

Creating Staycation Memories



LIVE WELL UTAH

You don't have to drive for days or hop on a plane to have a fun, relaxing break from the daily grind. Check out these expert tips on taking a staycation.

Taking a family vacation is a great way to connect and make fun memories that can last a lifetime, but they can be pricey. Having fun as a family doesn't need to break the bank. Creating fun family memories is possible at a fraction of the cost by taking staycations, or in other words, choosing vacation destinations and activities somewhere close to home so you can reduce the need for hotel stays and other travel costs. Staycations = vacation fun for less \$\$.

Because home is often considered base camp, it may be helpful to set some ground rules as a family to help your staycation feel like a true vacation. Consider the following:

Decide on a budget. Deciding ahead of time how much you can afford to spend can help you decide what activities will fit into your summer without creating financial stress or debt.

Make a plan. Decide when your staycation is beginning and ending and what activities you will be doing. Aim to incorporate something that will be fun for everyone. No matter what you choose to do, just remember that staycations are about spending time together and making memories.

Pretend you aren't home. Although you may sleep or eat some meals at home, pretend you are not at home. For example, if you were on vacation you probably wouldn't be doing house chores, going to a friend's house, or checking work emails, so the same rules should apply to the designated time for your staycation.

Keep it simple. While staycations may mean a full day of travel and activity or even staying overnight somewhere, it doesn't have to. For families with young children, going to a

museum or waterpark close to home and then coming home for naptime or nightly routines may make a much more enjoyable vacation than full day adventures.

Staycation ideas are virtually endless and really depend on your location, interests and budget, but consider these ideas to get you started:

1. Get beachy at Bear Lake. Relax on the beach, play in the water, make sandcastles, or rent a kayak. While you are in the area, watch a play, go for a bike ride, check out the Minnetonka Cave or get a famous raspberry shake.
2. Go river rafting on the Colorado River, Green River or other river close to home. There are many guided tours available and lunch or admission to other attractions is often included.
3. Turn Salt Lake City into a large scavenger hunt as you complete challenges and solve clues to discover overlooked gems in the city and learn about local history. See www.visitsaltlake.com for more information.
4. Play in Park City for the day. Take a tram to the top of a mountain to enjoy the view and then hike, zip line or slide down. Check out the Utah Olympic Park freestyle shows and museum or go shopping at the outlets.
5. Enjoy a tasty day on a Cache Valley food tour. While in Logan, check out some historical sites, go for a hike in Logan Canyon, or visit the Willow Park Zoo.
6. Plan a year of fun with the Connect Pass which allows entrance to 13 select attractions including Discovery Gateway, Thanksgiving Point, Hogle Zoo, Clark Planetarium, The Leonardo, Natural History Museum of Utah, Snowbird Resort, and more.
7. Visit Heber Valley to snorkel, swim or soak in the geothermal spring. While you're in the area, take a tour of the Heber Valley cheese factory.
8. Check out reduced price days at local arcades/fun centers or movie theatres. Many have special pricing on

attractions for the summer months.

9. Enjoy local free offerings such as movies, art, science, or music in the park, farmer's markets or free days at local attractions. Check out these links for additional information in the Ogden area:
<http://ogdenamphitheater.com/#>,
<https://scienceintheparks.org/>,
<http://www.webercountyutah.gov/ramp/>.
10. Enjoy the great outdoors. Utah is full of state and national parks, not to mention all the beautiful canyons, lakes and mountain areas. Go for a hike, a bike ride, have a picnic and explore what people come from all over the world to see! Get in to the parks free August 25-28th in honor of the National Park Service Birthday.

Staycations are a wonderful tool to connect with each other and strengthen family relationships while playing and creating treasured memories. Wishing you a wonderful summer of family fun and adventures.

This article was written by Naomi Brower, USU Extension associate professor, Weber County