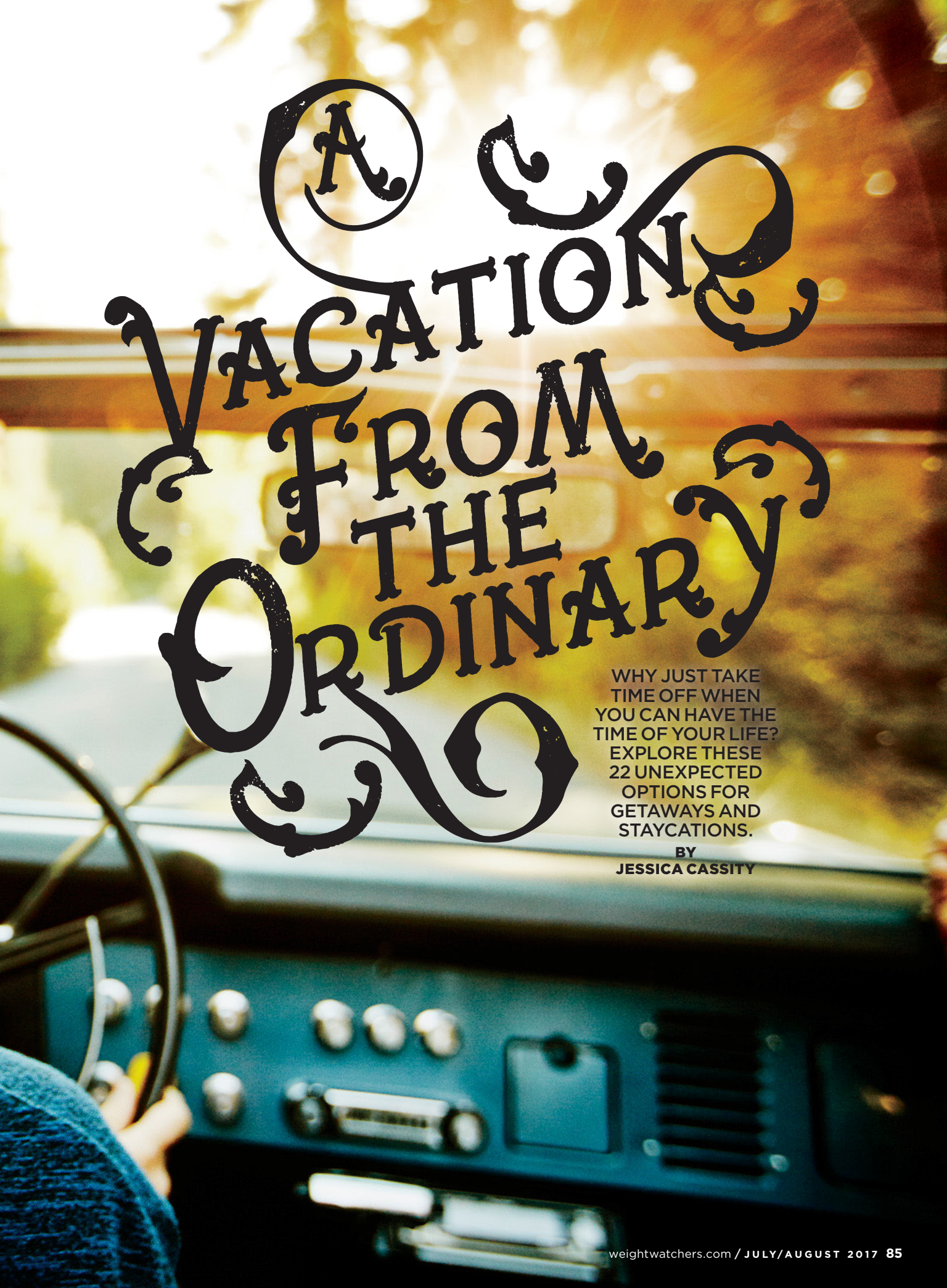




PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES



# A VACATION FROM THE ORDINARY

WHY JUST TAKE  
TIME OFF WHEN  
YOU CAN HAVE THE  
TIME OF YOUR LIFE?  
EXPLORE THESE  
22 UNEXPECTED  
OPTIONS FOR  
GETAWAYS AND  
STAYCATIONS.

BY  
JESSICA CASSITY

**1 Try Goat Yoga.** It's exactly what it sounds like: As you move through your sun salutations in a field with awe-inspiring views, **friendly goats (many of them miniature) wander through class, nuzzling you during your down dogs** and maybe even napping on your mat during *savasana*. Currently, classes are held only in the fields of Oregon's Willamette Valley, about an hour from Portland, but the company is looking into licensing. (Visit [goatyoga.net](http://goatyoga.net) for more information.)

