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budget, but if you've got bigger savings goals in mind a staycation might be in order. Certain cities are obviously more conducive to a staycation than others, though.

Jun. 04, 2014



With the economy showing begrudging signs of improvement following an especially tumultuous winter, travel is trending upward as consumers can't seem to wait for an escape. More than 36 million people ventured at least 50 miles from home over Memorial Day weekend, according to the American Automobile Association (AAA), and 75 percent of Americans are planning a summer vacation this year, according to American Express.

However, the 2014 summer travel season is also expected to be rather expensive. Vacationers plan to spend an average of \$1,246 per person this summer – a nine percent increase from 2013 – due in part to a [rise in hotel and airfare costs](#) in popular

destinations. If you don't feel like you can afford such a hefty tab, you aren't alone.

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you can bring the benefits of a vacation to your front door.

With that in mind, [WalletHub](#) considered 20 of the most important factors – from the number of public golf courses and swimming pools per capita to the cost of maid services – in ranking the 100 largest U.S. cities based on their staycation suitability. Hopefully our findings can help frugal-minded consumers who are on the fence about staying home or taking a trip make the best decisions for their wallets and enjoy a bit of fun this summer.

Rank	City Name	Recreation	Food &	Rest &	Weather
		Activities	Entertainment	Relaxation	
		Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
1	Buffalo, NY	7	10	1	31
2	Minneapolis, MN	4	7	51	9
3	Cincinnati, OH	2	13	20	33
4	Pittsburgh, PA	32	4	6	16
5	Portland, OR	14	6	45	7
6	Omaha, NE	10	29	12	8
7	New Orleans, LA	11	3	29	35
8	Tampa, FL	20	18	8	25
9	Orlando, FL	39	1	3	68
10	Seattle, WA	8	9	73	13
11	St. Petersburg, FL	5	38	7	63
12	Lexington, KY	17	28	18	29
13	St. Louis, MO	17	5	14	90
14	Cleveland, OH	29	19	9	41
15	Atlanta, GA	6	17	33	67
16	Boise City, ID	65	14	4	24

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St. Paul, MN

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63

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25	Richmond, VA	9	30	34	51
26	Austin, TX	42	16	13	72
27	Baltimore, MD	19	26	61	50
28	Lincoln, NE	41	42	43	6
29	Tulsa, OK	26	44	1	73
30	Sacramento, CA	27	48	40	23
31	Las Vegas, NV	67	2	57	54
32	Baton Rouge, LA	34	20	25	85
33	Washington, DC	16	25	49	84
34	Tucson, AZ	30	23	15	98
35	Kansas City, MO	33	27	10	90
36	Albuquerque, NM	15	49	56	62
37	Boston, MA	34	15	80	43
38	Scottsdale, AZ	37	24	53	58
39	San Francisco, CA	25	12	81	64
40	Nashville, TN	55	31	42	31
41	Indianapolis, IN	49	54	26	30
42	Milwaukee, WI	66	20	69	21
43	Fort Wayne, IN	36	37	83	25
44	Toledo, OH	81	43	19	38
45	Durham, NC	45	62	36	25
46	Chicago, IL	50	41	17	76
47	Virginia Beach, VA	21	68	76	22
48	Louisville, KY	31	40	88	39
49	Philadelphia, PA	68	34	64	39
50	San Diego, CA	57	49	87	11
51	Norfolk, VA	28	77	68	34

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Memphis, TN

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61	Lubbock, TX	63	64	27	92
62	Irvine, CA	54	98	82	1
63	Miami, FL	74	56	24	86
64	Chesapeake, VA	40	81	84	61
65	Plano, TX	51	92	30	75
66	Columbus, OH	43	55	71	83
67	Irving, TX	52	95	21	81
68	Los Angeles, CA	82	71	77	4
69	San Bernardino, CA	96	88	52	17
70	Colorado Springs, CO	64	36	79	97
71	Henderson, NV	77	79	36	47
72	Detroit, MI	57	47	72	87
73	Glendale, AZ	62	78	75	57
74	Garland, TX	57	89	44	76
75	Jacksonville, FL	70	75	32	80
76	Newark, NJ	73	87	66	49
77	Mesa, AZ	76	80	49	53
78	Aurora, CO	48	85	41	93
79	New York, NY	60	65	97	44
80	Santa Ana, CA	99	94	92	1
81	Stockton, CA	77	97	86	3
82	Chandler, AZ	84	84	38	54
83	San Antonio, TX	83	67	39	79
84	Oakland, CA	72	66	94	69
85	Hialeah, FL	90	86	31	82

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94	Jersey City, NJ	94	74	85	44
95	San Jose, CA	85	93	95	60
96	Fresno, CA	92	90	100	36
97	Anaheim, CA	93	96	99	14
98	Laredo, TX	86	73	23	100
99	Fremont, CA	80	100	96	48
100	Chula Vista, CA	95	99	98	51

~ Source: [WalletHub](#).

