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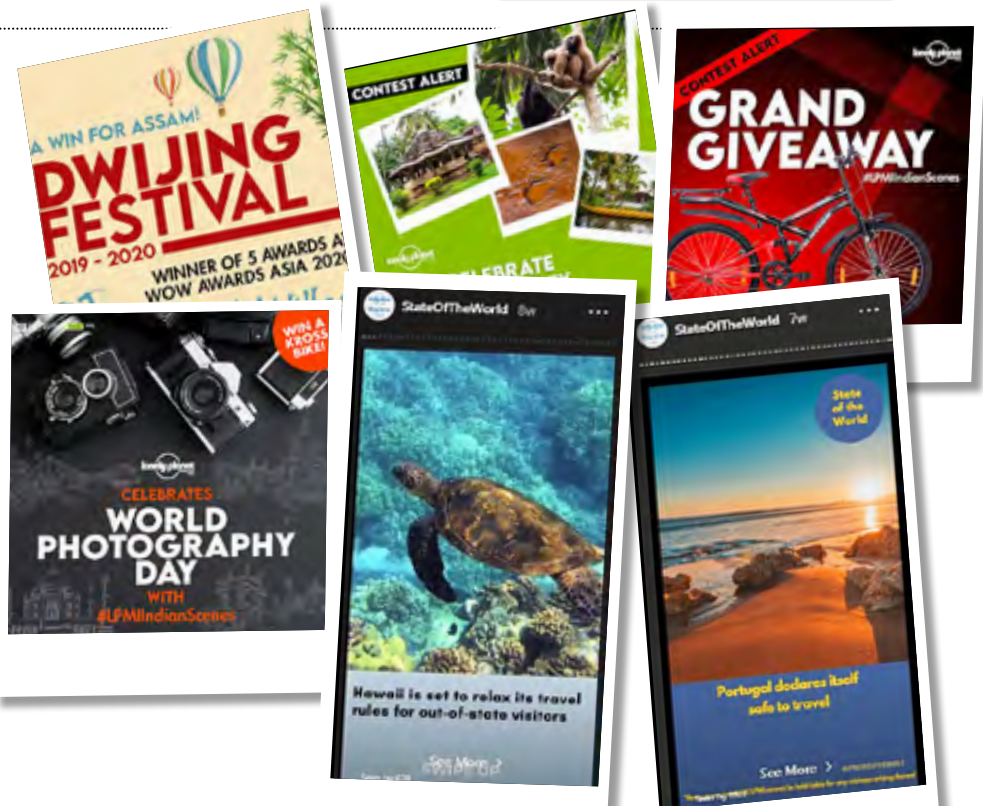
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Heritage

DECODING

STORIES BEHIND
THE WORLD'S MOST
RENOWNED LANDMARK
ADDRESSES

Lodha Altamount, Altamount Road



Lodha Seamount, Malabar Hill



One can't put a price tag on true luxury, part of an irreplaceable legacy transcending generations. In the modern luxury real estate landscape, heritage adds the association of depth, authenticity and credibility to a residence's perceived value. Here's a walk down some of the world's most famous landmark addresses that reinforce that heritage is an intricate part of real estate luxury.

BLOSSOM WAY, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA: A home on an 18 mile-long barrier island between an intra-coastal waterway and the Atlantic Ocean is a dream for any luxury homeowner. In the 1890s, Charles Bingham, built his historic home on Blossom way, Palm Beach. Known for its captivating imported tropical trees and rich history, it's today home to the world's most affluent.

57TH STREET, NEW YORK: 57th Street in New York City was named the world's most expensive neighbourhood in 2019. Its legacy can be traced all the way back to 1664. Today, one cannot imagine New York City without its picturesque skyline, with the skyscrapers of 57th Street at its heart.

MOUNT NICHOLSON ROAD, HONG KONG: Mount Nicholson road, at Hong Kong's highest point, was transformed into a playground for Asia's wealthiest in 2004. In the past five years, Mount Nicholson has become the world's second-most expensive neighbourhood.

BISHOP'S AVENUE, LONDON: Bishop's Avenue, home to celebrities, monarchs and business magnates including industrialist Lakshmi Mittal, is often referred to as "Billionaires' Row". The architectural influence seen here are inspired by ancient Greece, Egypt and Rome, as well as English country houses.

Luxury consumers today have the chance to experience luxury lifestyle elements from around the globe. However, culturally valuable properties will always play a key role as luxury purchases are driven by the emotional and sentimental value of leaving behind an aristocratic heirloom for future generations.

ALTAMOUNT ROAD, MUMBAI

India is home to some of the world's most iconic addresses. One such is Mumbai's legacy-rich Altamount Road, a community of political leaders, royalty and pioneering industrialists. Altamount Road now houses Antilia, home to billionaire Mukesh Ambani and one of the world's most expensive buildings. One of the most prestigious pieces of land on Altamount Road, which belonged to Maharaja Hari Singh and was bought by The USA in 1929, is today the location of an architectural marvel, **Lodha Altamount**. Legendary architect – Hadi Teherani, to give Mumbai a timeless icon, conceived the unique black façade that stands on the highest point of Altamount Road, 300 feet above sea level.

MALABAR HILL, MUMBAI

A stone's throw from Altamount Road is Malabar Hill, one of India's most exclusive addresses. Walkeshwar in Malabar Hill is steeped in Indian culture. The Banganga Tank near Raj Bhavan is part of the Walkeshwar temple complex and a Unesco heritage site. The area is also interspersed with beautiful Jain temples. Further up the hill, is the famous Kamala Nehru Park and Hanging Gardens. At the heart of this historic neighbourhood stands the breath-taking **Lodha Seamount**, with spectacular views of the Arabian Sea and the Queen's Necklace. Lodha Seamount perfectly complements the unique aura around Malabar Hill, an amalgamation of timeless structures and modern residential towers.

INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE

Travel safe:
follow advisories before
planning and setting off
on journeys

editor's note



Primrose Monteiro-D'Souza, Editor
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THIS MONTH'S COVER



PHOTO: MOMMY SHOTS BY AMRITA SAMANT
With proper planning, travelling with kids can be 'un-adulterated' fun. Get tips in this issue from real travellers like Anu and Pavan, seen here with their son Kabir at Amer Fort, Jaipur

Family holidays are about family...

For most of us, our first travel memories were made with family. When I think back to my own childhood, some of my happiest moments were in the 'native place', spending time with grandparents and cousins, doing things such as milking cows and fishing. There was never anything too fantastic about those annual holidays, but being together in a place, removed from our usual city life, helped us make memories for a lifetime. That's the important part of a family holiday; it doesn't matter where you go, as long as you're together. Of course, some travellers do it better than others. This issue, our lead feature on **travelling with family** has tried-and-tested advice from travellers who take on the world with kids, parents and, often, both, and do it without breaking a sweat. Pick up a tip or two for your next vacation *en famille*. Our excerpt from Lonely Planet's **Travel with Children: Family-Friendly Travel Without The Fuss** details child-friendly attractions and features in nine countries around the world, and, across India, we have **30+ properties waiting to show your loved ones a good time**. And, because it's not just about deciding to go, we have important **budget-related tips** to help you make that family holiday happen, and **travel insurance checklists** to insure you right. Look, too, for our stories on **family-friendly experiences** in the **Lake District, Switzerland, Gujarat and Rajasthan**.

You'd think that, after spending so much time together in lockdown, you'd want to spend some time apart, right? But that's the thing with families: making memories is an ongoing process, and one that we cherish all our lives.

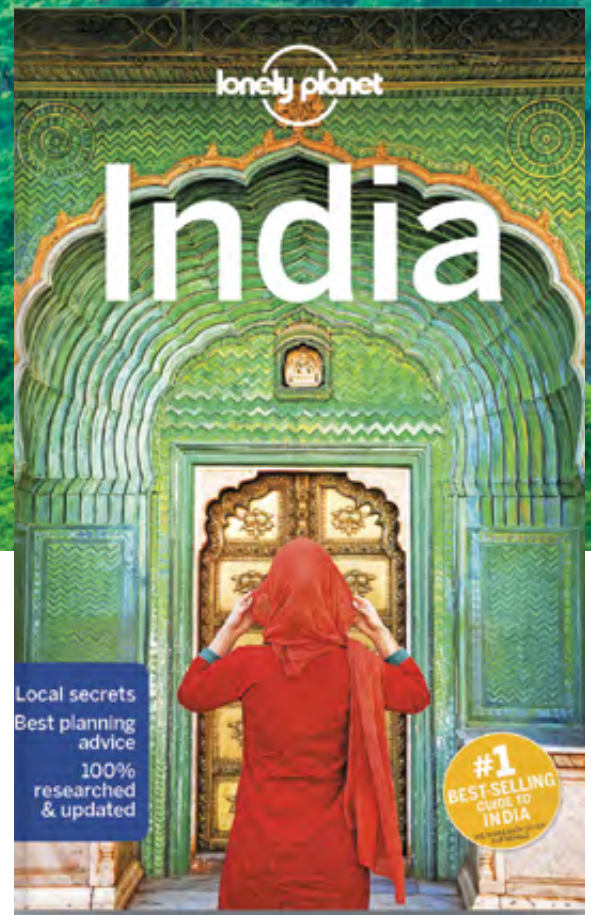
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In this issue...

