



Staycation Guide

Why Stay Home for Vacation?

There are lots of great places to spend your vacation — the beach, the lake, camping, the big city, getting pampered at a spa.

But if you want to save money, avoid the hassle of travel or simply enjoy the creature comforts of home, consider a fun, relaxing staycation, exploring your own city or region and all it has to offer, getting a break from your regular routine and still sleeping in your own bed instead of uncomfortable airplane seats. Not convinced? Forbes Magazine has some tips to help.

MORE TIME PLAYING, LESS TIME TRAVELING

Traveling to your destination can eat up huge chunks of your time off. If you only have a few days off, you don't want to spend two of those on the road or in a plane, not to mention dealing with jet lag, time differences and getting lost in a new city. A staycation enables you to spend your days off doing the things you want to do.

It also enables you to be less flexible. Is it raining on one of your days off? Instead of donning a raincoat and umbrella and splashing your way to a museum, stay home, make popcorn, binge-watch a show or otherwise stay cozy and dry.

STAYING HOME SAVES MONEY

Flights, hotels, eating out



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three meals a day, souvenirs, entry fees to all the places you want to go and random other expenses that always pop up when traveling can add up. A two-week trip for two can run into the thousands of dollars; that's, on average, \$200 to \$250 a day per person. If you stay

home, you eliminate two of those costs, allowing you to save money while also spending more on the experiences you're having.

RELAXATION

Unless relaxing is on your itinerary, you may end up more

tired after vacation than you were when you left; travel, getting from place to place, hauling luggage around and trying to fit in as much as possible, while they lead to fun things, are all going to wipe you out. A week spent at home allows you to work in sleeping in, naptime,

movie nights, a massage or whatever else will help you relax. Additionally, it's a good chance to ignore the chores (mostly); put off laundry if you can, don't do yardwork, don't run errands, only clean what's going to make you crazy if it's dirty.

Planning a Good Staycation

You took time off work, the kids are off from school — and you don't want to waste this time just sitting around. Plan your staycation like you would a trip out of town.

Make a list of places you want to visit, restaurants you want to eat at, even what your goals for the staycation are. Do you want to explore as much of your town as possible? Do you want to be relaxed at the end of it? Let the answers to those questions guide your planning. The Health Sessions has other tips for how to get the most of your staycation.

DO RESEARCH

Even if you're staying in the same city you've lived in for a decade, get online and find some new places to see. See what special events are happening during your time off or check out the local community center or college for a cooking class or food tour. See what TripAdvisor says is the No. 1 thing to do in your town.

Also, consider what you've wanted to do but not been able to because you're at work. Make plans for brunch, hit a restaurant for lunch that's always too busy at dinnertime, see a matinee or



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explore museums that are only open on weekdays.

MAKE A BUDGET, BUT BE OPEN TO SPLURGE

You're on vacation! Spend a little more money than you normally would. Go out for meals, spend a night in a local

hotel (weeknight rates tend to be lower than weekend) and enjoy the hot tub and swimming pool, tons of channels on the TV and not making the bed. That said, it's good to have a budget in mind and know where your money is going. When you're trying to

relax and have fun, money can seem to spend itself.

CHANGE UP YOUR ROUTINE

Leave chocolates on your pillows, order food in and eat on the couch in your pajamas, get a vase of flowers for the

dining room or living room table and sleep in. Also, don't be afraid to turn off your cell phone, leave it in another room or not answer non-emergency phones or texts. If you wouldn't handle it when you're out of town, don't handle it on a staycation.

Get into the Water (Or Close to It)

If your staycation is a summer vacation. Take advantage of the sunny weather to break out your swimsuit.

No matter where you live, there's some way to get into the water, and little feels more like vacation than having a tropical day. If you don't live near a beach or aren't a fan of natural water, look up your local pool or water park. Wherever you are, though, apply sunscreen liberally, wear a hat and spend some time every now and then in the shade.

GO TO THE POOL

If you don't live near the ocean or any lakes or rivers, the pool is a great alternative. Invite friends, take a picnic lunch, bring towels and an umbrella and sunglasses and stay all day. The pool is especially great if you're dealing with kids of various ages, since you'll have the kiddie pool for the younger kids and more activities for older kids who are stronger swimmers.

