

Staycationing in West Virginia

Andrea Mender, Extension Agent, Fayette County

Lesley Woodrum, Extension Agent, Summers County

Educational Objectives

1. Define staycationing.
2. Identify advantages of staycationing.
3. Provide information on staycationing destinations in West Virginia.

What is a Staycation?

Staycations are typically defined as a time when individuals or families stay home and participate in leisure or vacation activities within driving distance, but often sleep in their own beds at night. Trips spent away from home for the night are normally still pretty close, but people often choose things that can be done in a day trip to save the cost of lodging. With staycations taking less time than a traditional vacation and being more affordable, it has increased in popularity in recent years. Even though a staycation is close to home, it doesn't mean it's any less fun than a faraway vacation!



Why Staycation?

- You'll save money. Because staycations are relatively local, you don't spend as much on gas, rental vehicles and even hotels if you're only doing daytrips.
- It's fun for the whole family. Find something that appeals to everyone and activities that you want to do together. You bond and create the memories of a vacation without the stress of one.
- It's less stress than a traditional vacation. You don't have to worry about booking and making flights, lost luggage and more.
- It's an opportunity to enjoy your surroundings. West Virginia is beautiful, but because we live here, we often miss out on some of the great opportunities around us.
- You'll discover new places in your area. Often, we don't even realize all the great things to do around us. Once you start exploring those, you'll find plenty to do without traveling hundreds of miles.

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- You can support local economies. Staying within West Virginia means you're keeping your money in West Virginia, too.
- There's less to worry about getting everyone packed and ready to go. If you're traveling locally, you may not even need a suitcase. Even traveling farther away, the trips are still closer than many vacations, so you don't have to get up so early and spend hours and hundreds of miles on the road.



Arts and Crafts

West Virginia has a long history of creating unique handmade crafts. Early pioneers had to rely on ingenuity because of the terrain in West Virginia. Quilts of small scraps of fabric were created because large pieces of fabric were too expensive and difficult to obtain. Local shops, galleries, arts and crafts shows, and fairs and festivals are all places to find one-of-a-kind creations. Mountain Made helps West Virginia arts and crafts creators get their products to the consumer. Their main store is in Thomas, West Virginia, but there's also a shop at Stonewall Resort. Tamarack, located in Beckley, showcases handcrafts, arts and regional cuisine in one convenient location. Additionally, Tamarack also has a conference center and theater performances that are offered every Sunday. You can also watch studio artisans demonstrate their talents and even ask questions while observing.

Fairs and Festivals

West Virginians love to celebrate! We celebrate history, culture, heritage, agriculture, important figures and even our bridges! Many festivals offer something for every family member from music to games, food and entertainment, festivals are a great way to enjoy time with friends and family. Some festivals include:

- *George Washington's Bathtub Celebration* – Held in Berkeley Springs, this weekend festival celebrates colonial history and has many offerings for just \$1!
- *Chocolate Festival* – Lewisburg hosts this event that appeals to anyone with a sweet tooth.
- *Golden Delicious Festival* – Celebrate the home of this sweet apple where it was first grown in Clay, West Virginia.

Historical and Educational

West Virginia's past crosses many historical markers in our nation's history. From Native American heritage to the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and beyond, we have played a key role in many important times. We are a state of firsts – the first Mother's Day, the first county and state 4-H camps, and the first brick street. There are an array of opportunities to explore our history and culture. Museums, events and even communities across West Virginia celebrate these historical markers. Some examples include:

- *Arthurdale* – Explore Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's New Deal Homestead Community, created during the Depression to provide families a new chance in life.
- *Blue and Gray Reunion (Philippi)* – Home of the first land battle of the Civil War, this event provides participants and visitors with the opportunity to experience 1861 through kid's activities, ladies tea, ball, battle reenactment and many other events.
- *WV Cultural Center and State Museum* – Located in Charleston, this museum explores the rich history of the state including geology, Native Americans, wars, labor history and more.





National Parks and Forests

The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service are preserving many areas in West Virginia to protect important ecological, cultural and historical resources for our nation. Some of these places are remote, others are easily accessible and all have something to offer a family looking for a visit close to home. The Monongahela National Forest is considered one of the most biologically diverse forests in the country. It runs through ten West Virginia counties and contains interesting places like the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area and the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area.

The National Park Service provides various opportunities for families.