EXPLORE

Your world from the comfort of home

- 08 Weekend planners: As lockdowns start easing up, it's time to start planning a vacation with the entire family. Find family-friendly experiences in **Saputara, Gujarat**, and **Udaipur, Rajasthan**
- 12 Spotlight: **Switzerland** is a family destination like no other, with options ranging from outdoor activities to luxurious pampering and incredible natural landscapes you can immerse yourselves in
- 16 A look at how **travel insurance** works in the post-COVID scenario
- 18 **More reasons to plan for travel:** Destinations across the globe are offering travellers great incentives, while others are boosting health and safety measures

FEATURES

Travel with your world

- 20 As much fun as travelling with the entire family is, it does require a lot of planning. These **tips from fellow travellers** will ensure your trip is fun for the kids, parents and all generations in between – and, importantly, for you as well
- 37 With a number of international destinations opening up, here's a list of great places to visit across the world with family in tow. From **Austria, Italy and France to the USA, the UAE and Japan**, the options are many
- 53 The **Lake District in the UK** is among the world's largest national parks. Gorgeous views, fun activities and idyllic villages make the English countryside great for families
- 60 It's not easy to make sure you get the best deals when you have to cater to a wide variety of needs. Check out our **expert tips on how to stretch that rupee** without compromising on comfort
- 64 A look far and wide across the country to discover some of the most **family-friendly properties**. Because hospitality, especially with different generations, is as important as the destination in making your vacation experience great

Properties that will woo the entire family, pg 64



Global family destinations, pg 37



Treat your family the Swiss way, pg 12



explore

THE BEST OF THE MONTH'S TIPS & TRIPS

PLAN NOW... TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME! INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE!

Being in lockdown shouldn't stop you from dreaming about future adventures - our Explore section is here to help you plan your next international or local getaway smartly and safely!



An off-season visit means you can avoid crowds at places usually crawling with travellers

WEEKEND PLANNER

Rainy day stays in Udaipur, Rajasthan

Words SAMARPAN BHOWMIK @sum.err.pun

The 'City of Lakes' might be among the most popular travel destinations across the world but, in the off-season, or the monsoon, the crowds of visitors clear out, and those that are willing to brave inclement weather have the entire city to themselves. Yes, you might not be able to enjoy sunny days by the lakes, but the beauty of Udaipur awash in the rains is a wholly different experience. It gets even better if you base yourself at some of the city's amazing heritage properties. And these are especially great in the rains.

Shikarbadi is a former hunting lodge, once the haunt of the erstwhile royal family of Mewar. Spread across 250 acres, the property is expansive, with a lake and a deer park on its premises. Rooms are spacious and tastefully decorated, while the pool and restaurant ensure you have everything you need without having to venture out. Located as it is at the edge of a forest, animals live on the property and a number of wild ones, such as deer, wander onto the grounds from time to time. The deer, in fact, are so used to humans, you can even hand feed them. For a special treat, opt for a meal in the garden dining area right next to the lake, with a clear view of the Aravalli Hills. Bear in mind, though, that you're in the midst of nature; carrying eco-friendly bug repellents is an extremely sensible idea (00-91-294-258-3201; www.hrrhotels.com/) →

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANUJAK JAINMOOK(MAIN PICTURE), EKATERINA LUTOKHINA (3) /123RF, VAUBHAV MEHTA (1, 2, 4 & 5)



hotels/shikarbadi_hotel; Goverdhan Vilas, Sector 14, Hiran Magri; contact property for prices).

If you want a similarly serene stay experience, try out **Silence Lakend Club & Resort**. Situated on the banks of Badi Lake, among the best features at this property are the rooms' private wooden decks. You could spend entire days lounging on yours, watching the rain on the lake. But you'd want a bit of a break from rain, given the thrilling experience the hotel has on offer for guests at night. On dry nights, the staff arranges for a safari in a pick-up truck with mattresses loaded at the back, to see the leopards that inhabit the area. While leopards are shy animals and prefer to stay out of sight, those in the area have long gotten used to humans and you could spot them in the unlikelyst of places, such as behind a bush next to the property or by the road in front. Even if you're not up for the nocturnal adventure, on moonlit nights, the glittering waters of the lake are a magical sight to soak in from your room's deck (00-91-90010-97380; www.silencelakend.com; Nathawato ka Guda, Lake Badi; villas from ₹3,000).

If you don't want to feel too far removed from the hustle and bustle of the city, head, instead, to **Madri Haveli**. Located in Chandpole, the hotel looks like most other buildings in the area and is easy to miss from the outside. It's only when you step through

1 & 4. From bylanes lined with houses to lush green spaces, Udaipur is magical in the rains

2. Stepping into Madri Haveli feels a lot like going on the sets of a period film

3 & 5. There's colour everywhere in the city, from the myriad things on sale to the sellers hawking these wares

its doors that you'll realise why it's on our list of recommendations. It's a 300-year-old property that has been painstakingly restored and renovated over six years. The décor involves stone, brass and stylised lights, creating a magical and somewhat surreal atmosphere. The rooms are cosy and perfect to hole up in on chilly rainy days. But the highlight is the restaurant on the terrace. The cuisine, a blend of traditional Rajasthani and Mughal styles, is mouth-watering, but even better is the view of the city. Watching rain clouds sweep in from the horizon, cloaking the city in a soft, magical light as you sip on a glass of strong and piping-hot *masala chai* will surely rank as a top monsoon experience (00-91-294-241-3377; www.madrihaveli.com; 70, Ganesh Ghati Rd, Chand Pole; from ₹2,124).

When it's safe to travel again, plan a trip to experience an unconventional side to Udaipur. Skip the usual attractions that most travellers associate with the city and, instead, make memories of a unique kind, ones that you will cherish for a long time.

FOR FAMILIES: Udaipur has plenty to offer everyone in the family. While seniors will enjoy the immersion in local history and tradition, the youngsters will appreciate the wide, open spaces and the interaction with animals here

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In the monsoon, the Sahyadri Hills are covered in a green carpet of lush vegetation

WEEKEND PLANNER

Marvel at the monsoon in Saputara, Gujarat

Words SAMARPAN BHOWMIK @sum.err.pun

This little town in south Gujarat's Dang district holds the unique distinction of being the state's only hill station. It also provides a stark contrast to the barren landscapes of the Rann of Kutch that dominate the geography of Gujarat at the other end of the state limits. Being right on the border with Maharashtra, it usually sees visitors from that state there too. Naturally, you would expect these factors to lead to an over-crowded destination struggling with the challenges posed by over-tourism. Miraculously though, Saputara seems to have escaped the fate of popular hill stations in other parts of the country, such as Shimla, Ooty or Darjeeling. Saputara, thankfully, gets visitors in enough numbers to ensure that there are facilities such as accommodation and eateries in place, but not so many that all the attractions about town are jam-packed with camera-carrying tourists and the prices of everything from meals to hotel rooms are exorbitant.

While the weather is pleasant here throughout the year, and especially in the sweltering Indian summers, it provides a respite to those looking to escape the scorching heat of the plains. In the rainy season, Saputara takes on a wholly different look. The Sahyadris are in full bloom and lush vegetation drapes →

PHOTOGRAPHS: BHAVIK JAGANI (MAIN PICTURE), MAULIK SHAH (1), ALEKSANDR GRECHANIUK (2), DINESH CHHANGA (3) / 123RF



the hills in a thick carpet of green. In many places, streams and springs that are otherwise tiny swell with rainwater to form rivulets and waterfalls, some of them forming water crossings on the roads leading to and around town.

Start exploring the town with a visit to **Saputara Lake**. You can hire boats of different kinds from the boat house to go for a peaceful ride on the calm waters (00-91-95863-13186; Boating Rd, Saputara; 8.30am – 6.30pm; row boat: ₹5/ person, pedal boat: ₹20/ person).

If you're looking for some excitement instead, head to **Hatgad Village**, around 6km from Saputara. The village is the base for the trek up to the ancient **Hatgad Fort**, built by Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji. While the fort is not in the best-maintained condition, the trek itself is beautiful and pretty easy too, with steps leading to the top. Make sure you take along a camera as the views of the surrounding landscapes from up top are simply breath-taking.

Come back towards town for a visit to the **Saputara Museum** (Surat-Saputara-Nasik Highway; 10.30am – 5pm; entry: ₹2 adult). It's among the best places to gain insight into the traditional practices, culture, art forms, and way of life

1. The drive up to Saputara is a wonderful experience, especially in the rainy season

2. Few snacks taste as good as hot corn-on-the-cob on a cold, rainy day

3. There are a number of places around Saputara that offer paragliding sessions

of the local tribes. If you want a more in-depth understanding of local ways, make your way to the **Gandharvapur Artist Village** (00-91-94265-71558; Nashik Road Toll Booth, Saputara-Nashik Rd). Here, not only can you observe the nitty-gritties of the processes involved in creating amazing traditional craft work but also participate in workshops and learn how to create some yourself. And, while you should bring back your own creations for the lovely memories associated, don't forget to pick up some professional art works for your own home and as gifts for friends and family.

