Vacation budgets may be tight for many, but it is still possible to take a rejuvenating break.

This year, 30 percent of Americans will save money by taking only one vacation, and 30 percent will spend $1,000 or less total, according to a recent poll. Another 35 percent don’t plan to take a vacation at all.

Last year, when gas prices were sky-high and many were still struggling financially, more people took a ‘staycation,’ or vacation at home. You can make a staycation memorable and frugal with a few money-saving ideas,” said Ethan Ewing, president of free online consumer portal Bills.com.

Ewing suggested these ways to supercharge a staycation:

1. Make a budget. “Even for a staycation, it is important to keep spending in check,” said Ewing. “Divide the total available funds for vacation by the number of vacation days to establish an approximate daily budget. For the future, make vacation costs part of an annual budget and save a little each month. Even daily pocket change can make a difference,” Ewing said.

2. Be a tourist. Think about desirable activities at a tourist destination: Amusement parks? Historical areas? Thrills, from mountain biking to bungee jumping? “Contact a local visitor center and read brochures or ask questions as if you were new to your area,” suggested Ewing. Use savings from not paying for airfare, a rental car and lodging to fund an adventure.

3. Order in. If part of vacation’s appeal is the break from cooking, take a vacation from the kitchen. Ethnic restaurants can offer cheaper eats and introduce new favorites. Hit a hot dog stand for a bargain lunch for the whole family. Or purchase (or make ahead) frozen family-size meals and salad mix for easy meals that keep costs in check.

4. Unplug. Vow to shun e-mail, just as when on vacation. A true addict might even leave the computer with a friend or relative to make access impossible. Set automatic vacation response messages, and turn off the ringer on the telephone.

5. Camp out at home. For families, camping out in the backyard is a great way to please the kids, save money, avoid the hassle of packing up the car, and enjoy sleeping under the stars with the benefit of indoor plumbing and running water. Pitch a tent, roast marshmallows, and run through the sprinkler if it gets too hot.

6. Challenge yourself. Make a week — or a summer — more exciting with a personal challenge. Try for a personal best score at bowling, tennis, basketball or golf. Learn a new sport, discover a craft (check for video help at the library or online), or master a new gourmet dish.

7. Entertain. During a staycation, individuals might finally be relaxed enough to enjoy entertaining without the stress. Whether a popsicle party at a local public pool, a casual barbecue or an elaborate dessert buffet to show off baking prowess, entertaining can make a week off more memorable.

8. Rejuvenate. If budget allows, use some of the funds that would normally be spent on a traditional vacation to splurge. Get a massage, visit a day spa, have a mini-makeover or sign up for personal training sessions at the gym. Or set aside time to complete projects around the house, with the reward of dinner out or a favorite ice cream refresher. Take “before” and “after” photos to see how far the project has come.

9. Take a “maxi-staycation.” If getting away is a must, but an exotic vacation is not in the cards, expand the idea of a staycation to include locations within road-trip distance. “Even with gas prices creeping up again, a family of four can travel within an eight-hour radius for about $120. That’s far more affordable than plane tickets, which could cost $1,000 or more for a family of four,” Ewing said.

“Whenever a vacation takes you, taking a break from daily routine provides a chance to center yourself and remember the things you love,” Ewing said. “This year, commit to finding a way to refresh — on any budget.”

Information for this article was provided by Bills.com (www.bills.com), a free one-stop portal where consumers can educate themselves about complex personal finance issues and comparison shop for products and services.
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ILL not sure whether or not you want to stay close to home this summer and enjoy being a tourist in your own back yard? It would seem taking a page from out of towners is in order. After all, 44 million tourists can’t be wrong, right?

The Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board (L.A. Tourism) last month announced L.A.’s record-breaking visitation, visitor spending and tourism job growth for 2014. The announcement was made to coincide with National Travel & Tourism Week, an annual nationwide event established by Congress and organized by the U.S. Travel Association to celebrate the power of travel.

Los Angeles welcomed 44.2 million visitors in 2014 – a final total which exceeds previously reported estimates – an increase of 4.8% over 2013 levels. Total domestic visitation reached 37.7 million visitors and domestic overnight visitation achieved 23 million visitors. International visitation, an ever-important segment of the market, reached new levels at 6.5 million visitors, a 5.6% percent increase over 2013.

Record visitor spend of $19.6 billion increased 6.8% from the previous year, generating $30.2 billion in total economic impact including the induced and indirect benefits. International visitors, who tend to stay longer and spend more during their visit, accounted for nearly 33% of all visitor spending. Tourism generated $2.3 billion in state and local tax revenues in 2014.

L.A.’s tourism industry was a significant driver for jobs in the Leisure & Hospitality sector, one of the area’s largest and strongest economic sectors, which helped support 464,600 jobs and employed 1 in every 9 workers in L.A. County. Tourism contributed to the addition of 25,300 new jobs in the sector last year, making it the County’s leading job growth sector.

“A shining star of our local economy, the tourism industry continues to thrive, supporting good-paying jobs for our families and generating significant revenue for our city’s vital public services. Angelenos should be proud our city continues to be a desired destination for millions of visitors from around the globe.”

