 am In *Perfect Weekends*

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This weekend, put those post holiday blues in the rearview by braving the great outdoors in Alaska at an open-ocean race, trekking to Cali for a mountain bike festival, or, if you're still hankering for grilled meat, head to New Jersey for the state barbeque championships.

By Nate Storey, Karin Krisher, and Steven Kurtz

Sitka Sound Ocean Adventure Race, July 10-12 Sitka, Alaska

If the summer heat is stressing you out, head north to cool down and test your mettle at an [ocean adventure race](#) in the tiny fishing village of Sitka, Alaska. Choose a vehicle—kayak, canoe, or any other human powered craft—and decide which of the six, 14 and 20-mile races piques your interest (\$15 per boat, \$30 per racer). Once the logistics are settled, on Saturday morning you'll wend your way through the craggy islets, strong currents and blustery winds in the Sitka Channel. Enjoy a fresh grilled salmon lunch at the Sitka Maritime Museum after the race. If you can find the time, saunter to [Sitka National Heritage Park](#), where Sitka's Russian ancestry is on full display at a first-class museum and totem walk that twines through the forest. Don't miss [Tongass National Forest](#), where visitors are treated to stunning vistas of sprawling meadows, wildlife, and glaciers. The 5.5-mile [Indian River Trail](#), which skirts muskegs and finishes at the base of a crashing waterfall, can be hiked starting from downtown Sitka. Be on the lookout for eagles, deer, and even bears.

Travel and Accommodations

Alaskan Airlines has daily flights going into Sitka or you can fly into Ketchikan and take the [Alaskan Marine Ferry](#). Starrigavan and Blue Lake are two nearby campgrounds. [The Totem Square](#) Inn has rooms starting at \$144 a night. Kayak rentals are available through [Sitka Sound Ocean Adventures](#).

New Jersey State Barbeque Championships, July 10-12 North Wildwood, New Jersey

With the season in full swing, there is no better way to celebrate the summer air than with some championship barbeque. This weekend, the [11th annual New Jersey State Barbeque Championships](#) will take place in conjunction with the [Anglesea Blues Festival](#) for a delicious and entertaining occasion. Check out the antique cars and fire trucks, vendors, and crafts available in this New Jersey resort town while enjoying some of the best barbeque and blues the state has to offer. [Big Lou Elrose](#), former NYPD-motorcycle-cop-turned-restaurateur (as well as [Men's Journal's go-to expert for advice on advanced smoking techniques](#)), will be on hand to perform live cooking demonstrations and give two separate two-hour barbeque classes. Be sure not to miss the dramatic conclusion to the event, the judging ceremony, where each pitmaster will be judged on their version of chicken, pork ribs, pork, and beef brisket. The grand champion of the weekend earns the right to compete in this year's invitation-only [30th Annual American Royale Barbeque](#), the world championships of barbeque.

Travel and Accommodations

Fly into [Cape May Airport](#) and drive a short 20 minutes to North Wildwood or take the [Cape May-Lewes Ferry](#) and drive the whole way. Camping is available, but to stay closer to the festival, book a room in any of the [150 hotels](#) in the area to fit any budget.

Downieville Classic Mountain Bike Race and Festival, July 11-12 Downieville, California

If you're craving a little bit of everything for your midsummer break, head to Downieville, CA this weekend, where the 14th Annual [Downieville Classic Mountain Bike Race and Festival](#) takes over a small gold rush town. Though there aren't any spots left for racers, you can still experience some of Downieville's famed rugged trails by registering for [group rides](#). Saturday, while racers begin a grueling 46 mile push, the festival features live music, cold beer, and plenty of other [entertainment](#), including the weekend-long bike expo and fair. If you'd rather avoid the crowd for some of your stay, bring along your kayak, swim trunks, and fishing pole and get out on the North Fork of the [Yuba River](#), where there's an abundance of rainbow trout and swimming holes. Class IV and V rapids also call the North Fork home, so if you have your own equipment, make a serious [rafting trip](#) one of the weekend highlights. Or, if none of these activities get your blood moving, and you're just looking for a relaxing nod to the old days, gold panning is open to the public at [Union Flat](#) campground.

Travel and Accommodations

You can fly into [Reno/Tahoe International](#), the nearest major airport, and rent a car for the two hour ride to Downieville, but we've heard that getting your kayak off the conveyor belt at baggage claims is kind of a pain. Instead, drive to the festival, located on Highway 49, a short distance from I-80. Parking in Downieville during the race is nearly impossible, so you're better off finding a place to set up shop outside of town, like [Willow Creek Campground](#), which features hiking and biking trails nestled in the Sierra Foothills, or the [Lure Resort](#), where you can look right out your window onto the North Fork.

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