When it's safe to travel again, plan a trip to Saputara. Your days will be spent in exhilarating hikes, getting fascinating glimpses of indigenous cultures, and reconnecting with nature. If you make it there while the monsoon is still on, the lush landscape will make your getaway unforgettable.

FOR FAMILIES: Saputara offers up a wonderful blend of activities. The seniors in the family will appreciate the serene boat rides on the lake and insight into indigenous cultures, and the youth have outdoor activities such as hikes and para-gliding to entertain themselves with.

SPOTLIGHT

Switzerland for families

Adventure, leisure activities and picturesque views all rolled into one – Switzerland proves time and again why it's the perfect backdrop for a family vacation

HOME to mountains, lakes, plains and valleys, Switzerland is the ultimate combination of modern cities and towns and gorgeous countryside. While this definitely allows you to enjoy the best of both worlds, it often leaves you with a rather extensive itinerary and the hard decision of picking where to go and what to see. While children are usually bursting with energy and excited to try whatever comes their way, planning activities that allow you to have fun and relax is just as important. After all, a family vacation implies that you're on holiday too!



1

First, get yourself onto public transport

Don't feel the need to compromise if your family vacation has everyone planning their own special travel agenda. The **Swiss Travel Pass** does all the hard work! The best way around Switzerland is via the country's public transport system. With the Swiss Travel Pass in hand, you can get around the country on trains, buses and even boats, without the hassle of paying each time you hop on one (do keep in mind that some panoramic routes require the purchase of a ticket – your Swiss Travel Pass offers discounts on the same). While this card is immensely convenient for travellers who are always on the go, it's a great option for families too – allowing add-on tickets and children up to the age of 16 to travel for free! Depending on your vacation schedule, you can book the pass for three, four, eight or 15 consecutive days to travel without the hassle of driving or having to book private transport.



2

Take on the mountains

No trip to Switzerland is complete without visiting its iconic mountains. While scaling mountains sounds like a daunting task that only pros can take on, don't worry about lacing up your shoes just yet – there's a fun Swiss way to make it to the top. If **Mt Titlis** is on your list, round up the family and hop onto the Titlis Rotair, the world's first revolving aerial cable car that offers you a 360° panoramic view of the mountains and valley below. Once you've been wowed by these stunning views, hit up the Trübsee snow park for some snow-based activities, go boating on Lake Trübsee, or cycle down the Jochpass Trail.

Or plan a trip to **Jungfrauoch**, Europe's highest altitude railway station. At 3,454 metres, it's also home to Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, a UNESCO Heritage site. Complete with an Ice Palace, the Sphinx viewing platform and restaurants (including Restaurant Bollywood offering Indian food) which offer great views, Jungfrauoch is perfect for a day of family adventure.

Looking to leave Switzerland with a few bragging rights? Round up the family and head right to the **Matterhorn Glacier Paradise** in Zermatt. While skiing here is an absolute must, be sure to ride the crystal gondola, complete with a glass bottom, offering you unparalleled views over the slopes below. →



3 Hit the trails *en famille*

With nearly every city nestled between mountains and lakes, it comes as no surprise that Switzerland is dotted with hiking and trekking trails. Shorter trails can be covered in two to three hours, always with the promise of stunning views and beautiful sights. You can make a day of it, complete with a picnic, allowing you and your family to have a quaint little experience out and away from the city. Each of these trails comes with its own unique features; if you were to trek from Lauterbrunnen to Stechelberg, you'd be treated to the sight of 72 waterfalls, the Walter Legend Trail in Triesenberg-Malbun comes with the lore and legends of the Walser people, while a circular hike in Stein am Rhein treats you the best views of the land!



4

Make learning fun for everyone

It's not always easy to get children excited about museums, but Switzerland's museum culture is a fun and interactive one, inviting kids, and you, to learn without feeling weighed down by information. If your kids enjoy hands-on activities, plan a trip to the **Swiss Museum of Transport** in Lucerne, where you can try your hand at flying planes and driving trains. Got sports on your mind? The **Olympic Museum** in Lausanne will have any child and adult jumping with joy. It hosts exhibits from famous athletes from across the globe, including our own Mary Kom's gloves and Dhyan Chand's hockey stick. Football fans, young and older, must visit the **FIFA World Football Museum** in Zurich – be sure to snap a picture or two of the original FIFA World Cup Trophy! →

Live it up by the lake

One of central Europe's largest lakes, **Lake Geneva** serves as the backdrop to the cities of Geneva, Lausanne and Montreux Riviera, each with their own unique history and charm. **Geneva** makes a great Swiss city to spend a considerable amount of time in. Home to the Grand Theatre, museums, vineyards, the Cathedral of Saint Pierre, the Old Town, cruises and exciting culinary experiences, Geneva ensures that there will never be a bored moment. Here, you can also take on the lake itself, by riding a *mouette*, a type of water taxi that takes you from one lake shore to another, letting you make the most of the waterways.

Home to the International Olympic Company since 1914, Lausanne buzzes with a dynamic energy, seamlessly combining old-world charm with modern-day innovation, making it a place where even a stroll has the potential to be an adventure. The old town here is largely car-free, so perfect for a family walkabout, but it also has plenty of cafés and boutiques dotting its alleys, so you can just stop, rest and relax when little feet tire. Make sure your itinerary includes the Olympic Museum, the tower and park of Sauvabelin, the Notre-Dame Cathedral and a train ride across the vineyards of Lavaux, which lets you enjoy the best of its lush greenery on one side and the calm waters of Lake Geneva on the other!

The Montreux Riviera brings Mediterranean flair to your itinerary. Expect warmer weather here; it's a great place for outdoor family picnics and trips to the local vineyards. Try hiking here through meadows of wild narcissus, locally known as 'snow of May'. More indoor experiences include a visit to Chaplin's World, housed in the former country estate of Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, popularly known by his stage name Charlie Chaplin. The museum showcases the actor's life and works – it's a great way to introduce your children to one of entertainment's most iconic characters, while reliving your own childhood!

5



6

Get artsy and artisanal with the family

If you're looking for experiences that the whole family can all enjoy together, workshops are definitely the way to go. Switzerland has a rich and diverse culture when it comes to handcrafted products, the most popular ones being chocolate and cheese. Pick from a variety of cheese-based workshops; from learning how to make cheese from scratch in Einsiedeln to being a shepherd for a day in Riederalp and trying your luck at being a farm hand, the cheese-related options here definitely go beyond a simple factory tour. If chocolate is your thing, Geneva, Basel, Bern and Zurich have workshops and classes that teach you how to craft this beloved treat and help you learn what goes into making Swiss chocolate oh-so-sinful. Then, there's bread. Switzerland has no shortage of cafés and bakeries, a lot of which offer fun workshops. Learn the secret art of making Zug cherry cake in Zug, explore sweet traditions in Maggia, learn to make your own *Bretzeli* in Trubschachen, and try mastering the perfect loaf of rye bread in Erschmatt!

Want something less food-related? Sign up for handicraft-based activities such as glass blowing in Hergiswel, or learn to cast your own iconic Swiss bell and fondue forks, or make your own paper! →





7 Cycle through the Alps

If you're looking for a family holiday that celebrates Switzerland's gorgeous scenery, large open paths and beautiful weather, a cycling-based holiday is definitely worth considering. While most children will definitely find this exciting, it can be just as fun for older people too – most towns and cities are very cycle-friendly and, if you aren't confident about venturing out on your own, there are plenty of tours to pick from. The intensity of these tours also depends on you – choose from short ones that are roughly nine kilometres and longer rides that go up to 33 kilometres. Either way, the gorgeous views and cool weather will ensure that you stay energised all the way.

8

Eat your heart out!

Food in European countries is always an exciting affair for any culinary enthusiast, but, when you have a family in tow, it can often turn into a hunt as opposed to an adventure. Still, Swiss specialties such as **schnitzels**, **roesti**s (a version of hash browns), alpine macaroni, fondues, *raclettes* and gelatos are sure to encourage your little ones to open up to eating more local dishes.

For you and your partner, vineyards can be found in various cities across the country. Most of these have a range of outdoor activities and cycling trails, ensuring that the younger members of your family have enough to keep them occupied, while you can kick back with a glass of wine or two.

And, of course, there's cheese! Go behind the scenes and understand what goes into making this beloved dairy product – you can learn all about cheese making in Lavin, Rigi Kaltbad and Mollis. Or, if you find yourself in Montreux between January and April, board the Train Du Fromage that runs between Montreux and Château-d'Oex, while allowing you to try nearly 21 kilos of cheese along the way!

