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'Stay Vacations' - What To Do In the Dallas/Fort Worth MetroPlex



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In today's hard economic times, many families are trying to cut costs across the board. They've gone back to the "good ol' days" where house work was done by members of the 'house' - lawn mowing, house cleaning and laundry. Now with utilities going up and wages staying the same or going down, we have to be creative in how we spend our hard earned dollars and still enjoy quality time with our families.



As the summer months creep up on us and people start planning their summer vacations, be prepared for airfare 'ticket shock': not to mention increases in entertainment ticket prices at various U.S. family attractions. With that in mind, staying closer to home can be a less expensive but quality alternative. Stay-Vacations are a way to do just that.

Some hotels have decided to add amenities to their overall hotel experience to draw not only business travelers, but families as well. While some suite hotels offer continental breakfast, which consists of coffee and sweet rolls, others have added more options. Homewood Suites now offers a complimentary daily Suite Start® breakfast buffet. Guests get to enjoy, fresh waffles, which you make yourself, bacon, quesadillas, scrambled eggs, hash browns, coffee, juice and more. In addition, the expansive buffet includes healthy fare, such as cottage cheese, fresh fruit, oatmeal, muffins, cereal, etc. Monday through Thursday guests are provided complimentary dinner as well. This can save your pocket book some serious damage, especially if you have teen-agers.



As a family we've visited several 'suite' type hotels and always enjoyed our stays. Some to consider that include a decent breakfast and plenty of room space are Hyatt Place and Embassy Suites which we visited in San Antonio and Atlanta, respectively. These type of hotels can provide guest rooms with fully equipped kitchens (dishes, silverware, fridge, pots & pans, etc), in-room dining, LCD flat screen TV's and pull out sleeper sofas. Even the studio suite can easily accommodate a family of four, since the sofa pulls out and still leaves plenty of room to move about. Additional options can include a one bedroom suite that sleeps four, but has two TV's and a two bedroom suite that sleeps eight, with the second bedroom accommodating two queen size beds.



The key to a decent 'Stay-Vacation' is the location to local attractions. With plenty of museums, nature trails, shopping, movie theaters and amusement parks to choose from in the Metro-Plex, you can make your 'Stay-Vacation' one to remember. The Homewood Suites Allen location I visited is close to amenities such as:

Allen Premium Outlet - Which features Coach, Burberry, Ann Taylor, Neiman Marcus Last Call, Banana Republic, Movado, Nike, etc.

Gold Class Cinemas - A movie theater which features a regional menu prepared fresh by an in-house chef and drinks from a the fully stocked bar which includes wine, beers and cocktails. Movie goers are escorted into their theater 5 - 10 minutes prior to the start of the movie, where they have call buttons to order dinner, drinks or a blanket or pillow throughout the duration of he movie.

The Heard Natural Science Museum - Is within 15 minutes and has a sanctuary, nature trails, native plant garden and several inter-active exhibits.

Watters Creek - A mixed-use development that includes a large creek-side village green, interactive public art, upscale retail and restaurants with al fresco dining is also close by.

Rebecca Rohwer, Director of Sales, at the Homewood Suites Allen/Dallas location agreed that many local families use their facilities for alternatives to the normal 'hotel experience'. With a complimentary breakfast, an outdoor pool, basketball court, workout room and business center, families can spend quality time together 20 minutes from home. Other options besides 'Stay-Vacations' to consider are slumber parties for kids - no mess for you (and free breakfast and entertainment), family reunions - most contain conference rooms, BUNKO groups - come for a weekend of shopping and card playing or what about a girls over-night out which includes mani's, pedi's, a movie, drinks and breakfast in the morning, that you don't have to cook. *Does it get any better?*

When we left the Homewood Suites this weekend, we left with a child in tears, 'Mommy why do we have to leave?' I guess that means Garrison had a good time. Let me know if anyone has visited a 'suite' hotel and what your experience was? Has anyone taken a 'Stay-Vacation' recently? What did you do? Have you ever used a suite hotel in an alternative manner? Tell us about it and keep moving ladies....

Comments

Posted by **kristie Smith-Armand** @ 7:41 AM Thu, May 20, 2010

Great ideas, Lisa! My husband and I were talking about this the other day. I plan to have get- togethers at my pool as much as possible. I want to look into The Heard Natural Science Museum for my step-kids, nieces and nephews. :) Thank you

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Posted by **Lisa Keys-Blair** @ 7:50 AM Thu, May 20, 2010

I think finding local (free) events around town and then planning a 'suite' stay around that event is a good idea as well.

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