



Staycation

Why Staycation?

Staycations are a trend taking hold across the country. Different from traditional vacations that encompass traveling long distances by road or air to reach your destination, staycations are about uncovering the magic in your own backyard.

Traffic, road construction, waiting in airports and losing luggage are just some of the stresses that can dampen your fun on a traditional vacation. Often vacationers come home more exhausted and stressed than when they left.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that “paradise” does not have to be a location but rather a state of mind. The perfect vacation makes you feel a certain way — rested, relaxed and stress free. Those feelings, along with some adventure and fun, can absolutely be achieved on a staycation in your neck of the woods.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

Imagine being on vacation while helping other people achieve their dreams. That would be a good feeling.

Your staycation will benefit not only you but many of your local community businesses. Small community businesses depend on locals for support, and anything beneficial to them will impact the entire community — including your family. Everyone knows your dollar will reach farther, because that money goes right back into the local economy.

Local businesses owners



© FOTOLIA

and employees also will be encouraged by your support. Many of them are your neighbors and friends. Your advocacy brightens their day and helps you stay updated on what’s happening in your community.

UNIQUE ADVENTURE

A lot of your local shops contain unique items that are not mass produced. Challenge yourself to go window shopping and try a few different businesses. It is an adventure. You could find some great

birthday or Christmas presents while you peruse shops as part of your summer staycation.

You might even meet some of the talented artists who make those one-of-a-kind gifts. Many share the story

behind their art, as well as its purpose or meaning. This personal touch and connection makes the gift more meaningful. What better way to spend your staycation than building positive relationships with those in your community?

Save Money

Sticking close to home for your vacation has a major perk when it comes to cost. According to the American Automobile Association, the average American vacation costs \$244 per day for lodging and meals for two.

Add some kids and airfare, and a 10-day vacation could top \$10,000. On a staycation, there are many ways to save money and still have a great time. Take a look around and start planning your local adventure today.

LODGING

You can limit or eliminate the expense of lodging while staying around your hometown this summer. Rather than spending hundreds of dollars per night at a fancy hotel hundreds of miles away from home, consider supporting your local bed and breakfast or cabin company by choosing their accommodations on your staycation.

Your home also can become your sanctuary on a staycation. Choose to check out some local history during the day and then get back home in time for dinner and enjoy the comfort of sleeping in your own bed. You decide how much you'll spend on losing during your staycation because you are the one in control.

TRANSPORTATION

Vacations involving long-distance driving entail extra gas expenses and wear and tear on your vehicle. Staying closer to home means



© FOTOLIA

there won't be any rental car costs, because you can drive your own vehicle or take the local bus or transit system. Your pocketbook will thank you for choosing to visit local hotspots instead of trekking

across the country.

FOOD

Although you might still decide to dine out some of the time, on a staycation, it is optional. You will have extra

time to try those interesting recipes and have fun with the family in the kitchen.

Let's not forget that staycations can include all your pets. There will be no kennel fees or the fear that your pets will feel

anxious while you're away. Staycations embrace the philosophy that there is no place like home. They are also cost-efficient, and that can only contribute to the feelings of relaxation and less stress.

Explore Local History

Discovering local history is a traditional vacation activity. What better way to learn about the history around you than by diving into a journey through the past on a staycation?

There are many local organizations dedicated to showcasing the historical perspectives of your home region. You just have to look for them. Start by spending a day at the local library, heading to your downtown museum or taking a local tourism tour around some of the hotspots your area has to offer. You will wrap up your staycation feeling more well-informed than you started.

LOCAL MUSEUMS

Museums can bring us up to speed on history. They offer the perfect forum for providing both education and entertainment for your family.

While all the different types of museums might not be available in your town, you likely won't have to travel far to find one that celebrates the history, cultural background and landmarks around you. Take your children and friends with you as you educate yourselves on the historic gems that together tell the story of your region.

LOCAL LIBRARIES

Libraries contain volumes of books of every genre, and there should be lots of information and stories on your local history. Check one out and you have a perfect staycation day enjoying the peace and quiet of the



© FOTOLIA

local library.

Or check out a collection of books for the week and head home. Put on your favorite pajamas and plop in a chair. Make some tea, cover yourself with a blanket and encapsulate

yourself in local history.

TOURS

Tours of historic districts and homes are another option to catch up on local history. Some tours and guides even use

horses or boats to discover historic areas. Part of the trip could include local places to dine or shop. Enjoying the weather and scenery on these historic adventures only adds to the experience.

History buffs on staycations will be thrilled with these out-of-the-ordinary adventures. Even if history isn't your favorite subject, you may find yourself enjoying learning about local times gone by.

Bring the Resort Home

Instead of spending your money on expensive hotels and resorts, why not turn your home into a must-see destination?

Take a few tips from how the top hospitality companies treat their guests and give yourself some extra pampering during this staycation.

You can transform your home through eclectic design, vibrant flowers and ambient lighting. You just have to know where to start.

AMBIANCE

Special lighting can enhance your mood and create a certain environment. Candles are traditional favorites in regards to affordability and scents indoors. They can change the atmosphere immediately to romance or serenity — or whatever other feeling you are trying to evoke on your staycation.

Outside, solar or low-voltage lights can extend your living space and boundaries physically as well as visually. Lighting will give your family and friends more room to relax and enjoy when they visit you on your staycation.

