

# A 1-Night Santa Cruz Staycation Helped Me Refresh After Canceled Trips

**BI** [businessinsider.com/one-night-staycation-helped-refresh-after-canceled-trips-cancer-treatment-2026-3](https://www.businessinsider.com/one-night-staycation-helped-refresh-after-canceled-trips-cancer-treatment-2026-3)

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**When I got my cancer diagnosis, I had to cancel 3 planned vacations. A 1-night staycation in nearby Santa Cruz gave me the reset I needed.**



The writer said she enjoyed soaking in a hot tub during her solo staycation.

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- Winter activities and chemotherapy left me feeling exhausted. I needed to do something for myself.
- I had to cancel a few big trips that I planned, but a 1-night staycation helped me feel refreshed.
- My solo trip to Santa Cruz offered a much-needed break from life's challenges.

The winter months were a [blur of holiday activities](#) and family gatherings. It felt like I was running on a treadmill from Thanksgiving into the new year, without the opportunity to get off.

As the unofficial "bringer of cheer" in my family, I feel a heavy burden to make sure we have enough fun over the holidays and work hard to [create all the memories](#). Cookies must be baked, and decorations must be put up. And then they need to come down and get put away as I ready the family for the new year and the months ahead.

On top of that, I'm doing weekly [chemo for breast cancer](#), which didn't let up throughout the holiday madness. Life doesn't stop for cancer. Eventually, I learned I needed to stop and do something for myself, though.

## **My diagnosis meant a change of plans**

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When I got my [cancer diagnosis](#), I had to cancel planned trips to St. Maarten, Boston, [and Dollywood](#). Not having those to look forward to was hard for me. As a travel writer, I love getting out of my regular routine for a few days to snorkel with sea turtles and dine on new cuisines.

With only my weekly chemo sessions on the calendar, I was feeling down. I knew that limiting my exposure to germs was important, but I missed my time spent enjoying [Guinness in Ireland](#) and kayaking near glaciers in Alaska. I knew I had to go somewhere, even if it was nearby.

## **I booked a one-night staycation near home**

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My solution: I booked myself a night away at West Cliff Inn, a [boutique hotel](#) by the beach in Santa Cruz that's just a 30-minute drive from my home. I knew this wouldn't be the same as a week in the Caribbean, but it was the perfect combination of time by myself and relaxation.

When I checked in, I found that my room was extra spacious and could have accommodated a friend or two. Did I think maybe I should have brought someone with me? Yes. But that thought vanished as soon as I set out to explore the area on my own

## **Simple moments helped me reset**

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I took a long [walk on the beach](#) and hiked along the cliffs, watching surfers just offshore. I enjoyed an umbrella drink and coconut shrimp at a tiki restaurant on the water, where I sat in the rotating bar area. A friend texted me at the perfect time with some gossip, and it felt like we were enjoying the vibrant sunset together.

Before it got too dark, I headed back to the hotel and enjoyed a salt soak in my massive tub before cozing up in my king-size bed at an early hour to enjoy the [latest episode of "Below Deck."](#)

The next day, I visited a nearby spa and enjoyed a massage and a dip in a private hot tub before heading back home. Few things are perfect, but these 36 hours came pretty close.

## **I learned I don't need a big trip to feel refreshed**

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This trip wasn't about avoiding my family. It was about giving myself something to look forward to and acknowledging the difficult time I am going through.

I got home and felt ready to tackle what comes next, and I'm going to keep that in mind as I continue to move forward.