



*"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."
– Jimmy Dean*

Summer Travel Plans Quashed Due to the Coronavirus? Here are a Few Ideas for a Stellar Staycation

Over the past few months, the coronavirus pandemic has quickly upended life for millions of people around the world, disrupting everything from the ability to go to work every day to summer travel plans. Whether you're opting to stay home this summer as a precautionary measure or you're simply seeking an easier, more budget-friendly way to unwind, a "staycation"—a planned period of leisure time spent at home or in your own city—offers a great alternative to traveling. Here are a few ideas for a summer staycation that will ensure you won't miss hitting the road:

- Have an at-home spa day. Pampering yourself is one of the best ways to make your staycation feel relaxing and restorative. Gather the supplies you need for your favorite self-care measures, such as DIY manicures/pedicures, facials, a bubble bath (or a dip in the pool or hot tub if you have access to one)...or simply treat yourself to a long afternoon nap and some time lounging with your favorite book or show!
- Schedule an outdoor movie night. Bring the classic drive-in movie theater experience to your own backyard by investing in a projector, hanging a white sheet against a flat surface, and gathering friends and family to watch your movie of choice. Be sure to set up a comfortable seating area and make some popcorn!
- Go camping in your own backyard. If you have the space, create a backyard getaway for the whole family by pitching a tent, making some s'mores and other camping trip favorites, and spending a night under the stars.
- Dine al fresco. Enjoying a meal on a restaurant's patio is one of the simplest pleasures of summer. But whether restaurants near you remain closed due to the coronavirus or you're simply opting to dine at home, you can easily recreate the restaurant patio experience with a little planning. Set up an outdoor table with dining utensils, candles, and your favorite decorations, play some background music, and either make a home-cooked meal or grab takeout from a local restaurant.
- Design your own film festival. An evening spent watching movies can offer the same sense of escapism as a vacation. Plan your festival by setting a theme—such as classics, horror flicks, romantic comedies, or foreign films (a great option if you have the travel bug!)—and procure the movies for your line-up. After watching, enhance the cinematic experience by discussing the films with your viewing buddies.

Baked Salmon with Lemon Butter Cream Sauce

Source: Cafedelites.com

Ingredients:

Salmon:

- 4 (6 oz | 170 g) skinless salmon fillets
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine, (optional -- can sub with 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard)
- Salt, to season
- Cracked black pepper, to season

Cream Sauce:

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine, (can sub with 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard)
- 1/2 cup cream (heavy, whipping or thickened)
- 1-2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice,
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley, divided

Directions:

- Heat oven to 425°F (220°C). Lightly grease a baking dish.
- Pat the salmon dry with a paper towel. Combine lemon juice, olive oil, garlic and wine together in a small bowl.
- Rub salmon with the mixture and arrange in baking dish. Season with a good pinch of salt and pepper.
- Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until salmon is opaque throughout.
- While salmon is baking, melt butter in a small pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant (30 seconds).
- Pour in the wine and let cook for 2-3 minutes until just starting to reduce. Add in cream and cook until sauce thickens slightly.
- Take off the heat and stir through lemon juice and parsley.
- Pour the sauce over the cooked salmon in the dish to mix through the natural pan juices released from the salmon while baking.

Easy Home Improvements that Offer a Strong Return on Investment (ROI)

Source: homelight.com & nar.realtor

When your home is for sale, you might wonder which upgrades would maximize your price and attract a buyer more quickly. Home improvements don't always pay off—before embarking on a project, it's important to consider the likelihood that it will actually increase your home's value enough to leave you with a profit margin that renders your time and effort worthwhile.

If you're seeking quick ways to increase your home's appeal, here are a few relatively easy improvements that offer a strong ROI:

- Create a more open floor plan. Open floor plans seem to be more popular with each passing year. By strategically knocking down a wall or two—particularly around your kitchen and living area—you can create a more open floor plan that makes your home look brighter and more spacious and offers a convenient gathering space. However, it's advisable to consult a contractor to ensure that you don't eliminate a support wall.
- Tidy the landscaping. When prospective buyers arrive at your home, the landscaping is one of the first things they notice—and an unkempt yard may give the impression that the home is not well-maintained. According to a 2018 survey from the National Association of Realtors®, simple actions like pruning shrubs, laying mulch, mowing the lawn, and planting flowers on an average-sized property yielded a 100% ROI.
- Touch up exterior paint. Paint touch-ups offer an easier, more budget-friendly alternative to repainting your entire house. To create a newer look, simply paint over any areas that are chipping or peeling, pressure wash the exterior to clean dirty spots, and consider applying a boldly colored coat of paint to the front door as a way to make the entrance pop.
- Upgrade kitchen and bathroom hardware. Faucets, doorknobs, and cabinet or drawer pulls may seem insignificant—but having outdated versions of these items can make your home less appealing to buyers. Fortunately, this is an easy and inexpensive fix. Consider replacing any older hardware with brushed nickel, oil-rubbed bronze, or stainless steel.



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