

Take a Vacation or a “Staycation”?

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Living in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area for 18 years, I became well acquainted with the seasonality of a desert resort community. In the hospitality industry, we often referred to the area having three seasons. January to April was “in-season” when all of the large corporate groups and travelers visited the area. There were two “shoulder-seasons” which usually occurred from October to December and May through June when business either began to arrive or leave the area. July through September were “off-season” months, when the average person would not travel to the area due to dust storms, lightning, humidity, flash floods, and extreme temperatures reaching 120 F. However, the higher-end five-star resorts booked European tours at \$250 a night per person when it was blazing hot. Some of the lesser Mobil-rated properties (three to four-star resorts) reduced their rates to well below \$100 a night, often for the local clientele. We referred to it as a time when the “snowbirds” left town and the locals took their vacations. Since we did not leave town, we were actually taking what has become known as a staycation.

The term staycation was not used widely in the 80s and 90s. With the financial impact of the worldwide recession in the latter half of 2007, it has been used more recently. It may have originated in the travel industry during the late 1990s, its definition -- when a person or persons stays at home or in the local area to take a vacation. A staycation would not be synonymous with “traveling” somewhere. With our larger, sprawling communities and our often lengthy commutes, “traveling somewhere” might be considered a relative term. Prior to Thomas Cook inventing “travel” in 1841, people took staycations, although not defined as such, and probably thought little of it. The term staycation is a “portmanteau”, a linguistic blend of two words.... stay and vacation. Other examples are “brunch” a combination of breakfast and lunch, “netiquette”...Internet and etiquette”, and “guestimate”...guess and estimate.

Salon.com’s article [“Staycation Nation”](#) describes staycation as “the new too broke to go anywhere”. [Urbandictionary](#) defines it as “The equivalent of being unemployed for a week, and a chance to sit around and look at all the reasons you wanted to get away for a week in the first place.” [Top of the Fold](#), an online resource of journalism jargon and resources, lists it as a cliché meaning” as opposed to “vacation” when gas prices are too high.”

This holiday season, I decided to take a staycation and remain close to home. I have found that some of the personal advantages have included reconnecting with friends in the local area, reducing stress from a daily work routine, and allowing more time and creativity to pursue personal interests. I have spent time redesigning my home, going to local eateries, attending local shows...events that I wouldn’t experience in another city or country. Some additional suggestions that could enhance your time at home or close to home would be to turn off the cell

phone, do not answer the land line, do not overbook your calendar, avoid the computer and email, and take a look at some of the tourist attractions that you haven't seen in your local area. All of these tips could improve your quality of life. Gee, I think I do these things on a "real" vacation.

From speaking with colleagues, the primary reasons for a staycation tend to be the cost of travel associated with fuel, food and beverage, and lodging. This is a legitimate concern for those who have lost employment or have seen a reduction in income during this economic recession. Having read multiple articles on the subject, there is also a camp that encourages those that can afford to travel to do so. They should not cut back on the elements of a great trip that could not be experienced in their own backyard. Arthur Frommer's recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle, "[Staycation, a 2nd Rate Substitute for Travel](#)" notes:

"Those extra costs of driving a car or taking a flight can all be offset by thrifty decisions at the destination: reducing the category of the hotels you choose, dining in less pretentious restaurants and making use of public transportation to move about the cities on your trip. What a small price to pay to enjoy the great rewards of travel!"

If you can afford a "regular" vacation, I would suggest taking it. Certain cultures and diversity may not be offered in your local backyard or local community. The more we experience, the more we learn and your money will contribute to the rebuilding of other communities in need. The last week of my own staycation will be a regular vacation.

Some interesting staycation ideas are located below. Have fun!

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Dress-Like-a-Cowgirl---Easy-Tips-For-a-Fun-Staycation&id=3487734>

<http://www.staycationidea.com/>

<http://www.supereco.com/news/2009/05/08/37-fresh-staycation-ideas/>