



Staycation GUIDE

What Is a Staycation?

Two weeks exploring another country or a new city can be an amazing way to spend your vacation. It can also be expensive, time-consuming to plan and involve days of travel. If you're looking for a different way to spend your vacation days, consider a staycation — a vacation in the comfort of your own home.

Forbes Magazine offers a number of convincing arguments for why a few days spent relaxing and checking out your own neighborhood can be just as fun as a trip.

SAVING MONEY

Between flights, hotels, eating out three meals a day and entry fees to various attractions, vacations can get pricey. AAA reports that the average North American vacation costs almost \$250 a day for two people, and when children are added to the mix, it gets even more expensive. If you can't afford that every year, a staycation is a good way to mix things up.

SAVING TIME

Depending on where you're going, two full days of your vacation could be spent traveling to your destination. If you can spare two weeks for a trip, that's not too bad. If you only have a few days, though, you don't want to spend half of that in transit. A staycation allows you to spend all your days off playing, relaxing and enjoying the time. You also get to skip the long car trip or line at the airport and navigating around a new city.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER, ADAPT

Bad weather can ruin vacation plans, either because you



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aren't able to do what you want or you do it anyway, but it's much less fun because of the rain or dust storm. When you're spending your vacation at home, it's much easier to adjust

plans around weather or other circumstances, including waking up on the day you planned to go hiking and decide it's the day you want to have breakfast in bed and read instead.

IGNORE THE CHORES

Taking a couple of days off work to catch up on outdoor repairs or attack the piles of laundry and dirty dishes is not a staycation. You have to

change up your routine and make your days fun, relaxing and different from what you normally do. Sleep in, eat brunch and save the vacuuming for later. You're on vacation.

Planning Your Staycation

Although we all have days off that are simply a day off, with no plans for work or play, you want to approach a staycation as if it's a vacation. The Health Sessions recommends a number of ways to make a staycation enjoyable, exciting, relaxing and all the things a good vacation offers. So much of that comes down to how well you plan.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Do as much research for a staycation as you would for a vacation. Find out what attractions there are in your city through the convention and visitors website, community center and your local newspaper's events page and find out what's happening. Make a list of things you've always thought about doing but never got around to.

MAKE A SCHEDULE

Take the time off work, mark the staycation on the calendar and treat it as you would a vacation for which you were leaving town. Plan out your days with activities you want to do. Want to spend an afternoon napping, reading a book or binging on Netflix? Schedule it, guilt-free. But don't be afraid to change up the schedule or leave free time either.

DELEGATE

Involve your children in the planning. Let them pick activities they want to do, research nearby attractions or plan a backyard campout or sleepover in the living room. This helps them to get more excited about their vacation as well.

SPLURGE A LITTLE

You don't have to spend

every night at home or eat every meal around your kitchen table. A staycation is a great time to splurge on a restaurant you might not normally go to. Or, you can spend one night in a local hotel, enjoying the swimming pool,

continental breakfast and changed surroundings. You can also leave chocolates on the pillow, have fresh flowers in a vase on the table or do other little things to fancy up your home.

GET READY

You may not need to pack, but do grocery shopping and take care of necessary tasks beforehand. Knowing your fridge is full and you don't need to worry about running errands will allow you to relax

more. Let extended family, your boss and others know that you won't be available during this time. Allow yourself to unplug, just as you would if you were on a beach, hiking a mountain or exploring a foreign country.



Exploring Your City

It's human nature: we rarely explore what's in our own backyards. A staycation is the perfect chance to be a tourist in your own city or region — with the benefit of going home, cooking dinner in your own kitchen and sleeping in your own bed. Forbes offered a number of ideas to check out in your city.

GO TO THE LOCAL MUSEUM

Most cities and towns have museums of some kind that catalog the history of the city or some industry or happening in the city, the science around some interesting physical aspect of the region, the life of a local celebrity or even some quirky feature about the city, such as the UFO Museum in Roswell, New Mexico, which sprang up from the interest surrounding the reported alien landing in 1947. You can also look up the buildings in your city that are on the National Register of Historic Places and do a little architectural tour around town.