**2 Splash Out on a Grown-up Thrill Ride.** Not all water parks are kid stuff. Universal Orlando's newest park, Volcano Bay (open as of May 2017), spans 30 acres and features 18 rides, many of which incorporate **the park's centerpiece—a 200-foot volcano.** Take the wildest canoe ride of your life or simply laze your way down a winding river. Cool wearable technology lets you reserve a ride time. (For more info, go to [univsalorlando.com](http://univsalorlando.com).)

**3 Make a Giant Leap.** Want the rush of skydiving, without jumping out of a plane? Indoor skydiving is a real thing, and there's a good chance you live (or will be visiting) near one of the specially crafted tunnels and wind chambers that make it possible. After a short lesson, you'll gear up in a jumpsuit, helmet, goggles, and earplugs. Then... let 'er rip! (See [indoorskydivingsource.com](http://indoorskydivingsource.com) for locations; prices start at around \$60 per person.)

**4 Seek Out Nature Among Skyscrapers.** There's a healthy dose of edible flora hidden even in big cities—if you know where to look. Go on a guided tour that gets into the nitty-gritty of finding herbs and plants on the not-so-mean streets of one of America's major metropolises. Author and naturalist Steve "Wildman" Brill offers urban foraging tours in and around New York City, and his website even provides an app to help DIYers. (Visit [wildmanstevebrill.com](http://wildmanstevebrill.com).)

## 5 WATCH THE WHALES

New England and California lay claim to being two of the country's best whale-watching destinations, but no area hosts sea life quite like Monterey Bay. About two hours south of San Francisco, this region boasts year-round whale-watching boat tours. All told, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is home—either all year or during migration season—to 27 types of whales, thanks to its nutrient-rich waters. In summer, you might **expect to see humpback, blue, and killer whales.** If you'd rather stay on land, visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium. (See [montereybayaquarium.org](http://montereybayaquarium.org) for more info.)

**6 Have Old-Fashioned Fun at a State Fair.** Almost every state holds a fair and some—like Texas and Wisconsin—have more than one. **Look forward to a real celebration of rural life, including competitions for locally farmed foods** and animals (you may see newborn calves, colts, and lambs there!).

**7 Plant a New Experience.** You can get a taste of adventure in your own backyard by planting something unusual. Options to consider: Kalettes, a hybrid of kale and Brussels sprouts; pineberry, a white strawberry with a hint of pineapple; and cucamelon, a miniature cucumber that looks like a watermelon.

## 8 CAMP IN A GRAPEVINE FOREST

**Have you ever wanted to stay at a winery? A handful of vineyards now host tent and RV campers on their grounds.** "You can gather around the campfire with friends and sip on wine crafted from the vineyards that surround you," says Caitlin Pianetta of Pianetta Ranch and Winery Camp near Paso Robles, CA. "What our guests want is always the same: To get outside and enjoy life." Here's to that! (See [pianettawinery.com](http://pianettawinery.com) and [tesoaria.com](http://tesoaria.com).)

## 9

### EXPLORE SOME RAPIDS

River rafting is like backpacking—only with regular swim breaks, gourmet dinners, and a lot less to carry. Many guiding companies, such as Boundary Expeditions and Middle Fork Rapid Transit, organize trips ranging from three to six days. "Multiday river trips are an amazing way to connect with nature, see incredible scenery, and experience the thrill of whitewater," says Eric Ladd, co-owner of Boundary Expeditions. "And a **raft's leisurely pace lets you slow down and reconnect with yourself.**" (Visit [boundaryexpeditions.com](http://boundaryexpeditions.com) or [middleforkrapidtransit.com](http://middleforkrapidtransit.com).)

**10 Just Say Om.** Wanderlust's one-day events and multiday festivals focus on yoga and music (MC Yogi, anyone?). But many also include other health-minded programming, from races and meditation sessions to self-help discussions. (Find your fit at [wanderlust.com](http://wanderlust.com).)

**11 Go to Sailing School.** Take the reins—um, ropes—with sailing lessons. **Hoisting sheets (that's sails, to landlubbers) is a real workout, but with mesmerizing views** and nonstop action. Look for classes at a local marina; lakes and rivers may have options, too.

**12 Harvest Your Own.** Nothing says summer like a freshly plucked blueberry—or peach, strawberry, or cherry. At a you-pick farm, you get to spend a summer day outside and **leave with a bucket (or two) of your favorite fruit.** Farms and fruit are available nationwide. (See [pickyourown.org](http://pickyourown.org) for locations.)