Let's not forget chocolate! From Basel and Montreux to Bern, Geneva and Zurich, nearly every Swiss city has chocolate factories, tours and workshops, allowing you and your family to indulge in the sweeter things in life. These chocolate-related activities are sure to be the highlight of your trip – and they often end with generous sampling – who can say no to that!

Switzerland also has a thriving global culinary scene, allowing you access to the Thai, Japanese and Indian cuisines and many more. There are also plenty of vegetarian options available, in fact, Haus Hilfi in Zürich, which claims to be the oldest vegetarian restaurant in the world, offers global vegetarian food. ¹⁹



MONEY MATTERS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS GUARANTEED!

When you're ready to experience the world all over again, a smart travel insurance policy will go a long way in keeping travel worries away

WORDS AMIT GAIKWAD @guiltyasframed

If there was ever a time to invest in travel insurance, it has to be now. After the world came to a standstill a few months into the new year, it is only now opening up, slowly and gradually, and it's advisable to proceed with caution. You wouldn't jump off a cliff without the right gear, would you? So why travel without covering all the possible risks? During these testing times, travel insurance has to be an important part of your pre-travel prep. Additionally, it is important to recognise that a travel insurance policy usually costs a small fraction of what you would spend on holiday.

WHY IS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL INSURANCE MORE EXPENSIVE?

International travel insurance covers you as soon as you leave the country on your trip.

The policies are majorly designed to cover heavy sums as the support and assistance offered in foreign destinations tend to be more expensive than back here at home. Additionally, some countries will not issue you a visa without proof of travel insurance of a specified sum.

TYPES OF TRAVEL INSURANCE AVAILABLE

- Domestic travel insurance
- International travel insurance
- Family travel insurance
- Schengen travel insurance
- Student travel insurance
- Senior-citizen travel insurance
- Group travel insurance
- Single trip travel insurance
- Multi-trip travel insurance

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS TRAVEL INSURANCE?

Travel insurance buffers you in the case of unexpected events before and during your trip. Travel insurance not only takes care of your financial needs in case of an emergency, but can also offer you easier access to services such as medical assistance, passport recovery, and more.

The market has an ocean of options when it comes to travel insurance, but don't get overwhelmed by the choices

at your disposal. Spend some time working out which travel insurance is best suited to cater to your needs. Get in touch with an expert and discuss the following aspects:

- The trip that you are planning
- Whether you're travelling solo or with a family
- The age criterion: Are you a young traveller, middle-aged or a senior citizen?
- The duration of the trip
- And what exactly you would like your insurance to cover

PROVIDERS

Companies in India offering travel insurance include

- SBI General Insurance
- HDFC ERGO General Insurance
- TATA AIG Insurance
- ICICI Lombard
- Aditya Birla Capital
- Bajaj Allianz General Insurance
- Bharti AXA General Insurance
- Future Generali India Insurance Company Ltd
- The New India Assurance Co Ltd
- Reliance General Insurance
- Universal Sompo General Insurance Co Ltd
- Religare Health Insurance
- Royal Sundaram General Insurance

IN THE POST COVID ERA, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR BENEFITS OF TRAVEL INSURANCE?

Now that the world is slowly opening up, you would want to make your travel experience one that evokes pleasant memories. The global pandemic has seen almost every sector come to a complete standstill, which means that you should work to make your travel as smooth as possible. Travel insurance can help keep your trip-related financial and medical worries at bay, and offer a far more relaxed experience.

"There is absolutely no doubt that the global coronavirus pandemic has changed travel insurance in unexpected ways," says **Bisheswari**

Singh, COO & CMO, Universal Sompo General Insurance Co

Ltd. "Every major event that impacts travel will have an effect on the travel insurance industry, but what is certain is that travel insurance will evolve constantly." Currently, COVID-related claims come under the 'health insurance' heading, and are in the process of being audited and paid out. However, be forewarned that insurers are likely to change claim policies in the future, and be more stringent about claims meeting different requirements.

POST PANDEMIC, YOUR TRAVEL INSURANCE WILL CONTINUE TO COVER THE FOLLOWING:

BAGGAGE LOSS/ DELAY: This provides reimbursement for lost, stolen, or damaged baggage or personal items.

MISSED FLIGHTS: In the event of a missed connecting flight, or for the additional costs to "catch up" to a cruise if the cause of delay is an accident or bad weather, travel insurance should potentially cover you.

FINANCIAL DEFAULT: This coverage kicks in in the event of a complete cessation of operations due to the travel partner's financial circumstances.

CANCELLED TRIPS: This reimburses you for non-refundable trip payments and deposits if a trip is cancelled for illness, injury, death, or other specific reasons, or if your destination is uninhabitable.

DELAY IN TRAVEL PLANS: Here, you will be provided reimbursement for meals and accommodations when a trip is unexpectedly delayed for a certain amount of time.

INTERRUPTION: Travel insurance could cover you for non-refundable trip payments and deposits if a trip is interrupted for illness, injury, death, or other specific reasons.

PERSONAL ACCIDENTAL DEATH/ DISABILITY: You (or your family) can claim in such unfortunate events.

Of course, claiming travel insurance in all these cases requires some amount of diligence, follow-up and patience, but none of these are possible if you don't take travel insurance in the first place.

"It is important that travellers familiarise themselves with the insurance coverage, its inclusions and exclusions to begin with," says **Abraham Alapatt**, President & Group Head – Marketing, Service Quality, Value Added Services & Innovation, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. "When a claim need arises, ensure that the travel insurance provider is informed. Timely submission of required documentation will help avoid delays in processing of claims."

Here's how you can help make the process of claiming easier to ensure a more successful chance of insurance payout:

- Make sure the form is fully completed.
- Attach all the original receipts and bills (keep photocopies of the entire submitted docket for your records).
- Include medical records and doctor's diagnosis papers (in case of medical emergencies).
- Submit the claim well within the time period prescribed.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KEEP IN MIND WHEN BUYING TRAVEL INSURANCE?

Research will help you get yourself acquainted with the different policies available at your disposal. Check if they have cover for pandemics like COVID; compare the rates in the premiums. **Ravi Vishwanath**, President – Accident & Health, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, says, "The most important factor to consider is whether the policy provides adequate medical cover recommended by the country that you plan to visit. This should be the first prerequisite to keep in mind since it is also a determinant to receive a visa."

He also recommends that you do the following:

PROVIDE EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS: Provide details of whom to get in touch with in case of an emergency while you are travelling.

KNOW EVERY DETAIL: It is important that you know important details such as the terms and conditions, benefits, and guidelines to your policy. This will help ease your claim processes.

CHECK THE INCONVENIENCE BENEFITS: Check for what is possible in the case of loss of passport, checked baggage loss, baggage delay, and for other related covers which are crucial when travelling abroad.

ENSURE VFM: Ascertain that the cover is affordable and meets all your needs.

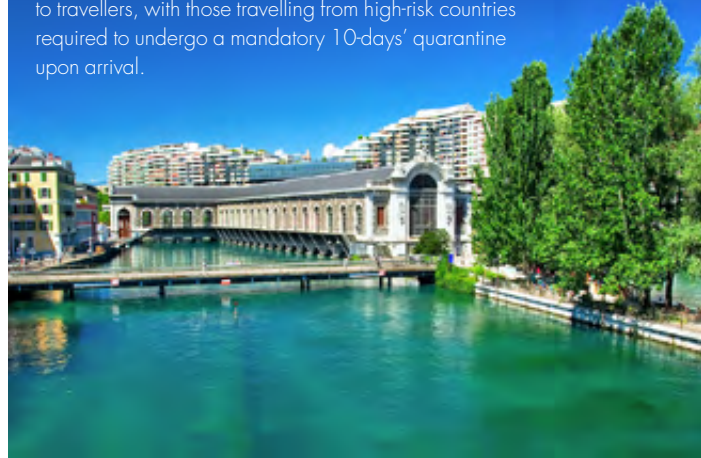
Additionally, make sure you have the numbers to call in case of any situation arising when abroad, and leave a digital copy of your insurance with family members at home, as well as keep a copy in your email or cloud storage.

More reasons to get out there - when it's time

As the world starts to open up in parts, it's a good time to plan travel. While uncertainties remain, testing capabilities across countries have been boosted, and many destinations are offering travellers amazing discounts and deals, alongside assurances of health, hygiene and safety standards

GIFT OF THE FAB

Switzerland, a traditional favourite with Indian travellers, is opening up with some incredible deals. The city of **Geneva** is offering a gift card worth 100CHF (₹8,165) that is valid across 58 hotels and guesthouses, 66 bars and restaurants and a number of public attractions. These will be issued to guests when they check into partner hotels or guesthouses, provided they stay for a minimum of two nights. The card is valid until the end of the year. Switzerland is open to travellers, with those travelling from high-risk countries required to undergo a mandatory 10-days' quarantine upon arrival.



TRACKING TIMES

All travellers to **Singapore** have to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Additionally, the government will issue an electronic monitoring device to ensure compliance with the 14-day stay-home notice. The device is issued after immigration clearance, and helps ensure that the wearer is within range of their place of residence or isolation with the help of GPS and Bluetooth signals. While device wearers might receive notifications on it during the quarantine period to which they must respond promptly, the government assures that no personal data will be stored.



