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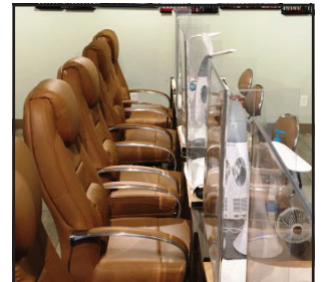


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# Get Away Without Going Away

## 5 family staycation ideas that won't break your budget

(eLivingtoday.com) Family vacations are a great way to bond and take a step back from the hectic schedules that accompany everyday life, but sometimes time or money (or both) make planning an elaborate trip a non-starter.

However, a staycation - a vacation you take right in your hometown (or nearby) - can be much less expensive and fit into nearly any amount of available time with the added bonus of skipping out on potentially stressful travel.

Consider these staycation ideas to take advantage of your local area's attractions and prove you don't have to go far to spend quality time together.

Visit local landmarks. Just because it's not a traditional vacation doesn't mean you can't pretend to be tourists. Start by visiting the places you recommend to friends and family from out of town or pick up a city guidebook to uncover hidden spots you may not even know exist. Make a plan to seek out historic sites, visit local landmarks like museums or try an out-of-the-way restaurant (or two) you've never eaten at before.

Camp out in the backyard. Camping doesn't have to be done far from home. In fact, it can be done right in your own backyard. Pitch a tent to sleep under the stars and plan a night full of traditional camping activities like roasting s'mores, telling spooky stories by flashlight and trying to identify stars and constellations.

Set up a picnic in the park. Pack a basket with sandwiches, fruit and other treats and head to the park. You can enjoy a casual meal then take advantage of the open space for a family walk or game of tag before retreating to the playground to let the little ones expel any leftover energy.

Have a home spa day. If you're looking for some relaxation but don't want to splurge on



“Camp out in the backyard. Camping doesn't have to be done far from home.”

the full spa treatment, plan an at-home oasis instead. Light some candles, run a bubble bath and break out the facial masks and fingernail polish.

Visit an amusement park. No matter where you live, there's probably an amusement or water park within driving distance. A quick online search before you arrive can help

prepare a strategy for hitting the most popular thrill rides and waterslides while skipping those that may not provide quite the same entertainment value. ■

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“Sometimes all you need is a **fresh take on classic fun to get excited again.**”



# Create a Family-Friendly ‘Staycation’

## 5 ways to fill your home with happiness

(Family Features) With summer vacations looking a little different this year, infusing new energy into playtime - and making it a family affair - can turn time at home into a fun “staycation.” Both kids and adults can quickly grow tired of the same scenery and activities, but new ways to engage together can help bring back excitement for making the most out of summer.

Help battle boredom and get the whole family involved with these fun and engaging activities from DQPlayAtHome.com. To celebrate the summer season, the family-favorite soft serve destination is helping fans create some of summer’s most iconic experiences right in their own homes and backyards. From a DIY backyard water park to a playful, treat-inspired coloring book and lighthearted challenges, there are a variety of downloadable games and activities to help fill your home with happiness:

**Camp-In:** Bring the great outdoors into your own living room with camping themed playtime. Set up a tent, roll out the sleeping bags and get ready to tell silly stories around a make-believe bonfire. Even forest animals can join in on the fun through a shadow puppet adventure. All you need are your own hands, a flashlight and a little imagination to create easy animal- and nature-themed characters on the wall.

**Happy Chats:** When the answer to “did you have fun today?” is always the same, it can be

hard to keep the conversation flowing. Entice little ones to speak up at the dinner table by taking turns drawing cards from the Happy Chats card set, which is filled with unique prompts, questions and interactive challenges. Inspire their imagination by asking kids to dream up a new ice cream creation or describe a pretend mission through outer space. Invite friendly competition by seeing who can recite the alphabet backward the fastest. Encourage kids to learn about the past when they draw cards asking parents to share stories from their own childhoods.

**Playbook:** Sometimes all you need is a fresh take on classic fun to get excited again. Using common household items like utensils, you can easily turn down time into game time for the whole family. Merge timeless entertainment like spoon relay races and obstacle courses to create a competition zone in the backyard. From a living room game of hot potato to hallway bowling, your home can become smile central.

**Coloring:** There’s a reason even adults have coloring books these days; it’s a chance to tap into your creativity and focus your attention on the simplicity of creating a work of art. Printable coloring books encourage fans to show off their art skills by coloring joyful scenes and iconic treats.

