

# STAYCATION

## — GUIDE —

**HOW TO SAVE MONEY  
AND TAKE A BREAK  
CLOSE TO HOME**



# Have Fun with the Family

## MAKE YOUR CHILDREN PART OF THE STAYCATION PLANS

**N**o parent wants to disappoint their kids. Children might not get excited if you say, "We're staying home for vacation this year," but what if you let them play a role in the staycation fun?

By focusing on your children instead of paying for expensive travel this year, you can make lasting memories, save money and create lots of little smiles at the same time.

### BOWLING

Depending on the age of the child, bowling could be a fantastic option for your family. Most families have at least one bowling alley within driving distance, and it can be a great place to have fun without spending a fortune.

Bowling games usually cost just a few dollars per person, including shoe rental, and most bowling alleys will let you rent lanes by the hour. Older children and teens can enjoy the competition bowling provides, and younger ones can simply enjoy the thrill of rolling a ball and knocking down a few pins.



PHOTO: IMAGESOURCE / YAYMICRO.COM

Children won't mind staying close to home for vacation if they get a chance to have some family fun.

### MINIATURE GOLF

Miniature golf courses are perfect for letting kids relax while Mom and Dad secretly work on their killer putting skills.

Miniature, or putt-putt, golf involves both luck and skill as you navigate hazards and

hope for the best with each putt. Larger courses may offer several different layouts that cater to various ages or skill levels — or simply to keep customers coming back to try different holes.

Smaller courses can be a more laid-back atmosphere

for families.

Look for miniature golf courses that are clean, well maintained, have lots of fun and challenging holes, and that's well-lit if it's open after dark.

### GO-KARTS

Nothing is more exciting than the thrill of motor racing, and both kids and adults can satisfy their need for speed by racing go-karts.

There can be a wide variety of kart racing, though, so be

sure you're prepared for fun that matches your family. Some courses and equipment are designed for small children to drive safely, for example, while others have high-speed go-karts that can go as fast as full-size cars.

Both can be fun if they match what you're looking for. Ideally, the course should offer different types of karts for different people — some faster, some slower, and perhaps some that hold two people so an adult can drive their child around the course.

### ARCADES

Arcades aren't as prevalent as they were 20 years ago, but they're just as much fun.

Today's best arcades are high-tech centers where children can play games that just aren't possible at home, even on the latest video game systems.

Some will include full-size racing simulators, dance platforms, aircraft cockpits or fun games like laser tag. No matter what, the excitement of all the lights, sounds and competition in a local arcade will make kids happy — and be a lot cheaper than traveling.



# Savor the Local Flavor

## RESTAURANTS LET YOU GET A BREAK FROM THE ORDINARY

One reason people like to go on vacations is to "get away from it all." You can do the same thing on your staycation, though, by getting outside your comfort zone and exploring new tastes and cuisines right in your own city.

### LOOK ONLINE

Search the internet and online newspaper listings to find new, exciting places to eat near your home. There are countless websites and mobile phone apps that let diners review their favorite — and least favorite — places for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can search by food type, price and location to see which restaurants are rated highest by other diners in your area.

Take the reviews with a grain of salt, though. Like any online source, the information can't always be trusted. Look for trends in the diners' comments,

such as lots of people raving about their excellent service or the flavor of their rib-eye steaks. A single positive or negative review can be misleading, but consistent comments from lots of different people

can give you a better idea of what to expect.

### BE ADVENTUROUS

Never tried sushi? Wondering what all the buzz is about that new Mexican restaurant? Want to try something more exotic?

The great thing about eating out as part of your staycation is that it lets you experience something completely new, just as if you had left town.

It can be relaxing to eat at a place you're familiar with, but it's more entertaining — and more of an escape — to try new restaurants and exotic types of food. Even traditional American restaurants can be exciting if you've never eaten there before.

Another plus: If you fall in love with the new cuisine or restaurant, you can return again and again, even after the staycation has come to an end.

### SEEK OUT FOODIES

For many people, food is about more than a simple meal. Today's diners are getting serious about what they eat and turning the act of dining into a more memorable experience.

If you're a real food and drink aficionado — or want to become one — you can take up dining as a serious hobby. There are all sorts of clubs, books and TV shows devoted to exploring and preparing great food.

Some cities even offer restaurant tasting tours that let food lovers experience a wide variety of tastes in one night.

No matter how serious you are about food, it's always a good idea to savor the flavor of your own hometown.