SNIFF TEST

Tests for COVID-19 have become commonplace at many international airports across the world. Some, such as **Dubai**, are adopting innovative new methods. While all passengers arriving in the UAE must present a negative COVID-19 test result, travellers from high-risk countries and those exhibiting symptoms of the disease are subject to a secondary screening. It's at these screenings that officials take the help of sniffer dogs that can detect the disease in people with 92% accuracy. The process is completely safe with no contact between passengers and the dog.

PEACE OF MIND

Spain's **Canary Islands** is going the extra step to assure travellers of safety. To lure back visitors, the islands' department of tourism, in association with AXA Insurance, is offering travellers free COVID-19 insurance. It applies to anyone travelling there, and will cover medical costs, costs resulting from quarantine and health repatriation if they test positive for the disease while on holiday in the Canary Islands. The scheme will be valid for one year.



LIFE IN A BUBBLE

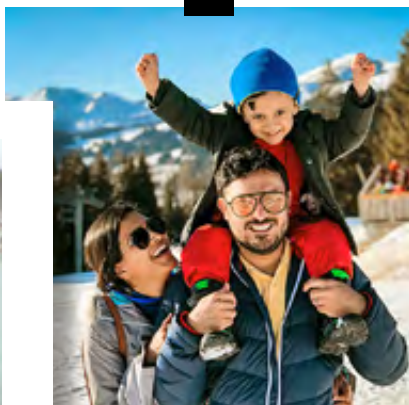
Hawaii has a mandatory 14-day quarantine for all those reaching its shores. In order to make the isolation experience more pleasant, the government is mulling making selected resorts on Big Island, Kaua'i and Maui designated quarantine zones. This way, guests will be able to venture outside and around their rooms but won't be able to leave the property's premises. Isolation might not sound like fun, but, if you're doing it while sipping tropical drinks and sitting by the Pacific Ocean, it might not be too bad, right?



PLAN NOW... TRAVEL WHEN IT'S TIME! INSPIRATION HAS NO EXPIRY DATE!

The best family holidays are when everyone has fun! And when parents get a chance to be childlike and carefree again! In this section, find everything you need to plan a wonderful family vacation with kids, parents, or both!

FEATURES



TRAVEL WITH YOUR WORLD

Some of our greatest travel memories are made with family – with our children, with our parents, or with both children and parents. These family holidays build memories for a lifetime, but they can also be stressful. In this feature, we bring you tips, tricks and insights from your fellow travellers and professional travel planners to make your vacations *en famille* occasions for joy

WORDS **PRIMROSE MONTEIRO-D'SOUZA**  @PrimroseDSouza

BUT, FIRST, A CONFESSION

I wasn't great at travelling with my infant son. All I can remember of the first time I took a flight with him is how many things I managed to drop – first, the boarding passes, then the napkins that are always a part of paraphernalia of carrying babies around, and, finally, the diaper bag itself when its strap decided that the airport was the best place possible to give way. It didn't get much better as he grew into a small boy – not for any fault of his; he was and remains a thoroughly amenable traveller; I was usually too stressed to go with the flow. And, then, there was that road trip where he couldn't bring himself to pee into the bushes. He was distraught at the idea.

We waited. We finally started doing serious trips when he was nine, did not have to be carried, and very visibly enjoyed every aspect of our carefully-curated trips. From child-friendly destinations like Singapore, to slightly-more adult ones like Bangkok and, in recent times, culinary journeys through Italy and Turkey; from, parallelly, eating only burgers and fries no matter what the destination to sampling tripe sandwiches in Florence and a chicken dessert in Turkey, we have come of family travel age.

As I put this feature together and spoke to many parents (see side bars on these pages to meet our collaborators), I could no longer deny the fact: I had done him a disservice.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY

Smriti Lamech has been doing road trips since her daughter was barely a month old. Radhika Dossa D'Cruz took her daughter Alekhya everywhere with her from the time she was six months old. As did Ami Bhat her daughter. Says Hrish Thota, "My wife and I did three 'babymoos' when she was pregnant, so I like to think our son developed his love for travel from the womb itself!" For Anu and Pavan, "Travelling with Kabir was the most natural progression for us. We both knew that we wanted to travel the world with him, not only for the experiences and memories it would give us, but for what travel would give him. In 2018, when he was a year-and-a-half old, we challenged ourselves to do #12months12trips. We travelled with him every month, both locally and internationally, during which we all learned more than we could imagine and grew together as a family." Lynette Menezes has been travelling with her husband and three (now grown-up) children since the youngest turned four.



Pavan, Kabir and Anu on holiday



Judy and her family in Paris

IT'S ABOUT FAMILY TIME OFF SITE

Spending time together is a key aspect of a family holiday. "We love travelling together," agrees Smriti. "Well, we, as parents, love travelling with the kids. I'm not sure how much they enjoy our company!" "We make sure we take at least two long vacations a year, and as many road trips on long weekends as possible," Ami adds. "It is a great time to bond and destress from the routine of regular life, which is extremely important given that we all have crazy schedules." Radhika agrees: "A family holiday for us is quality time just being together, because we don't see enough of each other otherwise; Robin produces TV commercials and is always travelling, and Alekhya has been studying abroad since she was 16." "We enjoy the time we spend together bonding," says Lynette. "Sometimes, the close proximity brings up issues that have been pushed aside and, →



RADHIKA DOSSA D'CRUZ

Animal whisperer with a passion for film, food, words and the world at large
Travels with: daughter Alekhya ("only child; best friend") and husband Robin

Best family holiday: "Italy in 2018. Alekhya graduated, and we had a month-long break. We did Italy by train and road with long stops in Tuscany exploring the countryside, getting lost."



ANU & PAVAN

Pavan is a restaurateur and cofounder of a food start-up, Tasty Tales; Anu is a former professional dancer, teaches children performing arts, and manages Hungry Travellers (@ hungry_travellers)

Travel with: their four-year-old son, Kabir



Ami and her family in Bhutan

Time for you, time for us

It's fine to want some time alone on a family holiday. Work it so one parent gets a break while the other is with the children, and then switch. If you have reliable babysitting in place, a lunch date might be better than a dinner; things going awry are always set right much easier in the daylight.



Gunjal with her husband and daughters on vacation



SMRITI LAMECH

Independent media professional, and English language teacher

Travels with: her husband and two teenaged kids; once in a while with her parents, or his school friends ("a huge gang")

Great family holiday:

"Australia. We dived at the Great Barrier Reef, and hired a car and drove all over the country. It was spectacular."

although this is stressful, we have always had a lot of relational and emotional healing during holidays." Now that her children are adults, "our holidays have been relaxing; they really like being together."

A CHANCE TO TEACH... AND LEARN

Someone I admire used to take her kids out of school if something came up in travel. She always said that travel could teach them more about the world than sitting in a classroom ever could. It's not something I was ever able to do, but there's no denying that travel expands the mind in the least painful way possible.

"We travel with our son so that he can learn about the world practically rather than just through books," says Hrish. Adds Gunjal Jain: "I have always believed that no classroom teaching can substitute for real-life experiences, and that travel to new places with exposure to new cultures is a lesson in itself." Anu agrees: "I think our biggest takeaway is that kids are far more resilient and adaptable than we give them credit for. They enjoy the feeling of being on the move and they thrive on all the stimulation. The interactions along the way, the exposure to new food, new cultures, new languages have a deep impact on their development. Kabir has learnt so many life skills thanks to our travels – interacting with people of different ages, making friends with children even when there is a language barrier, becoming flexible enough to sleep on the go, opening up to trying out new cuisines..."

DO PLAN....

Travelling with children can be unpredictable. Planning can take some of the sting out of mishaps. Although seasoned and brave travellers like Smriti don't plan, for most, it begins long before the holiday – with the itinerary and day-to-day schedule. "You need to plan your day with a good amount of breaks, and keep kids hydrated and well fed," says Hrish. Judy Morris and her husband plan keeping climatic conditions in mind. Gunjal works to have free days interspersed with planned days. Lynette remembers that when her children were young, she used to plot a fairly full itinerary. "It would be all about what they would love doing – visits to zoos, butterfly parks, theme parks, etc. Children have short attention spans. While I would like to trawl through an entire museum or historical site, they would get hungry, bored or irritated a lot faster. I used to include short visits to historical sights, important scientific places, museums, art galleries, alongside the fun activities. I would also schedule sightseeing or major walking only every alternate day, allowing for a chill day in between when we would sleep in, swim in the pool, eat full meals."

