

H^{ome} Town Safari

You're in the mood for something fresh and new, and your sweetie is game for exploration, and your calendar has a tiny bald spot. The stars are aligned for an adventure, but you're leaving your passport at home. For this excursion, no planes or trains required! The only hitch: you have to act like you are on vacation, and let your PDA remain MIA for a few hours. Leave the kids in good hands, and trust you'll have a ball without digital intervention.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED:

A day to be a tourist in your own hometown

Transportation: a car, bike or walking shoes

A tourist attitude and attire

A special interest

A theme

Start by dreaming up a theme:

Culinary go beyond restaurant row and seek out more unique experiences. Try a farmers market, a brewery, a bakery, a candy factory, a coffee-roasting shop or a chef's/cooking supply store. Then make a meal together using the gear/ingredients you picked up. Set the scene like a restaurant table for two: white napkins, rose in a bud vase, nice music in the background and you dressed to the 8's (you want to be cute but comfy).

Romance every town has a spot where the kids go to make-out. Create several of your own Inspiration Point destinations around town to inspire a kiss or two. Basically, this is a flirt fest! Under a funky motel sign, in an off-the-beaten-track part of a local park (hello, secret garden!) or in the corner of a dark restaurant you've just discovered.

Sports the key is to not overdo it, mix fun with physical - a bike ride then miniature golf and a cocktails at the 19th hole, or one-on-one basketball then sharing a milkshake with two straws.



Be the tourist in your own town:

Explore the usual no-fly zones places you avoid because of the tourists and the tourist traps. Live in San Francisco? Okay, go to Fisherman's Wharf and take a ferry out on the bay. Live in Custer, South Dakota? When's the last time you drove up to Mount Rushmore

Look the part, people! Wear your dressy, comfortable clothes and sensible footwear, and have camera in hand. Or up the fun factor by pulling out the shorts, black socks and retro sunglasses.

What about the attractions off the beaten path? Do a little research. Ask friends and neighbors where they take their out-of-town guests. Many amusement parks, museums and concert venues offer fantastic deals to locals. Going as adults is a totally different experience than going with your kids.

**Check with the
chamber of commerce
They Often
Have Coupons And List Specials
That Locals Never Even Know About.**

**THE KEY TO GOING
ON A HOMETOWN SAFARI
IS BEING AWARE.**

Check out your surroundings during your daily loop (flyers, local newspaper ads, et al) then take action. Dare to do something worthy of safari status!

Explore a special interest:

Go green. Visit local retailers and experts who are specializing in futuristic and ecologically harmonious technologies. Some homes and buildings are available to tour to advertise their ideas in action.

Theater. Just because you don't live in Manhattan doesn't mean there aren't thriving acting troupes and theatre groups in your area.

Gardening. You don't have to start big. A small herb and vegetable garden is a simple and rewarding start. Map out a trek to visit local growers and nurseries ... maybe they'll inspire you to start a kitchen garden!