ERIC GARCETTI, Mayor

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“A shining star of our local economy, the tourism industry continues to thrive, supporting good-paying jobs for our families and generating significant revenue for our city’s vital public services,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “National Travel and Tourism Week is the perfect time to celebrate these record-breaking tourism numbers and their benefits to our community. Angelenos should be proud our city continues to be a desired destination for mil-

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Los Angeles has one of the most dynamic dining scenes in the country, offering everything from street food to 5-star restaurants. From California cuisine to organic ingredients, food trucks, and dineL.A.’s Restaurant Week (July 13-26), L.A.’s culinary influence can be felt across the country. Staycationing food aficionados can experience the restaurants of Wolfgang Puck, Thomas Keller and Nobu Matsuhisa, as well as a new generation of culinary stars like Kogi BBQ Truck founder Roy Choi and Top Chef champion Michael Voltaggio. Global kitchens can be found in culinary neighborhoods across the city, while L.A.’s beach cities offer some of the best oceanfront dining in Southern California. But what about breakfast? When you are on vacation, it’s likely that you go out to eat for every meal, including breakfast. Many Staycationers, however, forget to include breakfast among their “home holiday” dining plans. LA offers incredible day-launching meals at some of the areas top coffee houses. The Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board offers up the following examples:

It’s a no-brainer that breakfast and coffee are quite complementary to one another. Yet serious coffee houses that serve breakfast are much rarer than you might expect. Either you’ve got a coffee hotspot or an all-out breakfast place, but what if you want eggs with your Third Wave coffee? Kitchen space can be very hard to finagle. Fortunately, there are specialty coffee shops that serve breakfast dishes beyond the usual pastries. Read on to find out the best spots to get coffee, eggs, pancakes and more.

ALFRED IN THE ALLEY

Not all coffees are created equal, but neither are all Alfred Coffee Houses. Head to Alfred in the Alley on the west side of La Cienega for access to freshly delivered breakfast sandwiches from Farmshop. They take a handful of minutes to warm up but they’re more than worth it, whether it be the Egg & Bacon, Egg & Ham or Egg & Spinach Biscuit Sandwich. But remember to get there before they’re all gone!

BLACKTOP COFFEE

This little Downtown spot in the Arts District is a gem that brews Sightglass coffee. They have a unique cold brew - it’s on a nitro tap, so it’s slightly aerated. And of course, they also have a handful of quality, unique and seasonal breakfast treats. Try the Grown Up PB +J, a masterpiece made with toasted brioche, local Santa Barbara pistachio butter and blood orange-strawberry marmalade. The butternut squash toast is on toasted ciabatta with agro-dolce onions, sage and crème fraiche for a slightly sweet, mostly savory stack of goodness.

CHIMNEY COFFEE HOUSE

You’d never guess a coffee house as charming as Chimney would be sitting in a plaza on the outskirts of Chinatown, but the naturally lit space boasts brews from a mix of different roasters. It’s a great place to try coffees you’ve never had before, but you’d be remiss if you didn’t also try one of their insane breakfast sandwiches (8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. weekends) by Royce Burke, known as The Rogue Chef. For instance, The Rogue places black truffle pork sausage, scrambled and poached eggs, a cheddar crisp and sriracha-yuzu mayo between a toasted in-house milk bun.

GO GET EM TIGER

Best known for their G&B coffee and indulgent espresso milkshakes, Go Get ’em Tiger also has a breakfast menu (served 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.) that’s not to be missed. Whether you go sweet with their Treat Yourself to Amazing Local Coffee House Breakfasts: The Most Important Meal of the Day

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Churro Waffle or Gjetatt Toast, or savory with Baked Eggs with chorizo, tomato stew and ricotta, it’s all delicious fare with which to sip your carefully curated coffee brew. Enjoy everything inside their high-ceilinged, cheery space in Larchmont Village.

HABITAT COFFEE
Habitat Coffee may be a new kid on the Glassell Park block, but they’ve got City Bean coffee and a handful of health-conscious breakfast options (7 a.m. – noon weekdays, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. weekends) with slow scrambled eggs and your choice of ingredients taking center stage. Made to order options include the breakfast tostadas with two fried eggs, avocado, pico de gallo, black beans, sour cream and queso fresco.

LAMILL COFFEE
This Silver Lake coffee shop is as elegant as they come, with robin egg blue providing the backdrop for chandeliers and bright, plush and textured seating. Lamill’s beans are roasted in Alhambra, and bright, plush and textured seating. Providing the backdrop for chandeliers as gant as they come, with robin egg blue providing the backdrop for chandeliers and bright, plush and textured seating. LaMills beans are roasted in Alhambra, with their adjacent dance studio in the back fulfilling their second. The two-story, beautifully designed Paper or Plastik brews Intelligentsia coffee all day and serves breakfast from 7 a.m. – noon on weekdays and 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. on weekends. Try their Creamy Polenta Bowl or French Toast breakfast while reading a newspaper or using your laptop at one of the designated community spaces.

TWO GUNS
There’s some great coffee to be enjoyed in the South Bay, and the porch at Two Guns Espresso in Manhattan Beach would be just the place to do that, as well as enjoy some exemplary breakfast. Their house beans are roasted by none other than Caffe Luxxe, and what better way to enjoy them than by ordering a Flat White? Owner Andrew Stanisich hails from New Zealand and his passion for coffee shines through at Two Guns. Order the impressive pretzel bun or French Toast. It’s all excellent.

BREW DETAILS
Continued from page 46

‘This remarkable growth for the local tourism industry elevates L.A.’s status as a leading global tourist destination to new heights.’ said Ernest Wooden Jr., president and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board. ‘These achievements, along with L.A. Tourism’s accelerated marketing efforts, firmly position Los Angeles towards reaching our goal of 50 million visitors by 2020.’

ERNEST WOODEN JR., Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board president and CEO

Lions of visitors from around the globe.*

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Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board is a private, non-profit business association whose primary mission is to market and promote Los Angeles as the premier site for leisure travel, meetings and conventions as the City’s official tourism marketing organization. For more information, visit the official visitor information website of Los Angeles at discoverLosAngeles.com, join the more than one million people who follow L.A. Tourism’s Facebook page at facebook.com/LosAngelesFan, or follow @discoverLA on Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

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