...BUT BE READY TO GO WITH THE FLOW

The best-laid plans can go awry, when a child needs to go suddenly to the loo and you all miss the train, or a tantrum derails a tight itinerary. "Travelling with kids requires a lot of flexibility," Smriti points out. "They get tired, fall ill, want to do something else. You have to be able to pivot, and fast." "I learned the hard way not to ruin my own holiday by being on too tight a timetable," says Radhika. "I like to go with the flow, to enjoy the day without that extra stress. Of course, we still need to catch trains and planes on time!" While Judy does plan carefully for big holidays, "when we venture out on extended weekends, we go with the flow." "Though we have some days planned, especially when we have to visit museums or adventure parks, we intersperse them with free days, to explore the unexplored and to travel to offbeat smaller villages and towns," says Gunjal, "because that's where real fun is, and that's where real learning takes place; it teaches us to come out of our comfort zones and learn to adapt!" Ami works with a free-flowing plan at the destination for most family holidays. "The only thing we book are the hotels. The activities are generally a bucket list that we put into action after we've reached the place. The reason for this is so we can take in local inputs and make the

most of the local deals that are available. Sure, this exploratory travel can sometimes go wrong, but we've now learned to just accept that sportingly as a part of our travel experience." "My husband is a lot more relaxed than I am when our plans fall through and we have to think of something else," Lynette admits. "He's great at making the most of every situation. We had once planned a drive through northern Europe, and I had all the maps in place to go to Norway and Sweden. But then a cold wave hit and it began to snow heavily, so we just drove south, going where we felt like, and had one of our best holidays ever."

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A HOLIDAY FOR EVERYONE

Keeping children engaged is half the battle won. Keeping them excited is the jackpot. Working with different interests is key to a holiday that will be remembered for years to come – and for all the right reasons. It's important to keep in mind that the holiday is a break for everyone – including the parents, which means the intention to cater to different interests is already a great first step. "We work consciously to find things everyone enjoys," says Radhika. "When Alekhyia was 10, she and I went diving in Havelock. She got her certification too. We had a blast, we spent time together. We did not go out every night that time, but, when Robin is around, we do go out more. On the other hand, museum fatigue after Paris meant we skipped the museums in Amsterdam and, instead, spent the time with cousins, cycling and swimming and exploring small towns. That said, some educational and cultural things are non-negotiable. Like, in Paris, →

Radhika, Alekhyia and Robin on holiday



Lynette with her husband and children in Italy



Hrishi, Sunitha and Reyansh in Sydney, Australia

TRAVEL PRO



SUMITRA SENAPATY

Founder of WOW Club – inspiring all women to travel, and an avid traveller herself

Sumitra sees holidays with immediate family as a way of bonding. With all her experience in travel, she sees the itinerary and choice of destination as important first points to focus on when planning a holiday, with flights and length of holiday the next considerations. She always ensures there is enough leisure time built into the holiday, and that the programme is not too rushed, and that it includes a few interesting features like concerts or a gourmet meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant. One of her most memorable family holidays was in Uganda. "We walked with the silverback gorillas; I loved that holiday because it was so different and unusual, and offered the right amount of relaxation and adventure."

THE PRO TAKE

Sumitra sees more nuclear family units going on holidays, probably because it's easier to plan and execute, whereas, on a multigenerational holiday, all might not be able to cope physically with the demands on energy levels and enthusiasm. When you go with a travel professional, she avers, all the nitty gritty details are ironed out, and the family can look forward to informed travel recommendations.

A travel professional would also be better able to include unique experiences that will be enjoyed by all, depending upon their age group and budget.

Sumitra's tips:

- Try to restrict driving time to a maximum of four hours a day on a family holiday.
- Start your day at 9am, not earlier.



JUDY MORRIS

Lifestyle blogger at The Other Brain Inc and sustainable travel and lifestyle micro-influencer (@freemindtree)

Travels with: her husband and son Riaan

Best family holiday:

"Our vacation in Europe was fantastic; one, because it was our first major trip as a family and, two, because all our interests were covered in this trip."



LYNETTE MENEZES

Pastor – Every Nation Church; mother and grandmother

Travels with: her husband Kevin and three children

Best family holiday:

"We flew to Frankfurt and hired a car, drove to Austria, Monaco, Italy, Switzerland and southern France. It was just before my oldest daughter moved to Singapore to work and we knew it would be one of the last we would do together."

**HRISH THOTA**

Digital marketing manager, content writer in the software industry (@dhempe)

Travels with: his wife Sunitha Bora and their seven-year-old son, Reyansh

**GUNJAL JAIN**

Mother, storyteller and travel blogger

Travels with: her husband and two daughters usually, but annually also with family or family friends

Best family holiday:

"Vietnam – full of hope and lovely people! We danced with the locals on streets, ate on pavements, shopped at local stalls, and stayed at some of the world's leading hotels. It is a country etched in all our hearts!"

**AMI BHAT**

Full time travel writer and blogger – www.thrillingtravel.in

Travels with: her husband and daughter; sometimes extended family, including cousins

Best family holiday: "Bhutan!"

It was interesting to see how each one of us feel in love with the place – but for different reasons. For my daughter, it was the thrill of the mountains, for my hubby, it was the calm, and, for me, it was the culture."

you cannot not see the Louvre." "We mix up the holiday," Smriti says, "A little shopping, a little adventure, a little museum." "We ensure that at least one adult engages the kids with back-up activities in case they are not interested in the main activity," adds Hrish. "I've learned that if we do our research and plan well in advance, it's not very difficult to keep everyone's interest piqued," says Gunjal. "From travelling extensively to 35+ countries, I've learnt that every country – off-beat or touristy – has something that caters to all age groups." And it's fine to separate and indulge. "At any destination, we try and pick at least one activity that each of us likes," reveals Ami. "For example, a trip to Bhutan had the dzong and heritage trail for me, hiking for all of us, a relaxed evening by the river for my husband. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, I went diving, there was whale-watching for my daughter, and beach-hopping for him."

BITING INTO THE FOOD QUESTION

One of the things that used to really rattle me when we first travelled with my son was how he just wouldn't eat local food. With time, I realised that, since burgers and fries were rare treats at home, it was fine if he wanted to taste every type in, say, Singapore, instead of the local chilli crab. He ate well, we ate well – just differently. Ami obviously has had better luck with that than we did: "We have always encouraged our daughter to try local food. Even when she was a baby, we used to go to local joints and get her the local vegetables and boiled rice. Since she has learnt to adapt, food has never been an issue. Of course, we always keep some back-up snacks for long waits and emergencies." As has Judy: "Kids are more adaptive than we think. Most children are now acquainted with world cuisines and willing to try new foods."

"Make sure everyone tanks up on breakfast, and plan where you want to eat," advises Radhika. "Queues around food places near tourist sights are the worst, and meltdowns will happen! I'm diabetic, so I'm always prepared with food. And keep in mind that it's a holiday, so have fun: pizza, gelato, picnic food are all good!" "I make sure we shop for basic food as soon as we land," says Lynette. "Some chips and chocolates, but lots of cereal, milk, juice cartons, bread and cheese. We carry these wherever we go each day, so we don't have major hunger pangs in expensive places. We also keep stopping for street food and then have a proper dinner back at the hotel." "Food is not an issue at all," Smriti adds. "My kids will have plain bread and water if that's all that's available, they'll wait to get to a destination without a word even if they're starving."

REALITY CHECK: YOU ARE WITH CHILD

When it comes down to it, family holidays with children are about the children. Careful planning will ensure that you enjoy them too, but the primary idea is that you slow down and absorb the world – like a child would.

"Travelling with children should be about them," avers Radhika. "Not about wanting to put them to bed or leaving them with a babysitter, and partying. Kids don't ask for too much – just lots of love and attention and simple things

like a beach, a pool, fun food, games and the space to be themselves. Work around their needs and moods."

"We try to maintain discipline in terms of time and punctuality but, at the same time, a holiday with kids should be fun – devoid of too many rules and regulations and, of course, no books or officework!" Gunjal points out. "It is just our time together as a small world in this big world!" →



TRAVEL PRO

MANU KASHYAP

Luxury holiday designer and director – Windmill Holidays

Manu's first family holiday was when her son Anay was two months old. "We travelled to Goa with lots of butterflies in our stomach, but his paediatrician was super supportive, and said: Go, the sooner you start travelling, the easier it gets." And easy it has been.

Manu loves planning the holiday herself, but also ensures that her husband and son are happy. "We usually take a one-week break, and each one chooses one activity; the remaining time is to enjoy because you are on holiday. Earlier, I used to get very tense; everything had to be perfect, but, over time, I've become more relaxed and chilled out. That's why we now leave a lot of breathing space in the itinerary to just immerse ourselves in local culture and cuisine."

THE PRO TAKE

Manu believes that health and wellbeing are important considerations when planning a family holiday, as well as convenience; remember to check out how far the rooms will be, whether there is a lift and close enough, whether there is a buggy service, enough bathrooms, whether the food is what all family members will like... "It's fun to plan for different generations going on a holiday together. I love listening to various viewpoints and trying to manage their expectations."

Manu's tips:

- For smooth sailing when it comes to planning, **appoint one person in the family to work with the travel planner;** everyone else can be marked in carbon copy (cc) in the correspondence.
- **The more inputs you give the planner** in the brief, the better they will be able to ensure that everyone's interests will be addressed.
- **Be patient, with other family members as well as with the travel planner.** This is what will help everyone to get into the holiday spirit.

