

Desert Sun.

LIFE

Summer of Savings: How to have a two-person adventure in Rancho Mirage for under \$50



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Picture this: You find yourself in the Coachella Valley during the summer, and you've already done everything you can to cool down. The few times you braved the outdoors, it was to swim to your heart's desire or walk through downtown Palm Springs enough times to start seeing a mirage.

Sound familiar? We can help.

If you're a visitor who's made the journey to our desert before, it's likely been to fabulous Palm Springs. But there are plenty of other gems to explore, like Rancho Mirage.

Nicknamed the "Playground of the Presidents," and the once-home to several entertainment greats, a place with this kind of stature must be pretty impressive — and it is. If you only have a day to explore and you're on a tight budget, you can still make the most out of your Rancho Mirage adventure.

Activity one: Take an early-morning stroll

If you want to enjoy the natural beauty around you in Rancho Mirage in the middle of summer, you'll have to get out the door fairly early. Don't get us wrong, it'll still be warmer than what you probably would want, but at least you'll be shielded from the harsh afternoon heat.

We suggest a relaxing stroll through the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park, which features a pyramid kiosk, tiled benches, ponds, a hillside waterfall and sculptures. It's a peaceful area that reminds people of the joys of life and hopefully gives strength to all who

pass through it. Bring a freshly brewed cup of coffee and a book with you, and you'll have quite the relaxing start to your day.

Cost: \$0

Running total: \$0

Activity two: Look to the sky at the Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory

If those incredible images from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope sparked a love of space (and possibly a fear of the vastness out there), you're not alone. Learning about the galaxies around us might make your head spin a little, but the friendly folks at the Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory are here to help.

At 9:30 a.m. every weekday (except Aug. 8 through 12), you can take part in a tour of the observatory, which includes a stop at the observation deck with the observatory's solar telescope (if it's not cloudy), a look inside the Cosmic Office control room, 3D replicas of the moon's surface, even more telescopes and an impressive show that is out of this world. You'll be surrounded by fellow space fans, so it's OK if you find yourself more excited than some of the little children around you.

If you don't get a chance to go during one of the daily tours, there are also several stargazing events held throughout the month that you can register for at www.ranchoiragelibrary.org/observatory/stargazing/. There are currently no special programs on the weekends, unless there are special events in the sky, like an eclipse, but you can take part in some at-home stargazing by checking out a portable telescope with your library card.

If space isn't your thing, thankfully you have a whole library full of books, music and other items to check out with your card.

Cost: \$0

Running total: \$0

Activity three: Catch a movie at The River

Who doesn't love a good movie? More importantly, who doesn't love watching said movie at a discounted price? If you head to the Century theater at The River for an early bird showing.

that's exactly what you'll find.

The Century theater has a great mix of all the biggest Hollywood blockbuster hits and darling indie films. There have been numerous times where I, a huge movie lover, have wanted to see the most random artsy movie out at the time and could only find it at The River. So whatever you're in the mood for, chances are you'll find it here. You'll also be able to watch films in comfort with the theater's luxury loungers that make any moviegoing experience so much better.

Can't get there early, but free on Tuesday? Discount Tuesday tickets at The River are only \$6.75.

Visit <https://www.cinemark.com/theatres/ca-rancho-mirage/century-the-river-and-xd> to see a list of showings.

Cost: \$18.20 (online price for two tickets every day other than Tuesday; you might be able to save a few bucks if you purchase tickets in person.)

Running total: \$18.20

Activity four: Grab a bite to eat courtesy of Taste of Summer Rancho Mirage

Rancho Mirage is blessed to have so many different types of cuisines to enjoy, and thankfully there's a Taste of Summer program available that let's people try a little bit of everything. A variety of restaurants are offering great summer deals for this year's event, held through Aug. 12.

If you're in the mood for sushi, and don't want to spend too much of your \$50, Haus of Poke has you covered. You and your companion can share two spicy tuna hand rolls or two crab hand rolls and a regular size tea (boba not included) for \$10.

The Taste of Summer Rancho Mirage program also offers deals on Italian, Mexican and American food spots, but they might cost you a bit more of your budget.

Cost: \$10 wristband plus \$12.78 for meal and tip

Running total: \$40.98

Activity five: Don't forget about your four-legged friends

While you and your friend, date or whoever are enjoying a jam-packed day in Rancho Mirage, don't forget to bring your furry friends along for the ride. The perfect place where big and small dogs can make new friends is at the Rancho Mirage Dog Park.

The park features separate off-leash areas for dogs depending on their size, as well as some shaded areas and benches. But because this is the middle of the summer, don't expect to find ample shade to cool off under. The best time of day to go is early morning or evening so that you and your four-legged friend don't overheat.

Cost: \$0

Running total: \$40.98

Activity six: Cool off with some sweet treats

You've had a long, busy day. In my opinion, there's no better way to end it than with a sweet treat. Aside from date shakes, Brandini Toffee is a staple in the Coachella Valley dessert scene. Head over to the local chain's Bob Hope Drive location and sink your teeth into a \$5 toffee ice cream bar courtesy of your Taste of Summer wristband.

Watching the masters make the ice cream bar is a treat in it of its own. They dip the ice cream — your choice of vanilla or chocolate — into a rich pool of chocolate to create the coating. Before it hardens, they sprinkle all the toffee your heart could desire on all sides. When you take that first bite, you'll know exactly why Brandini Toffee has made a delicious name for itself in the valley.

Cost: \$5

Running total: \$45.98

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