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Spring Break: You don't have to travel far to enjoy your time off

By Dolores M. Bernal
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Too busy to make advance plans for Spring Break? No worries. Pulse has you covered on things to do and places to go to ensure you won't be bored during your Spring Break.

The Plan

Begin your last-minute travel plans by putting your resources together, recommends Rebecca Archuleta, a travel expert and co-owner of Atlas Travel in the Las Cruces Downtown Mall.

"A lot of students car pool to places," she said. "They can also split a hotel room between five people, that way (lodging) is not that expensive."

Some of the popular destination spots for last-minute planners are Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles and Puerto Peñasco or "Rocky Point," said Archuleta.

"There is a lot to see and do in California, for example, and it's only a 10- to 12-hour drive," she said. "There is Universal Studios, Disneyland, Six Flags and so much more."

California is where Shawn Thomas, 20, a NMSU sophomore majoring in speech pathology plans to go for her spring break vacation.

"I love L.A.," she said. "It's my own little vacation. I'm going to visit friends, go to Hollywood and to the beach."

Another NMSU student, Veronica Vasquez, 22, a senior majoring in biology, also plans to do some local travel.

"I'm maybe going to Puerto Peñasco," she said. "It's a nice beach and cheaper than going anywhere else. You can take your own food and rent a place with a kitchenette that way you don't go to the restaurant."

No money for a hotel room in Puerto Peñasco? No problem, said Archuleta. Camping out on the beach is allowed and is another option for those students who want to be really frugal.

Places such as the Inn of the Mountain Gods, a casino and resort in Mescalero can also make a fun and quick getaway.

"It's really nice," Archuleta said. "They have wonderful food and there is also a club there."

Take a hike

Students looking for an outdoor adventure can drive a couple of hours west to the Gila National Forest.

This is the time of year when temperatures begin to warm up at the Gila and a hike can reenergize and clear your mind, said Juan Castañon, an information officer for the U.S. Forest Service.

"Temperatures are between the low 50s to mid 70s -- nice weather for hiking," he said. "There is a lot to see and a lot to explore. If you want to camp, the best place would be toward the Cliff Dwellings. There, we have day hikes and also two- and three-day hikes where students can camp out."

Castañon recommends that students take a hike on the Catwalk National Scenic Trail -- a five-mile winding dirt and hanging walkway trail built between two canyons and located 12 feet above a slow running creek. "It's really nice and interesting," he said.

Visit family

A lot of students use spring break for a chance to visit family -- at least it gets you out of your usual living quarters, some students say.

"I'm going to go visit my cousins in Albuquerque," said Olivia Walker, 19, a freshman majoring in music business and dance. "I'm not really into partying and don't have much money to go too far."

Be safe

No matter what you do for spring break, it is important to remember to be safe and to try to be in the company of others, recommends Casey Akins of the Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program at NMSU.

"We advocate the buddy system," said Akins. "They should drink in moderation and stay in control of themselves and help friends stay in control as well."

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