# Become a Local Tourist

**CLUBS, MUSEUMS, ATTRACTIONS LET YOU KNOW YOUR OWN CITY**

**H**ave you ever spent years living in a city but never really explored it? If so, you're not alone.

Many people will spend their lives living in a place for a long time but never visiting the sites that are so interesting to out-of-towners. The same attractions that get visitors excited may not seem so appealing because, well, they're just so familiar.

If you want to make your staycation fun, pretend you're a tourist visiting your own town. Not only will you have a good time, but you'll also come away with a better understanding of your own town's culture.

## MUSEUMS

Look for a museum either within your own city or within easy driving distance, and make it a point to go there.

You may think of museums as stuffy places filled with art or incomprehensible science displays, but that's rarely the case. Small-town museums cater to niche interests such as local artists, city history or even specific hobbies, industries, sports and activities.

Bigger museums in major cities offer impressive displays, of course, and they usually rotate over time. If it's been a while since you've gone, it could be worth a visit to see the new materials and special exhibits that were hidden down in the basement the last time you visited.

## NIGHTLIFE

Another thing locals often ignore is their own city's nightlife. Virtually every city, big or small, has venues that are open into the evening hours for dancing, music, games and drinking.

If you haven't seen your own local nightlife lately, your staycation could be a great chance to relax and enjoy yourself without going too far from home. You can take some time off from work, grab some friends or your partner, and spend time doing what you want, when you want.

## GRAB A CAMERA

Finally, if you enjoy photography or just want to explore your own town, pick up a camera and start snap-

ping pictures.

Architecture, people and events can be a lot of fun to photograph. They

can also let you see your own city in a new light, just like a tourist would when they visited for the first time.

Take pictures of old buildings, interesting locations and eye-catching scenes around town. You may just fall in love with photography as a hobby.





# Do Some Shopping

**SAVING MONEY ON TRAVEL?  
SPEND SOME CLOSE TO HOME**

**M**any people enjoy shopping when they go on vacation. They explore new shops, hit the biggest malls and look for bargains away from home.

If you like to shop but don't want to spend money traveling this year, think about exploring the stores close to your house. You'll spend a little money, but it will be a lot less than the cost of a plane ticket or gasoline — and you don't have to worry about how to transport your finds back home.

## HIT THE MALL

If you're doing a staycation this year, that means you want to spend money wisely. One great way to do that is by looking for good deals — or making small but luxurious splurges on yourself — at local stores rather than spending so much money to leave home.

For a fraction of the cost of a plane ticket, you can have a great time with your friends — or as a peaceful escape — doing a little shopping close to home. You'll want to splurge on things that make you feel pampered without busting your budget, and retailers offer lots of ways to do that.

Think about buying yourself bath fragrances, getting those new clothes you've had your eye on, or buying some supplies for your favorite hobby. You'll be able to

enjoy yourself without the expense of jetting off to some exotic locale.

## EXPLORE FLEA MARKETS

Another great way to save money and have fun shopping is by checking out your local flea markets.

Flea markets come in all different varieties, ranging from groups of upscale antique sellers to random collections of junk. What's junk to one person, though, could be treasure to another, and you never know what you'll find for sale when you visit.

Smart, savvy shoppers may even be able to make a profit if they know what they're doing. You can find amazing deals at flea markets, including some underpriced antiques or decorator items that are worth more than the seller realizes. If you want to find something rare or unusual, a flea market can be the best place to find it.





# Improve Your Home

If you're like most people, you feel like you never have the time to finish projects around the house.

You may dream of repainting the living room, installing laminate floors or hanging new curtains, but you never seem to have the time.

Well, now's your chance. A staycation lets you take off time from work to do the things you enjoy, all without the expense of traveling. Instead of paying for an expensive plane ticket or filling up the gas tank this year, it could be a smart move to put that time and money into your own home instead.

## REMODELING

Americans today are staying longer in their homes, and many people are choosing to remodel or upgrade their living spaces instead of moving to a new house.

If you need a better space, want to modernize your home or simply want a change of style, you don't have to go to the trouble or expense of changing houses. You can simply spend time doing some work yourself to give your home that updated feel.

Look for minor projects that you already know how to do. If you need to fix a leaky faucet or repaint the dining room, you'll finally have the time to get it done.

And if you know how to tackle bigger projects — say, updating an entire bathroom — you may be able to get it finished quickly during your staycation rather than spreading out the do-it-yourself project over weeks or months.

Just know what you're capable of doing and allow yourself extra time in case things don't go to plan. Ideally, you'll finish your remodeling work early to leave plenty of time for relaxation before you return to your 9-to-5 job.

