

Staycation GUIDE



Treat Yourself

Part of the idea of a staycation is to pamper yourself and relax. Here are some ideas that may give your days off a luxe vibe, without breaking the bank.

HIRE A HOUSECLEANER

Start off your days at home by hiring a professional housecleaner. Once you get them started working, take off to while away the time by reading a book in a coffee shop, wandering a local museum, walking in a park or all of the above. Then come home to kick off your staycation in a nice, clean home.

GET OUT IN THE GARDEN

Sunshine and growing things nurtures the soul. Get out and tackle some of your outdoor projects and get some new plants making roots. If you like to cook, consider planting an herb garden or a salad garden. If flowers are your thing, put in some native pollinators that are hardy to your environment and help bees and butterflies do their job.

VOLUNTEER

Spend some of your staycation days helping kids learn to read, painting murals or walking shelter dogs. Not only will you get out, meet new people and make your community better, you'll also be giving



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back. This may become a regular habit and lead to new connections you never knew you needed.

HAVE A GOURMET MEAL

Take a trip to a restaurant you've never been to and splurge on a really great meal. Eat well, enjoy and bring home the leftovers along with some

great memories. Invite friends, put your phones away and enjoy an hour or two of catching up.

GET OUT IN NATURE

Take a walk or a hike in an area park or on a local trail. Walk with the mindset and eyes of a tourist, excited to be there and aware of every noise,

every smell and every burst of color. Stop to read historical plaques and look up the species of trees and flowers. Really immerse yourself and relax.

START A NEW HOBBY

Use your staycation time (and keep your mind off work) by teaching yourself a

new hobby. You can set up guitar lessons, learn to make pottery, fine-tune your woodworking techniques. Anything to keep your mind engaged and excited during your time off. Make sure you plan how to continue your new hobby once you get back to work, too, to extend the health benefits.

Vacation Rental Etiquette

Staycations are great ideas for a getaway on a budget. One way to glam up your staycation is to spend a day or two in a vacation rental in your area.

Revenue from vacation rentals will top \$19 billion this year, one forecast says, and the market will boast some 62 million users. With numbers like that, there's a good chance there's a vacation rental in a neighborhood near you.

You can take the opportunity to check out a new neighborhood in your city or to just get away from your own four walls for a little while. But remember to follow these rules.

BRINGING YOUR PETS

Unless it's specifically stated, Fido and Fluffy should stay at home. Pets can make a mess if they're in an unfamiliar environment, and many rentals don't want to deal with the extensive cleanup necessary if the next guest happens to be allergic.

KEEP IT CLEAN

While many vacation rentals have cleaning fees attached, that doesn't mean you get to leave it in shambles. Treat your vacation rental like you would want someone to treat your home. Not only is it polite, but it also makes it easier for you to



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keep track of your stuff, making it easier to pack up on check-out day.

No one wants to touch your dirty pillowcases. So, before you pack up, strip the beds and put the soiled linens in the laundry room or on top of each bed to make it easier for housekeeping. Some rentals may even ask you to pop them in the washer and start the

cycle before you lock up.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING BREAKS

If something breaks, whether it's your fault or not, let the owner know right away. Don't take it upon yourself to fix anything, either. As a guest, you probably aren't covered by the owner's insurance policies. You should also replace anything

you use from the cabinets, even if they're full of food, unless the rental agreement or welcome book specifically says that you're welcome to eat any of the food provided.

LEAVE A THANK-YOU NOTE

Some rentals come with a guest book, and you should make sure to leave a note for

the owners telling them how much you appreciate the rental. You can also leave a positive review, should the property deserve it, on a booking site, or leave a handwritten note for the owners behind when you check out. All are appropriate ways to show your gratitude and give the owners constructive feedback that they'll appreciate.

Memberships Save Money

Memberships to zoos, aquariums, museums and other fun activities can pay off big time during a staycation, where families can often visit as many times as they want for free or for a minimal fee.

Many memberships also offer discounts on other things once you're inside, such as food or in gift shops, so you can even take a souvenir home and stay on budget.

