10 ways to take a staycation without breaking the bank

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Winter recess is the perfect time to have a family adventure. By this point in the season, cabin fever may have set in, the kids are ready for a break from their routines, and parents and grandparents are seeking ways to keep everyone happy and entertained.

Thankfully, we live in an area rich with opportunities for family exploration. Within a two-hour drive of Rochester, you can enjoy a vacation experience, create lasting memories, and keep the learning going outside of the classroom - all while not breaking the bank.

Read on for 10 awesome ideas for your family's winter break field trip:

1. Winter Hiking

With the right gear, winter can be a great time for outdoor adventure. Gosnell Big Woods Preserve, http://www.geneseelandtrust.org/protected-places.aspx?id=10 in Webster, is home to a rare old-growth forest, with some trees estimated to be 350 years old! The trails are easy to navigate for all ages.

Cumming Nature Center (http://www.rmsc.org/cumming-nature-center), operated in Naples, NY, by the Rochester Museum and Science Center, is open Wednesday through Sunday for winter hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Rental equipment is available at the center. Check out http://www.rmsc.org/cumming-nature-center.

Rochester mom suggests 3 warm places to go when it's cold outside (https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/lifestyle/2017/03/10/rochester-mom-shares-local-places-go-cold-weather/98967522/)

2. Genesee Country Village & Museum

The largest living history museum (https://www.gcv.org/explore/nature-center) in New York State is nearby in Mumford, NY. In addition to historic buildings with costumed guides and demonstrations (open May-October), the museum is home to a 175-acre year-round Nature Center. On Feb. 18, join museum staff for a tea party and a hike to identify winter birds. The popular Owl Moon program is on Feb. 24 and includes owl calling, a live hawk demonstration, and a campfire. Visit https://www.gcv.org/explore/nature-center/.

3. Overnight Staycation

Give the family a fun vacation experience, close to home! Area hotels offer special winter packages (http://www.visitchronicle.com/things-to-do/special-offers/), many including in-room pizza delivery and snacks, movie rentals, and tickets to area attractions. Kids will love splashing in the hotel pool on this mini vacation that’s easy on your budget. Check out visitchronicle.com/things-to-do/special-offers/ for deals.

4. Buffalo Day Trip

Canalside, downtown Buffalo’s energetic waterfront venue, is bustling with winter sports and family-friendly activities. Ice skating is open daily during February break, or try your hand at curling! This fan favorite of the winter Olympics involves sliding stones down an ice alley towards marked targets. The sport may look a bit silly, but is great fun for all ages! The ice bike rentals at Canalside (https://www.canalsidebuffalo.com) offer another unique way to get
out on the ice. Traditional bikes are outfitted with a metal skate platform, allowing for easy balance. The Winter Lodge offers seasonal beverages, snacks, and a place to warm up. Go to https://www.canalsidebuffalo.com.

5. Niagara Day Trip

Winter is a magical time to visit Niagara Falls. Dress in warm layers and visit Niagara Falls State Park (https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit/attractions/butterfly-conservatory/). This newly expanded waterfront park on the American side offers close access to the frozen falls. Then, warm up on the Canadian side with visits to Bird Kingdom and the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory.

The Bird Kingdom, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, houses dozens of varieties of free-flying tropical birds. (Photo: Katie DeTar)

The Bird Kingdom, just over the Rainbow Bridge, is the world’s largest indoor aviary and home to dozens of varieties of tropical birds. https://www.birdkingdom.ca/ The nearby Butterfly Conservatory is a tropical oasis of flowers and hundreds of varieties of free-flying butterflies. Wear a bright red shirt and they might land on you! Visit https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit/attractions/butterfly-conservatory/. For travel information to and from Canada (https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html), including current passport requirements, visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html.
A butterfly rests on lush greenery at the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory in Ontario, Canada. (Photo: Katie DeTar)

**6. Indoor Water Parks**


**7. East Aurora Day Trip**

Southeast of Buffalo, this charming village offers experiences for all ages. Kids 10 and younger can dive into art projects, construction activities, and learn about cultures of the world at the Explore and More (http://exploreandmore.org/) children's museum. Go to http://exploreandmore.org/.
Vidler's on Main Street offers a glimpse into small-town Americana of a bygone era. Kids will love the old-fashioned candy counter and classic toy selection. And don’t miss The Roycroft Campus (https://www.roycroftcampuscorporation.com/). This National Historic Landmark, once a 19th-century artist colony, now offers art classes, tours, and special events. Check out https://www.roycroftcampuscorporation.com/.

### 8. Maple Season

Pancakes and maple syrup are two of the best reasons to love winter in Western New York! Cartwright’s Maple Tree Inn kicks off their annual season on Feb. 13, offering all-you-can-eat buckwheat flapjacks and endless maple syrup. Arrive early to the Angelica, NY, restaurant; there is often a line out the door for a table. Visit http://www.cartwrightsmapletreeinn.com/.

### 9. The Corning Museum of Glass

Admission to this famed glass-themed museum (https://www.cmog.org/) in Comion, NY, is always free for ages 17 and younger. Special events for winter break include a museum-wide scavenger hunt, make-your-own glass projects including a snowman necklace and snowman figurine, and guided tours. https://www.cmog.org/.

### 10. Ithaca Day Trip

This eclectic college town to our southeast will delight curious young scientists and naturalists. The well-known Buttermilk Falls and Ithaca Falls are open for hiking and winter exploration. Continue your outdoor adventure at the Cayuga Nature Center (http://www.priweb.org/index.php/education/cayuga-nature-center) http://www.priweb.org/index.php/education/cayuga-nature-center, featuring live animal encounters daily at noon, and more than two dozen live animal species on view. The Sciencenter (http://www.sciencenter.org/) at http://www.sciencenter.org/ is offering a special discount to educators during February break, as well as daily hands-on activities accompanying their new sound-themed exhibition, Sonic Sensation.

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