



# Family & Consumer Sciences Oklahoma State Cooperative Extension

## Summer vacation doesn't always mean plane tickets and passports

One of the highlights of summer for many families is taking a vacation. A vacation is a chance to escape the hustle and bustle of day-to-day responsibilities. While embarking on a national park-themed road trip, a plane ride to a sunny, white-sand beach or a trip to the mountains can be a lot of fun, take a good look in or around your hometown and chances are you will find something for your family to do.

If staying closer to home sounds appealing, start planning your staycation now, said Stacy Tomas, assistant professor in Oklahoma State University's School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration.

"Vacation to far-off destinations can be fairly expensive and you can burn up a lot of your available vacation time," Tomas said. "Planning a trip closer to home, or even right in your own town, can be just as much fun and easier on the budget, too."

While the family contemplates nearby staycation options, setting up some guidelines can help make this adventure feel just like a trip far away. If you are going to be taking day trips, but staying overnight in your home, make every effort to keep it family time. Do not engage in activities you would normally do while at home, such as mowing the lawn, cleaning or laundry. If your budget allows, eat out while on staycation. Try new restaurants in your town or just a few miles down the road.

Tomas also suggests no working from home, keeping this time dedicated to your family and avoiding taking up time using electronics.

Steve Ruby, assistant professor in OSU's School of HRAD, said just as with any trip, the more you plan for fun, the more successful your staycation can be.

"It's important to establish a budget upfront. Be sure to include eating out, gas for day trips and entry or ticket fees," Ruby said. "Don't forget about a souvenir or t-shirt as a keepsake of the trip."

Oklahoma is home to some beautiful botanic gardens, zoos and museums. Give your children some learning opportunities while school is out by visiting some of these educational sites. Just because school is out does not mean learning takes a vacation.

The state also features an abundance of lakes. Spend some time getting physically active in the great outdoors, all while creating memories with your family. Pack a picnic lunch and make a whole day of it. Adults may enjoy visiting some of the many different wineries Oklahoma has to offer.

Keep in mind your staycation does not necessarily mean a nearby road trip. Your staycation destination can be right in your own backyard.

"Set up a tent and light the firepit for a camping experience at home," said David Davis, OSU Cooperative Extension specialist. "Cook your meals over the firepit and remember to make s'mores. No camping trip is complete without them."

Aside from being more budget friendly, staycations typically are less stressful and just as much fun. As an added bonus, families are likely to learn a bit more about the area in which they live.

"Check with your town's Chamber of Commerce or Visitor's Center for deals in your area. Another resource is [www.travelok.com](http://www.travelok.com)," Davis said. "Research shows children are spending less time outdoors now than in years past, so get outside and enjoy the beauty of Oklahoma."

Tomas said people will be pleasantly surprised to find out all the different offerings found in this great state.

"Oklahoma is such a beautiful and diverse state - there is something for everyone. Plus, staycations help support the local businesses that help make our state such a great place to not only visit, but to live," Tomas said.



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