

TRULife

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Destination: MISSOURI

Editors Pick: Places to visit in Missouri while on break this Spring



Andrea Hewitt and Blaise Hart-Schmidt / Index
Design by Rose Runser and Antonette Bedessie / Index

Midterm Break vacations might not include beaches and sun, but students can still have fun exploring landmarks and local restaurants in their hometown. A journey through childhood places in St. Louis and Kansas City can bring back cheerful memories.

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN
Assistant Features Editor

The epitome of spring break: A sunny beach packed with college students.

This is the image that inevitably comes to mind when hearing the term. So much so that it seems the only way you can enjoy your spring break is on a beach throwing back Coronas with college hooligans from across the country.

But what about the other students? What about the majority? What about the kids that go home to work, see family or catch up on sleep?

You don't have to venture out of your home state to have an unforgettable spring break, but you do have to cut the laziness and show a little creativity. It's easy to surrender yourself to the couch for non-stop movies and popcorn. Sure, it's nice to watch a couple flicks without the constant guilt from knowing you're putting off school-work.

But this Midterm Break, I encourage you to take advantage of the many things to do in the big cities most of us live in or around. Get out and make the most of Midterm Break '10.

Visit that well-known attraction you haven't been to in years. In St. Louis, ride to the top of the Arch and enjoy the view from 630 feet above the Mississippi River. In Kansas City, head to the

Liberty Memorial and explore the National World War I Museum. Both cities are filled with history, so don't wait for a reason to explore.

Take advantage of free entertainment. Money was probably at least one factor in your decision to go home for break. Luckily, there are plenty of things to do that are free — or close to it.

The St. Louis Zoo is completely free, and admission is \$5 to the Kansas City Zoo. Either way, it is a cheap price for hours of entertainment. Additionally, there are countless museums, parks and visitors' centers providing enjoyment at little or no cost. Go to VisitKC.com or explorestlouis.com to see lists of free attractions in both cities.

Take your little brother, sister or cousin to a children's hands-on exhibit. Obviously, your sibling can't be 17 for this one to work. But make a child's Saturday by taking him to Kaleidoscope in Kansas City or the Magic House or City Museum in St. Louis.

If you are like me, you look back fondly at field trips to places like these and wish you could regain that innocence. While you can't go back in time, you can still enjoy these attractions — even if it's vicariously through a younger relative.

Make like an Olympian and go skiing, snowboarding or ice skating. While it might be tough to find curling equipment available to use, there are plenty of other more traditional Olympic events

you can mimic while your interest is high and the temperature is low. Take a date to an ice skating rink or go with some friends to a ski resort. Both are good ways to get some exercise and have vacation-style fun close to home.

Find a new restaurant, but take advantage of those lifelong favorites. A big advantage to going home is getting to indulge in your favorite home-grown cuisine. But make it a point to forego Panera at least once and go to a restaurant you have yet to try. In Kansas City, visit Skies Restaurant, a fancy, rotating restaurant offering a high-up, panoramic view of the city from atop the Hyatt Regency. In St. Louis, catch a Big 12 Tournament game at one of the many downtown sports bars. Just remember to go online and check the menu ahead of time. If the prices are high, plan on just grabbing drinks and appetizers before heading to a cheaper locale.

Bottom line: This spring break will be what you make of it, no matter where you are headed.

Very, very hypothetically, if someone headed to Panama City Beach with a closed mind, expecting it to suck, it probably would. Likewise, heading home with a positive attitude and even a little excitement will go a long way toward deciding how enjoyable your break will be.

[BOOK]ED to travel

BY CASSANDRA MCCARTY
Features Editor

Whether Midterm Break means lying on a beach with the ocean splashing nearby and the bright sun overhead or staying home and sleeping until noon, the best accessories for break include the most popular books of the season. Hastings employee Carla Hayes offers several suggestions of book series and novels that have been flying off shelves because of their success in the box office and television.