# 13

## EAT EXTRA LOCAL

You've heard of field-to-table restaurants, but what about dining out in the middle of the farm? That's a new trend in pop-up fare. A guest chef prepares food grown on-site for diners to enjoy in the unrivaled ambience of a farm setting. "It's a magical experience to eat between the soil and sky in the very fields where the food was harvested," says Jim Denevan, founder of Outstanding in the Field, which hosts outdoor dinners around the world. "It's a great way to savor the immediacy of the place and the moment." (See [outstandinginthefield.com](http://outstandinginthefield.com) or search on Google for one-offs.)

**14 Strengthen Your Spirit.** If you have a spiritual practice—or want one—a retreat may help you focus on and deepen that aspect of your life.

There are a wide variety of spiritual, religious, and meditative retreats available. **Ask your spiritual adviser for suggestions, or, for a nondenominational getaway, try the Esalen Institute, in Big Sur, CA,** or Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA. (Visit [esalen.org](http://esalen.org), [dharma.org](http://dharma.org), or [retreatfinder.com](http://retreatfinder.com), and see "The Sounds of Silence," p. 41, for a first-person take on the experience.)



## 18 FIND YOUR MOUNTAIN

Majestic views are one reward for scrambling up Colorado's peaks. But reaching the top of a "Fourteener," the locals' name for mountains more than 14,000 feet above sea level, is a real badge of honor. With 58 summits to choose from, if you're a novice, we hope the one calling your name is Mount Bierstadt, known as the gentlest of the giants.

**19 Live out Your Foodie Fantasy.** What's your favorite food? Olives?

Lobster? Chances are, it's got a festival. From the Gilroy Garlic Festival (in California) to the National Cherry Festival (Michigan), there's a celebration for almost every taste. Can't find your fave? Create your own!

**20 Tie on a Fly.** Master the art of catching dinner by signing up for a guided fly-fishing trip. The female guides behind Reel Women Fly Fishing Adventures will show you their favorite spots to fish around Wyoming, Idaho, or Montana. (For info, see [reelwomenflyfishing.com](http://reelwomenflyfishing.com).)

**21 Ride the (Former) Rails.** Pedal on a road all your own, thanks to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The group turns former train routes into unbeatable bike paths like the Midtown Greenway in Minnesota and the High Trestle Trail in Iowa. (See [railstotrails.org](http://railstotrails.org).)

# 15

## TAKE AN EPIC HIKE

There are hiking trails, and then there are the Appalachian National Scenic and the Pacific Crest trails (aka AT and PCT, respectively). The AT stretches 2,180 miles from Georgia to Maine; the PCT covers 2,650 miles through California, Oregon, and Washington. Think: Reese Witherspoon in *Wild*. Not that ambitious? You can pick a short section for an overnight backpacking trip or even a day hike. (For more info, see [nps.gov/appa](http://nps.gov/appa) and [pcta.org](http://pcta.org).)

**16 Be a Voluntourist.** Transform at least part of your same-old summer vacation into a do-gooder getaway. If an RV adventure is in your plans, sign up with **Habitat for Humanity's RV Care-A-Vanners, which lets RV travelers join its build teams around the US and Canada.** And everyone— with or without RV—can get their hands dirty at Solid Ground, a nonprofit near Seattle, which grows food for families in need. (See [habitat.org](http://habitat.org) and [solid-ground.org](http://solid-ground.org).)

# 17

## GET ON BOARD

Because stand up paddleboarding, or SUP, is often done on relatively calm water, it's actually a whole lot easier than surfing. "The beauty of SUP, and why it has become so popular, is the versatility," says Jarrod Covington, owner of Wrightsville SUP, in Wrightsville Beach, NC. "You can make it match all skill levels, as easy or difficult as you like, by taking it on waves or flat water and moving quickly—or not." Look for paddleboard rental stores near just about any large body of water. For an extra challenge, try SUP yoga, where you do down dogs and warrior poses while balancing on your board.



## 22 FOCUS ON FITNESS

Whatever your wellness passion, there's a place to indulge it full-time—or explore new possibilities—for a week or so. For example, a trip to Rancho La Puerta, a fitness spa in California, is much like summer camp for adults. At any hour, you can choose between several activities, like cardio drum dancing, a hike to the on-site farm, and aqua aerobics. Plus there's plenty of meditation and yoga classes, as well as pool time. (Visit [rancholapuerta.com](http://rancholapuerta.com).)