

Travelling with children: Your ultimate guide to a stress-free family vacation



It can seem daunting, but once mastered, travelling with children can be quite rewarding. With thoughtful planning and strategic execution, potential stressors can turn into manageable tasks, ensuring a smooth family vacation filled with fun and unforgettable memories. Start early and embrace travel

Many parents worry that having children means the end of spontaneous travel, but it does not have to be. Exposing your children to new experiences as early as possible helps them adjust to travel easily. Being on the go from infancy can teach children adaptability, making them more comfortable in new environments. Choose family-friendly destinations

Selecting family-friendly locations is important. If your child is old enough, allow them a say in choosing your travel destination (within reason). This will give them an idea of what to expect during the journey. Involving them in planning gives them a sense of ownership and reduces anxiety.

Look for destinations that offer attractions suitable for children and accommodations with kid-centric amenities like pools, playgrounds, and spacious suites to keep them entertained. It may be beneficial to take children to places you have been to before, as it gives you an advantage of having navigated the place



and can cut your fear of missing out by quite a bit, too. Pack smart and light

One of the most important tips for travelling with kids is to pack smart, aiming for minimalism.

Create a packing list to prevent over-packing! When travelling with babies, consider purchasing diapers, baby food, and other necessities at your destination to lighten your load. Focus on essential items like a few favourite toys, extra clothing, and snacks, allowing you to enjoy local



shopping experiences.

Use bright-coloured luggage to quickly identify your bags at the airport, scoop them up and move on. Use carry-ons as much as possible, or strollers that can be gate-checked if your baby is under two. Soft leashes (frowned upon as they are) can save you a few scares, especially by adventurous toddlers over that age. In-flight entertainment

Long journeys can be tough, so keep a variety of entertainment options at hand,

such as colouring books, puzzles, or a tablet with downloaded movies. Long-haul flights are not the time to be stringent with screen time — aim to use the screen as a distraction during flight times, substituting it for hands-on activities throughout the actual vacation.

Utilise on-board amenities

When travelling by air, make use of available amenities, like family check-in counters and on-board baby supplies like bassinets and hot water. Many airlines have services catered to families, helping you navigate the airport and board with ease. When possible, have one of the couple board first, stowing overhead luggage and making the space comfortable before the younger members arrive. Always have snacks on hand

Hunger can lead to hangry children, so keep a variety of snacks readily available during your travels. Many hotels can provide larger refrigerators, so call ahead to arrange this if possible, allowing you to stock up on essentials. Maintain routines while being flexible

While it is important to maintain your child's regular sleep schedule, you must also be flexible in your plans. Try to let your children nap around their usual times during vacations so that they feel more comfortable in new environments. But know that travel plans can change unexpectedly, so maintain a calm demeanour when things go awry. Your reactions can influence your children, so try to set a positive example. Build in cushion

days, downtime and playtime

If travelling internationally, consider adding cushion days for acclimatisation. Gradually adjusting to a new time zone can significantly benefit young children, helping prevent jet lag and fostering a smoother transition. Similarly, if you are guilty of trying to cram too much into a trip, it may be wise to slow down.

Travelling with kids is decidedly different from travelling solo. Children need breaks, so incorporate playtime at parks or local attractions, or even just let them go to the hotel pool for a few hours to allow them to unwind. This creates balance in their travel experience, ensuring they don't feel overwhelmed.

Consider hiring help

For parents seeking some alone time, hiring a babysitter during your stay could allow for adult exploration. Look for trusted recommendations for babysitters through your hotel or friends. This opportunity can help you reconnect as a couple or enjoy a night out.

Keep the first few trips short

If you are travelling with your baby for the first time, make the trip a short one and to a nearby location. Proximity to home can be reassuring, especially if things don't go according to plan or when they get overwhelming. Know that this is an experiment for both of you, so give each other grace along the journey.

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