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31 Places to Go This Summer

Corrections Appended

THERE used to be a time — oh, let's call it 2007 — when summer was considered a time of almost limitless possibilities, a time of languorous vacations, of trips filled with the promise of discovery.

But the summer of 2008 is starting out like a cruel joke, with air travel increasingly a nightmare and with wildly escalating gas prices threatening to make the [road trip](#) all but obsolete. It's almost enough to make you sit at home and catch up on episodes of "Gossip Girl."

The summer vacation is still an inalienable right, however. And there is no reason to forgo it this year. It will just take a bit of creativity — and perhaps the willingness to stay a little closer to home this time around — to pull it off in 2008.

Thus, here are 31 options — from river [rafting](#) in eastern [Oregon](#) to [biking](#) in the [White Mountains](#) of [New Hampshire](#) — for a great summer vacation. Not one involves the terrifying conversion of dollars into euros, many can be enjoyed without ever getting on a plane, and the road trips are ones that actually justify filling up your tank, even if the price of gas hits \$5 a gallon this summer.

1. TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Who needs [Europe](#)? The Texas Hill Country, west of [Austin](#) and north of [San Antonio](#), might be the next best thing to crossing the Atlantic. The region is lush, colorful and, unlike much of the pancake-flat state, dotted with beautiful green hills that are evocative of [Tuscany](#) or the south of [France](#). Moreover, the region is speckled with [22 wineries](#) (www.texaswinetrail.com) that buzz with food and [music](#) festivals year round. And towns like Fredericksburg offer a taste of the Old World, with German-style biergartens and schnitzelhäuser.

2. NEW HAMPSHIRE

With 800,000 acres of rugged terrain and [biking](#) trails, the [White Mountains](#) of New Hampshire are sometimes called the [Moab](#) of the East. And while you won't get red-rock formations or Road Runner vistas, the White Mountains do offer their own purple majesty. The Cherry Mountain Loop near Twin Mountain, not far from Bretton Woods, features remote waterfalls and thick forests. The trails around North Conway, a small, outdoorsy town near the [Maine](#) border where volunteer riders maintain more than 100 miles of downhill paths, are popular. For trail information, see the New Hampshire Trails Bureau (www.nhtrails.org) and New England Mountain Bicycling Association (www.nemba.org).