

Scottsdale Staycation

Written by Written by Hayley Mitchell

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Summer is here, but the vacation fund might be running a little lower than in years past. Of course, the annual family trip to Disneyland can't be cut, but your summer girls' trip to Mexico might be on the chopping block. Here, we rediscover Scottsdale and how to have the perfect girls' staycation right at home.



According to Lisa Kasanicky, author of the newly released "Complete Idiot's Guide to Girlfriend Getaways," the best part about staying in Scottsdale during the off season is the deals for locals. From hotel rooms to dinners out, prices have been slashed, making the city your playground for a weekend with your gal pals. Book a summer room rate at one of the luxurious local hotels (Westin Kierland and JW Marriott Desert Ridge have great summer deals and luxe amenities to explore) and take Kasanicky's advice on how to organize a female fiesta.

How to Spa in Scottsdale:

"Even though resort spa services can be pricey, they come padded with a full day's use of the amenities like swimming, steaming, lounging and fitness classes at no extra cost, so take advantage of that. For a group of five or more, be sure to book well in advance, so you can get your appointments coordinated so you can meet up for lunch or lounging by the pool." *Joya Spa at the InterContinental Montelucia Resort is AFM's pick for summer spa trips. Enjoy \$55 Happy Hour mini-treatments on Thursday evenings.* www.joyaspa.com.

Stay Fit and Have Fun:

"For exercise while on vacation, the hiking trails in Scottsdale are obviously amazing, but I've found that us locals are much more immune to the dry heat than we think. I've taken out-of-town guests on easy hikes in the dead of the summer and it's not pretty. It is a vacation after all so I say just laugh a lot—it burns calories—and enjoy your girl time. Pretend you're French (as in eat what you want and think skinny) and don't worry so much!" *AFM thinks swimming up to the resort pool bar is exercise enough.*

Avoiding Photofobia:

"I got a great suggestion about pictures when researching my book: designate one person a day to be the photographer. You'll save yourselves the time it takes to pose for five different shots if you use one camera and then combine all your pictures at the end of the trip so everybody gets full copies. You can use online tools like TripWiser.com or Kodakgallery.com to share photos and details of your vacay." *AFM likes this tip and reminds you to actually enjoy the moment instead of always trying to photograph it.*

Break Free from Technology:

"Set some ground rules about checking in at home or work on your girls' weekend. The No. 1 pet peeve on group getaways is someone obsessively tied to their BlackBerry and not focused on the task at hand—having a good time. Set a designated time for personal device checks—over coffee in the mornings, for example—and initiate the Whine Jar rule for breaking out the BlackBerry at inappropriate times. The money of course goes toward a bottle of wine on the final evening." *Instead of wine, AFM suggests the guilty girl buy a round of happy hour shochu tonics at Roka Akor's Shochu Lounge; a great way to start the night.* www.rokaakor.com.



Dealing with Dining Out:

Eating at Scottsdale's fine restaurants is one of the main activities of a girls' getaway. "As for tackling the bill when you go out, if it looks as if everyone did an equal amount of damage, then split it up per person. Easy! For large groups, I suggest that everyone chooses house wines and cocktails priced around \$10, so it averages out and math skills aren't too severely challenged." *Asia de Cuba is AFM's choice for group dining. It has big tables and all menu items are meant to be shared, which makes for a fun dinner. Plus, the cocktails are strong and the service is fantastic.* www.mondrianscottsdale.com.



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Buy the book: Get your own copy and make some big plans for a summer of fun with girlfriends by your side. \$15.95, www.idiotsguides.com.