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## Recreation

### Dig into your backyard

**How you can unearth archaeological wonders.**

*By Gayle Jo Carter*

**Although survival expert** Josh Bernstein, 35, has spent the past two years traveling the globe as host of the History Channel's family-friendly, adventure-archaeology series, "Digging for the Truth" (Mondays, 9 p.m. ET), he says people can learn a lot about archaeology right in their own backyards. Bernstein, who has trekked through 29 countries in pursuit of unearthing historical artifacts, also runs his own outdoor survival venture, the Colorado-based Boulder Outdoor Survival School.

With warm outdoor weather beckoning, we asked him for five ways families can conduct their own neighborhood digs. Be sure to wear a hat and clothes that you can get dirty, and bring along a shovel, trowel, pail and magnifying glass.

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#### **Bernstein's backyard archaeology projects**

**1 Have a friend destroy a small clay pot and bury it in a secret spot.** Then try to find it (no fair looking for fresh dirt!). Next, dig up the pot and try to put it back together.

**2 Dig a 2-by-2-by-2-foot section in the ground.** (Kids, get permission from your parents first, and stick to your own yard.) Note every item you find -- rocks, wood chips, sticks. Pinpoint those findings on graph paper, and label and place the items in individual bags for your collection. Don't forget to refill the hole with dirt.

**3 Bury a chicken bone for two weeks.** Then dig it up and compare it with a fresh chicken bone. Now imagine a bone that has been in the ground for 5,000 years. Pretty amazing.

**4 Empty a bag of household trash (kids, if it's not yours, get permission first) and search through it.** Separate the items, looking for those that would not decay in, say, 10 years. Then try to reconstruct in writing what kind of activities took place in the house based only on those items.

**5 For "explorer" extra credit:** Try to find and list 10 insects, 10 birds, five mammals, 10 trees and 20 plants within 30 minutes just in your immediate neighborhood. Give the list to a friend or family member and have him or her try to find the same items.