Anything Vampire

With all of the attention the vampire genre has gathered, Hayes said she had to move collections of vampire books to the front aisles. She said she noticed many people taking an interest in the "TruBlood" series by Char-laine Harris because of the new HBO television show. The "TruBlood" series follows the character of a young telepathic woman named Sookie Stackhouse, who becomes involved with vampires. Unlike other vampire-inspired novels, the "TruBlood" series introduces the concept of vampires making their presence known to the world. Other supernatural beings of this series include werewolves, shape-shifters and ancient Greek characters. "Vampire Academy" by Richelle Mead is the story of Rose Hathaway, a Dhampir bodyguard for her best friend Lisa Dragomir, who is a Mori vampire princess. The two girls participate in dangerous adventures and mysteries while being educated in the ways of magic at St. Vladimir's Academy, a school hidden in the deep woods of Montana, according to the book's official Web site.

Percy Jackson and the Olympians

Hayes said many novels or series people purchase from Hastings are literature that has been adapted into a film or a television series. The series "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" also has been moved to the front of the store because of the movie's popularity.

"A lot of the time, we get people who want to read the books and then see the movie and then a lot of people who want to do the opposite," Hayes said.

Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school when he notices ancient monsters and gods walking straight out of his Greek mythology textbook. He learns Zeus's lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect, according to the book's official Web site. He and his friends have 10 days to discover the stolen lightning bolt and return peace to Mount Olympus.

Stephanie Plum Series

Although the "Stephanie Plum" books by Janet Evanovich have not been made into a television show or movie, Hayes said they also are popular because they are light and fun to read for a quick mystery. The numerous books in this series follow Stephanie Plum in her new career as a bounty hunter. In the first book, readers meet Plum, who is out of a job and money. She blackmails her bondsman cousin Vinnie for a job as an apprehension agent, despite knowing nothing about how to do the job, according to www.evanovich.com.

Dear John

With the new film adaptation of Nicholas Sparks's book, Hayes said the novel "Dear John" has been another popular

choice among the customers of Hastings. Sparks tells the story of a young man named John who enlists in the Army but falls in love with a girl named Savannah during his two-week leave. Savannah is left waiting for John's tour of duty to end and John wanting to settle down with the woman with whom he has fallen in love. Everything changes after the Sept. 11 attack, and John reenlists. During their time apart, John learns Savannah has fallen in love with another man and, when he returns, must face her, according to www.nicholassparks.com. "The Last Song" by Nicholas Sparks also will be released in theaters soon, and features Miley Cyrus.

Say You're One of Them

Readers should choose "Say You're One of Them" by Uwem Akpan for a book that received popularity because it made Oprah's booklist. Akpan's novel takes place in Kenya where a family is trying to find gifts for the Christmas holiday. In the story, a Rwandan girl tell her family's problems with maintaining a normal life while unspeakable acts occur. The text also follows a young brother and sister coping with their uncle's attempt to sell them into slavery, according to www.hachettebookgroup.com.

Pride and Prejudice

Professor of English Joe Benevento suggests the classic novel "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen because it's a wonderful book in which nothing in particular happens. He said it's a book in which readers become attached to the characters.

"[Jane Austen] is just devastating," Benevento said. "I remember when I first read that book in high school, and everybody was like, 'Oh, that's a book girls are suppose to like,' but I liked that book right away, and I don't have any apologies. It's a great book."

New York Times: Best Sellers

Dear John
Nicholas Sparks

First Family
David Baldacci

Shutter Island
Dennis Lehane

Pleasure of a Dark Prince
Kelsey Cole

The Scarecrow
Michael Connelly

Hot Rocks
Nora Roberts

One Day at a Time
Danielle Steele

The Lovely Bones
Alice Sebold

Moonlight Room
Robyn Carr

First Drop of Crimson
Jeaniene Frost

Source: nytimes.com