

# A Dozen Summer Essentials

**M**att and I started having a discussion about what makes a summer great. Aside from the gathering of family and friends and good eats from the grill, there were certain summertime “props”, if you will, that kept coming up in the conversation. We decided it might be fun to put this list of a dozen summer essentials together to see if anyone else felt the same way or perhaps had different summer essentials they wanted to share.

**H**ere’s our list in no particular order!



**1 Bicycle:** OK, I lied a little bit because we do feel that the number one summer essential is a bicycle. A bicycle can take you places. It gives you instant exercise and you barely feel it. You can do it by yourself or go with a group. There’s nothing like feeling the wind in your hair and the bugs in your teeth! Hahaha, just kidding!

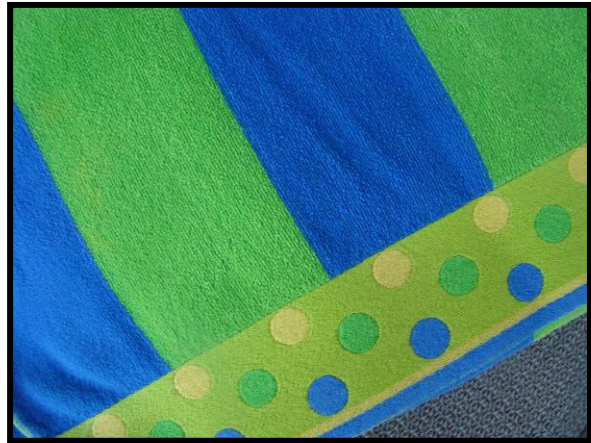
**2 Flip Flops:** Everyone knows it’s not summer until you can wear flip flops and not have your feet freeze. (I’ve seen teens wear these all year ‘round, but I’m not talking any fashion advice from them!) They’re inexpensive and you can have them in tons of colors!!





**3 Sunscreen:** Yes, you are right; this should be our number one summer essential because you shouldn't do anything outside this summer without it. Find one that has a high SPF and doesn't burn your eyes. I find that the kid versions are wonderful and I've grown to like the spray....just close your eyes and let it rip!

**4 Beach Towel:** Once you find the perfect beach towel, it will be difficult to get you away from it. For me, it's the bigger the better. I want full sand coverage if I'm lying down and full body coverage if I'm covering up, so it better be big!!!



**5 Good sunglasses:** I'm sure it doesn't need to be said, but good sunglasses can keep you comfortable all summer long. It's very important to protect your eyes from the sun's harsh rays and make sure your children are protected as well.

**6 Campfire:** At least once during the summer, get yourself and your family around a campfire. This one is elaborate and wonderful to use all year long, but there are sites to build fires in parks, at campsites, or just gather around the grill! Don't forget the marshmallows!



**7 Comfortable outdoor chairs:** The plan is to spend as much time outdoors as possible isn't it? So if you want to make this enjoyable, find a cushy chair that fits you to the tee. (This one needs a side table for drinks, snacks and a great book!)

**8 Hammock:** Don't you remember hanging out on your grandmother's hammock for half the summer? There was nothing else to do there but make believe it was a space ship or a boat and there were all sorts of dangers that lurked beneath it? Was that just me?





**9 Tent:** Never in a million years would I have suggested this until I went to my son's second grade camp out. We had a ball! (FYI: Aside from the tent, I needed a blow up mattress, cooler, lantern, sleeping bags, pillows, camping chairs and assorted drinks and goodies...then, it was fun!)

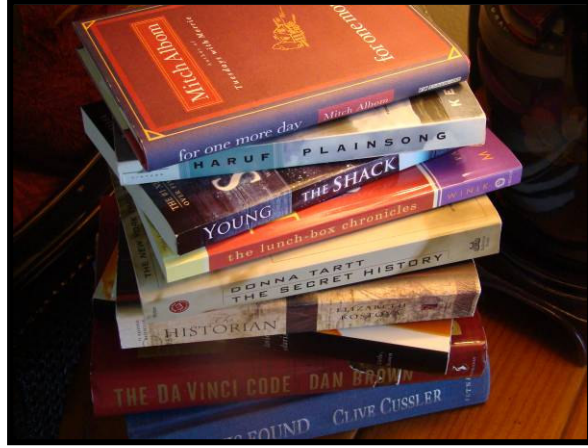
**10 Sturdy Tote:** This wonderful, colorful tote came from Target, last year. I'm sure they are well stocked for this season and you can pick one up at a reasonable price. These come in handy for all sorts of things, vacation plane and car rides, beach trips, overnights, camping, shopping, etc. I promise if you purchase one you'll use it 'til you wear it out!!



**11 Seafood Steamer:** I searched high and low for a great photo of a steamer and I eventually found this one from <http://www.akitchen.com/store/seafood-steamers.html> is a great looking one with all the decorations. It's \$59.95 and would make for some good eatin' this summer, everything from lobster to clams to good ol' corn on the cob!

## 12 A Stack of great books:

Matt and I don't even mind reading them over again. Just get yourself settled in that comfy chair and allow yourself to be taken away to places that may not even exist. Ahh, the joy of a good book. For book suggestions, check out our "Books We Love" lists for adults and children!



Well, those are our dozen summer essentials. I'm sure we could think of more, but if you have these 12 items on hand, you are bound to have a fun filled, relaxing, super summer 2009!!

Shari and Matt

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