



# *12 Great Ideas*

to Turn Your Backyard

into the Ultimate

Staycation

Destination

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# it's time to get inspired

Whether you are trying to balance your career with raising a family or single, married without children or retired, a vacation is more than a luxury. It is a necessity. Sometimes getting away can be virtually impossible.

Maybe it's time to consider a much more accessible vacation destination—your back yard.

For so many people, that space is a blank canvas brimming with possibilities. But where to begin?

The most enjoyable backyard retreats incorporate basic and familiar elements: earth, water and fire. Toss in a structure or two, sprinkle in some design and voila, you have transformed your home into a family vacation destination.

This eBook is filled with great ideas and suggestions that will inspire you to create memories that will last a lifetime for your family and friends.

# the floor plan

Every successful project begins with a vision. Start by creating a “floor plan” for your backyard. Consider what you need to extend your livable space in terms of rooms.

If you want to entertain in your space, plan on a kitchen, whether it is fully equipped with features such as a mini-fridge, pizza oven, wet-bar or sink or simply a dedicated area for your barbeque.

Next, plan for a dining area which might include table, chairs or benches and umbrellas. This could feature a deck, pergola or back porch which can be open, screened to keep out pests, or windowed to extend use practically all year round in Atlanta’s climate.





# dine al fresco under a pergola

One of the joys of cooking outdoors is dining al fresco. The trick is to design a dining oasis that is flexible enough for an intimate supper for two or for a large gathering of friends and family.

A great strategy is to incorporate a **pergola** that creates boundaries for your backyard eatery. This dedicated covered space works particularly well with a patio and patio seating. An added benefit is that a pergola offers elegant protection and shade for your outdoor furniture or kitchen.





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# al fresco — what a way to dine!

Complete your picture-perfect retreat by fortifying your **pergola** with flowering plants, ivy and vines to add fragrance and beauty. For night dining, don't forget to add fanciful string lights.





## eat, drink and be merry!

Spring through fall, do you grill at least twice weekly and love eating outdoors? Then an **outdoor kitchen** should be part of your plan!

Ideally, your grill should feature a countertop for food prep, some closed storage, and a separate side burner. Add a refrigerator and sink to simplify food prep and cleanup. Your outdoor kitchen can be as elaborate as the image (below) featuring a pizza oven, rotisserie barbecue and smoker. Or, keep things simple with a freestanding grill, table and chairs. Be sure to allow plenty of room for guests to relax without crimping the chef's style.





## eat, drink & stay dry

Small touches like sun umbrellas can go a long way toward adding both color and comfort. For more permanent protection from sun and rain, choose a **fixed roof pavilion** or **barbecue shed roof structure** for your favorite chef. Add lighting and, voila!, you've got the perfect staycation oasis!



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## the relaxing appeal of a back porch

It's one of the most popular ways to enjoy an outdoor room without dealing with insects or inclement weather. Use your extra living space to enjoy hobbies, spend quiet time reading, play board games with the family — or even entertain.

Customize your **back porch** to fit your favorite style, whether it's exotic, modern, tropical, rustic or more traditional.



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your back porch  
can be enticing  
and enchanting



# 4

## an air of destination

Lush plantings create an instant vacation feel to any setting. There are numerous traditional landscaping and garden styles which you can model your own after. Or, you can be creative and incorporate elements from different styles to create your own personal design. Want something a little more exotic to attract friendly conversation? Consider an Asian-style **gazebo** for relaxing or entertaining — it's sure to solicit ooh's and ahh's!



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## bridge the gap

Beautifully designed wood bridges can serve as a unique focal point in a backyard garden or by a stream. Decorative wooden bridges and boardwalks are a great solution for homeowners with properties that are split by a creek or suffer from poor drainage. There are plenty of beautiful options available from arched, decorative wooden bridges to expansive boardwalks. With the latter, wooden walkways offer a smart and simple answer to problem areas in your yard. Their natural design enables you to see wildlife and take advantages of areas on your property that were inaccessible or underused before.



# 6

## thoughtful plans beguile

Design the patio to be an extension of your home's architecture, and use planting beds, container gardens, and weatherproof furniture to decorate the outdoor space. Place pretty containers in your backyard seating areas and grow fragrant favorites like Jasmine or Gardenias. Try placing a few stones to add visual interest in plant beds or go all-out with stone walls and paths. Durable and dramatic, stone can also help tie together different living spaces around your yard when placed strategically.





## the allure of h2o

Who doesn't like to visit the ocean or a peaceful lake? The common theme is water. Closer to home, water is reflective and soothing and can even veil the sounds of traffic or noisy neighbors.

There are many ways to bring water to your outdoor oasis. It can be as simple as adding a small fountain that sits atop a patio table, or as grand as installing a backyard pool.