MUSEUMS

Museum memberships support researchers doing important work to preserve art, history and other specimens so that we can learn about the world around us. For the patron, memberships offer invitations to exclusive events, special membership rates (some may even be free) and extended visiting hours. Some museums have partnership agreements where membership at one museum gets you benefits at a whole network of museums.

ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

For zoos and aquariums, memberships support feeding and caring for animals and their habitats while offering members exclusive access. Some benefits of membership include discounted or free



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entry, shorter wait times to get in, behind-the-scenes access to exhibits and special visiting hours and events. Like with museums, membership at one zoo or aquarium may get you special access to other facilities as well.

LIBRARIES

Today's library card gives

you access to more than just books. You can liven up your staycation by checking out movies, music and even electronics such as laptops and gaming systems and sometimes even things. The Leon County Library in Florida offers badminton sets, table tennis, telescopes and tools for check out. You can

also get seeds every spring and fall from the University of Florida/IAS Leon Extension. Best of all, library cards are free.

YMCA

If you have a local YMCA, it may offer camps, sports teams, child care and pool access all for a low fee. Drop

the kids off at a camp and treat yourself to a day poolside during your staycation. Or spend the day taking yoga and spin classes to work off a few pounds. Members may also get earlier registration dates for programs such as career training, access to clubs across the country and more.

Living Like a Local Tourist

Make your staycation a love letter to your community by hitting up local hotspots like you were a tourist.

Start by using your local convention and visitor's bureau to dig up some old treasures you may not have seen in years or find new spots that you wouldn't normally visit. Get off your beaten path and create some wonder, right in your own backyard.

SEE THE SITES

Take a walking or biking tour of your community to see it differently than you normally would. You may learn a little more history or get a view of your town you wouldn't normally see. Hearing about your town from actual tourists can also make you fall head over heels for it all over again.

TAKE IN SOME NATURE

Map out some hikes near you and take a good, long walk. Not only will it get your heart pumping, but you may see some things you haven't seen before. Make sure before you go that you dress appropriately for the conditions and the weather, and that it's safe for you to exercise.

VISIT THE PARKS

Take a trip to one or more local parks and see a part of them you haven't before. Sure, you spent your fair share of time at the baseball fields, but



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did you ever check out the fishing ponds or the dog parks? Make a point during your staycation to see a new part of your local parks and maybe try out a few new activities.

GO TO A MUSEUM

Flip through a local directory and pick out a museum or

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two you haven't visited, then go. Sometimes you can opt for a guided tour to learn the

most about the exhibits there. Then find a restaurant or local shop nearby and walk over for a great meal to end the day.

TAKE IN A SPORTING EVENT

Even if you aren't a big fan of the local college or univer-

sity, you can appreciate that its sports teams can offer you some entertainment on the cheap. Go see the Wildcats or the Bears take on their biggest rival, then take a walk around campus to find other sporting and cultural events going on. Some of them are even free.

Planning a Day Trip

Staycations don't necessarily have to mean staying in one place. Instead, you can use your time to ping around your area on day trips. Here are some useful tips for planning the perfect day trip for your staycation.

PLAN HOW YOU'LL GET THERE

Make sure your destination is within a distance that is reasonable for your usual mode of transportation, whether it's by car or bike or public transit. Plan your itinerary accordingly taking into account the time (and energy) it will take you going back and forth. If you don't normally drive, you may even consider renting a car for the day.

PACK LIGHT

It's a day trip, not a trip to outer space. Bring only what you'll need to entertain you for the day. If you're walking, biking or taking public transit, you'll eventually appreciate not carrying everything you own. You should include a few drinks and snacks, however. You might be caught without stores or without stores that sell products you like or can eat.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Map out your itinerary in



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advance, especially if you're traveling with children or others with special needs. Plan stops for refreshments or just to stretch your legs and get out some energy before piling back into the car or on the bus. Also allow for traffic jams and other delays so that you aren't stressed. After all, staycations

are about relaxation.

WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHING

And you can't relax in uncomfortable clothes or if you're trying to keep your balance on a hiking trail in heels. Wear clothing and footwear appropriate to your activities

and to the weather where you're going, especially if you're going to be spending time outside. If you're going outside and inside, consider packing a light jacket or sweater that you can peel off if you get too warm outside or put on if you get too chilly inside.

TIME YOUR TRIP

One of the benefits of a staycation is that you can take it any time, so plan your day trips on days when your destination is unlikely to be busy. You can find the least busy days for popular destinations such as theme parks, state and national parks, zoos and museums online.

Tips for Leaving Work at Work

It's awfully tempting to work during our time away, particularly if you aren't leaving your home or hometown. But you get time off in order to recharge, and you can't do that if you're answering emails. Here are some tips on leaving work at work.

TURN OFF YOUR EMAIL

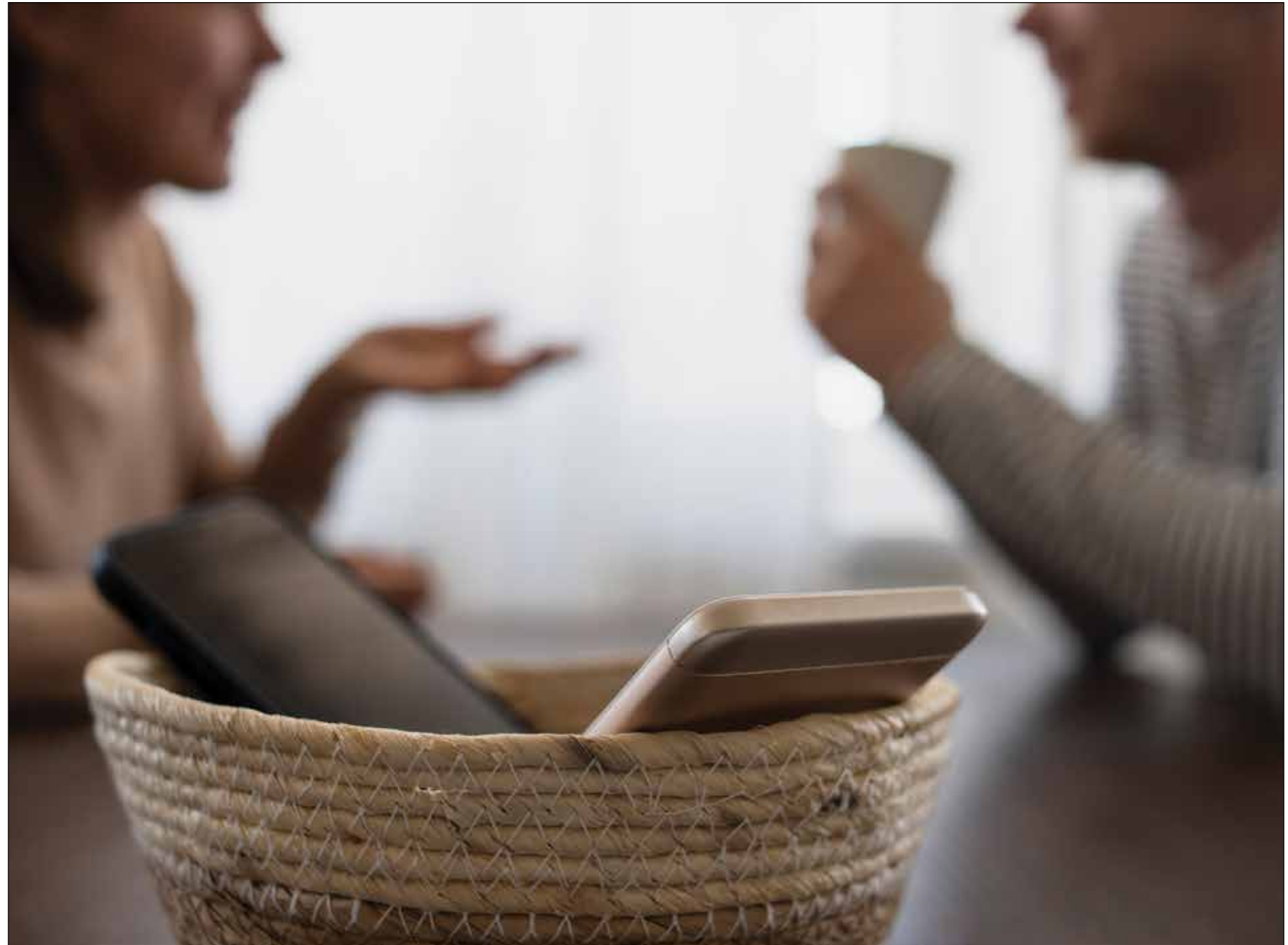
Before the end of your last day in the office, set your out-of-office reply that indicates the days you'll be out and who people can contact instead. Then flip it on, turn off your email on your phone and other devices and leave it off.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

