

There is nobody in the valley who would tell you honestly that July is their favorite month here. That's why we save our vacation days for summer and take off to cooler places as much as possible. This year, however, it seems that most families will take a few weekend trips, but forgo the lengthy summer holiday away—leaving them in town for most of these hot, hot days. But July in the Valley doesn't have to be all bad, since there is much to take advantage of, if you literally look on the bright side.

The off-season deals for restaurants, resorts and entertainment are a great way to save money and still have fun treating the family. I use these deals to try out local spas and restaurants that cost far more come winter. Check out our suggestions on how to staycation in Scottsdale on page 28.

The lazy summer days and Fourth of July weekend also mean barbecues and backyard entertaining, so we have compiled some expert advice on what grills are best for you, and some tips on how to amp up your outdoor areas for party time.

Perhaps best of all for some fashion-oriented people, July's brutal UV rays give us the excuse to buy new shades. Sunglasses are an essential accessory in this town, but be sure they are doing their job protecting your peepers. See page 72 to learn about proper protection, frame shapes and also see the season's hottest styles from top brands.

When you need more great ideas on how to keep your family busy this month, just visit AZFoothills.com for staycation deals, event listings, plus information on kids' camps, kids' activities, weekend road trips and so much more. We've got everything you need to beat the heat, right on one cool Web site.

There's no need to cringe at July in the Valley—just get out there, embrace the warmth and take advantage of slow summer days.

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