

# Staycation GUIDE



# Become a Hometown Tourist

Many live their whole lives without really exploring their own town.

Out-of-towners happily flock to see key historic places, fun destinations and celebrated eateries, and hometown folks sometimes over-react by avoiding them all together.

## BLAME FAMILIARITY

Staycation fun can sometimes come down to acting like a tourist in your own city. The same attractions that excite new visitors may have become overly familiar to you as a resident — or maybe you've always avoided them because you didn't want to get caught up in the seasonal crush of tourists.

Pick your spots if you must, perhaps booking in the off-season, but take an opportunity to break out of old habits. You'll add some spice to your everyday life, and you might just come away with a better understanding of why others find your hometown so exciting and fun to visit.

## LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

You may have avoided some of your town's biggest draws your whole life. But if you've already taken all of them in, try digging into the smaller, tucked away attractions that complete the local experience. Look for local galleries, museums and commemorative displays to learn more



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about the life, arts, crafts and history around you.

Oftentimes, these smaller spaces will focus more intently on narrower, more intriguing moments in time — like by-gone industries or historical sports triumphs. And the art will be made by people right there in your community.

## ENJOY THE LOCAL NIGHTLIFE

It's important to treat your staycation like an actual vacation, which means avoiding the tendency to hit the sack early. Busy weeks filled with work and family obligations probably keep you far away from venues open into the evening for music, dancing

and fun. Now's the time to take advantage of all that the night has to offer, whether with your partner or a group of like-minded friends.

## DOCUMENT IT ALL

Don't forget to take plenty of pictures — just as you would in some exotic locale. Keep your phone or camera handy,

and what you notice about your hometown might give you a whole new perspective. Maybe it's the urban-core architecture, or a particularly picturesque park setting. Maybe it's something artier, like the way light play across a city street. Mix in fun candid of yourself, your partner and the people you meet.

# Staycations: By the Numbers

Vacationing close to home is on an upward trend — in particular among millennials.

The reasons are many, from being budget conscious to pandemic fears to the desire to learn more about the country we live in.

## BIG POST-PANDEMIC GROWTH

More than a quarter of U.S. adults had taken a staycation during the summer in 2020, as pandemic countermeasures continued. More than a third of millennials had taken one. The numbers kept rising: As many as 60% chose nearby domestic travel over the course of the next year. Today, more than 75% of the American public is familiar with the term “staycation,” with a growing number of people looking to take advantage of the opportunity to see and experience things closer to home at a significantly cheaper price. “Staycation” has seen more than a 50% uptick in search frequency since 2010.



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## THERE ARE HUGE SAVINGS

Faraway trips can cost thousands of dollars, sometimes many thousands — and that’s a significant part of the average family’s yearly budget. Transportation, hotel reservations and passes to various attractions might require

months and months of savings. Staycations offer the fun and relaxation of those pricier trips, but for far less — and Americans have noticed. Domestic air travel is almost back to its pre-COVID levels, while international flights are still lagging. Use the money you save to pay off old debt,

that remodeling job you’ve been putting off, or purchasing some cool new tech. Or, better yet, book another staycation!

## LEARNING AND GROWING

You might be surprised how many interesting things there are to do in your own home-

town — or in nearby locations that you’ve flown right over to get to faraway destinations. Survey friends and family members on hot spots around the area, or fun outings they’ve heard about but never tried. Check out websites operated by convention and visitors bureaus, parks and recreation

and local chambers of commerce for more tips. Considering trying something new, whether it’s a boat tour on an area lake, or an evening of laser tag or bowling. You’ll likely find plenty of younger people to share these adventures with: Millennials take an average of three staycations a year.

# Connect Again Over a Meal

We've always tended to gather in the kitchen during parties. Staycations are no different.

When planning your next overnight domestic trip, remember to include a cooking experience. Making a meal together is fun, a great way to save still more money, and a bonding experience that strengthens relationships for years to come.

Why shell out the big bucks for high-end resort dinners when you can grill your own? Restaurant-produced seafood meals will set you back almost as much as that steak. Visit a local grocer, or incorporate an outdoor adventure into your staycation, and serve fresh fish for dinner at a fraction of the cost.