GO TO THE BEACH

According to Forbes, almost two-thirds of Americans live near one of the coasts, the Gulf of Mexico or one of the Great Lakes. If you're among those who live not too far away, spend a day at the beach. You can rent a beach



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house for a day or two and spend your days lounging in the sand and playing in the water.

If you don't have a "big" beach, there are hundreds of lakes and rivers of all sizes, from Lake Tahoe or Lake

Powell to the little pond in the backcountry somewhere. Bring a book, take a nap, explore tide pools or sea caves, watch the sunset — or sunrise, for the ambitious — play beach volleyball and just enjoy the day at the beach.

GO ON A CRUISE

Many lakes offer day or half-day cruises; you buy a ticket, and your job is then to eat, drink, enjoy the sun and sights, talk to your friends and relaxing. There are also river cruise companies, which give

you an entirely new view of the area you're used to seeing from your commute or your daily life.

If there's no cruise option, find a friend with a boat or see if boat rental is an option. Just make sure to be safe.

Staycation with Children

Traveling with kids can be hard; so can having a fun vacation at home. Don't let those worries stop you from planning a staycation that even the pickiest of children will enjoy.

Parenting Magazine offered tips to involve your children in the planning and executing of fun activities that will be as scrapbook- and story-worthy as a trip somewhere.

ENLIST THEIR HELP IN PLANNING

Ask your kids what they want to do. Encourage them to come up with different wish lists than a normal Saturday. Let each child pick an activity or give them a certain budget to spend. Then, let them help you plan. With older kids, give them more responsibilities and more opportunities to explore what your town has to offer.

HAVE A MOVIE NIGHT — OR A MOVIE DAY

This is good to have as a backup in case of bad weather, but it doesn't have to be a backup. Set aside time to watch movies or binge-watch a TV show. Have movie snacks like candy and popcorn, stay in your pajamas, drag mattresses into the living room so everyone can relax, break out



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blankets. Make it extra special by doing a sing-along to your favorite musical or letting your kids invite their friends over.

EXPLORE NATURE

If your family is up to it, plan a long bike or hike (with length determined by age and fitness level). It's a great way to explore your community more

slowly. Or, hit the local trails and go hiking. Bring snacks, water, bug spray, sunscreen and take younger kids on easy trails and older kids on the more intense nature trails.

HAVE A PLAY DAY

Spend all day at the children's museum or a local amusement or water park. You can also go park-hopping;

many of us are familiar with our neighborhood parks but never explore what others in the city have to offer. Look for parks with different types of playgrounds, nature trails, a carousel and more. Or, you can stay home and have a board game marathon.

MAKE SOMETHING

Break out the construction

paper, popsicle sticks, glue and markers and make crafts with your children. Worried you're not creative enough? Check out your local craft store for kits to make different projects. You can also hit the kitchen with your kids, making cookies, pizza, bread or some other culinary creation you don't normally have the time to undertake.

Getting Outside

There's never enough time for a good long hike or bike ride during the workweek. If you're inclined toward nature, use your staycation to get outside.

Go hiking, biking, camping, fishing or rock climbing. Many Americans live close enough to facilities that allow for these activities, so you don't have to spend a day driving. Look around your city and region to see what it has to offer, and when you know, consider what Forbes Magazine had to say about making the most of your outdoor staycation.

EXPLORE A STATE OR NATIONAL PARK

The United States has 58 national parks, 117 national monuments and more than 8,500 state parks. Find one near you and explore it. The state parks, often overlooked because of the fame of their national counterparts, can be especially good finds. According to America's State Parks, these comprise almost 19 million acres of the country with 52, 603 miles of trails, 221,000 campsites and marina, stables, golf courses and more. Go take advantage of the of the 14,000 trails.

GO FOR A RIDE

Even if you're not a regular cyclist, this can be a fun activ-



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ity; just be ready for how sore your bottom will be after the first day of riding. Many cities have trail systems that wind through parks and along rivers and allow you to stay away from automobile traffic. If yours doesn't, or you've spent a lot of time riding through

your city, load up your bike and drive to the next town over to explore it. Don't have a bike? Many bike shops will let you rent one — road or mountain, if you're feeling really adventurous, or tandem, if you're feeling romantic. Always wear a helmet and

obey traffic rules when you're riding a bike.

