



STAYCATION! by Gilda Stanbery

An increasingly popular and fun vacation is the stay-at-home-vacation, or the “staycation.” Let’s admit it, we probably have spent more time exploring places far away than we have the sites in our own area. This is natural. People tend to dismiss local sites or always assume they will go there some day. There are bound to be places around us we have not explored or activities we have not tried.

Imagine the benefits of a staycation: Save money! There are no airfare, hotel, or rental car costs. According to an American Automobile Association survey, “The average North American vacation will cost \$244 per day for two people for lodging and meals. Add some kids and airfare, and a 10-day vacation could top \$10,000.”

- There are no wasted travel days -- two more vacation days for fun!
- No travel means no physical drain. Let’s admit it, travel can be exhausting.
- You do not have to spend your vacation with strangers, either on flights or in hotels.
- It is the green thing to do!
- If the weather is lousy, who cares? Adjust.
- No need to board pets – more money saved! You can include them in your outings too!

A staycation is a green thing to do! Explore the area for green ideas like: a nature trail, camping at a site close by, taking bike trips, fishing, paddling, kayaking, canoeing, or just relaxing.

Here are 16 things to get you started planning your staycation and #whattodoinforsythga. Look for staycation deals all around, as you #shoplocal and #eatlocal.

1. **Change it up!** Stay in one of the local hotels and enjoy the amenities they offer while getting a change of pace. There is plenty of time to relax and check out the swimming pool, exercise room, in room movies, and free breakfast many offer. Forsyth KOA has mini golf and mining for gems too!
2. **Visit our local museum:** Monroe County Museum (478.994.5070) has exhibits in two historic train depots located at the corner of Adams and Johnston Streets. Outside, you will find an old fire truck, an even older steam engine, and a newly installed train sculpture – great for selfies! Inside holds the stories of Forsyth and Monroe County. If you are looking for more local history, take a short walk up Johnston Street and visit the beautifully restored Monroe County Courthouse. www.monroecoga.org
3. **Looking for another great selfie spot?** Across the street from the depots is the City of Forsyth’s first mural -- to welcome you home! Can you find the hidden green tomato? Don’t forget to add the hashtags #sweetlifeforsyth and #forsyth_cvb. Or visit Hamlin Hills Farm’s petting zoo. (844.386.3276)
4. **Go to a movie.** Yes, you can rent a movie or borrow one from the library (478.994.7025) and have a movie night at home. Don’t forget the popcorn!
5. **See a show.** Check out Backlot Players performances at the Rose Theater www.thebacklotplayers.org or what is happening at the Monroe County Fine Arts Center www.monroefinearts.org
6. **Go shopping.** Spend the day in downtown Forsyth’s shops and boutiques for that unique one of a kind experience. While you are there have lunch at your favorite, or try a new favorite restaurant, for a snack or lunch. Look for staycation specials all around downtown Forsyth.
7. **Take a nap.** Hey, vacations are to escape from daily life and relax. Catch up on sleep in that hammock or easy chair. It is a great time for a little aromatherapy too!



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8. **Get the bike out or take a hike.** There are many miles of dedicated shared use trails in and around Forsyth. Pack a picnic lunch and go explore. Need to brush up on bike safety? Pick up your free guide at the Welcome Center, 68 North Lee St.
9. **Read a book.** You don't have to be sitting in a faraway place to settle in with a good summer read. Pick up the latest best seller from the library and head downtown to one of the cafés or Lee Street Park. Splurge on a cappuccino or other tasty treats, and spend an hour or two lost in a book.
10. **Take an exercise class or spa treatment.** Always wanted to try yoga, Pilates, spinning, etc.? Maybe you are ready for a new look and a little pampering? Look to the salons on spa around the Square. Now is your time!
11. **Concert On the Square.** Forsyth Main Street hosts a series of free concerts each summer. It is a good time to dance, people watch, and have fun for all ages! www.cityofforsyth.net/forsythmainstreet
12. **Host a potluck or barbecue.** Have the extended family over or host a block party. Ask everyone to bring something and share. Don't miss the **Independence Day Celebration** held at the Monroe County Recreation Complex – complete with food, fun and lots of fireworks!
13. **Play golf.** Even if you're not an avid golfer, this is the perfect time to try it. Forsyth Golf Club is the perfect course for a relaxing game or to take a couple of lessons. www.cityofforsyth.net If miniature golf is more your speed, try Forsyth KOA (478.994.2019). Pan for gold and gems while you are there too!
14. **Take a day for High Falls.** Visit High Falls State Park, for events: www.gastateparks.org/highfalls Visit the shops and restaurants around the park entrance or cool off at the pool!
15. **Take a little trip to Juliette.** Visit the movie set of *Fried Green Tomatoes*, eat at the Whistle Stop Café, and visit the shops on McCracken Street. While you are there, look for Buddy's arm, or take your fishing pole and visit Juliette Park on the Ocmulgee River.
16. **Spend time with the kids.** People remember the good times spent with each other more than the places they've been. Get out a deck of cards or a board game. Visit the **Splash Pad** and **Pump Track** at the Country Club Park. Go on the **Forsyth Foxhunt**. It is a downtown based scavenger hunt of small fox statues hidden around different shops, businesses, and historic buildings, taking you on an adventure through Forsyth. You can pick up the clues at the Welcome Center. This fox hunt is free and sure to delight all ages! Spend time talking, laughing, and reminiscing. Life is short--spend time with family!

Staycation ideas are great for entertaining, visiting family, and friends too! For more ideas and a Visitors Guide to relax, shop, and dine locally, stop by the Welcome Center at 68 North Lee St. in Forsyth, or visit the City of Forsyth Convention & Visitors Bureau's web site: www.forsythcvb.com.

The trick to enjoying a staycation is to deviate from daily routines and truly make it a vacation. If you enjoy eating out on vacations, do the same on your staycation. Skip the laundry or cleaning the garage. Relax! As odd as it sounds, bring discipline to the vacation by not allowing chores or drudgery to intercede and take away the fun. Remind yourself that, while you are at home, you are on vacation. If you do, your staycation will be more fun and relaxing!