SEE A SHOW

Whether it's community theater or a professional performance, see what live performances are happening in your community. If you have several options, try something you may not normally go to. Check out an opera or a ballet or a big band performance. During the summer, cities often host concerts in the park, which is a great way to hear live music with the whole family.

CHEER ON YOUR LOCAL SPORTS TEAM

Have a minor league sports team in the area? Get tickets and go see them play. Minor



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league baseball games are a great time to throw out a blanket, spend time with your friends or children, eat stadium food and watch the action. You might have other sporting events going on in your area too, even though high school

sports aren't going on during the summer.

FESTIVALS, PARADES AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

A lot of cities have a Fourth of July parade or fireworks or a

festival celebrating the city's founding; festivals in particular are often weekend-long affairs with food, vendors, games and other fun ways to wile away a day or two. Farmers markets let you buy local produce, shop from arti-

sans' creations and enjoy live music. County and state fairs also offer a great opportunity to eat food you'd never eat when you're not on vacation and see events like rodeos, demolition derbies and concerts.



Swimsuit Season

It's sunny and warm outside; why not put on a bathing suit and go for a dip? That could be a couple of hours at the local pool or a day at the closest beach. Enjoy the feel of the sun on your skin and the sand (or grass) on your bare feet. Wherever you are, though, apply sunscreen liberally, wear a hat and spend some time every now and then in the shade.

There are plenty of ways to enjoy the water during the summer that don't require you to go too far from home.

A DAY AT THE BEACH

Most Americans don't live too far away from a natural water source. According to Forbes, 50 percent of Americans who live near the Pacific or Atlantic coasts or the

Gulf of Mexico and 10 percent who live near Great Lakes. Beyond that, there are hundreds of lakes and rivers throughout the country, offering access to a day at the beach. If you're not a strong swimmer, make sure you're near lifeguards or are taking safety precautions. Even if you don't want to swim in the ocean, relaxing on the sand,

listening to the water and people-watching can be fun. Walking along the beach also offers the chance to check out tide pools, watch the sunset and collect shells.

TAKE A CRUISE

Live near a lake? Forbes recommends seeing whether there are cruise companies that offer a relaxing few hours

on a boat eating, drinking, socializing and enjoying the view. If you're near a river, see if river cruises are an option. These offer a whole new view of the area than watching from the shore – or from your car on your commute to work.

NO BEACH? GO TO THE POOL

If the beach is too far for

your staycation, head to the local swimming pool. Your family can make a day of it, packing a picnic lunch for mid-day, bringing umbrellas and books and other ways to pass the time in between playing in the water. You may also find a water park nearby and can mix up the swimming with water slides, a hot tub, a wave pool and a nap on the grass.

Outdoor Recreation

The weather is warm, the days are long, flowers are blooming and it's a great time to be outside. No matter how familiar you are with your city, it's always fun to explore it on foot or by bike or spending a day or two at a nearby national or state park. Forbes had a few ideas to help you get some sun and a bit of exercise during your summery staycation.

EXPLORE ON A BIKE

No matter how well you know your city, it always look different on two wheels. You can spend a day on your bike, either mountain biking along the trails nearby or biking on roads or urban trails. You can bring a lunch and go all day or keep it short and relaxing. Always wear a helmet when biking. If you want to try something new, look into renting a tandem bike.

GO HIKING

There are national and state parks with a couple hundred miles of many Americans, and a staycation is a good opportunity to explore a new park. But if you don't want to go that far, the same trails that make for good biking are good for hiking too. Find a wilderness park in your city or check out trails just outside the city limits, put on hiking boots or solid tennis shoes, pack water, put on sunscreen and go for walk in nature.

EXPLORE THE CITY ON FOOT

There's nothing like walking among the shops and restaurants in a city's downtown, soaking in the sights, sounds and smells of city life. Check out the fresh bread and pastries at your local bakery, enjoy a leisurely hour at an



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outdoor table at a café, go window shopping (or regular shopping) in stores that you may not always get to.

