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By Jordan Trent | jtrent18@radford.edu

Thanksgiving break is a time for friends and family to come together and give thanks for all we have, but most college students think of it as a time to rest.

This year, break stretches from Nov. 16 to Nov. 23. This means that most students get an entire week to destress from homework and relax. No e-mails from professors, and no texts from group projects, how nice.

Even though sleeping in or curling up with a book by the fireplace sounds like a good idea, there are other ways to unwind that do not involve spending loads of money.

Family Hiking



One free activity that is fun for the entire family is hiking. Virginia offers tons of hiking grounds that are easily accessible. Most of the hikes range in difficulty and distance, so it doesn't matter if you are athletic or not, you will be able to complete it.

Hawksbill Mountain is a popular hike that is located in the Shenandoah National Park. The total distance of this hike is 2.9 miles and is known to be fairly easy. This mountain takes you up 4,049 feet high.

Fun fact: it is the highest peak in the park.

McAfee Knob is another popular hike that is located in the Roanoke Valley. This hike is the most photographed site along the entire Appalachian Trail and its beautiful hike is 8.8 miles long and 3,197 feet high. It is known to be a tougher hike, but when you reach the top it is totally worth it.

If you aren't the hiking type, don't worry, there are plenty of other activities for you to enjoy.

Ice Skating

Ice skating season is returning. Reston Town Center recently opened back up their ice skating rink. It is located in the middle of a variety of restaurants and shops so it's a great way to have dinner and enjoy different types of entertainment.

Watch the Big Games

For those of you who want to stay indoors, there are several NFL games being played the week of break.

On Nov. 18, there's a total of 11 games being played. They will be shown on ESPN, CBS, Fox, and NBC, Nov. 19, the Chiefs and the Rams are playing at 8:15 p.m. on ESPN, and on Thanksgiving Day there will be a total of three games; Bears v Lions at 12:30 p.m., followed by the Redskins and Cowboys at 4:30 p.m., and the Falcons v Saints at 8:20 p.m. Get your snacks ready and cheer on your favorite team.

5k Run

Also, almost every community does a 5k run on Thanksgiving morning. Even if you are not the running type, surround yourself with your community and walk the 5k. It is a great way to get to know your neighbors while getting in a great workout before the Thanksgiving feast.

Visit Local Vineyards or Breweries



If you are 21 or older, check out your local vineyards or breweries. The Winery at Bull Run located in Centreville, Virginia is a popular spot that won't hurt your pocket. The Veil Brewing Company located in Richmond, Virginia is another hot spot, It is a lowkey scene filled with different types of local crafts and quality food trucks.

Whether you are from a small town or a big city, there are plenty of fun things to do this break.

Don't forget to lend a hand with cooking the Thanksgiving feast, wake up a little earlier to enjoy the Macy's Day Parade with your family or send a text to your friends and see if they want to grab a bite. No matter what you have planned for this holiday season, remember why we celebrate: To spread thanks.

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