## GARDENING

You can also use your staycation to jump-start your home's outdoor projects.

If your landscaping is looking ragged or you've always dreamed of preparing a vegetable garden, a staycation can be the perfect time to get it done. Use the extra time and the money you save by staying home to improve the look of your property.

## ADDING VALUE

Finally, every dollar you spend upgrading your home has the potential to add value to it later on. When it comes time to sell, a home with updated fixtures and neat, well-kept landscaping will get a higher sales price and create a faster close.

If you want to be really smart with your money, think about taking your vacation budget and pouring it into your house instead of a trip. Not only will you have the time to work on projects during your staycation, but you'll also be adding value to your home instead of spending your money on frivolous trips.





# Totally Pamper Yourself

Spending your vacation time at home doesn't mean you have to do without. On the contrary, by saving your travel money, you may be able to spend extra on little ways to pamper yourself without leaving town.

## HOTELS

Most people only think of hotels when they're traveling away from home, but that doesn't always have to be the case.

Consider treating yourself to an indulgence by spending the night in a local hotel. For a fraction of the cost of an airline ticket, you can pamper yourself with a couple of nights in a luxury or boutique hotel room.

This can be a great option for couples who are living on a budget but also need a getaway. They can get all the benefits of a true vacation — an escape from the house, great service, privacy and a total change of pace — without having to travel far.

In fact, because there's less stress and less

time spent in airports or in the car, staying in a hotel close to home can be even more enjoyable than traveling.

## SPAS

If you're looking for the ultimate in relaxation, a spa is just the place to go.

By shopping around, you should be able to find a spa near your home that offers a true escape from day-to-day life. You should remember that the experience of a spa is more important than its location, and you can pamper yourself without having to drive too far.

Many spas offer a wide variety

of services, including manicures and pedicures, facials, massage, acrylic nails, sauna, microdermabrasion, makeup application or hair removal. If you want a special spa treatment, just ask. The best spas will go out of their way to keep a customer happy if you make a reasonable request.

## MASSAGES

If you're sore, exhausted or just want to relax, there's no better way to pamper yourself than making a trip to

a good massage therapist.

Massage therapists aren't all the same, though, and choosing one requires some thought and trial. Sometimes you have to go through different choices — both with the specific therapist and the type of massage they perform — before you find the one that's a good match for your needs.

There are more than 250 different kinds of massage therapies available, including deep tissue massage, aromatherapy, Swedish massage, hot stone massage and many more.

They can also involve lotions, powders and oils designed to either increase or reduce friction as part of the process, making a virtually infinite number of therapies available.



# Enjoy the Outdoors

**A TRUE ADVENTURE MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK**

Vacations are all about taking a break, relaxing and reconnecting with yourself and loved ones. If you don't want to travel this year, what better way to unwind than looking to the great outdoors — right outside your door.

## CAMPING, FISHING

Spending time outdoors is a great way to save money while still getting a break from daily life. You don't have to travel far to have a good time, either. Whether your hometown is near lakes, streams, trails, mountains or campgrounds, everyone should get the chance to enjoy nature near their own house.

Camping and fishing are two of the most popular options. Great for both families and individuals, a minimal investment in equipment and training can bring you a lifetime of outdoor memories.

It's important to buy good outdoor equipment that will last, though. Save money by sticking close to home this year, and save even more by choosing quality gear that you can use for years to come. It's best to buy camping and fishing equipment from well-known manufacturers, with a good warranty, and from trusted local retailers.



PHOTO: MONKEYBUSINESS / YAYMICRO.COM

Spending time outdoors, even without traveling far from home, can be a great way to get a break from day-to-day life.

## GOLFING

Another great way to spend your staycation is on the links.

Golf is one of the most popular outdoor activities in America, and it can be far more affordable than traveling.

This year, instead of spending your vacation budget on airfare and gas, think about

investing in new clubs, new golf clothes and green fees for some of your favorite local courses. You can have a great time on the golf course without straying far from home.

## OTHER SPORTS

Luckily, sports fans have

plenty of ways to stay busy on a staycation.

If you're going to stay close to home, buy tickets to see your favorite teams in action. By saving money on travel, you should be able to afford to splurge on better seats or more popcorn and hotdogs for the kids.

You can also plan your time off from work to coincide with big games. If you want to take off a few days while your team's archrival is in town, plan ahead. Buy some great tickets and savor the chance to be a superfan while saving money at the same time.