Are staycations a good money-saving idea?

“Staycations are an excellent money saving idea. I often recommend them to individuals and families who are having a financial crisis due to a job loss or other personal casualty. They are often for short periods of time (daytrips, long weekends, etc.) and are much more economical than formal vacations.

Formal vacations often require advance notice and bookings with huge deposits. I once booked a place for a week at a fancy resort and ended up spending most of the time in my room due to terrible weather conditions. Since staycations are usually for a short duration, you can likely do four or five staycations for the price of one regular vacation.”

–*John Grigsby, Pennsylvania College of Technology*

“Whether staycationing is for you or not depends on where you live. If you happen to live in a major metropolitan hub and your city is rich in culture,

events and sights then a staycation might help you not just save on travel

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attractions, your expenses can become considerable.”

– *Gabor Forgacs, Ryerson University*

Staycation money-saving tips

“Plan ahead and use Internet sites to search for bargains on lodging and admission fees. State parks often have very inexpensive places to stay such as cabins and yurts and the admission to state parks is usually free.

Stay at a place that has a refrigerator and microwave for storing and cooking food instead of eating every meal out which adds up quickly. Buy groceries and fuel away from resort areas where prices are often inflated.

If possible, combine a business trip with a vacation by staying a few extra days before or after the business event. That way, your travel could be partially paid by your employer and if you are self-employed, your travel could potentially qualify for a tax deduction.”

– *John Grigsby, Pennsylvania College of Technology*

“If saving money is a strong consideration here is an idea: finally you can catch-up with all the local friends and relatives! Organize pot-luck get-togethers and barbecues in parks or backyards to meet and spend time with people. Take advantage of 'open doors' events if your city offers that, to visit places that you otherwise couldn't.”

– *Gabor Forgacs, Ryerson University*

What is the best way to determine a vacation budget?

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college or going on job interview.”

– *John Grigsby, Pennsylvania College of Technology*

Do “staycations” reflect our habit of turning luxuries into necessities?

“This depends on the persons involved. I have heard people comment that staycations are often more fun and like an adventure since you can plan to do things as you go. Unlike a formal vacation to a resort for a week or more, you don’t feel obligated to visit every attraction and attend every prescheduled event and can simply relax.

Staycations are not a sacrifice since there is nothing that prevents you from staying at a luxurious hotel or eating at fine restaurant along the way.”

– *John Grigsby, Pennsylvania College of Technology*

“There is no reason to be embarrassed when you choose to staycation in a given year, however this choice is more likely than not, out of necessity.

Real vacation involves a change of scenery for a variety of reasons: we unwind, relax and rejuvenate ourselves much better in a new environment that is different from our usual habitat. Learning, exploring and discovering is enriching and refreshing the mind and the body.

If we staycation we should go to places and see sights even in our own city that we never visited before. That way we can gather new experiences, even if we sleep in our own bed every night.”

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Are there any psychological drawbacks to a staycation?

“There can be some drawbacks to staycations, especially for some couples/families.

(1) Couples/families often stay in the same ruts or family patterns if they are at home, on a staycation, as they do in their typical routine. Getting away may offer them an opportunity to engage in more positive interactions.

(2) Often times if people stay home it is easier for them to get pulled back into work, either by individuals at their place of employment (e.g., employers) or by their own involvement in their work.

(3) Many times, staycationers spend their time with household projects, errands, etc., rather than playing and enjoying one another's company, and as a result, they do not feel relaxed or get much pleasure out of the experience.”

– *Nadine J. Kaslow, Emory University*

“Research shows that a change of environment can alter our perspective. And sometimes it may take leaving our usual four walls to also be able to forget about the responsibilities, duties and 'to-do's' that weigh us down on a daily basis. Finally, it may be hard to not fill your days with household errands on a staycation and actually rest. Staycationers need to be very deliberate and conscious to actually rest and stay away from work even though they are at home.”

– *Emma Seppälä, Stanford University*

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decision was made. Moreover, children may feel deprived of new experiences and learning opportunities and you may feel a sense of guilt that you are depriving them. So children make the equation more complex.”

– *Nadine J. Kaslow, Emory University*

“Kids are a joy but can also add complexity when it comes to travel. A staycation, in which the environment remains the same but you make the time to relax, participate in activities you usually don't have time for together, and focus on your family, may be an even more restful way to vacation with kids.”

– *Emma Seppälä, Stanford University*

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