And before you leave that who to contact information, talk to them first. Set expectations for your upcoming time away and make it clear that you aren't to be bothered unless it's an emergency. Then make it clear on what constitutes an emergency. Resist the urge to let people know you'll be at home; some people may read that as available to work.

DESTRESS

Use the beginning of your staycation to unwind and



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destress, whether this involves meditation, mindful breathing exercises, yoga, hiking or anything else. Avoid work and any activities that remind you of work. Instead, occupy your mind with other things.

TAKE TIME TO DO WHAT YOU ENJOY

Don't just plan to do noth-

ing. Instead, make a list of things you enjoy doing and try to do those things during your staycation. If you tend to obsess about work, make sure to keep yourself occupied with doing other things that you truly enjoy doing. Imagine putting work in a room and shutting the door, just for a week.

SET BOUNDARIES AND KEEP THEM

Even if you've worked during time away in the past, make this time different. Make it clear to your coworkers before you take off that you'll be away from the office and your phone and your email and text messages and Slack messages and, well, you

get the picture. Then, do whatever it takes to keep to that boundary and that promise.

We all need a mental break to be our best self at work, and at home. Keep telling yourself this if you need to during you staycation so that you can take the time you need to recharge.

Spa Days at Home

While not everyone's budget runs to a full day of beauty at the local spa, you can create a blissful atmosphere at home just as easily. So draw up a warm bubble bath and take up some of these activities.

MAKE A FACE MASK

You can make a luxurious face mask that will leave your skin glowing with ingredients from your pantry. Combine a teaspoon of honey, two teaspoons of milk and a teaspoon of cocoa powder into a bowl and mix. Apply to your face and leave it on for 15 minutes, then rinse thoroughly with warm water. This mask is moisturizing and gently exfoliates, all at the same time.

SOAK YOUR FEET

Draw a warm footbath with your favorite aromatherapy oils and soak those tootsies for 15-20 minutes. This will loosen and soften dry and hardened skin. Gently brush and scrub your toenails at the end of your soak, then go in with a pumice stone, emery board or file and gently reduce corns and calluses. Trim your toenails and push your cuticles back, then moisturize your feet and gently massage in the lotion. Don a pair of thick



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socks or wrap your feet in plastic wrap for an hour or two to ensure proper absorption of the lotion.

MAKE A HAIR MASK

Give your mane a moisturizing mask by mixing one and a half avocados, two tablespoons of olive oil, two tablespoons of manuka honey, the juice of half a lemon and a few

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drops of your favorite aromatherapy oil in a blender. Coat

your hair evenly with the smooth mixture, cover with a shower cap and let it sit for 45 minutes. Wash it out, then shampoo and condition as normal.

The oils from the avocado will heal and moisturize a dry scalp while detangling any knotted strands. Lemon acts as an antibacterial scrub and manuka honey helps with

hydration and shine.

EXFOLIATE

You can also exfoliate the rest of yourself by making an easy scrub. Mix together a cup of coconut oil and two cups of granulated sugar. Make a paste and then add 40-50 drops of essential oil. Scoop into a jar and apply as needed in the shower to slough off dry skin.