



**Media Contacts:**

Jennifer Seeley

(336) 553-1708

[jseeley@rlfcommunications.com](mailto:jseeley@rlfcommunications.com)

**BEING MANLY ON A BUDGET**

*What the New Economy Means for the Mancation*

**CHESAPEAKE**, Va., March 11, 2009 – To deal with the trials and tribulations of everyday life, it's common for women to getaway for a few days with the girls. However, it's not just the ladies who need this kind of escape. Gentlemen need a retreat of their own; a way to become one with the outdoors and experience life the way Mother Nature intended it. Otherwise known as the proverbial 'mancation', guy trips are often action-packed getaways that have become an increasingly popular trend among men both young and old.

In today's economy, men need to get creative about how they're spending their mancation cash. These once costly endeavors such as ski trips to Vail, golfing in Palm Springs or scuba diving in the Bahamas are being overhauled for slightly more rugged and affordable adventures.

**BUDGET IS A FOUR LETTER WORD**

Men who keep a running tab on their wives' every shopping expenditure will often snarl at the mention of a budget for their own activities. "You can't put a price on quality time with the guys" or "We only see each other once a year" are common responses. Don't fret. Being economical is not synonymous with being boring. The goal is to sacrifice the *expense* and retain the *experience*. With a little thought and a lot of creativity, you can create the manliest of adventures without breaking your bank account or sacrificing any Y-chromosome bonding.

Some of today's most popular mancation trips often involve camping, hiking, kayaking, mountain biking, fishing, and hunting, all of which can be cost-effective and reasonably priced adventures, each sponsored by Mother Nature. "Experiencing the great outdoors is a great way to stay on a budget without sacrificing adventure," said Kim Murden, director of Chesapeake, Va., Conventions and Tourism. "We've found that some of our most popular attractions are our most economical, and they all revolve around being outdoors."

**GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES**

There's something to be said for being able to load everything into the trunk of your car and just hop on the road. No airport security lines, no delayed flights, no lost luggage, just you, your buddies and your trusty GPS. Plus, with the new airline baggage fees, checking a bike, fishing tackle or other equipment can be costly.

Heilig Wilkinson, a seasoned mancationer from Monroe, N.C., has been taking hunting and fishing trips with friends for the past 22 years. "We used to fly to Canada for some of our excursions," said Wilkinson, "but it's become too expensive to travel that far. Now we keep our trips within driving distance."

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It's easy to forget about the retreats right in your backyard, but if there was ever a time to take advantage of a close vacation spot it's now. Limit yourself to one tank of gas and see where it takes you. Experience a getaway that's a little closer to home and you may be surprised at what you'll find.

### **A FISH OUT OF WATER**

Although that exotic deep-sea fishing excursion may seem like a trip of a lifetime, you'll be paying off that credit card balance for what feels like an eternity. It's time to trade in the chartered boat off the coast of Cabo and think more realistically.

Try something new. Kayak fishing is one of the latest trends in fishing and for good reason. The narrow vessel can gain access to tributaries, creeks and canals that cannot be reached with a 30-foot boat.

Smooth, shallow and slim waterways are not only peaceful, but the fish are plentiful due to the low population of fishers. Whether fishing in freshwater, brackish or saltwater, kayak fishers haul in some impressive catches from bass to shark to marlin.

Landing a fish from a kayak can be an adventure in itself. Remember "The Old Man and the Sea" by Hemingway? Many fish have the strength to pull a kayak or canoe through the water. "When you get a 15-20 pound fish to bite...it'll take you for a ride," said Paul Wilee, park ranger for the Parks and Recreation department in Chesapeake, Va. "You'll be all over the place! Kayak fishing is an absolute ball."

"Kayak fishing is becoming a popular sport because of its obvious benefits," said Kevin Kaul, recreation specialist at the Parks & Recreation department for the city of Chesapeake. "Kayaks are motor free making them virtually silent; it's much easier to sneak up on a cluster of fish. The odds are in your favor to not only catch more fish, but catch much larger fish."

Kayaks are light making them easy to travel with (as long as you're not on a plane). They're great exercise and as an added bonus, it's environmentally friendly.

### **IT'S NOT THE DESTINATION, BUT THE JOURNEY**

We've all heard of destination golf; jet-setting from one fabulous course to the next. It may seem like a viable option for the everyday millionaire, but what about the rest of us?

Rather than varying the locale of your next golf adventure, think about varying the *type* of course that you play. Links, parkland and forest courses all present different challenges that are guaranteed to change the thrill of a course. If you're always the one buying the first round of drinks at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole, don't worry, there's still hope. That buddy who always seems to end up under par can't possibly be the Tiger Woods of every course.

### **TAKE REFUGE**

Visiting national wildlife refuges are a great way to keep costs down without sacrificing excitement or adventure. National refuges are some of the most preserved and aesthetically beautiful natural environments in the United States, and they are highly underrated. With everything from hiking to biking to rock climbing, you're bound to find an adventure that suits you.

National refuges are extremely accessible. With at least one national refuge in each state and a refuge located within one hour of most major U.S. cities ([www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)), they offer a low cost alternative to traveling long distances or paying fees for a private reserve.

Home to some of the United State's most rare and endangered species, refuges are great for those who love wildlife. Refuges act as major migratory passages, and offer lots of unique bird watching opportunities, including the manliest of birds, the Bald Eagle. "On our first trip in the park last season, my group and I looked up and saw six bald eagles playing in the treetops," said Kaul. "Then, not two minutes later, we saw sixteen of them flying in perfect formation right above us."

If you prefer to be a more active participant, some refuges even offer hunting (from black bear to feral hogs) and fishing (with limitations, of course).

### **MAKE TIME**

Despite all the good-natured ribbing men take about their so-called man vacations, these getaways do serve an important purpose. They provide vital bonding time. Whether looking to reconnect with your fraternity brothers, teach your son how to fish over a father-son weekend, or looking to enjoy your last few days as a bachelor with your groomsmen, mancations bring people together.

"We're seeing a dramatic increase in the number of all male trips that are being planned," said Murden. "This is more than just a trend; we're predicting that mancations will only continue to grow within the travel industry. However, we're also finding that less about the vacation itself and more about the memories created."

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