## HEALTHIER CHOICES

Let's face it, we all tend to put on a few while we're on vacation. There are typically just too many options that lead to weight gain — and then post-vacation guilt. When you're making your own meal, you get to select every ingredient. Home cooked meals are both healthier and lower in calories, according to research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Make informed decisions based on your unique taste, caloric goals and health needs, and you'll have taken away one of the lingering regrets that sometimes



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follows our most extravagant faraway vacations.

## FAMILY FUN

If your staycation involves a larger group of family members, cooking at home also provides a fun opportunity for younger relatives to take part in the process. You'll also be set-

ting a good example when it comes to healthy eating. Parents play an important role in teaching kids about making the right dietary choices, according to the government's Let's Move! website. Bring them with you when you are shopping for ingredients, or into the outdoors as you try to land the

evening's fresh catch.

## EXCITING NEW TASTES

Staycations are a great opportunity to try new things, and to visit new places. Rather than shopping at your regular supermarket, consider visiting the farmers market or local co-op. You'll find fresh fruits and vege-

tables, as well as a growing variety of other ingredients to spice up your evening meal. Ask about favorite recipes that make use of anything you buy. Even if you find yourself going to a more traditional grocer, try a new one. They may have something there that offers a whole new culinary experience.

# Pampering Yourself

In some cases, staycations can be your first chance to unwind in a while.

Rather than over scheduling, consider taking it easy. Pamper yourself in ways you might not in your every-day life, and you'll return rested and relaxed.

## HOTELS

We typically think of booking multi-star hotels when we travel far away from home. But they can be a part of any staycation, as well. Chances are, you've never stayed in the nicest hotel in your hometown — why would you? Now's your chance to experience the luxury and refinement that so many visitors have enjoyed right down the street. You'll get all of the benefits — including an escape from the every day, personal service, comfy bedding and high-end decor — without the added expense and stress of booking an airline ticket or taxi ride.

## SPAS

The ultimate relaxation might be found in a place you've driven by countless times on the way to work. Find a spa near home that offers an escape from our busy lives. Many offer a wide variety of pampered services, including pedicures and manicures, facials and a sauna, micro-abrasion and other skin treatments, and even makeup services. There may even be



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special additional touches, like a champagne toast. Ask about package deals, and perhaps bring a friend or your partner.

## MASSAGES

Sore, aching muscles? Tension from another hard week at the office? Relax with

a trip to your local massage therapist. Shop around in your hometown for the best-reviewed pro, keeping an eye out for technique. There are literally hundreds of different therapies to consider, including deep tissue, Swedish, hot stone and others. Some massage therapists also pair their

work with aromatherapy, and special oils or lotions that reduce friction on the skin.

## TAKE OUT

Who doesn't love to sit back and let someone else do the cooking? Luxury vacations always include an amazing meal or two, prepared and

served while you enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation. Staycations don't have to be any different: Order a meal and drinks from a fancy restaurant in town, then have it delivered to your door. Bring along a tablecloth and elegant dishes to complete the look. And don't forget the dessert!

# A Resort, Right at Home

Want to keep the “stay” in staycation by never leaving your own house?

Here are some helpful tips that will turn your home into a mini-version of the expensive resorts and hotels that usually accompany longer trips.

## BEDDING

So many people come back from visits to a resort simply raving about the comfort of their bedding. Take some of the ready cash you saved by not traveling further away to buy high-quality toppers, sheets and pillows. If you're interested in going all out, splurge on a comfy new mattress. Then you'll be all set for an evening of deep sleep, then perhaps breakfast in bed. The best news of all is, all of this beauty, peace and comfort will remain long after your staycation is over — transforming your bedroom into a sanctuary every night.

## STAGING

Familiar spaces take on a whole new look when you change just a few things. Turn your home into a showplace by moving furniture around to take advantage of square footage. Create a conversation nook by pushing chairs and a small table together. Move furniture away from your windows to allow more natural light to flow in. Declutter to make it all look more elegant. Refresh everything with a new



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rug, or updated window treatments.

## FLOWERS

Fancy hotels are typically dotted with fresh flower arrangement, adding beauty, freshness and beautiful aromas to every visit. You can mimic this look with a quick trip to a local florist or nurs-

ery, or an easy and fun trip out into nature to pick your own. Garden centers also offer an amazing selection of variations and hues. Pick out your favorites, and playfully arrange them throughout your staycation space for a pop of color. Allow your inner designer to flourish, or visit a local hobby store for tips on

arrangements. If you're not known for having a green thumb, there are plenty of attractive artificial varieties, as well.