Tips for a Safe and Fun

Day Outside:

- Wear sunscreen and a hat.
- If you're hiking or biking or doing other strenuous activity, make sure to bring

enough water and snacks – including for your dog if you take it hiking.

- Rest as needed. This is especially true when you're

working hard, but on a hot enough day even strolling the streets can take its toll.

- Wear shoes that are appropriate for the activity.

Get Some R&R

Ever finished a vacation that was so exhausting that you felt like you needed another vacation to recuperate? When you're in a new place, you want to spend as much time as possible visiting museums, hiking, seeing the sights and exploring. It's fun, but it can get tiring.

A staycation, while it should always include a little exploration, can be more relaxing. Real Simple Magazine suggested activities to include in your staycation planning to help you enjoy your down time.

READ A BOOK

Vacations offer lots of reading time, be it waiting at the airport or riding a train. Just because you're not traveling doesn't mean you should miss any of that quality reading time. The hot afternoon hours are a great time to wile away with a good book and a glass of lemonade or iced tea. Want a change of scenery from your living room? Set up a hammock in the yard, go to a local coffee-house or take a blanket to your closest park and enjoy the sun while you read.

SLEEP IN OR TAKE A NAP

You're on vacation! You may have days that are packed with activities and don't leave time for this, but work in nap time or free time or a late start to the day so you don't have to set an alarm.

UNPLUG

Leave your phone at home or put it on airplane mode. That way you won't feel the need to check email, scroll through Twitter or wonder who might be trying to get hold of you. Give yourself permission



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to truly check out and enjoy your vacation. Leave your watch at home too.

ORDER IN

This could mean ordering

pizza or Chinese food from the restaurant down the street or, with a little planning, it could mean ordering Maryland crab legs, Maine lobster rolls or Omaha steaks, allowing you to

bring the food of somewhere else into your living room.

To make things a little fancier, eat outside by candlelight, preferably barefoot so you can enjoy the feeling of grass on

your feet. Find a good summer soundtrack – maybe your favorite beach music, or a relaxing classical sound, or something French or Italian that transports you elsewhere.

Fun Activities with Children

It can be hard to get children excited about staying home. With a little creativity and depending how much work parents want to do (or how wet they want to get), there are many activities you can plan so your kids have fun experiences on their staycation. Real Simple Magazine and the Huffington Post had a lot of ways to make staycations fun for kids.

HAVE A SLEEPOVER OR CAMP OUT AT HOME

If your backyard is big enough for a tent, pull it out, put it up and spend a night outdoors. You can cook with a grill for dinner, which means the opportunity to make s'mores, the quintessential camping treat, look at the stars and then curl up in the tent. Not into sleeping outdoors, even in your own yard? Push aside couches and other furniture and lay out sleeping bags in the living room.

HOLD A FAMILY TOURNAMENT

Whether your game is Uno, Monopoly, table tennis, croquet or something else, set up a tournament and find out who's the best. Or, make it last all vacation, doing a different activity each day, with the day's winner getting to pick where you go for dinner that night or what movie to watch.

HAVE A MOVIE NIGHT

Get your favorite movie candy, pop some popcorn and break out the movies. You can pick a theme or otherwise pick a favorite movie, turn off the lights and pretend you're in a theater. If no kids are involved, make it longer; plan our own film festival and get through your favorite international films, romantic comedies or action movies. If you



have a large enough wall, either inside or outside, check out your library to see if you can rent a projector and get the big screen magic without leaving the house.

BEAT THE HEAT WITH WATER GAMES

Invest in a kiddie pool and water balloons, break out the hose or sprinklers or dig out those water guns and have a

water fight or a day to play in water.

Feel free to invite the neighborhood kids or your children's friends and stock everybody up with balloons and

spray bottles and anything else they can use to play. Not much structure is needed; generally kids know what to do with water balloons and water guns.