**A Sweet Surprise:** Make memories with an occasional shift in routine by surprising the family with dessert after they’re in their pajamas. Have one parent tackle bedtime and send the other to a local favorite like Dairy Queen for some drive-thru treats. Sweet moments with family are some of the best ways to celebrate the season.

Visit [DQPlayAtHome.com](http://DQPlayAtHome.com) to find more inspiration for summer family fun. ■

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## A Backyard Bonanza

Recreating summer fun at home can be as simple as changing into swimsuits and turning on the sprinklers, but you can take your backyard waterpark to the next level with these tips:

- \* Start by blowing up an inflatable pool
- \* Use goggles for underwater fun and splashing safety
- \* Add pool noodles and floaties for a realistic feel
- \* Remember to apply sunscreen as recommended and wear hats for added protection
- \* Include snacks and treats like soft serve for an additional cool-down in the summer heat.



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# Safe Entertaining Tips in a COVID-19 World

(eLivingtoday.com) Depending on where you live, restrictions on social gatherings may become less strict in the coming weeks and months. However, many experts caution that care should still be exercised when groups of people gather.

After an extended period without social contact, it's only natural to crave some interaction, and there's evidence that doing so can be advantageous for your mental health. However, taking precautions to protect your physical health, along with your guests', can make for a more enjoyable event.

Keep it contained. Limit your gatherings to a few close friends or family members so if someone does get sick, contact tracing is a simple task. Keep in mind the number of same-household families you invite is more important than the number of people in that family. For example, one family of six that has already been living in close quarters poses a lower risk than three couples living in separate houses. Also be mindful of your guests' approach to prevention; if they've been less cautious than your family or vice versa, there's room for conflict and anxiety.

Celebrate outdoors. Indoor event spaces

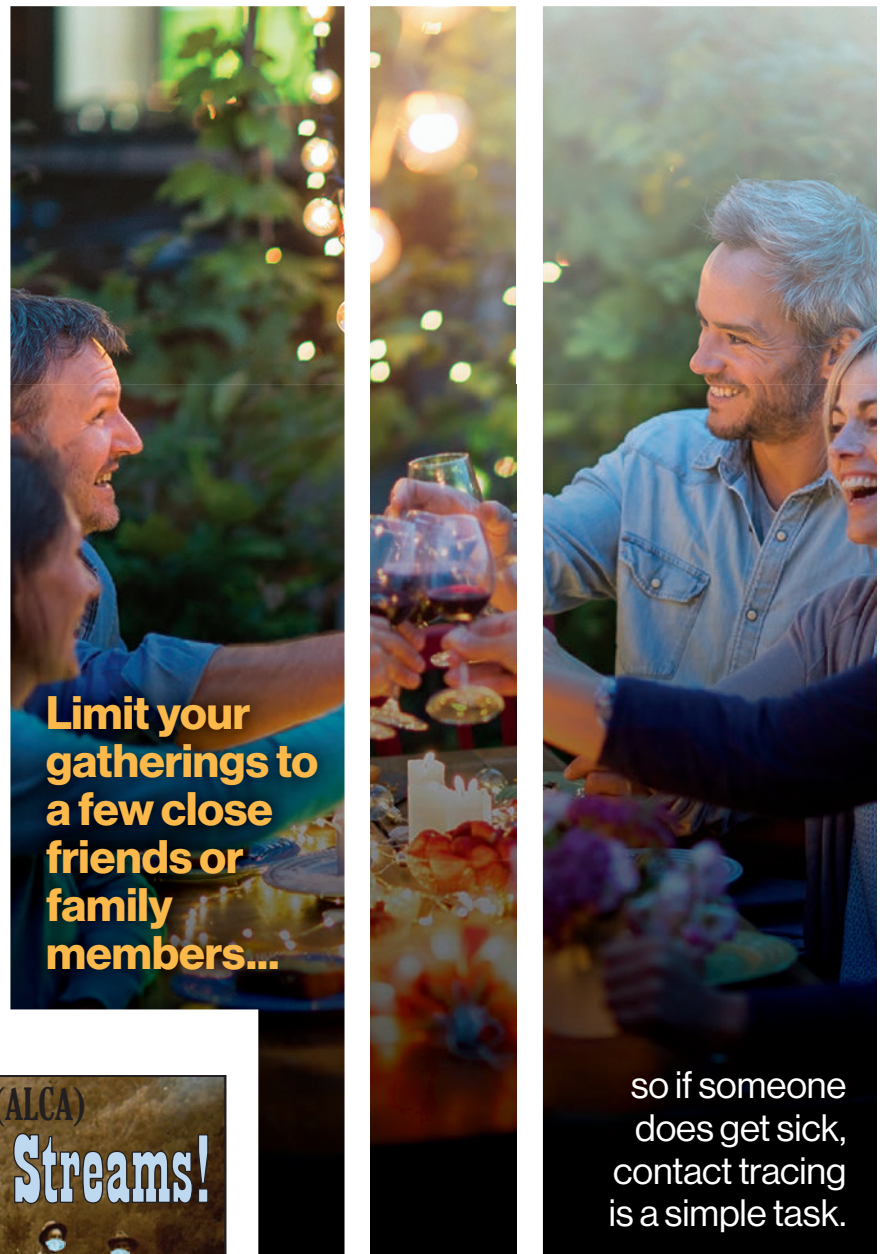
naturally have less circulation, meaning potential airborne particles hang around longer. Planning your gathering outdoors helps ensure more free-moving fresh air and more space for guests to spread out and practice social distancing.

