

Wild Nights Out: The Magic of Exploring the Outdoors after Dark

Chris Salisbury

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Chris Salisbury's *Wild Nights Out* is a fun, inventive adventure guide about helping children explore nature after dark.

This comprehensive handbook is loaded with activities and information to enrich children's experiences of the nighttime world. Detailed instructions explain how to walk like a fox, practice "deer ears" to sharpen senses, watch for owls, or play "bat and mouse" to learn about echolocation. Describing twenty-five outdoor activities in all, the book urges parents, grandparents, and teachers "to pause and imagine what it's like to be a child in an unfamiliar place, like a forest, under the enchantment of nighttime."

While some activities may require a road trip, most would work in a backyard or neighborhood park. To spur confidence, the book includes practical tips for tracking nocturnal animals, observing constellations, and telling stories around the campfire. Who knew before that an otter's scat smells like jasmine tea? Or that the best time to view the moon's craters is when it's waxing or waning, not when it's full? Or that there are approximately 1.4 billion insects—many of them nocturnal—for every human being that's alive? Or that a Finnish folk tale explains that the northern lights are sparked by the tail of an Arctic fox? Citing an array of science, lore, literature, and personal experience, the book makes a powerful case that darkness is essential to our health and a full experience of life on this planet.

With engaging illustrations and a helpful list of resources, *Wild Nights Out* provides tools and instructions that will spur parents' creativity and help transform children's perceptions of the natural world. Its activities are a great excuse to turn off the television, set down smartphones, and explore the rich, mysterious world of darkness just beyond the back door.

KRISTEN RABE (May / June 2021)

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