Doggone Fun

BY KATE HOFMANN

For extra fun outside, take along a dog as your guide!

Lots of people love hanging out with a special dog. Are you one of them? If so, you already know that dogs are good company in the great outdoors. Playing a game of fetch, taking a walk, or splashing in water are perfect ways to have fun and get some exercise together. But don’t stop there. Go outside and try these three fun games to see what you can learn from your dog’s way of seeing (and smelling) the world!

Find the Object

Does your dog have a favorite treat or toy? Send that pup on a scavenger hunt to sniff it out! Show the dog the object. Tell the dog to sit and stay, or have someone hold it. Hide the object nearby, and then send the dog to find it. You might need to start with an easy spot or give some hints. Your hiding spots can get harder as your dog catches on.

Hide-and-Seek

Tell your dog to sit and stay or have someone hold it. Go and hide in a place where your dog can’t see you. Then call your dog. When it finds you, give it something it loves, such as praise, petting, or a treat. Play a few more rounds, hiding farther away or in harder spots each time as your dog figures out how the game works.

Follow the Leader

Clip on a leash and head for a meadow, a wooded trail, or even just a sidewalk in your neighborhood. Then follow your dog’s lead. If it circles around a tree, can you spot a squirrel or another animal up in the branches? If it sticks its nose in a hole, can you guess what creature might live there? When it stops to sniff, search for animal tracks or droppings from wild animals. A field guide can help you identify the signs you see.