FANCY FLOWERS

Nothing adds more beauty to a home than flowers — indoors or out. Resorts and hotels use them to enhance their premises. It is easy and fun to add flowers to your home, too.

Nature-loving staycationers might prefer real flowers, and your local nurseries contain a considerable amount of selection and color. Picking out favorite varieties and colors would be a fun part of any staycation, and many may enjoy planting a new flower garden in the middle of their time away from work.

Other staycationers may prefer artificial arrangements due to the ease of care. There are no rules on a staycation, so follow your inner designer. Stop by your local hobby stores or florist to pick up arrangements that can brighten up your home during your break.

BEDDING

The best thing about resorts and hotels is the comfort of their beds. Use some of the money you saved by not going on an expensive vacation to purchase high-quality mattresses or toppers and pillows. Catch up on some rest and sleep and maybe have breakfast in bed.

Your home can be a sanctuary on a staycation, just like those resorts we escape to on traditional vacations. All of these tips will create a home environment of beauty, comfort and peace.



Cook as a Family

Kitchens have traditionally been gathering places for families to spend time with each other. There is a reason for this, and maybe our present culture would benefit from more traditional approaches to fun.

Staycations can include family cooking fun that has many benefits.

Not only is cooking together as a family a fun experience, it also can be a great way to save some money on your staycation. Instead of shelling out premium bucks for a high-end steak dinner, grill your own with all the fixings. Save money on that restaurant-produced lobster bake and visit your local grocer for fresh seafood selections that you can cook at home.

Support local business while you fill your belly — a win-win!

HEALTHIER EATING

According to Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research, people who frequently cook meals at home eat healthier and consume fewer calories. That is good news for staycationers on a diet!

You also can make more informed decisions about eating because when you prepare food at home, you can pick out the ingredients and follow safe cooking procedures.

According to the government web site, Lets Move!, parents play a key role in not only making healthy choices for children but teaching children to make healthy choices for themselves. It doesn't have to be a battle though if you make it fun and include them in the preparations. Take these tips into consideration if you're planning out your staycation itinerary and meal plans.

FAMILY TIME

The most important benefit is the



© FOTOLIA

family time and the fun you can have cooking together. Small children can be involved by setting the table or doing other small tasks.

Since you have more time on a staycation, try family-style dining. According to the Department of Children and Families, family-style dining has many benefits because it allows children to practice social

skills, such as sharing, taking turns and saying “please” and “thank you.”

LOCAL FOOD TRIPS

Take a family trip to the local farmer's market or co-op that sells fresh produce grown by area farmers. Not only are they full of healthy eating options, but it would be fun to pick out new combinations of vegetables

or fruits to create new dishes on your staycation.

Baked delicacies and canned goods, such as jams and pickles, also are available in some markets, while some even have fresh flowers and local crafts. Staycations can bring families closer together. You can make memories that last a lifetime in your own hometown.

Reconnect

Most of us are too busy during the work week and catching up on chores and activities on the weekends to spend time with the people who mean the most to us.

Staycations can allow us to spend more quality time with our parents, children or dear friends as well as nearby extended family.

PARENTS

Sometimes we take our parents for granted and forget that they won't always be here for us. Staycations allow us time to stop by and have a cup of coffee with them and reminisce about the past.

Maybe we can tell them how much they mean to us or take them to lunch. Your time is a gift to them, and what better way to reconnect than through bonding with your family on your staycation?

CHILDREN

Our children grow up fast, and there is nothing they value more than to spend time with us. Have a tea party, play catch or go to a local park. Ask them their preference on activities. You might be surprised or even enjoy their choices.

A staycation can be about the kids as much as it is about catching up on quality time. You will never regret these simple things you can do with your children on your staycation, so be sure to build in plenty of fun with the kids during your break.



© FOTOLIA

INCLUDE EXTENDED FAMILY

Staycations can include activities with close extended

family or friends. It is easy to lose touch with them with our hectic lives. Plan time to touch base and let them know you

care by bringing a gift or flowers.

Use your staycation to embrace your family, friends

and life. Take some time during your time away from the office to reflect on those who have made a difference in your life.

See a Show

One idea for your staycation is to experience sports, arts or film. You likely have many things in common with your friends and family members when it comes to music and shows you enjoy.

A staycation allows you to embrace these types of activities while you also gain more time with those around you.

Here are some ideas to incorporate into your next staycation:

Hit the movies: With your free vacation time, see the latest movies at your local theaters. Grab some popcorn and soda and you are in for some fun. A less expensive version would be catching up on movies at home. Visit your local movie store and stock up on the latest rentals and your favorite snacks.

Go to a play: Some local colleges or universities, churches as well as local theater groups have plays at various times of year. You will be amazed at the local talent. Actually, you might recognize a few of them, too. Depending on where you live, you may be near a theater that offers world-class productions.

Check out local music: Concerts are a cool choice for staycation fun, and some communities sponsor local musician performances. County fairs and some festivals have a good lineup of music, too. Seeing what your local music landscape has to offer can open your eyes to the talent in your region.

Go to a game: Sporting events are the perfect staycation activity because they allow you to root for your favorite team while bonding with fellow fans. Check out your local professional baseball team this summer. If you have a minor league team in your area, these games can be just as fun, especially for families.