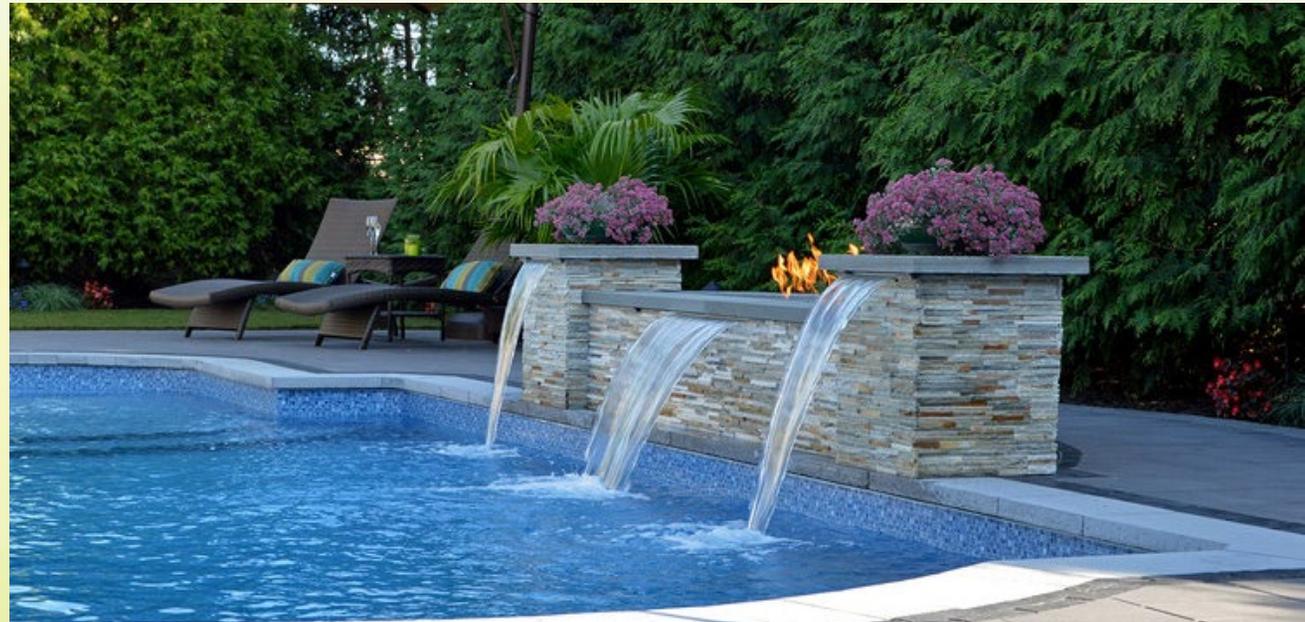
To bring the benefits of water to your yard, you can install waterfalls or use a self-contained fountain for a similar effect at a lower cost.



# 8

## envision a water wonderland

A backyard pond with tranquil water is the perfect way to enjoy your morning coffee or wind down for the evening with a glass of wine. Your private retreat might include fountains, bird baths or other small water features that can attract birds, frogs, and butterflies. They bring a variety of sights and sounds to give you the feeling of a far away destination in your own backyard.





## a little privacy please

Give yourself a sense of escape by creating privacy in your backyard. Whether you frame your outdoor oasis on two or three sides with hedges or fences, or use shrubs to shield it from your neighbors, you'll be pleased with the tranquility and security it brings.

If you choose to add an outdoor room, it will feel more like a vacation setting if it has some element of enclosure. **Fences** and garden walls ensure privacy for patios, but you can also use lattice or **pergolas** to define your outdoor spaces.



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## create a private sanctuary

You can also landscape your yard to achieve the privacy you desire. A well-placed tree or bushy hedge can help create a discrete outdoor area.

Hanging outdoor curtains or growing a natural barrier of flowers with a trellis and some climbing clematis are the perfect additions to a **pergola**. **Privacy gates** and **fences** offer seclusion and beauty.



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# extend your vacation with a deck or patio

Your next vacation could be just outside your back door. Not only is a **deck** a great space to relax or entertain, but it adds beauty and value to your home. Add a **pergola** covered with luxurious vines and place an abundance of plants in containers onto the deck to bring some life and color to your extended living space.



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## create your very own staycation oasis

Make your **deck** a vacation destination by defining different activity or relaxation zones within the space. If your deck has multiple levels, carve out specific spaces for dining and for relaxing. For example, create a secluded reading area that allows you to curl up with a good book. Or, if catching some rays is your thing, designate a place for your lounge furniture.





## Ready to Get Started?

Let's create a memorable staycation now so you can enjoy a fabulous backyard space for years to come. Whether you choose to add a porch or deck, build a pergola, add a water feature or any combination of the above, you'll maximize your backyard space while adding value to your property.

In this eBook, we have featured several examples to get you started. Over the years we have helped thousands of our customers transform their backyards and their homes. **Check out other examples here** and be sure to **subscribe to our newsletter** to receive helpful articles and tips for your home.

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