



Calling All Moms (Yes, Even You!): Get Out of the Fray for Mother's Day

by Ondine Brooks Kuraoka

To-Do List

1. Plan awesome summer activities for the kids
2. Clean the house, do laundry, chauffeur the crew, cook dinner
3. Keep romance alive
4. Be the best mom I can be- Schedule TIME AWAY for myself

Two little words can make everything else feel easier: time away. You deserve it. You are not a selfish person for taking time off; you are a mother and spouse who gives of herself the year through. This Mother's Day, honor yourself and schedule an escape to rejuvenate.

San Diego moms are fortunate to have a wide variety of options to plan a blissful getaway. Here are a few ideas.

On-the-Go Bliss: Hike Bike Kayak

Wait a minute: hiking, biking and kayaking? And surfing! What about relaxing?! Well, now you can do it all. Try something new and exciting this summer and get those endorphins pumping!

Since 2000, Hike Bike Kayak in La Jolla, has been leading women and men on year-round excursions to explore the beautiful San Diego outdoors.

Women's Adventure Series

This summer, Hike Bike Kayak presents its Women's Adventure Series. Groups of four to six women will have the time of their lives doing three sports in three days. Sound like boot camp? Don't worry; all excursions are paced according to skill level. With one sport in the morning and one in the afternoon, there is time for a leisurely lunch in between.

"We often get women who are in the same play group," says Kim Johnson, one of Hike Bike Kayak's instructors. "Sometimes when women are learning a new sport, it's easier to be in a small group of women; it's more comfortable."

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Johnson enjoys watching the women's confidence build, which is especially apparent in kayaking and surfing, sports that lots of women have never tried. Launching into the surf can be intimidating, but the instructors make it feel easy. A favorite kayak tour is the La Jolla Sea Caves.

Surfing is taught one-on-one, on long, soft surfboards. "We guarantee they'll stand up by lunchtime," Johnson says.

Satisfying Escape

Shira Martarana of La Costa is a mother of two, ages 3 and 4-1/2. She chooses her rare "free day" activities carefully. Some of Martarana's more satisfying escapes have been kayaking and mountain biking with a girlfriend, led by Hike Bike Kayak. Martarana had never gone ocean kayaking before.

"We saw seals out past the surf," says Martarana, who has participated twice in the kayak lessons. "As a mom, to have that peaceful moment to yourself, to be out in the ocean in the sun, is amazing." Only one person in Martarana's group had kayaked before.

Though Martarana does not consider herself much of a biker, she had a great time pedaling through Rancho Peñasquitos Canyon with Hike Bike Kayak. "You never feel like you're left behind no matter what your skill is," Martarana says. "They don't push you really hard; it's a good workout but it's enjoyable."

No Experience Or Gear Required

Hike Bike Kayak supplies all the gear you'll need for your adventure. The three-day Women's Adventure Series costs \$350 per person. Dates are posted online. For moms who want a total escape for the three days, packages are offered with Hotel La Jolla.

Southern Italy in Northern San Diego: Hidden Valley Artist Retreat

Ensnconced in the hills of Escondido is the quiet world of the Hidden Valley Artist Retreat. With ten acres of landscaped gardens, the grounds are reminiscent of the Italian countryside, graced with terraces, flowers, fountains, an organic vegetable garden and exotic fruit trees. Benches beckon for reading, writing or just plain old sitting (imagine!). The 200-year-old oaks provide a nice shade canopy during the summer.

Follow Your Muse

You don't have to be an artist to feel at home here, but you may be inspired to get in touch with your creative side. Instruction can be arranged in drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture and more. Group workshops are also available. Beginners are welcome.

"Ellen and Tom Nadeau were wonderful hosts who made me feel right at home," says Robin M. Cohen, of Los Angeles. "They were very accommodating in providing for anything that I needed. The grounds are beautiful, the lodgings very comfortable and there is plenty of space for making art, meditating, listening to music or just going out for a walk."

Rosemary Graham, of Berkeley, is an author and mother of a six-year-old. "I did most of my writing up in the retreat building, working out of a 'corner office' overlooking the valley. I saw many lovely birds—even a blue heron that lives up there. At night I'd hear coyotes and owls. There's an air of peaceful productivity."

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With plenty of space for time alone, there is also a small community with which to convene and share enthusiasm and ideas during your stay. Accommodations range from fully equipped cabins to private or double rooms. Guests prepare their own meals.

Treat yourself to an extended weekend stay for \$175. Or indulge in five nights and six days for \$300. Prices don't include classes or workshops.

From Horse Set to Paint Set: Bheau View Horse Ranch and Art Retreat

Are you planning fun with horses for your kids this summer? Now you can get to know these magnificent creatures and participate in workshops designed to bring out your inner artist, all at the same place.

Mother's Day Retreat

Bheau View Ranch, in San Marcos, offers an ideal way to celebrate the afterglow of Mother's Day: a Mom's/Women's Retreat on May 10th and 11th (Tuesday and Wednesday). If you can't make the official retreat, contact the ranch and schedule your own.

Nancy Tarsha, owner of Bheau View Ranch, has an intuitive connection with horses. Raised with horses, Tarsha shares her 30 years of experience in horse communication workshops. By applying basic animal training techniques, participants can enhance personal communication skills.

Tarsha's workshop, "Dances with Hooves" is a fun-filled, safety-conscious, and memorable introduction to horsemanship. She also leads "Management/Communication Skills for Animals & People" and "Click-trick Animal Training." You probably won't emerge as a horse whisperer, but you will learn skills that will assist you in communicating more clearly in other areas of life.

Linda Luisi has 20 years experience painting murals and large-scale works of art for corporations and private collections across the United States. She leads several workshops at the Women's Retreat, including "Painting Like the Impressionists" and "Relax and Draw," which encourages participants to sharpen observation skills as they learn drawing techniques. Luisi gives each participant individual attention and offers guidance for beginners to advanced students.

"I could have stayed there all day," says Tammy Hocking of Carlsbad. "Nancy's place is a little piece of heaven, to be able to be around horses and do art. Some women won't want to go home."

A Day at the Ranch

Hocking described the day she spent at the Ranch. Tarsha began by having participants unsaddle the horses and get familiar with them. They walked around the horse, touching it and even lifting up the tail. "The horse will tell you if he's connected with you or not; if his tail is relaxed he's connected- if not, you still need to work with him," Hocking says. The horse assigned to Hocking was willing to pick up its feet and Hocking was even able to touch its belly.

The horses were then released into an open field and the participants had to figure out how to "catch" them and put them in a ring. Hocking and the others then rode the horses bareback using just the halter and verbal communication.

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“They’re a lot bigger than we are- if you’re paying attention and on the same page as your animal it’s going to be a much better experience,” Hocking says. Hmm... Sounds helpful for life in general.

Wear low or no heels, closed-toe shoes or sneakers. Bring a sunhat, sunscreen and water. The first day of the retreat costs \$75 and is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The second day costs \$60 and goes from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Retreat size is limited. Participants can spend the night at a nearby hotel or resort to create a complete getaway.

Lunch, dinner and evening movies are convenient at Restaurant Row and Edward’s Stadium 18 Cinemas.

Do It for Yourself

This year, give yourself a break and do something just for you. Your family will manage somehow without you. They’ll miss you and you’ll miss them. But you’ll return with new energy and lots of kisses. And a promise to yourself to do it again whenever you can!

Contact Information

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