



The variety of activities on offer ensure that the kids are entertained, but still supervised at all times.



HOLIDAY Heaven

Wondering how to entertain your kids this December? Give them a week of American-style summer camp available right here in KwaZulu-Natal

A quick glance through the testimonials on the Sugar Bay Resort website will show you that the camp's had a profound effect on youngsters who have spent time there, with many of them returning year after year or applying to be counsellors themselves for the new intake.

Considering what's on offer, it seems obvious that kids and parents alike are smitten with this camp-style holiday option. Located in Zinkwazi village on a secure 6,4ha sugar cane farm, with direct access to the Zinkwazi lagoon, there's an abundance of space – a good thing, considering there are over 100 activities on offer, catering for every child's fancy, ability and age.

While the aim is for the kids to have as much fun as possible, the activities are also chosen to promote mental concentration, patience and perseverance. From paintball, BMX-ing and wall-climbing, to kayaking and water rockets, river cruises and ziplines to

dance, drama, creative arts and circus acts – it's impossible to be bored.

Safety and security are key, with a 3:1 child-to-staff ratio and 24-hour supervision for both newcomers and seasoned campers.

The counsellors (most of whom are former camp-goers) are trained in the needs of the various age groups, providing mentorship and friendship, as well as skills development.

Accommodation is in stilted log cabins with bunk beds and each has its own bathroom and showers, as well as a boma for pre-bed campfires and storytelling. The on-site health centre is open 24 hours a day.

Sugar Bay accommodates kids between the ages of seven and 17, with the camps

running from five to 10 days during school holidays. It also offers team-building and school excursions between seasons. From R3 899 (discount for past campers).
www.sugarbay.co.za
holidays@sugarbay.co.za

WHAT THE KIDS SAY... Who better to review summer camp than the youngsters themselves?

Upon arrival, we were tasked with the mission of trekking up to our cabins. The walk was short, but it was dark – that time of day when the sun's not really down, but the moon's not really up. I walked up with Laura, a counsellor, close behind. Slipping and sliding, we finally made it up, lugging our suitcases behind us. We entered the cabin in darkness, wondering what lay before us.

When the lights were turned on, our

new best friends in tow, we headed towards the place where my hunger would be tamed – the dining hall. After two brimful bowls of spaghetti bolognese, we headed to the main hall for an evening of games and songs.

There's never a dull moment at camp. Every day is different – different food, different friends and even different counsellors. Each week has a different theme and you wake up to music every day. The song of choice on our first morning was *Roar* by Katy Perry and even the grumpiest of morning people, meaning me, couldn't help but sing along.

Then there are things to look forward to: Party Night, the evening programmes like quiz and casino nights (for seniors) and treasure hunts for the juniors.

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eyes widened with surprise – this was no campsite! We had fans for those hot nights and thick blankets for the cold ones.

It was chaos as everyone rushed to choose a bed. I found mine, but my mind was on other things. I wanted food. With my three

All in all, camp is one of the best places on earth. It's one of the only places where you aren't allowed to use your cellphone – and I didn't even miss it. Even though I've been to Sugar Bay seven times before, it's never disappointed. – Jordan Leah (15)

I'm the type of person who likes my shoes dirty, my hair windswept and my skin sun-kissed. Combine that with smiling faces and little bodies and you get the

perfect job. I'm a counsellor-in-training at the Sugar Bay Resort and I'm having a blast.

Being a counsellor here requires in-depth training in a variety of activities. I can harness an excited rock-climber, clean scraped knees and make children laugh. I didn't expect my training to go far beyond that, but my two weeks here not only served as a training course of skills, but were also a journey of self-discovery.

Yes, you're expected to teach children how to surf and poi, but it's actually the kids who do the teaching. They teach us to laugh at ourselves and live in the moment. You realise that it's important to be excited about dessert tonight, and that any achievement deserves recognition.

There's a lot that I'll take home from here: a new nickname, a qualification and the opportunity to return. What do I think was the most important lesson I learnt at camp? That doing what you love is imperative and that there are lovely people and places out there. One needs to create one's own ideal world. For me, that includes a place where a sense of self is appreciated and where adventure is in abundance. Sugar Bay, you are my world. – Gaby Isabelle (18)

