

Fab family fun for not a

THINK YOU NEED A FISTFUL OF CASH TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS ALIVE? HERE'S 20 FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT WILL GIVE YOU CHANGE FROM \$20, WRITES **POLLY SIMONS**

1. LOOK TO THE SKY

Sydney Observatory isn't only worth visiting by night. Daytime viewings let you see the sun, stars and even the moon or Venus. Plus, there's time to check out the exhibits. Viewings are every day at 11am, noon, 2.30pm and 3.30pm, \$10/\$8. More: sydneyobservatory.com.au

2. BECOME A SECRET AGENT

Make identikit photos, match fingerprints and learn forensic testing at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) Discovery Centre, New Illawarra Rd, Lucas Heights. October 1-3, 9am, 11am and 2pm, \$10 (including an adult). More: ansto.gov.au

3. KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Bring history to life at Elizabeth Farm and Vaucluse House, where kids can discover homegrown produce, bake damper, make butter, and prepare lemonade in the colonial kitchens. September 22-October 3, 11am, \$20 (including an adult). More: sydneylivingmuseums.com.au

4. UNCOVER CONVICT CLUES

With its prison cells, shipyards and convict workshops, there's plenty to see on Cockatoo Island. Children can follow the Convict Clues Challenge to discover the answer to a secret question. Entry is free and ferries depart daily. More: cockatooisland.gov.au

5. HIT A BULLSEYE

Channel *The Hunger Games* or *Brave* at Kids on Target at Sydney Olympic Park Archery Centre. The one-hour lessons for children aged 10+ are held every weekday and teach the basics of archery through fun and challenging games. Cost \$16.50. More: archerycentre.com.au

6. CLIMB THE HARBOUR BRIDGE

If scaling the bridge is out of your budget, get almost the same view - at a snip of the price - by climbing the 200 stairs to the Pylon Lookout. On the way, there are three levels of exhibits on the history and building of the bridge. Cost \$13/\$6.50. More: pylonlookout.com.au

7. ENJOY FESTIVAL FUN

Hear the Columbian tale of Senor Rabbit, enjoy dress ups and games at a special *Frozen* screening, or try origami or puppet-making at the Spot On Children's Festival at Riverside Theatres in Parramatta, September 30-October 4. More: riversideparramatta.com.au

8. HEAD UNDERGROUND

Explore underground tunnels and fortifications dating back to the 1870s while learning about



ANIMATED ADVENTURE: Families can enjoy a screening of *Frozen* at the Spot On Children's Festival at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta.



Sydney's military past on a guided tour of Headland Park at Georges Heights, near Mosman. The next one is October 5 at 10.45am, \$8/\$5/\$20 family. More: harbourtrust.gov.au

9. EXPLORE PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Kids can visit the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly chambers, have their photo taken in the Speaker's Chair and discover the democratic process at the free Parliament House Family Fun Open Day, September 26, 10am-3pm, Macquarie St, Sydney.

10. CATCH A MOVIE

Catching a movie doesn't have to cost a fortune. Tickets at Campbelltown's Dumaresq Street Cinema are only \$6, and Hornsby Odeon Cinema has \$8 2D movie tickets on Tuesdays. Still too much? Check out your local library or council for free or reduced-price screenings.

11. HAVE A PICNIC

Play a giant game of frisbee, take a walk on a slackline, join in the paper plane competition or get Mum and Dad involved in a family tug of war at Newtown Picnic Day, part of the annual Sydney Fringe Festival. Free entry. September 21, 10am-2pm. More: sydneyfringe.com

12. LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Bring a torch and discover the native creatures that go bump in the night at a free spotlight walk at Harold Reid Reserve in Castle Cove. Don't forget to bring your own torch and binoculars. September 24, 7pm. Bookings essential: Contact Di Eva on 9777 7755.

13. GET CRAFTY

There's more than just books at your local library, with a variety of free or low-cost activities. Try jewellery making at Ingleburn's Greg Percival Library, sci-fi mask making at Campbelltown Arts Centre or chocolate making at Marrickville, just to name a few. See your council website for what's happening near you.

14. VISIT CONEY ISLAND

There's no entry fee to Luna Park, but rides are \$10, so make the most of it at the gorgeously old-fashioned Coney Island. A Coney Island Pass (\$10) gives all-day access, so kids can try the giant slide, mirror maze and Barrels of Fun.

15. SKIP THE QUEUES AT Q STATION

September 21 is Family Fun Day at the former Quarantine Station, with tours of the historic hospital (watch out for ghosts!), music, wildlife encounters and more. From 10am-4pm, free entry, 1 North Head Scenic Drive, Manly. Bookings a must, quarantinestation.com.au

16. COOK UP A STORM

Ok, it's \$22, but at least you can eat the results. Choose from a Cookies & Craft workshop on September 23, 26, 30 or October 3 at 11am, or Pizza & Pasta on September 25 and October 2 at 11am. Unleash your Masterchef at Cafe at Waterview, Sydney Olympic Park (price includes adult). sydneyolympicpark.com.au

17. SCULPT A SAND MASTERPIECE

What happens when 85 tonnes of sand end up at Cronulla Plaza? A giant sand sculpture of course. Check out the 4m-high masterpiece,



ACTION GALORE: Check out the fun at Sydney Observatory at The Rocks (above left), Sydney Olympic Park (top) and Quarantine Beach at Quarantine Station, Manly (above right).

lot of funds



GOOD TIMES: Join Kids on Target at Sydney Olympic Park Archery Centre (clockwise from above left), explore the past at Cockatoo Island, make a splash at Blaxland Riverside Park or get crafty at a library.

plus there are free workshops for kids to create their own. September 20-October 6, 10am-5pm. More: cronullabeachcbd.com.au

18. BE A FOREST FAIRY

Come dressed as your favourite fairy or elf and join in a magical mystery forest walk, followed by fairy and elf-themed craft at Cumberland State Forest, 95 Castle Hill Rd, West Pennant Hills. September 24 and 29, 10am. Cost \$5.50. More: forestrycorporation.com.au

19. DRIVE A FIRE ENGINE

Got a fire engine obsessive at home? They'll

be in seventh heaven at the Museum of Fire, where they can see fire engines of all shapes, sizes and ages, and also take a turn to drive the simulator. Open every day, 9.30am-4.30pm, \$10/\$6, 1 Museum Dr, Penrith. More: museumoffire.com.au


20. FIND A PLAYGROUND

For the cheapest sanity-saver of all, decamp to a playground. Two of the best are the Blaxland Riverside Park at Sydney Olympic Park, with its double flying fox, multi-storey treehouse and outdoor water play area, and the huge Darling Quarter Kids Playground in Darling Harbour.



GREAT IDEAS: Cooking at Vaucluse House (top) and Newtown Picnic Day (above).

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