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Fall getaways for grown-ups — minus the kids

Maine, the Caribbean, even Orlando among great escapes

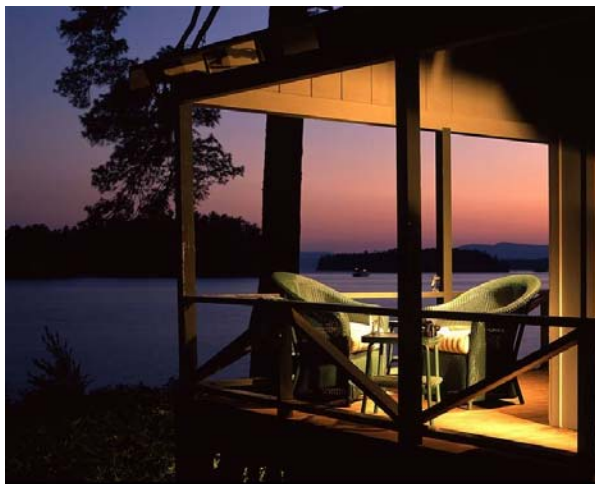


Photo courtesy of Migis Lodge

Migis Lodge, located on the shore of Lake Sebago in Maine, is crowded with families in the summer. But come fall, it's an ideal getaway for parents who want to sneak in a little alone time.

By Eileen Ogintz

Tribune Media Services

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The dinner bell!

We troop to the lakefront where, after cocktails, we're served

lobster, corn on the cob, strawberry shortcake and more. We look out at [Lake Sebago](#) — Maine's second largest — dotted with small islands, as the sun quietly sets. It is an exquisitely beautiful, peaceful scene.

The best part: I didn't have to shop, cook or do the dishes. I'm not worrying about whether the kids are happy — or where they are at the moment, since they're far from here. Instead, we're spending time with old friends from Chicago



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whose son is in the Army.

Welcome to [Migis Lodge](#). In a local Native American language, migis means, "place to steal away and rest," says Tim Porta, who is the second generation to run the place — his 29-year-old son Jed is the third.

This is a small resort about an hour from Portland — just 35 well-appointed cabins in the trees. A decidedly family place in summer (families return annually), it morphs into an ideal getaway spot for parents who want to steal away on their own for a few days once the kids are settled into college or their routines at home. At Migis Lodge there are special hikes, fishing seminars and beer and wine tastings around the fire until mid-October.

Whether you want to escape the baby overnight at a city hotel ([Doubletree](#) has special romance packages across the country), play golf ([Bermuda](#), which has more golf courses per square mile than

anywhere else in the world, offers a third night free), pamper yourself at a spa (spa getaways at the deluxe [Viceroy Snowmass](#) in Colorado offer rooms beginning at \$125 a night and spa treatments that are 30 percent off), tour wineries ([www.cheapflights.com](#) has just listed its top 10 picks of wine destinations) or hike and bike amid the glorious fall foliage (check out [Travelocity's fall foliage hotel room sale](#), offering rooms from \$53 per night), fall is an ideal time for some "me" and "us" time.

"Prices are generally less expensive than the summer months," says Travelocity.com's Genevieve

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Brown. "And since most families are wrapped up with school activities, you're not likely to encounter a lot of kids at your destination."

That's key, of course. You certainly don't want to be surrounded by other people's kids. Join forces with friends and split the costs.



Photo courtesy of Tranquility Bay
Tranquility Bay, Antigua.

Check out deals like the one at [Tranquility Bay Antigua](#), an all-suite beach resort complete with discounts on a two-bedroom suite, private chef for one night and a spa gift certificate. Come midweek and save even more (under \$1,100 total for four nights)!

"We found a great four-night cruise deal on Royal Caribbean to the Bahamas — \$600 for the two of us. Plus airfare and a grandparent taking over for the week we're at about \$1,000," writes Rae Hostetler in an e-mail. Four couples are going guilt-free on a trip that won't bust the budget.

