

VOCABULARY Festivals and carnivals

1 What are the people talking about? Match the statements (1–5) with the items in the list (a–j).

- a a firework display
- b costumes
- c a parade
- d confetti
- e a sound system
- f a bonfire
- g a band
- h masks
- i floats

- 1 'Wow! Look at how many people there are. It stretches all the way back to the main square. And the music is brilliant. I love all those Caribbean rhythms.'
- 2 'Look at that one with all the flowers. That must have taken ages to build. And the one in the shape of the boat is beautiful. But I can't hear the commentary very well. It isn't loud enough.'
- 3 'I'm freezing. Let's get a bit closer to the flames. ... Oh, it's started! Aren't they amazing? Like little coloured stars hanging in the sky.'
- 4 'There were people dressed as Romans, characters from Disney, birds all sorts. I didn't even recognise my own sister. Her face was completely covered with feathers.'
- 5 'Look at me! I'm covered in bits of paper. And you are too. It's all in your hair.'

2 Cross out the verb in each set that doesn't collocate.

- 1 *set light / make / sit round / throw wood on* a bonfire
- 2 *watch / light / cancel / miss* a fireworks display
- 3 *listen to / form / play / book* a steel drum band
- 4 *set up / test / record / hire* a sound system
- 5 *watch / hold / look / take part in* a parade
- 6 *carry local / dress up in a / design a / wear national* costume
- 7 *decorate / build / ride on / sit* a float
- 8 *get dressed / make / wear / hide behind* a mask
- 9 *throw / spray / ban / be showered with* confetti

READING

3 Read the blog opposite quickly. Match the headings (a–f) to the correct sections (1–6).

- a Learn something new
- b Declare your home a work-free zone
- c Keep a record
- d Indulge yourself a little
- e Plan ahead
- f Set start and finish dates

4 Read the blog again. Which of these statements are true, according to the writer.

- 1 The only reason for doing a staycation is lack of money.
- 2 At first, the writer's children weren't keen on the idea of a staycation.
- 3 It's important to decide a fixed period for your staycation.
- 4 A staycation is a good time to catch up on household jobs.
- 5 Only one person should plan the family activities.
- 6 It's a good idea to explore your local area on foot.
- 7 You should be prepared to spend a bit on money on something special.
- 8 People don't often bother to look back on their staycation experiences.

5 Add one missing word to each sentence. Look back at the blog if you need to.

- 1 Our kid aren't very demanding. They usually along with what we suggest.
- 2 You can't trust to luck if you want a successful party. It's in the planning.
- 3 If you want to improve your language skills, staying with a host family is just the for you.
- 4 I avoid fattening foods, but I like the ice cream now and again.
- 5 There's a lot to choose from, but have what your fancy.
- 6 You've been very kind. I'd like to you to a nice dinner.



HOLIDAYS FOR THE HARD-UP

Short of money, time or just energy? Fed up of being ripped off at hotels, restaurants and theme parks? Tired of getting stuck in endless traffic jams and airport queues? Then a staycation may just be the thing for you. Adapted from the word vacation, a 'staycation' is becoming the trend for families who opt to stay at home during their summer break. And it can be more fun than you might think.

My family and I have been 'staycationing' for the last couple of years. At first my kids went wild at the thought of not going abroad. What on earth would they tell their friends or put on their Facebook profile at the end of the summer? But then they realised they wouldn't have to put up with an exhausting journey, sharing a room with siblings, communication problems and endless arguments over the plans for each day. Suddenly, exploring the area near their own home and being able to hang out with their friends seemed like heaven.

Basically, as with any family activity, it's all in the planning. Don't expect to have a successful break by just staying at home and hoping that something interesting will happen. Here are a few pointers to get you started:

1

Schedule a beginning and ending to make your staycation seem like a 'real' holiday. Otherwise, it might end up feeling like a series of days just hanging around at home.

2

That means no housework, no paperwork and no homework. You are on holiday, after all.

3

Have a daily activity in mind and a back-up in case the weather changes. Let each member of the family choose what they would like to do for at least one afternoon ... and make sure the others go along with it.

Check out what's free

Everything from bike rides in the countryside to family fun days in the local park. Pack your own picnic and set a budget for treats like boat trips, cold drinks and the odd ice cream.

4

Most colleges and sports centres run summer schools that offer a wide range of courses. Have a go at something the whole family can enjoy – pottery, cookery, local wildlife – whatever takes your fancy.

Explore your own backyard

Take the time to explore the area near where you live. Walking or cycling is a great way to enjoy the scenery without adding to your carbon footprint.

5

Add up all the money you're saving on travel and accommodation and treat the family to something really nice. It could be a banquet-style takeaway, a fancy dress party, or an evening out.

6

Take photos or videos, just as you would if you went away from home for your holiday. Remember your kids will want something to show their friends, and you will want to keep those staycation memories too.

Have a happy staycation!

Glossary

back-up: a second plan in case a situation changes

your own backyard: the area near where you live

carbon footprint: a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide produced by a person / organisation

