

TRAVEL TIPS

Become a Tourist in Your Own Town

(NAPSA)—Just about everyone could use a weekend getaway, but sometimes the rush of traveling or escalating gasoline prices can make you rethink your plans. Fortunately, there is a happy medium between a far-flung weekend and the same old boring routine. The next time you're itching for a new experience, why not explore your own hometown or a neighboring city? Who knows, before the end of the weekend, you may just see your community—and yourself—in a whole new light! Here are some ways to get started.

Revamp your routine. Making a few changes to your typical weekend works wonders. For example, if your usual pastime is dinner and the latest box office flick, try a new type of cuisine and see an independent film. Another option is to revisit a favorite activity from the past. When was the last time you went ice skating, miniature golfing or bowling? Or you can simply enjoy the outdoor splendor that the town has to offer and go hiking, picnicking or appreciate the beauty of a sunrise or a sunset.

Make a list and check it twice. Jot down featured hot spots—restaurants, shops, cultural centers, attractions—that you've wanted to visit but never had time to try. This is your chance to check them out. Drawing a blank? Browse the paper or go online to a travel Web site such as www.MyLeisureTrip.com to



search for fun activities by city.

What would a tourist do? Think like a tourist and take advantage of the visitors and conventions bureau or chamber of commerce for a list of tourist attractions and local trivia. You can also find resources such as calendars of local events, travel brochures and various promotional offers. Some attractions may even offer discounts or special passes to nearby attractions, just for local residents.

Check your luggage—and peace of mind—at the door. Even if you're only a few miles from home, check in to a hotel to enjoy that blissful feeling of a weekend escape. The change of setting and pampering service can clear your mind, relax and reinvigorate, and you can enjoy your vacation without the everyday distractions and chores of home. You can also sleep in, savor a leisurely breakfast or take a dip in the hotel pool. Hotel packages, like

the BounceBack Weekend® available at Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn hotels, seem custom-made for hometown tourism and offer special Thursday through Sunday night rates, and include a full American breakfast for two daily, as well as early check-in and late checkout.

See your town differently through the viewfinder. Since you're on vacation, don't forget your camera! Snap away as you enjoy the sights and sensations of your hometown, and share these memories later with friends and loved ones. Don't be afraid to try something different! Take pictures from unusual angles and capture wacky photo-ops and candid moments that will surely make the storytelling more fun later. Your friends won't believe you had a fantastic vacation without even taking the trouble to leave town.

Once you discover all the fantastic things to see and do that are just around the corner, you may find it difficult to resist the temptation to try them all again next weekend. The beauty of hometown tourism is that you don't have to plan far ahead—and you can enjoy it on the spur of the moment.

For more information about booking a BounceBack Weekend, visit www.hilton.com/bounceback or www.hiltongardeninn.com/bounceback or call 1-800-HILTONS or 1-877-STAY-HGI.