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presented by



## How to Find Solace Like a Local

A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO FINDING PEACE DURING TOURIST SEASON

I've recently taken up fly fishing. My roots are in the lakes of Wisconsin and I've decided that right now is a perfect time to go back to that place of quiet solace on the waters with nothing but the fish and my pink Minnie Mouse bait rod to keep me company. But unfortunately, I can't quite go back to how things were. For one, I no longer have a Disney-themed rod with heavy bait and a bobber, and for the other, I am no longer alone with quiet solace.

My fly rod, dog and I have ventured off into various area rivers and lakes. The first time we went was to a trail about 45 minutes north of town. Far enough of a drive, I thought, that everything: the parking, the solace and the fish would be plenty. When I arrived, however, all the parking lots were full and there was overflow on a small grassy area. I sat dumbfounded and then turned into my mother--as I tend to do in stressful situations. I stubbornly waited until some poor schmuck tried to load up an entire family into a minivan with a license plate that suggested their time was spent rubbernecking, and then I rolled up with a big smile and asked sweetly if I could have their parking spot.

I hiked down to the river which was slightly less crowded than the parking lot and I was the only one fishing. I was not, however, the only one interested in making that small piece of land my late afternoon oasis. As I stood in the cool waters casting my line, a family of a million khaki shorts paraded down to where I was and all stood, staring at me as if I was part of their vacation experience. Then they began prancing in the waters themselves. Mimicking the joy of quiet solitude that I had planned on experiencing. A few days after that I drove an hour in a different direction to try my hand at a longer, more difficult to access trail. One that I knew well and rarely saw anyone at. When asked about my experience later, my response to the question of my hike was a very curmudgeonly "it was a circus". The two-tiered parking lot equipped for multiple horse trailers was filled to the brim with single family cars poking out in every angle they could wiggle in. My hike up the trail felt like a summer walk downtown; maneuvering my way around hoards of tired parents and hungry, whiny children. After a handful of miles and a couple sounds of thunder to scare the weak, I found my quiet solace--with just enough time to cast just a handful of times and then start hiking back before sunset.

Throughout the summer months I kept trying to find my quiet solace--a place to provide peace and grounding from the chaos of an unsettled world. I didn't necessarily mind the friendly hellos or banter about the fish biting--or not biting--with warm strangers, but the world was spilling into the peaceful places and I had nowhere left to go. The wilderness was becoming exactly that; totally wild.

### How to Find Solace like a Local

Do what you keep telling that lurker at the grocery store to do. Get back. Get waaay back. Re live your days at the bars and clubs (do you remember those? Bars? Clubs?) And back back back it up. You can probably shake your tail feathers too, but mostly just get the heck in the backcountry where no khaki family of one hundred with whiny, hungry children would ever be.

Research different areas and trails with **Durango Trails** and learn proper, respectful protocol and backcountry knowledge with **San Juan Citizens Alliance**.

Reconnect with your inner Snow White before you go, too. Grab some angling gear and tips from **Duranglers Flies & Supplies**, Bird seed from **For the Birds**, or get some flora and fauna advice from **San Juan Mountain Association** and **Bear Smart Durango**. Leave the poisoned apple at home though.

Gear up with maps and all the other essentials with **Pine Needle Mountaineering**, **Durango Outdoor Exchange** and **Backcountry Experience**.

Don't have that much time to get back in that country? Feel like you need to zip past those crowds as fast as possible? Or you just need to be in the backcountry, like, omg, RIGHT NOW?? Grab some trail running shoes at **Durango Running Company** or a bike from **2nd Avenue Sports, Pedal the Peaks, The Durango Cyclery or Mountain Bike Specialist**

Unable to sprint with a backpack, fly rod and Prince Charming on your back? There's a van for that. Customize or buy a van from **Wanderful Wheels** or rent one from **VanGo Durango**.

Bring a book you can also get lost in (and a map you can find where you're at). **Maria's Bookshop**

Screw it all. We're over it.

Build a house in the woods for you, Prince Charming, your Seven Dwarfs and all those animals that follow you around.

**Timber Age Systems, Kroegers Ace Hardware, Durango Land and Homes, Brookie Architecture and Planning and 365 Roofing, LLC**

-JENNAYE DERGE