TAKE A TIP, OR 42

BEFORE YOU GO

1 INVOLVE THE CHILDREN IN THE PLANNING: It builds excitement, allows them to relate where they're going to what they're learning. It also shows kids their opinion counts, and the discussion helps them understand why something can't be done. Explaining the trip helps kids participate and prepare themselves and, if you're lucky, get excited about the trip. You'll also be able to address any expressed anxieties.

2 PLAN TO STAY LONGER, GO DEEPER: Sustainability in travel is an important lesson to teach early; additionally, rushing children from one place to another is not a good idea.

3 PLAN AN ITINERARY WITH PLENTY OF WIGGLE ROOM: Factor in downtime and rest periods. Even in the day plan itself, remember to factor in time for tired little feet and getting child-related paraphernalia through airports and into hotels. Plan to arrive so you have time to have a good night's sleep before starting your explorations. If you're not staying in a hotel with room service, pick up food on the way to your accommodation (or carry it along), so you don't have to go out again that day, but can just rest and prepare for the days ahead. And go with the flow when it comes to unexpected situations.

4 PREBOOK, PREBOOK, PREBOOK: If you're flying to your destination, prebook a car or shuttle from the airport to your stay with enough leeway for delays and getting children to the meeting point. Pre-book sightseeing tours, private tour guides, and certainly timed tickets to attractions and museums in advance. These help you skip the lines, and usually will allow you to go in with the guide, have them explain things to you, and then permit you to stay on and explore at your own pace. Don't forget to look for or even ask for child and

family discounts. If you are reserving a rental car, ascertain that car seats are available for hire too. In many countries, you cannot drive with a child not secured into a car seat.

5 TALK TO OLDER KIDS about budgets and priorities, about why you can incorporate some attractions and not others, why you'll rough it out on a budget airline so you can spend more at the destination, and why taking the train makes sense over flying...

6 CHOOSE CHILD-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION: Location is key; pick as central a place as you can when with young children to reduce strain on yourselves and them. If your child is young, confirm that the stay option has baby beds or cribs, high chairs, can help you with food requests, might even have a stroller you can borrow; with older children, a pool and games room (in case of bad weather) might be a bonus. Or pick a serviced apartment where light cooking is possible, and where you all have space beyond a single room to spread yourselves out.

7 PACK LIGHT – AND PACK SMART: Take as few pieces of luggage as you can, and keep them as lightweight as you can. You know better than most that children need frequent and unexpected changes. Take simple clothes of the easy-wash, easy-dry, no-ironing-required type. A portable washing line is a good idea to carry along. Don't forget smart swimming togs. And favour layers to handle changeable weather conditions.

Kids usually enjoy pulling along their own colourful strollers. Encourage this, and fill each with stuff they will need on the journey – whether on a plane, train or car.

Make sure you carry water bottles that you can fill, so that you will not need to buy water in disposable bottles along the way.

8 CARRY THE FAMILIAR AND THE ENTERTAINING: If your child needs a particular toy to sleep with, that goes in. If something will make your life on the road more comfortable, that, too, should go in. If Peppa Pig is what helps, so be it. A limited amount of digital screen time is permissible on the road, especially to engage during long waits. Keep in mind that you might not always have an internet connection, so download apps, movies, TV shows. Have some new toys and books – even ebooks – at hand that you can unveil on the vacation. Pack daybags, preferably a backpack or two, that you can take with you at the destination.

9 BE UP TO DATE WITH MEDICATIONS: All prescription meds must be carried with a printed prescription, which is also scanned into your email. Some countries require additional documentation. If there are allergies in the mix, ensure you have them printed out on cards in the destination language so you can show a doctor (for medical conditions) or a food server (for food allergies).

10 GET YOUR DOCUMENTS ONLINE: Scan your passport (relevant pages), visa and insurance papers, and have them available online for any emergency. Also carry photocopies of your passport (front and back pages) to quickly buy local telephone SIMs and the like. And carry extra passport photos.

11 ANTICIPATE SEPARATION: It's a parent's worst nightmare, but preparing for your child getting lost will reduce the anxiety. Older children must know your local number and address (have a plan of where you will meet in place), young children can wear a band or tag that will help wellwishers or the police get them back to you. →

GETTING THERE

12 WORK OUT WHICH MODE OF TRANSPORT WOULD

BE BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY: Options include a road trip, a train journey, or a flight, or, of course, a combination of these.

13 PLAN ROAD TRIPS WITH BREAKS AND FLEXIBILITY:

If you're doing a road trip, plot your route to allow for enough food and loo stops in places you will be happy with. "We prefer self-driving holidays because driving offers us flexibility with the kids, and gives us the freedom to go as and when and where we like – especially on the unplanned days," says Gunjal. "Road trips are made easy and fun by playing simple games and music; we also carry books to read and some board games to keep the children occupied." "We used to fly to a destination and then drive when our kids were young," adds Lynette. "We would hire a car at the airport and just have one or two hotel nights booked. The advantage of this is that you can be quite flexible if someone is tired or sick (both have happened). It is also a lot of fun because you can end up in unusual places (as long as they are safe) and see life in another culture, rather than just be a tourist. We usually had a lot of books and games – cards, colouring books, quizzes (my kids learned the capitals and currency of every country in the world on long drives). We let them choose what they wanted to eat." "Play 'I Spy' games with your kids on road trips," says Hrish. "It keeps them engaged and you can concentrate on the road."

14 TRY A TRAIN TRIP OR TWO:

Every child should experience at least one trip by train in this vast country of ours. There is great adventure in meeting new people on the train, eating on the train (both what you have brought from home, and 'train food'), and even sleeping on the train. Explain carefully in advance how it works: No wandering off too far, no going near the doors, no going to the loo on their own (in the case of small children). There are also cabins and coupes available on certain Indian trains that will allow the family to have its own space while on the train. If you're worried about the cleanliness of the loos, book as high a class as you can, and carry lots of sanitiser and toilet paper to do a little cleaning of your own.

15 PLAN TO MAKE FLYING EASIER:

When booking flights, choose comfort over budget; you will need all the ease you can get on a family holiday.

16 CHOOSE FLIGHTS AND TRAVEL TIMINGS CAREFULLY:

Work with what you know your children can manage.



Manu & family on a family break

Sometimes, a night flight will coincide wonderfully with their sleep patterns. Avoid layovers in the middle of the night. It's best to have them bright and excited through layovers.

17 DON'T BOOK TOO TIGHT LAYOVERS:

Adults can make it quickly from one gate to another across the airport, and even between terminals. Children might not be able to manage, and you could miss your connecting flight. Try to keep layovers fun or, at least, easy for you. Check online if there are play areas in the layover airports that the kids could enjoy. "We used to walk a lot at airports, so that we would get tired and pass out on the flight," Lynette tells us. Adds Judy, "If we have a long halt between inter-connecting flights, we usually explore the airport, do some quick shopping and, of course, visit the play area. Riaan, our son, tends to befriend kids of any nationality fast, and then gets busy playing with them."

18 WORK THE LOUNGES OR TRANSIT HOTELS:

Spend some time online to see if there are lounges or transit hotels in all airports you will touch – just in case you need them due to unexpected flight delays or cancellations.

19 CHECK IN ONLINE:

This will allow you to get seats together, and reduce waiting time in the airport (this is currently *de rigueur* in the light of COVID-19).

20 EXPLAIN AIRPORT PROCEDURES TO YOUNG CHILDREN:

Airports are busy places, and might be overwhelming for children the first time. Tell them about the different stages – baggage scanning, check-in, security check, immigration (if relevant), waiting and then boarding. Don't forget to emphasise the need for wearing a seat belt on the plane.

21 PACK FOR EASE OF UNPACKING AT SECURITY CHECKPOINTS:

Messenger bags are best for parents to put all documents into, and leave hands free to handle children and baggage.

22 CONSIDER TAKING ALONG A SLING OR TRAVEL STROLLER, OR BOTH, IF YOUR CHILD IS VERY YOUNG:

A travel stroller – also called an umbrella stroller – folds up compactly and might prove invaluable in the airports and at your destination. A sling – light and easy to pack – works great if your destination has bumpy streets, or you're going into the countryside. If you can take both, nothing like it.

23 LET YOUR KIDS HANDLE THEIR PERSONAL BAGS:

Carry-ons must include a change of clothing, wet wipes, a few snacks, personal headphones, a book and toy, even gum for blocked ears. "I encourage my daughter to pack her own knapsack with all that she wants to do during long waits," says Ami.

24 AVAIL OF FAMILY-FIRST PRIVILEGES

when boarding. Let staff at the gate know when you arrive at the waiting area.

25 ASK THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS FOR THE KIDS' ENTERTAINMENT PACKS:

These usually include colouring books and other goodies, and guarantee at least a few hours of engagement. Book these in advance to ensure they are available on the flight.