Believe me, the kids will be the better for your getaway. Younger ones discover that they can survive — happily — without you for a few days. Older ones see that you have a life beyond their carpools, homework, games and crises-of-the-moment. And those new college freshmen will be

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flummoxed that your life really didn't end when they decamped.

For you empty nesters, the fun is just starting, now that you can get away at the last minute without worrying about school schedules or what your teens are up to while you're gone. Check out sites like www.lastminutetravel.com and www.jetsetter.com where membership entitles you to private sales that spell big savings.



Courtesy Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing
Watch the leaves turn this fall in Vermont.

Go jump in the leaves on a Wednesday. Vermont is offering special "Midweek Peek" deals during its popular foliage season. Meanwhile, the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) promises "stay 2

nights, get the 3rd free" at their New England lodges and White Mountain huts.

Make getting there part of the adventure. Check out www.virginia.org/fall for [romantic trips](#) for two, with wineries, scenic drives, historic inns and picturesque small towns; in Washington state, [tour wineries during crush season](#).

The deals are everywhere. Consider the [Bahamas](#), which just announced the return of their free companion airfare on bookings of four or more nights. (You can travel until mid-February, but

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have to book by Oct. 13.)

"It's the closest 'Caribbean' destination and the flights are a great deal, since there are several low-cost carriers in the region," says Kellie Pelletier of Jetsetter.com.

Wherever you go, and especially if you are leaving kids at home, choose a destination easy to reach — just in case of an emergency.

Orlando — with well-priced flights from everywhere — fits the bill. Yes, [Orlando for grown-ups](#). Skip the theme parks (unless you love them) in favor of the golf courses (176 to choose from), spas (19 destination spas), restaurants (more than 5,300, including plenty of upscale eateries) and shopping (a dozen shopping malls and factory outlet centers). There's so much for grown-ups to do that you can take your pick of adult packages.



Stephan Poulin, Tourisme Montrea
Jean Talor Market in Montreal. The perfect spot for foodies.

Explore a new city (according to www.hotwire.com, midsized ones like Seattle and Denver are especially good deals now) and linger in all those museums the kids rush you through. If you're a



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foodie, check out *Tourisme Montreal's For Foodies Package* (www.tourisme-montreal.org). It offers nightly rates starting at just over \$115 a night and discount coupons at check-in for complimentary treats at popular Montreal eateries and savings on culinary classes. Mingle with vintners over wine and cheese at Napa's decidedly adult *Milliken Creek Inn & Spa* (www.millikencreekinn.com).

Maybe a football weekend is more your speed. Book a flight and hotel together, suggests the experts at www.expedia.com and you can save some significant bucks for your tickets and tailgate parties.

Head to a ski town. You'll find good hotel deals, lots going on and plenty of places to hike, mountain bike and golf from *Stowe, Vt.*, (the *Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa*, www.stoweflake.com, boasts a huge spa, golf course and restaurants featuring local cuisine) to *Breckenridge, Colo.*, (www.gobreck.com) where you might join

the festivities at the inaugural *Craft Distillers' "Still on the Hill" Festival* Oct. 15 to 16, or stay at the new deluxe *One Ski Hill Place* (www.rockresorts.com) with its own bowling alley and "rejuvenation center" for massages or try *Park City Utah* (www.parkcityinfo.com) where you can get a free massage and wine with a room rate under \$150 a night (www.parkcitypeaks.com).

As for us, we savored every kid-less moment of our weekend at *Migis Lodge*. We hiked and golfed, took a motorboat out on the lake, chatted up other guests at breakfast cookouts (blueberry

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pancakes!), relaxed over leisurely dinners and on the porch of our cabin with wine glasses in hand, we talked and talked -- especially about the kids.

I wouldn't have it any other way.

For more Taking the Kids, visit www.takingthekids.com and also follow "taking the kids" on www.twitter.com, where Eileen Ogintz welcomes your questions and comments.

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