Encourage guests to bring their own. It may go against all your good hosting inclinations but hosting a bring-your-own party eliminates shared food and the risk of cross-contamination. You can provide disposable table service (plates, silverware and napkins) and single-serve beverages, but skip the cooler everyone reaches into.

Provide ample, well-spaced seating. Encourage guests to keep some distance from one another by creating comfy seating arrangements. You can take it a step farther by asking guests to bring their own chairs and directing each family to set up its space a reasonable distance from the next.

Make cleanliness a priority. Create stations with hand sanitizer or wipes. You can also create a makeshift sink to minimize trips to the restroom indoors. Provide a spray bottle or bucket, soap and paper towels near the hose for quick clean-ups.

Find more advice for navigating pandemic life at eLivingtoday.com. ■



**Limit your gatherings to a few close friends or family members...**

so if someone does get sick, contact tracing is a simple task.

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Find more advice for navigating pandemic life at **eLivingtoday.com**



# 4 Tips for Planning a Summer Family Vacation

**(Family Features)** As stay-at-home orders ease, many families are eager to get out of the house and hit the road for a summer trip. However, vacation will most likely look different this year as families looking to get away may stay closer to home and take extra precautions.

**Make your summer travel plans safe and successful with these tips.**

**Destination:** Taking a road trip allows you to avoid crowded airports or public transportation hubs and bring your own food and groceries. A drivable destination is still a getaway, and driving typically offers more flexibility and requires less planning. Even if it's just a trip across the state instead of across the country, picking a destination within driving distance of your home is a chance to break away from everyday surroundings and routine.

**Cleanliness:** Clean accommodations are always important and may be even more so now. Many hotels and whole-home vacation rentals, which were pioneered by Vrbo nearly 25 years ago, have enhanced cleaning and disinfection guidelines. When selecting a place to stay during your trip, consider whole-home vacation rentals so your family has the privacy of having the entire property to yourselves, and make sure to review the cleaning measures that have been implemented. Measures to look for include cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces, stocking antibacterial soap and sanitizers for guests, building in time between bookings to avoid back-to-back stays and offering minimal contact check-in and check-out options.

**Activities:** Although many amusement parks, tourist attractions and businesses have re-opened, their hours may be limited and there may be capacity restrictions, so be sure to

research requirements for tickets and admission and plan your trip accordingly. Consider accommodations for your trip that include built-in activities for your family, such as a private pool, or opt for less-crowded destinations like mountain cabins or lake houses to enjoy a change of scenery.

**Flexible Accommodations:** In these uncertain times, much of the travel industry has adjusted cancellation policies to be more accommodating to travelers. In fact, according to a survey of Vrbo travelers, more than 75% of respondents are more likely to choose accommodations with flexible cancellation policies when booking their next vacation home. When planning and booking your trip, be sure you clearly understand the cancellation policies. When possible, seek out options that allow you to make changes with minimal or no penalty if circumstances force you to adjust your plans. ■

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# How to Clean Up Your Summer Grilling Game

## Simple, flavorful ingredients make for instant family favorites

(Family Features) There's something about summertime that ushers in an easygoing spirit. The long, hot summer months are often celebrated with backyard barbecues, beach days and spending time with friends and family. It's a time to fire up the grill, slow down and roll with the punches.

So, when you're thinking about what to feed your family off the grill, it should be a breeze, and you shouldn't have to choose between good and good for you. Next time you turn on your grill, consider these tips for creating healthier, flavorful meals you can feel confident serving.

Keep it simple. Skip the complicated recipes that call for a wide variety of ingredients, a multitude of steps and long cook times. Instead, seek out products and dishes that are made with ingredients you recognize and have just a handful of instructions. This will ensure less time in the kitchen and more time with loved ones.

