



Staycation
GUIDE

Why Stay Home for Vacation?

If we've learned anything during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that vacation can sure look a lot different than what we're used to.

Lockdowns and quarantines put a halt on travel in 2020, and families were forced to be creative when booking some downtime.

While travel restrictions are easing, you may not be comfortable visiting heavily visited areas. Fortunately, there are lots of great places to spend your vacation locally, including the beach, lake, campgrounds or even the local spa.

Read on for some of the best reasons for ditching the long trip this summer in favor of a more relaxing, easy-going staycation.

RELAX STRESS FREE

Many of us have said, "I need a vacation after that vacation!" A long road trip to the beach is fun and all, but think about all the planning and driving it takes to get there. Staying home for a fun, work-free stretch can actually help you unwind without all the hassles of travel.

Choose a local destination to visit or just stay home and catch up on some rest and relaxation. Avoiding busy airports and rental car locations doesn't sound like a bad idea, does it?



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YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT YOUR TOWN

A fun, relaxing staycation may be just what your family needs as it looks to escape and unwind this summer. Depending on where you live and what type of history your town has, you may be able to

explore what your local area has to offer.

Check out your local museum or library to find out more about people who came before you.

Plan your staycation around fun local events like festivals or concerts to better

appreciate the local talent in your area.

YOU CAN SAVE SOME SERIOUS MONEY

Flights, hotels, rides, dining out in restaurants, souvenirs and entry fees — the list of things you need to pay for

on vacation is seemingly never-ending.

A two-week trip for two can run into the thousands of dollars. Depending on how many people you plan on bringing along on vacation, your bank account or credit card can take a major hit.

Planning a Good Staycation

Taking time off work can be stressful if you have a demanding job.

Many people dread the thought of shutting down their work for more than a week because of all the projects that are sure to be waiting for them when they get back.

A 2019 study found that 36% of Americans took their last vacation over two years ago, and 51 percent have not vacationed in more than a year, according to the 11th annual Vacation Confidence Index by Allianz Global Assistance.

Throw in the complications caused by a global pandemic, and we're seeing a record number of people simply staying home instead of leaving the office — or their homes — for any extended period of time.

Staycation may be the perfect fix for this trend that is taking over American life.

DON'T RUSH IT

It's easy to see why overworked professionals are hesitant to avoid leaving town with their families. That's even more reason to opt for a staycation this year. When it comes to planning the perfect time away from work, it's important to remember not to rush your plans.

The main point of staying home instead of heading out of town is to create a more relaxing environment. Trying to fit multiple activities or visits into one short staycation is a recipe for stress.



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Instead, start planning your staycation months ahead of time. Find a few activities — visiting the local beach or checking out a newly released movie, for example — around which you can build a staycation. Even if you're staying in the same city you've lived in for

an extended period of time, get online or read your local newspaper to find some new places to see.

Remember to be flexible if things change. The beauty of a staycation is you're not tied to any specific schedule or responsibilities.

BUILDING YOUR STAYCATION BUDGET

It's easy to get flippant with your spending when you see the savings a staycation can bring. Be sure to build a budget beforehand so you can stick to a financial plan.

Go out for meals at your

favorite nearby restaurants. Spend a night in a local hotel. Plan a “retail therapy” day where you visit local markets and vendors.

Once you have your budget set, stay flexible. Keep it reasonable but remember, you're on staycation.

Let the Kids Help Plan

Traveling with kids can be hard. Who wouldn't get stressed out with multiple bathroom breaks, continuous requests for food and trying to keep them quiet in hotel rooms?

A local staycation can help relieve some of that stress, as you can dramatically cut down on the amount of time spent traveling to your destination. Turn your potentially stressful vacation into a fun, localized experience this year.

You just might find that staycations become your new summertime break of choice.

ASK THEM FOR HELP IN PLANNING

Have you ever asked your kids where they would like to spend vacation? Their answer may surprise you. Many children might want to visit a local waterpark or hang out in multiple parks around town versus climbing in a rental car or plane for a long trip.

Remember that as a parent, it's all about spending quality time with your kids. If you've found yourself edgy and irritated on past family vacations, choosing to stay local may reduce some of the factors causing your anxiety.

Involve your kids in planning their preferred local activities and watch your fam-



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ily staycation come alive.

PLAN SOME INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Given the unpredictable nature of the weather, it's smart to have some backup activities that can be spent indoors. Set aside time to watch movies or binge-watch a kid-friendly TV series.

Purchase movie snacks like candy and popcorn and stay in your pajamas. Bring some air mattresses into the family room and spend some snuggle time with your kids.

Other fun activities to bring indoors could be a family board game night or singing karaoke to your favorite songs.

CREATE SOMETHING COOL

Kids are among the craftiest people on the planet. You never know where their creativity and ideas will take them. Put that ingenuity to good use by planning a day full of fun crafts. Support local business by visiting your nearby craft store to stock up

on construction paper, popsicle sticks, glue, markers and other creative materials.

Your local craft store may also offer indoor projects or provide easy plans for creating unique crafts at home. Being crafty could also include preparing new recipes, writing fun books or making up new songs together.

Get Outside for your Staycation

For busy families, there is seemingly never enough time for a good long hike or bike ride during the workweek.

With sports and other extra-curricular activities during the weekends, it may be hard to even squeeze these fun family activities during Saturdays and Sundays.

If you're inclined toward nature, use your staycation to enjoy the great outdoors. Why go outdoors? Outdoor recreation is beneficial for your health, as being out and enjoying the natural world provides both physical and mental benefits. It also is a vital part of the economy on both the local and national level, and can help pass a love of the outdoors to younger generations.

Here are some of the most popular outdoor activities to pursue while you unplug from work, according to The Wilderness Society.

