



During summer in the Lowcountry, it's tough to leave the comfort of the A/C to go outside and exert any type of movement. I've looked at a few active adventure travel tapas to inspire you to escape to the outdoors and stop being climatically –challenged!

SPORTS VACATIONS: Ever ridden an ATV down the coastal beaches of Mexico; surfed the “Dinosaur Coast” on the north coast of Peru; or bareboat-sailed down a chain of islands strung out like pearls on a necklace in the Caribbean? While sounding “extreme” to some, others consider these the adrenalin rush they need while on vacation. Relax? You’ve got to be kidding! However, there are all levels of activity from a myriad of companies out there to please your level of participation. Maybe you’ve always wanted to learn to dive. There are lessons that will provide you with certification in select resort hotels and cruise lines to enable you to take that first plunge & explore the world underwater. How about kite boarding? You can learn this sport as close as the Outer Banks or in the warm, shallow water of the Turks & Caicos, which also offer consistent winds & plenty of sunshine. Just remember, working hard at playing also gives you “permission” to indulge in spa time for yoga, meditation or just plain relaxation.

WOMEN-ONLY: Whether soft adventures with great food, hot showers and comfortable beds or challenging backpacking in the wilderness, women-only adventure travel has taken off over the last 20 years. Trips range from combining hiking the Umbria countryside with visits to some of its most famous sites and cities such as Assisi to “slackpacking” all but 7 miles of the Appalachian Trail that traverses Georgia. (For those of you unfamiliar with the term,

slackpacking is backpacking without the backpack – you return to a hostel each night and hike unencumbered during each day.) This is a trip to do with your mother, sister, BFF or partner. If traveling solo, these are trips with like-minded women who you may not know at the beginning of the trip but become your friends during it.

VOLUNTOUR: The new buzzword for “volunteer tourism,” this one is often referred to as travel with a purpose. Immerse yourself in different cultures and make a difference, both at the same time! For example, one such trip to Laos & Cambodia combines building and educational initiatives from which you’ll take away much more than photographs and souvenirs while immersing yourself in the culture of Southeast Asia. Or volunteer at the largest Panda reserve in the world in China and help ensure these distinctly Chinese icons are around for future generations to admire. Closer to home, you can travel to Hawaii and count whales and gather data for the National Marine Humpback Whale Sanctuary or help to construct oyster domes to attract oysters with Tampa Bay Watch, a group dedicated to protect and restore the Tampa Bay (FL) estuary. And, for you corporate types out there, consider hosting a meeting that incorporates a team-building exercise to benefit a local community, much like the activities after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina a la Habitat for Humanity. Think about giving back for your next vacation.

FAMILY TIME: Time to drag the kids away from the computer screens and any other electrical device they’re umbilically-connected to and have them experience fresh air, sunshine and (heaven forbid!) other people. Why not a horse-drawn caravan in Ireland where you’ll see the famed Irish countryside in your own comfy gypsy-style caravan, drawn by a patient horse. Bet that’s something the neighbors haven’t done yet. Isn’t every kid a dog lover? Why not do something different during your winter vacation, be your own “musher” and go dog-sledding. Reputable firms offer tours of their kennels and discuss the “everyday life of a sled dog” – something the kids will enjoy hearing. These tours are offered in New England, California, Banff, and Norway (to name a few spots). In summer, you can go to their “training camps” on Alaskan glaciers, accessed by helicopter as a shore excursion from cruise ships.

Just choose your adventure -- it’s offered somewhere in the world.

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