

A TALE OF

TWO GETAWAYS

When daily life starts to feel draining, a getaway can offer needed relief. But what each of us needs to recharge is so personal. While one person might crave the energy of the city, another might need the quiet of the country. Imagining the destinations that speak to each of us can make all the difference.



For my day-to-day life, a slower pace is right. The farm I live on feeds creativity with its easy familiarity and plenty of space for inspiration to flow. But there are seasons when the jazz stops playing, when the well I draw ideas from dips low. That's when it's time for a trip to the city.

I crave its energy—the sights, sounds, and shows, exciting tastes and colorful characters. So much to do and try, I long to experience it all. And because everything in a city is so close together, even if I only have a short window of time, I can.

At the top of my long list is art and architecture. Museums filled with works masterful and experimental, inspiring creations I love to spend a day with. Streets lined with landmarks and towering feats of engineering that defy what I imagined possible. Churches, bridges, and train terminals rich with history. Massive sculptures erected as memorials or simply to express exuberant joy.

I find adventure in harrowing cab rides and decoding subway lines, but also enjoy the journey of walking a city from one neighborhood to the next. Passing windows displaying wonders of every fabric and fashion. Sidewalk vendors and makers selling knockoffs next to one-of-a-kinds. Discovering treasures completely different than what I pick up during my nature walks back home.

Dining is its own excursion, a chance to sample foods of every nation and persuasion, my curiosity insatiable. The only thing to do is start early and eat often, ordering with an open mind.

And where but a city can you cross paths with so many people, chance connections with seeming strangers, their stories now part of mine.

I sit on buzzing patios with beloved friends, stand in lines to see sold-out shows, pause to applaud street buskers, bask in bright lights and rooftop views. With every moment and experience, I can feel my perspective shifting. To see that there is so much else out there, to feel the energy of so many human beings immersed in their pursuits. This is the souvenir I bring back to my wonderful, peaceful life. Bringing me back to my true self again.



I thrive in the sprawling city I call home. I love the people and places, the noise and excitement. But I have also learned I can't go full speed all the time. When I sense it's time to take a break, I kick off my heels and point myself toward the allure of rural life—peace, quiet, starry nights, and space in every direction. There is magic in leaving the multitudes behind in a rearview, driving until highways become backroads. When I can count more cattle than people, I know I've arrived.

The welcome wagon is lined with hay bales, and I am greeted by curious chickens or the gurgle of a running stream. Out beyond where the cell towers reach, my phone gets stuffed in a drawer, sunup and sundown the only keepers of time. Live oak mottes are the skyscrapers, and rolling pastures stretch longer than subway lines, vanishing into an expanse of Magritte-cloud studded sky.

"But what is there to do?" friends back in the big city wonder. "Not much," I say with a smile.

First order of nonbusiness is always a hike through the hardwoods, the longer the better, the pace ponderingly slow. I notice the grace of the deer. The colors of every bird. The miraculous design of tree bark and leaves. Depending on what the weather decides, there may also be river swimming, though floating is more accurate—the feel of the clean running water bringing my thoughts to a standstill.

Dinner is usually the rural version of takeout. Meaning, I take the cooking and the eating outside. Simple fare cooked over a campfire without the exotic spices and ingredients I'm used to, yet somehow bursting with flavor I'd easily give five stars.

Sleep comes in a rustic log cabin or on a cot in a tent. But not before I watch the nightly programming: a front-row view of planets, comets, and galaxies that burn so bright it's impossible not to know I'm part of something bigger. This is the souvenir I bring back to my wonderful, bustling life. Perspective that brings me back to my true self again.

