



stay·ca·tion

ˌstā'kāSHn/ *Noun Informal plural noun: staycations*

1. a vacation spent in one's home country rather than abroad, or one spent at home and involving day trips to local attractions.

For many folks, the dream of a slow-paced, relaxing vacation has fallen victim to high gas prices, very invasive security searches and credit card bills that linger long after a trip has ended. By the time you're ready to head home, you're left feeling like you need a vacation to recover from your vacation.

So, this year, why not enjoy time off on your own terms with your own cycling stay-cation? You'll skip the hassle and the expense of flying or driving, and take part in the best experiences your town has to offer. Planned stay-cations also offer economic benefit to local businesses, who get customers from the area providing them with business.

Remember to assess your cycling limits: How long do you want to be on your bike for each excursion



So how do you plan a great cycling stay-cation? Part of the joy of time off is enjoying the freedom that comes with having little on your plate. Not so little that you become a couch potato, but you also don't want to over-schedule and end up just as stressed as you were at the start. It's a good idea to give your stay-cation start and end dates, so you really feel like it's an official vacation. And remember to take photos and videos!

Discover what is special about the Comox Valley. The Vancouver Island Visitor Centre which is open from 9 am to 5 pm. 7 days a week, is located at 3607 Small Rd #101, Courtenay, BC V9N 3Z8 and can be reached at (250) 400-2882. If you are a smart phone or tablet user, you can now plan your vacation and discover the Comox Valley on its mobile site. Or if you're on an iPhone, be sure to download the FREE Discover Comox Valley app from the App Store. For those of us more comfortable on a computer, the website offers lots of information <http://www.discovercomoxvalley.com/explore/vancouver-island-visitor-centre>

There is a list of Heritage tours in Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland that are all equally accessible by foot or bicycle. A list of wonderful Gardens to tour such as the Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park, the Kitty Coleman Woodland Gardens and the Anderton Therapeutic Gardens; a Comox Valley Growers guide that lists Valley wineries and Vineyards and the Farmer's Markets which take place on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the Valley. Comox fisherman's wharf

They also feature several "Top 10 Lists" which include Fresh Air adventures, Relaxing escapes, and Hidden Treasures, to mention just 3. For a change of pace there are several mountain biking trails including Seal Bay Park, Cumberland Woods.

With our long evenings you can also combine cycling and dining. Plan a leisurely

Take into account the weather: do you prefer early morning rides or is mid-day the best?

Be prepared for tire changes but also know the location of Valley Bicycle Shops:

Courtenay

Mountain City Cycle

Broken Spoke

Trail Bicycles

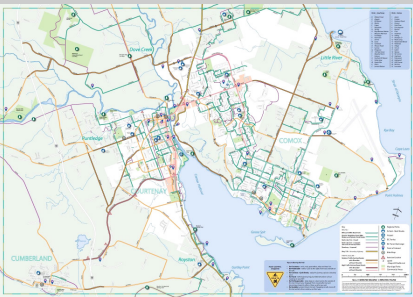
Comox

Simon's Cycles

Black's Cycle

Cumberland

Dodge City Cycles



The Don't's of Staycations:

Don't "check in" with the office. Just because you're sticking around town doesn't mean you should check in

ride to a new to you restaurant and cycle home. What a wonderful way to end a warm summer evening.

So now that you are excited about touring the amazing Comox Valley, it's time to plan to cycle.

First, plan a safe and enjoyable route. Get the maps you need either in hard copy or on-line and choose your roads wisely. Look for quiet roads, or roads with paved shoulders. Be aware when you are cycling if drivers see you. Know whether the sun is in the eyes of drivers approaching you from behind or ahead of you in intersections. Use your best judgment about where to ride.

Consider what you would like to see or do: wineries, farmer's markets, swimming, scenic views.

Make your day's food choices (packing snacks or lunches or making restaurant stops).

Ensure that you have adequate hydration.

Carry Sunscreen.

Be very efficient with what you carry. Layer your clothing. Consider back up rain gear. Pack your panniers before you load them on the bike to avoid putting too much pressure on the clips and running the risk of breaking them.

Weigh the options of panniers vs back packs.

Invest in the bike that will do the job. If you like the joy of riding a road bike might be the best. For longer rides you'll need a touring bicycle that's sturdy enough to carry panniers and/or tow a trailercycle or trailer. If you are not sure about your bike speak to one of the local bicycle shops about renting to try out a different bike.

If you are expecting some long stretches of quiet consider a portable speaker system that mounts on your bike and connects to an iPhone or iPod and plays your favorite tunes can make the miles more pleasurable and not impede your ability to hear.

If you are taking children, ride as a team. When kids are riding on a trailer-cycle, they get to choose: They can pedal when they're feeling strong, or just sit back and enjoy the ride. Either way, it's important to make them feel like part of the team. As long as you're loving and reasonable with your expectations, kids will rise to the challenge. Also, consider giving them a camera. Nothing beats boredom like a camera in kids' hot little hands, and their perspective on the notable sights will be different from an adult's.

Take a break every hour.

Start small. If you're new to bike touring ease into it with easy trips.



with the office. A staycation is still a vacation, so resist the temptation to catch up on work while at home.

Don't scoff at prices. Staycations are about saving money but keep in mind that you are already saving lots of money on airline tickets, hotels, meals, etc. If an event nearby is slightly expensive, don't scoff and ignore it. Take a moment and consider if this will fit into your budget.

Don't let the weather dictate your activity. If the weather outside isn't perfect that doesn't mean you should stay inside. Get out your rain gear and ride. A modified more protected route. Time spent watching the rain fall outside your windows won't make for a fun time.



For anyone who would like to make their cycling staycation even more effortless, Island Joy Rides can do the planning for you. They will provide the right bike and gear and assess the best routes for your ability and interest. They know which restaurants and coffee shops are cycle-friendly, and where to pull off the trail for a refreshing dip in a local swimming hole. They are a boutique cycle tour company, owned and operated by Laurel Cronk. Laurel was born and raised in Comox, now resides in Campbell River, and has toured extensively in an number of countries to continually learn about the bike tour industry. "We welcome guests from around the world and right here at home - experiencing the abundance of raw & cultured beauty of our island from the seat of a bicycle provides a unique perspective that engages people on a deeper level than more passive forms of travel." says Laurel. Island Joy Rides design and guides their tours to celebrate the best of Vancouver Island's East Coast - wild nature, fertile agricultural lands, and refined culinary choices.

Maps, cue sheets, hybrid bikes, helmets, local tips, and a few other personalized touches make Island Joy Rides' fully guided and self guided cycling tours a great option for visitors and residents of Vancouver Island. Single and multi-day tours are designed to connect guests with the tastes, sights, and sounds that make this region so spectacular: pedalling along idyllic coastal and country roads and forested trails; breathing in fresh, salty ocean air; seeing eagles soar; tasting fresh-picked fruits and vegetables; conversing with local chefs, brew masters, and vintners; and kayaking through diverse marine ecosystems are just some of the highlights. Customized tours are also available for groups of four or more so birthday parties, family reunions, stags, stagettes, and special occasions can all be celebrated while pedalling a bike and exploring your own backyard. For more information, please connect with Island Joy Rides at 1.855.830.8522

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JOY
/joi/
noun
A feeling of great pleasure and happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; keen delight; elation