## LIGHTING

A change in lighting so often leads to a change in mood. Create the perfect environment for that special meal, a

celebratory toast or a long-awaited movie marathon during your staycation. Replace the light bulbs with low-wattage versions, or add candles since they also provide inviting new scents to any space. Whether you're looking for romance or serenity, the right lighting can make a big difference.

# Get Out There

Why not take “getting away from it all” to the extreme?

Reconnect with yourself, and nature, with a staycation right outside your door. Consider camping, parks and trails, golfing or other outside fun for your next getaway:

## CAMPING AND FISHING

Camp out or fish your way back to peace of mind. There aren't many easier ways to save money while getting a much-needed break. You decide how much you'd like to invest in sheltering and equipment. The most rugged adventurers may need only a backpack and pup tent. Others may want to go the so-called “glamping” route, combining luxury with the great outdoors. Where ever you fall on that spectrum, there's plenty of fun to be had. Purchase quality gear from well-known manufacturers and it will last for trip after trip over the years. Research nearby campgrounds, lake, trails and streams, then head out.

## BIKING AND HIKING

State and national parks offer a treasure trove of trails for hiking and biking. Increasingly, so do local cities and towns. Take advantage of these nearby options by heading over to one of their official websites. They'll provide handy maps so you can plan out your adventure, including stops along the way to view nature or



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enjoy some refreshments.

## GOLFING

Golf remains one of the most popular outdoor activities, and those who shop around can find public courses and day specials at semi-private clubs that are

very affordable. Rather than spending money on airfare and gas, invest in a day spent chasing a ball under a beautiful blue sky.

Save enough and you can re-route your old vacation budget into new clubs, shoes and golf clothes.

## SPECTATOR SPORTS

Maybe you love sports, but aren't the kind of hike, golf or camp? Settle in at a local ballpark for a relaxing afternoon or evening with the sport of your choice. The cash you saved by deciding on a staycation can be spent on better

seats, or that special banner or cap for the kids. Plan your time away to coincide with a critical stretch of games. You can be there for every second as your team takes on their arch rivals, rather than simply following the scores in the next day's news feed.

# Take a Moment to Relax

Did you need another vacation after your last vacation?

Sometimes a staycation just means taking a moment to yourself, rather than rushing off to museums, sightseeing, hiking or exploring.

## DANGERS OF STRESS

Sadly, more than 20% of American adults felt stressed during their time off, according to one American Psychological Association survey. Nearly 30% worked more than they had hoped while actually on vacation. The truth is, of course, that we shouldn't be working at all. This kind of chronic stress leads to burn out, or what one study referred to as a "vacation deficit." So give yourself time to take it easy.

## READ A BOOK

Staycations offer the perfect opportunity to dive deeply into that book you've been meaning to read. You probably started it, in fact, while you were on a plane to your last faraway destination, then in the rush of vacation activity never finished. Staycations can offer focused time to devote to quality reading, in particular during warm, lazy afternoons. Create a comfy space in your living room, or relocate to a hammock. Scout out a new coffee shop, or spread out a blanket at a nearby park. The next thing you know, you'll be turning the



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final page.

## HEAR THE MUSIC

Create or discover a new playlist, then make it the soundtrack of your time away. Hit play while you're relaxing, sharing a meal or enjoying family time together. These songs will become memory triggers for years to come, as

you look back on this happy time together.

## GET SOME SLEEP

Not getting enough sleep is often a byproduct of our busy lives. Staycations should always have an element of self care, and catching up on your sleep is an important part of that. Turn that alarm off.

Have all of the fun you'd like, but either way — leave time for resting, whether that means planned nap time, or sleeping in late.

## DIGITALLY UNPLUG

This may be the hardest part of all, for some people. Put your phone away, or switch it to airplane mode.

Delete your messaging app, email updates or social media alerts for the duration of your staycation.

Give yourself needed permission to unplug from your digital life, then more deeply connect with yourself, your family and your surroundings. The Twitter feed can wait.