- The Appalachian Trail, a National Scenic Trail that passes through West Virginia
- Bluestone National Scenic River and the New River Gorge National Park
- Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and Harpers Ferry and National Historical Parks
- The National Coal Heritage Area and Wheeling National Heritage Area
- The Gauley River National Recreation Area

Oddities in West Virginia

Do you crave seeing or doing something completely different? Set a day or two aside for a tour of unusual offerings that only West Virginia has to offer.

- The World's Largest Teapot in Chester

- The Apple Time Capsule in Martinsburg
- The Mystery Hole in Ansted, where gravity is undefined
- The town of Odd is located outside of Beckley in Raleigh County

Outdoor Adventures

If you enjoy being outside and a rush of adrenaline, West Virginia has plenty to keep you busy. The state has some of the best and most intense whitewater rafting east of the Mississippi River. If you prefer to keep your feet on dry land, there are opportunities for mountain biking, hiking and riding All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Camping is abundant with campgrounds throughout the state. Winter sports are also popular with opportunities for boarding, cross-country skiing and snow tubing. Finally, rock climbing is another outdoor adventure waiting to be experienced.



Relaxing Retreats

If you're looking for something relaxing, West Virginia offers many high quality spas throughout the state:

- Berkeley Springs State Park in Berkeley Springs
- The Resort at Glade Springs in Daniels
- The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs
- Stonewall Resort in Roanoke
- The Woods Resort in Hedgesville

There are also a wide variety of smaller spas throughout the state.



Sports and Amusement Parks

If you or your family are into sports, West Virginia has plenty for you. Appalachian Power Park hosts the West Virginia Power minor league baseball team, which is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Pirates. There are also two rookie teams that play in Mercer County: the Princeton Rays and the Bluefield Orioles. Beckley also offers baseball with the West Virginia Miners.

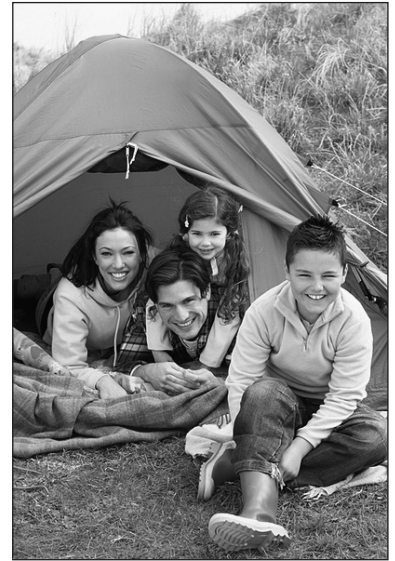
Both West Virginia University and Marshall University provide basketball, football, baseball and a wide variety of other sports. If they aren't in close proximity, check out the colleges and universities in your area. You can even take in some area high school sports. The Friday Night Lights of high school football has a long and rich history in West Virginia. If you're interested in a sport, you can probably find it somewhere close by.

Many people travel outside of West Virginia just to visit an amusement park. Why do that when you can travel to Huntington and visit Camden Park. At Camden Park, you'll find major rides, kiddie land and other attractions.

State Parks

State parks in West Virginia conserve the beauty, culture and history of our state. In West Virginia state parks you can find something for every member of the family. State parks offer events, educational presentations, museums and outdoor activities on land and water. Lodging at a state park is often inexpensive and provides options like staying in a lodge or cabin, or bringing your own tent or RV. There is a state park in every corner of the state that provide easy access to other local community activities.

As you can see, there are many opportunities for travel in West Virginia. Save yourself some time and money by visiting some of these locations. You can find a wide variety of vacation destinations throughout West Virginia. Need more ideas?



Check out

websites and contact information at the end of the lesson. Just look around – vacation is closer than you think!

Websites/Contact Information

<http://www.roadsideamerica.com/location/wv/all>

<http://www.wvtourism.com>

<http://www.wvcommerce.org/travel>

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

<http://www.nps.gov/state/wv/index.htm>

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mnf/home>

Sources

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-9627/7-reasons-why-you-should-take-a-staycation.html>

<http://www.roadsideamerica.com/location/wv/all>

<http://www.wvtourism.com/minisites/adventuresinwv.aspx>

<http://www.wvcommerce.org/travel/thingstodo/history/arts.aspx>

<http://www.camdenpark.com>

<http://www.beckley.org/>

<http://www.oglebay-resort.com/>

<http://visitwv.com/wv-holiday-lights/>

<http://visitwv.com/things-to-see/fairs-and-festivals/>

<http://www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/fflist.html>

<http://www.arthurdaleheritage.org/>

<http://www.mountainmade.com>

<http://tamarackwv.com>

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