

Ask an Expert: Ten Ideas for Creating Staycation Memories



Though the kids will

be back in school soon, there is still plenty of time to make summer memories. Family vacations are a great way to connect and make memories that can last a lifetime, but they can be pricey. Having fun as a family is possible at a fraction of the cost by taking staycations — vacation activities close to home that reduce the need for hotel stays and travel costs. Staycations = vacation fun for less money.

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 these tips:

* **Decide on a budget.** Deciding ahead of time how much you can afford to spend can help you determine which activities won't create financial stress or debt.

* **Make a plan.** Decide when your staycation begins and ends and which activities you will all enjoy. No matter what you choose to do, 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 do chores, go to a friend's house or check work emails, so the same rules should apply to the designated time for your staycation.

* **Keep it simple.** Staycations may mean a full day of travel and activity or even staying overnight somewhere. However, 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 depend on your location, interests and budget, but consider these 10 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 Minnetonka Cave or get a famous raspberry shake.

2. Go river rafting on the Colorado River, Green River or another 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. [Click here](#) 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. [Click here](#) for more information.

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, music in the park, farmers 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. Check out the [free entrance days](#) at the national parks August 25-28.

By: Naomi Brower, USU Extension associate professor