- Hiking and camping.
- Hunting and fishing.
- Canoeing, kayaking and rafting.
- Sailing and motorboating.
- Biking.
- Rock climbing.
- Horseback riding.
- Skiing.
- Restoration and conservation volunteering.

If you haven't spent a lot of time outdoors, you may not even realize how close you live to nature-focused entertain-



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ment options.

Many Americans live close enough to facilities that allow for these types of fun activities, so you can more than likely find a local staycation that helps you get back to Mother Nature.

EXPLORE A STATE OR NATIONAL PARK

The United States has 58

national parks, 117 national monuments and more than 8,500 state parks. You should be able to easily find one that can offer a memorable staycation option for you and your family.

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

marinas, stables, golf courses and more. Finding an option for you is as easy as checking with your local park office.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS AT HOME

Not looking to even leave your home? That's OK. There are still many ways you can enjoy a day of fun outdoor activities without leaving

your property.

Grill hot dogs or cook a cast iron meal over your fire pit. Pop up a tent or hammock in the back yard and take in the natural beauty around you.

You might just find that unplugging from technology, work and your daily responsibilities can help refresh your mind and make you slow down a little bit.

Practice Self-Care this Year

Planning an out-of-town vacation can be a stressful experience, which is why so many Americans will opt for a staycation this year. And the last thing you need today is more stress.

During the pandemic, about four in 10 adults in the United States have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, a share that has been largely consistent, up from one in 10 adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019, according to KFF, a non-partisan health policy organization.

To battle the stress, consider coordinating a low-maintenance staycation that lets you rest and pamper yourself so you're rejuvenated when it's time to jump back into everyday life.

HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

When looking to reduce the level of stress in your life, it's healthy to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, TV and computer screens for a



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while. Sound like a relaxing staycation?

Here are some other tips from the CDC on coping with stress. Find ways to mix in some of these activities on your staycation to maximize your time away from the daily grind:

- Take care of your body.
- Take deep breaths, stretch

or meditate.

- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco and substance use.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others.

- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations.

PLAN A SPA DAY

Time at the spa is another activity to consider including in your staycation. Schedule a massage, mani-pedi or a facial to truly escape the stresses of your work or

household responsibilities.

Local spas or salons offer a relaxing, health-focused environment for you to unplug. Be sure to book them in advance, as these types of businesses are seeing a big increase in 2021 business.

Not a spa person? Take a long, hot bubble bath with relaxing music and candles.

Keep Track of Memories

If a staycation happens without any social media presence, did it actually happen?

All joking aside, it seems that Americans are obsessed with documenting every second of their trips to show friends and family members what they've been up to.

And can you blame us? We love looking back on old trips and times with our loved ones. This is especially true when you consider the lack of enjoyable travel in 2020.

The good news is, keeping track of your staycation memories is easier than ever before. Read on for ways to capture your special staycation, even if you choose to not even leave your home.

TAKE LOTS OF VIDEO

Photos are so 2020. Videos are the new way to tell your staycation story. And thanks to emerging technology, your smartphone can produce the same kind of high-quality video content as some Hollywood studios.

Have your phone at the ready for spontaneous, as well as surreal, moments in time. Save your videos to a "Staycation" album in your phone so you can easily find them.

You can also opt for professional-grade photo editing software. The key to creating great video slideshows with



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narration or text is how you put together the edits. Take a video production tutorial online before your staycation to really brush up on your skills.

BUY SOUVENIRS

What is a better reminder of

visiting a new place than some kind of souvenir that marks your experience there?

Visiting a local establishment that offers new wine or craft beer? Buy a souvenir mug so you can remember how much you enjoyed your first sip.

As you go to regional museums, parks or festivals, purchase new mugs, T-shirts or magnets to commemorate your time. When you get home from your local travels, dedicate a shelf or wall in your home to celebrate the places you have visited over the

years. This will help you remember all the great times you enjoyed.

These types of displays will help you remember all the joys of your staycation, and you'll be able to share your memories with friends, families and co-workers.

Staycations by the Numbers

Spontaneous travel will be the word of the year for 2021 travelers, according to Hotels.com.

Americans are feeling the cabin fever of the pandemic but still unsure about where or when to spend their vacation budgets.

That's why staycations make more sense than ever before. Check out the results from a recent Hotels.com study that confirm the local tourism and entertainment should see a boost from people either entering the region or choosing to stay close to home for their breaks from work.

- 89 percent of U.S. travelers intend to be more impulsive than ever, following 2020's canceled trips.

- 32 percent are dubbing 2020 the "lost year" for travel, prompting more than one-third (35%) to be more likely to drop everything to vacation if they can in 2021.

- 28 percent of respondents revealed they would say "yes" to more last-minute trips in 2021. Only 4% said they would take off on a long road trip.

- Many Americans are ready to commit to spontaneity, with 29% claiming they'd be ready to drop everything and leave the same day if given the opportunity.

- Compared to pre-pandemic times one-quarter



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(26%) would now book a better hotel room, and another quarter (24%) would spontaneously say "yes" to a room upgrade if offered when booking. This is especially true of local travelers who are staying close to home for their staycations.

- One of the benefits of staycation is having more money to spend on amenities. The Hotels.com survey backs this up: When asked what new experiences they would say "yes" to, one in five (20%) would splurge on a spa treatment, uber-luxe hotel restau-

rant (20%) or a fancy cocktail in the hotel bar (24%).

- Nearly one in four reported they would spontaneously book a fancy hotel for a staycation for the weekend (24%) or take advantage of a mid-week deal in their local trendy hotel (23%).

- Wondering what to pack for your staycation? Most would go nowhere without their digital lifelines, with over half (55%) prioritizing their phone, laptop and charger. This surprisingly beat out a change of clothes (46%), a swimsuit (29%) and sleepwear (30%).