TURN YOUR YARD INTO AN OUTDOOR DESTINATION

If you don't live near campgrounds or just prefer to sleep in your own bed, you can get

similar experiences closer to home. Grill hot dogs or cook tin foil dinners in your backyard and make s'mores over the grill. Set up a tent in your backyard or set up a hammock and fall asleep under the stars. Just be careful of mosquitoes.



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Make Time to Take a Break

Planning an out-of-town vacation can be stressful.

It's expensive, you're dealing with airports and trains and schedules and in a new area and schlepping your belongings from hotel to hotel as you move around. It doesn't always provide the restful, relaxing vacation you may need after a difficult stretch at work or if you're in need of escape and indulgence. Plan a staycation to rest and pamper yourself so you're rejuvenated and ready to jump back into things.

HAVE A SPA DAY

Book a massage, get a mani-pedi or

a facial or find out what a seaweed wrap really is at a local spa or salon. If you don't have those resources close by, create your own spa experience — take a long, hot bubble bath with relaxing music and cucumber water, paint your toenails, do a not-at-all intense yoga class that helps you relax.

LEAVE TIME FOR READING AND WATCHING TV

Reading, be it serious books or frivolous magazines or anything in between, often gets shunted to the side during busy times.

Make time for this during your staycation. If you're itching to finish "War

and Peace," do it, but if you want nothing more than to lay in a hammock reading celebrity magazines, go for it! Reading things you enjoy is a great way to forget about your problems. Watching a new TV series or revisiting an old favorite is also a great way to let your brain disengage and relax.

ORDER FOOD ... OR DON'T

Many people find placing an order for food and paying the delivery person enough work for an easy meal. If that's you, go for it. Order dinner in (eat it on the delivery containers to avoid extra dirty dishes) or order meal kit services that make cooking really

easy. You'll eat food you like without having to worry about all the cooking.

Of course, if cooking relaxes you, then absolutely pull out a complicated recipe you'd never have time to make in a normal week and spend a few hours whipping up something fabulous.

SLEEP AS MUCH AS YOU WANT

Sleep in, take a nap, go to bed whenever you'd like. Don't set your alarm and just enjoy the all-too-rare opportunity for your body to wake up when it's ready.

If you have kids, now is a good time to make sure they can find cartoons on the TV.

Tips for a Memorable Staycation

For people who love traveling, staying at home may not seem like the most exciting way to spend your days off. But there are lots of ways you can make the time special and help it feel like a real vacation.

The Kitchn supplied a number of little ways to make your staycation fun and memorable for everyone. More than anything else, find what works for you and then run with it.