Focus on seasonal, clean ingredients. Get inspired by your local farmer's market. One of the best parts about summer is the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables that can add flavor and nutrients to your plate. Plant-based meat, like the burgers, ground and sausages from Lightlife, are also a healthier swap for traditional animal meat products. The pea protein-based product line features only simple ingredients, like pea protein, beet powder and red bell pepper, and are non-GMO, gluten-free and soy-free, perfect for use in recipes like this Burger with Grilled Pineapple and Honey Garlic Barbecue Sauce.

"I know how hard it can be to create fast and flavorful

meals that the entire family will love," said Dan Curtin, president of Greenleaf Foods. "That's why we're focused on making delicious food with the cleanest ingredients possible. The fact that they're all plant-based is just a bonus."

Don't forget the sides. Food should be a source of confidence, with everything enjoyed in moderation. To balance your spread of burgers and hot dogs, consider serving fresh asparagus or sweet corn in place of other salty, processed options. Fruits like peaches and pineapple work well on the grill, too, but remember to group produce by similar cooking times.

Aim for a quick and fun cleanup. Perhaps one of the most overlooked secrets to a stress-free meal is to cut down on cleanup. A backyard barbecue can be one of the easiest messes to maintain as most of the prep is done outside on the grill. Try setting up a buffet line on your deck or patio where your family can build their burgers with customized toppings, like cheese, veggies and sauces. Then add a little bit of fun by putting on your favorite music playlist to help make a simple, everyday meal feel even more special.

Visit [lightlife.com](http://lightlife.com) to discover more plant-based recipes and solutions.

**Burger with Grilled Pineapple and Honey Garlic Barbecue Sauce**

- Total time: 30 minutes
- Servings: 2
- 2 rings freshly cored pineapple
- 2 Lightlife Plant-Based Burger patties, thawed
- salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup baby arugula



**"Keep it simple. Skip the complicated recipes..."**

- 2 sesame seed burger buns, lightly toasted
- ¼ cup crispy fried onions
- 2 tablespoons honey garlic barbecue sauce

Heat grill to medium heat. Grill pineapple slices 4-5 minutes per side until grill-marked and slightly caramelized. Cut slices in half and set aside. Wipe down grill to cook burger patties.

Season burger patties with salt and pepper, to taste. Grill 4-5 minutes per side until burgers are evenly browned with internal temperature of 165 F.

To assemble, layer handful of baby arugula leaves on toasted bottom buns, top each with burger and two cut slices each of grilled pineapple. Sprinkle on crispy fried onions, drizzle with honey garlic barbecue sauce and place toasted sesame seed bun on top. ■

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# Commit to More Family Meals



(Family Features) Spending moments together with loved ones carries obvious benefits like time to catch up and opportunities to bond, but sharing meals actually provides definitive value for families. With restricted social interactions and confinement at home due to COVID-19, many families face meal challenges that have shifted from juggling busy schedules to seeking new ways to mix up the traditional menu or using digital solutions to reconnect at a virtual table.

A study published in the "Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior" funded by the FMI Foundation shows more frequent family meals are associated with better dietary and family functioning outcomes. The results build on years of previous research studies to punctuate the creation of the Family Meals Movement, which encourages Americans to pledge to share one more family breakfast, lunch or dinner at home per week.

Consider these notable findings from the study:

\* Family meals improve fruit and vegetable consumption. Studies show a positive relationship between family meal frequency and fruit and vegetable intake when examined separately, but also when fruit and vegetable intake are combined.

\* Family meals improve family dynamics. Nearly all the studies included in the systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between family meal

frequency and measures of family functioning. Family functioning is defined as family connectedness, communication, expressiveness and problem-solving.

"There are thousands of individual studies that examine the impact of family meals on nutrition and family behavior, but this meta-analysis looks at the relationship between family meal frequency and family functioning outcomes," said David Fikes, executive director of the FMI Foundation. "We can confirm that family meals are a valuable contributor of improved nutrition and family dynamics."

Find tips, recipes and ways to increase family meal frequency at [familymealsmovement.org](http://familymealsmovement.org).

## Hawaiian Chicken Pizza

Recipe courtesy of Toby Amidor on behalf of the FMI Foundation

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Nonstick cooking spray

1 ½ cups shredded rotisserie chicken

¾ cup barbecue sauce

1 ready-made pizza crust or whole wheat pizza crust (10 ounces)

1 cup canned or jarred tomato sauce

2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese or part-skim mozzarella cheese

1 cup finely chopped fresh pineapple or canned pineapple tidbits packed in 100% juice.

