

It's All About the Kids

Help turn traveling with children into child's play

While travel is fun, family vacations can be challenging and stressful, with long stretches of boredom and days of over-stimulation. To help reduce stress and increase enjoyment of your vacation, use the following tips if you're going to be traveling with children.

- Instead of listening to lots of “buy me this, buy me that” routines when you travel, tell kids how much you will give them for souvenirs at each destination, and then they get to decide how to spend their money.
- When traveling with children, purchase postcards from your destinations, and let them write on the back about their thoughts and experiences. Punch a hole in the top corner and assemble them onto an expandable ring. You will have an enjoyable time reflecting back on past vacations experienced during childhood years.
- When traveling with children, always carry a current photo of each child. This will prove invaluable if you accidentally get separated.
- If you're in a crowded place or attraction, arrange for a meeting place in case you get separated.
- When flying with small children, carry on a plastic drink cup with a lid and a straw. This is an effective way to avoid spills.
- With older children, walkie-talkies can be invaluable for keeping track of everyone in busy tourist areas. Look for the ones with the widest range. Kids will have fun using them as well.
- Make a sleeping bag-style roll of each of your children's daily vacation outfits with the socks, shirt, etc., secured with a rubber band. You won't believe how much easier it is for them to find their outfit each morning. They pull out their rubber-banded outfit with all the garments together. Even the little ones can get it out of the suitcase and put their clothes on unattended.
- Parents taking children on extended trips should see their pediatrician well in advance to be sure their children get a pre-travel check-up and are up to date with all childhood vaccinations.
- Bring along plenty of your children's favorite foods and snacks for long flights, as well as reading material, games and other activities they enjoy. A 24-hour supply of food is recommended for infants and toddlers in case of major delays.

- Children often experience ear aches as a result of changes in air pressure during flights, especially during take-off and descent. Bring chewing gum and encourage them to yawn, chew and swallow. Children flying with even a mild cold should take a children's decongestant prior to take-off and landing.
- Pack all important medications and those that might be needed during flight in a carry-on bag.
- Make sure older children know the address and phone number where you're staying, and all other emergency information. Give younger children a card with the same information.
- In hot climates make sure children wear hats and other protective clothing, drink plenty of fluids and regularly apply sunscreen with at least SPF30.
- There are special preparations of insect repellents made specifically for children. Apply the sunscreen first and the insect repellent next, since the vapors from the insect repellent are necessary for them to work.

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