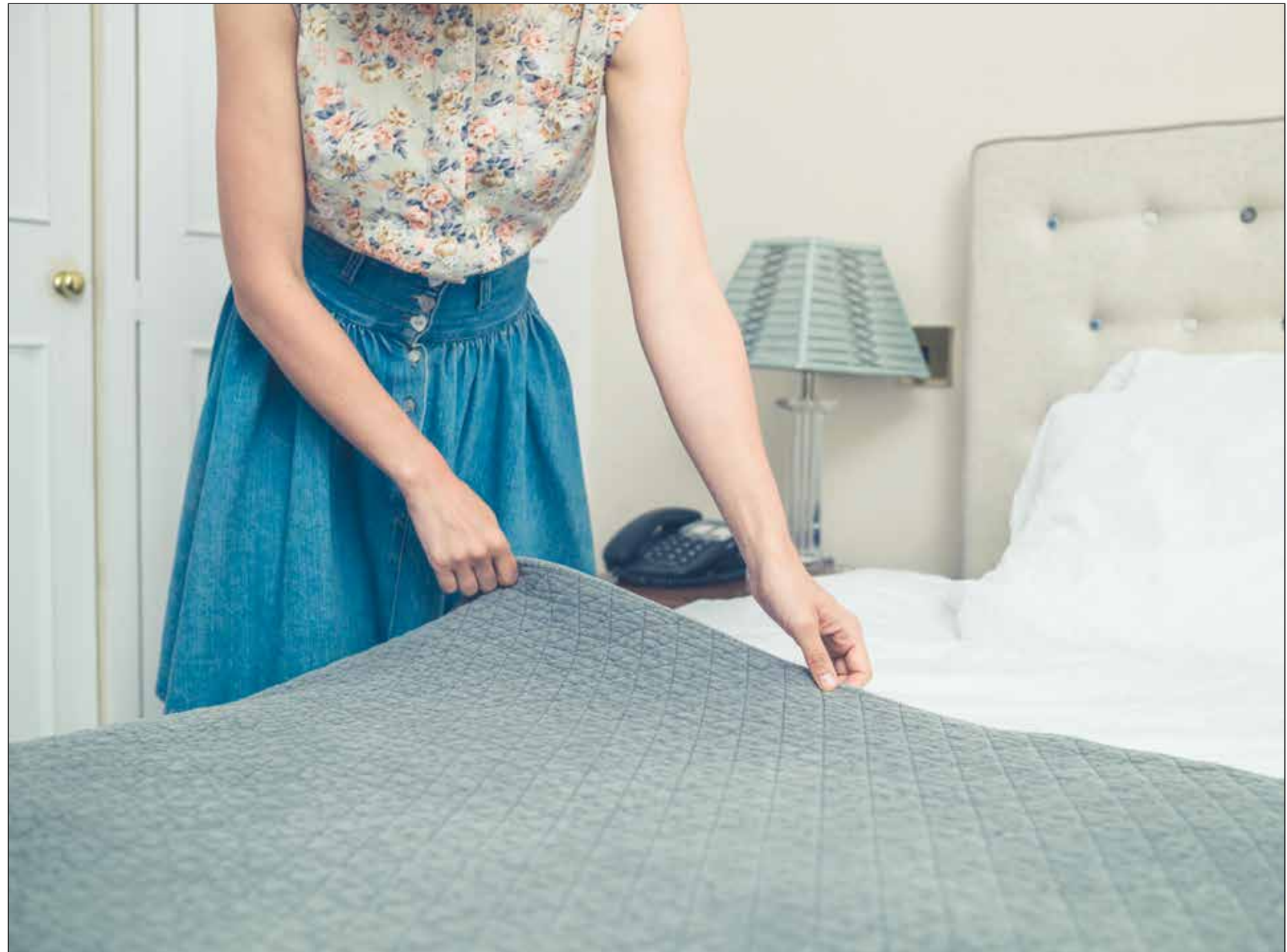
PREPARE BEFORE YOU 'GO'

Stock up on groceries, have a loose schedule for your vacation, set a budget, make sure your schedules are cleared of work assignments, doctor's appointments, homework and as many chores as feasible. Delete your work email from your phone so you're not tempted to check it.

BRING IN HELP

Hire a cleaning service to clean your house. You can do this right before your vacation officially starts, so it's nice and neat.

Hire a sitter or enlist friends or family to watch your children. Even on a family vacation, it's nice for parents to get



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an afternoon, night or even a full day to do more adult-friendly activities. Go to a movie that's not animated, go to happy hour, a wine tasting or brunch or hit a trail that's a little too advanced for little legs.

SPRUCE UP YOUR HOUSE

Get new sheets for the bed

or new, thick towels for the bathroom, put a vase of flowers by the bed or on the table, invest in fancy chocolates. If you're staycating with a partner or children, provide room service for each other, with everybody in the house getting a meal or two brought to them in bed or in front of the TV. You can buy nice, new

glasses, plates or silverware or a fancy tablecloth to dress up the dining room.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

Be it a new wine or craft beer, a new recipe or restaurant or a potential new hobby like a craft or cooking class, try something you've never had before.

REMEMBER GOOD TIMES

You're on vacation! As you go to museums or parks or festivals, purchase new mugs or T-shirts or magnets to commemorate your time. Take lots of pictures of you during your staycation; if it's not too distracting, post them on social media just like you would if you'd taken a trip.