

# Ask an Expert – Staycations a Great Option This Summer

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Family vacations are a great time to bond as a family and get away from work and other responsibilities. However, this year it may be wiser to use vacation funds to pay off debt or add to that “rainy day” fund (which may have already come in handy this year). In addition, there are still travel restrictions in place in some locations, and popular parks and recreation areas may not be fully open until late summer.

With that in mind, a staycation may be a good alternative this year. A staycation can mean either staying at home or remaining close by while enjoying local, regional or state attractions. This can help you save money on travel costs, and it is also a way to support the local and state economy.

Online travel guides like [www.visitutah.com/places-to-go/](http://www.visitutah.com/places-to-go/) are great for planning your staycation, and you could do something different every week. One week you might focus on national or state parks; another on bodies of water for fishing or playing; another could be visiting historical sites and museums; and don't forget all the great hiking and biking trails around.

If short day trips around the area seem to be too much, or the sites seem to attract too many people, consider a true staycation. Use the backyard, and camp out in a tent, under the trampoline or on the deck. If you don't have a backyard, ask to borrow one from a neighbor or family member, or spend an evening together playing games,

watching a movie, eating popcorn or making s'mores over the grill.

If you do feel like getting outside or seeing nearby sites, consider the following suggestions:

\* **State Parks** - Did you know Utah is home to 43 state parks and recreation areas? These include everything from historic Puebloan ruins and petroglyphs to wetlands, wildlife, and of course, our famous red rock. For info, visit [https://www.myutahparks.com/things-to-do/utah-state-parks\\_](https://www.myutahparks.com/things-to-do/utah-state-parks_)

\* **Camping** - There are over 240 free campsites throughout Utah. It may require some homework to find sites that fit your needs, but try an Internet search on “free campsites in Utah,” and go from there. If you want something with a few more accommodations, and are willing to pay, there are thousands of sites to choose from. You can search for these locations at [www.utah.com/camping](http://www.utah.com/camping).

\* **Entertainment** - Unfortunately, some of the “must see” entertainment options around the state have been cancelled this year. That doesn't mean there aren't options, but it may require some “sleuthing” or research. Search community calendars for free concerts, drive-in movie nights or patriotic celebrations.

\* **Outdoor Recreation** - Utah is a very picturesque state with a variety of mountains, deserts, canyons, rivers and lakes. Check out options for everything from off-roading to horseback riding and more at <https://utah.com/things-to-do/outdoor-recreation>.

Many times, families want to plan vacations where they can be entertained, stay in hotels or cruise to foreign locations. This year things are different, but involving the family in creating a unique vacation closer to home can be a fun, new experience and can encourage family unity in a new way.

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