Preheat oven to 375 F. Coat pizza pan or baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

In medium bowl, combine rotisserie chicken and barbecue sauce.

Place pizza crust on pan and evenly spread tomato sauce over crust. Sprinkle evenly with cheese. Top evenly with rotisserie chicken mixture and pineapple.

Bake until crust is crisp and browned around edges, about 10 minutes. Let pizza cool 10 minutes before cutting into eight slices.

## German Fruit Tart

Recipe courtesy of Deanna Segrave-Daly on behalf of the FMI Foundation

1 cup all-purpose flour

¼ cup whole-wheat pastry flour

½ cup sugar

1 egg

1 tablespoon half-and-half or cream

⅛ teaspoon almond extract or ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, thinly sliced

cornstarch

sliced strawberries

sliced kiwi

sliced banana

blueberries

2 teaspoons turbinado or powdered sugar (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 F.

To make crust, beat together flours, sugar, egg, half-and-half and almond extract. Add butter slices and mix together until sticky ball of dough forms. Refrigerate 30-60 minutes.

On heavily floured surface, knead dough a few times and roll out to fit greased 10-inch tart pan.

Carefully spread dough into tart pan and bake 15-20 minutes, or until tart starts to turn golden brown. Remove from oven and cool.

Dust crust with cornstarch to help fruit stick to crust. Arrange strawberries, kiwi, banana and blueberries on top of crust; sprinkle with sugar, if desired. ■

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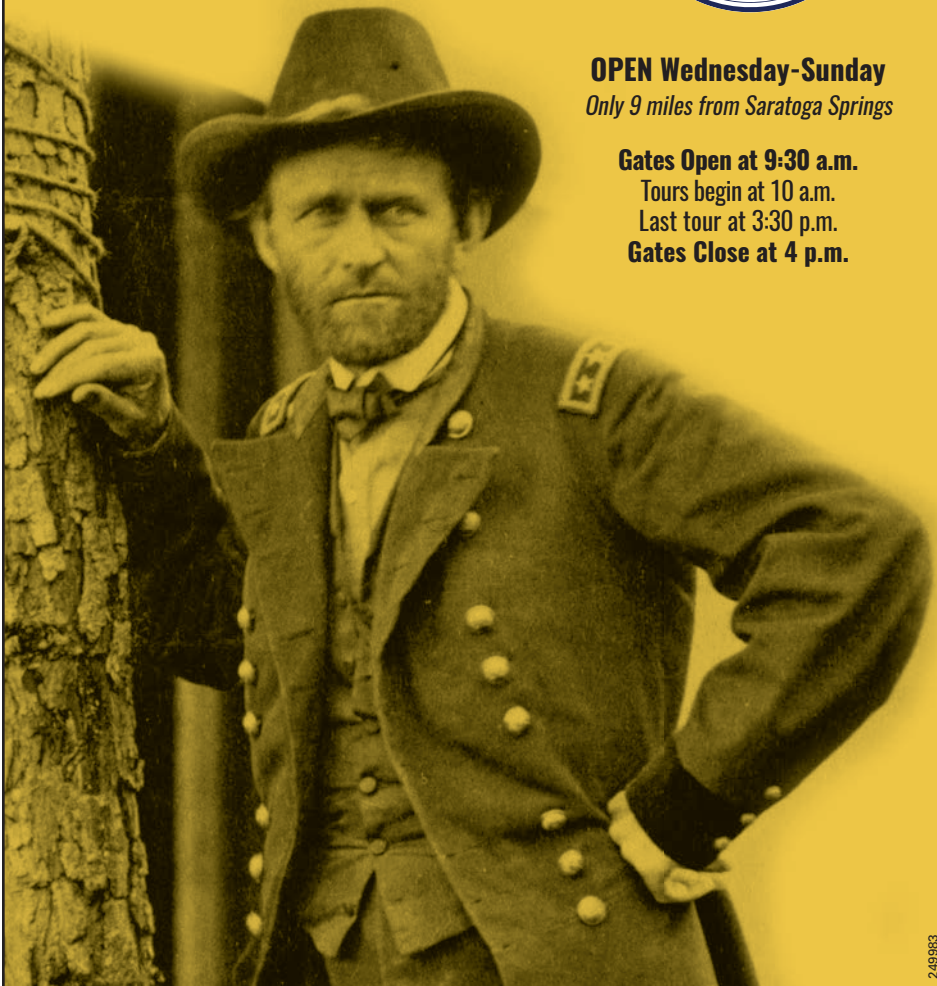
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