26 BE PREPARED FOR BLOCKED EARS WHEN FLYING:

Breastfeeding or sucking on milk in a bottle will help infants; older children can chew gum.

ON THE TRIP

27 STOCK UP ON FOOD:

Soon after you get to your destination, take slightly older kids to the local store to provision yourselves with food and snacks. It gives children a chance to see what food stores look like in another place or country, get an idea of price differences, and immerses them into local life. Pick up healthy snacks for when you're out and about, and provisions if you're staying in a self-catering apartment.

28 PUT THE CHILDREN IN CHARGE OF SOMETHING:

Let them handle ensuring that you pack snacks and water into the daypacks. Older children can handle the navigation on a phone app. This leads to involvement and engagement.

29 MAKE SURE THEY'RE AWARE OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS:

Orient everyone in the group to where you're staying, the name of the hotel or apartment building, the area. With older children, distribute phone numbers to be stowed securely. Put a plan into place in case you get separated. Work out meeting points, phone numbers, connectivity.

30 ALLOT EACH CHILD A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY TO SPEND:

This adds excitement and helps them make decisions.

31 LIMIT SCREEN TIME AT THE DESTINATION:

While screen time might work well to fill gaps in travel time, encourage being out and about at the destination itself.

32 DON'T LET FOOD SPOIL THE FUN:

Yes, most of us would like our children to experience local food, but kids might not be ready. Don't let it be the deal breaker; just make sure they're well fed and happy.

33 GO LOCAL:

In all other ways, be a family that travels consciously, responsibly and immersively. Try out local transport, eat at local restaurants, and interact politely but enthusiastically with the people of the area. This gives our children cues for travel – and boundaries – in the future. "Ask locals for their guidance and suggestions – their favourite restaurants and places that are their go-to spots for weekends," advises Gunjal. "And, in a dire situation, always seek help from locals. Generally, people everywhere are very helpful, especially when you have kids."

34 GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE:

Being in a new place is a great opportunity to try things you don't otherwise do. Try parasailing, rappelling or even new foods – all with the safety filter in place, of course.

35 EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED:

Impromptu loo breaks and sudden bouts of vomiting are par for the course when travelling with young children; have Plan B in place, and be ready to smile through aggravation. "It's okay to have a mommy bag," Radhika advises. "And to have the entire house in it, sunscreen and wet wipes and spare clothes and treats and anything else."

36 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR:

Your attitude and mindset set the tone on holiday; if you seem to be calm and enjoying yourself, your children are less likely to be rattled.

"Do as you would want your child to," advise Anu and Pavan. "If you model patient, kind, adventurous behaviour, your child will do the same. Flight delayed? Boring wait in a queue? Play an imaginative game. Trying new food? Try it out yourself and watch your child follow! You create your child's reality and world. Make it fun!"

Says Hrish, "Kids can be more patient when they are experiencing something new while travelling than you would imagine."

Be polite, courteous and enthusiastic. "Hotel staff, for example, is always happy to help if you're polite," Smriti points out. "They will accommodate strange requests at odd hours if they see you have kids with you."

37 ENCOURAGE PHOTOGRAPHY:

With younger children, phone cameras are perfect for capturing some moments; older children may be encouraged to use inexpensive cameras.

38 START THEM ON JOURNALLING:

Encourage children to place tickets, postcards and notes in a personal travel journal; besides documenting memories for a lifetime, these are great for show-and-tell when they get back to school.

39 TAKE STOCK DAILY:

In the downtime at dinner each night or before bed, review the day and praise enthusiasm and helping behaviours. Bring out small surprises – they can be tiny, but they will always be received with great enthusiasm.

AFTER THE TRIP

40 TALK AND REVIEW: Urge children to talk about the holiday, to tell you what they enjoyed, what they didn't. This will give you cues for other holidays, and you will also be able to address any misconceptions that might have arisen.

41 USE THE LEARNINGS: Reinforce any good behaviours (not littering, eschewing plastic) the child might have practised or witnessed on the holiday in regular life.

42 COOK THE FOOD: One of the best ways of reliving the holiday experience at home is by rustling up a few dishes you ate or learned about on the vacation.

GO ON, DO IT!

"Don't spoil your family time with timetables," says Radhika. "Hang out by the pool, go on long walks, connect with each other. Every trip Alekhy and I do, the differences and spaces between us melt away after the first two days. Suddenly, we're not just mother and daughter. We're best friends and two crazy women; we do argue or disagree, but that's okay."

"Travel with kids; start as early as possible," advises Gunjal. "Don't let them be a reason to 'not travel.'"

Says Judy, "Many parents plan a foreign trip as a couple, claiming that kids won't remember much from the travel, but travelling and meeting new people broadens a child's thought processes like no other activity."

Say Anu and Pavan, "In this world today, it is even more important that we raise children with an open mind, to be accepting and loving of all people, cultures, language, art, and with a deep love for our planet. We hope that, with travel, we are able to give Kabir not only exposure to worlds outside of his own, but also to new experiences that will push him and us in various ways. We hope we are able to live outside our comfort zone. Because that's where the magic is!" →

TRAVELLING WITH YOUR PARENTS

Vacations with the older generation bring their own set of rewards and challenges

MOST of us start off travelling with our parents as children; we build our first memories of other places and people with them. Then comes the bittersweet day when we become the keepers of the holiday, the ones who want to show them a good time.

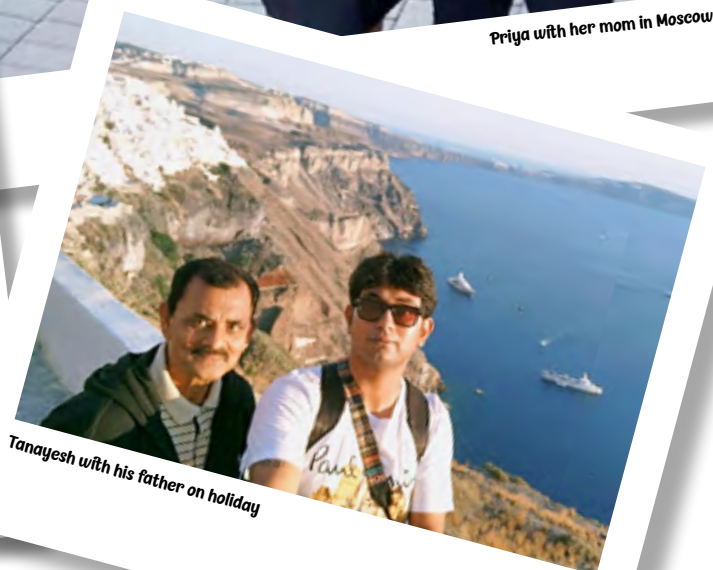
Although your parents might be fitter or more enthusiastic than your friend's, the fact remains that a two-generation vacation demands more than just the bagging a last-minute flight deal or the enthusiasm for an impromptu road trip. Here are tried-and-tested observations from travellers who enjoy having their parents along for the ride, or flight...



Priya with her mom in Moscow



Nicole and her mom on safari



Tanayesh with his father on holiday



Kritika and her family on vacation

PREPARE TO PLAN

Older people are generally not too fond of surprises; they've probably slowed life down a little at home, and might resent not being in control of the situation – even while being really happy to spend time with family. Or they might be happy to relinquish everything to you on the holiday. Either way, be prepared to have a detailed plan in place, keeping in mind their physical condition, level of activity, dietary considerations, and appetite for the unusual, as well as general weather conditions.

"Our family holidays with Mom are generally a little spaced out," reveals Mona Punjabi (*see side bars on these pages to meet our collaborators*). "We prefer not to rush her into too many things and try to strike a balance between touristy destinations and leisure time. She particularly enjoys walking tours so we make it a point to add them to our schedule. While planning, I always do a pre-check on the weather, so that I get her adequately prepared. I also keep a list of vegetarian or vegan eating options ready, because Mom is a pure vegetarian."

Tanayesh Talukdar keeps his father's dinner time and sleep time in mind. "I also keep the names and phone numbers of nearby hospitals handy. I've realised that I must be seen to be calm and in control. If we are reaching a destination late, a cab should be waiting for us, there should be restaurants nearby at which Dad can eat. But flexibility must be built into the plan as well. Scheduled experiences might not happen as parents might feel tired or want to relax, so one needs to master the art of magically blending calmness, detailed planning and flexibility when travelling with a parent."

Lavina D'Souza agrees: "Offering clarity is key. Parents need to know what they're doing on holiday and whether they'll get a chance to see and do what they have in mind. I share a detailed itinerary with them, allow enough time between activities to rest, try to ensure the day doesn't start too early or end too late, and that meals are had on time. Parents tend to panic easily when things don't go according to plan and, if you seem worried yourself, it leads to everyone getting stressed and anxious. Parents also tend to ask a lot of questions and it's nice to be patient with them when travelling!"

"My trips with my parents are usually planned to a T; even our free time is scheduled!" laughs Kritika Goel.

"Our planning also takes into consideration downtime each day so it's not too intense for my parents. On some days, my brother and I end up doing our own thing (more physical activities like skydiving and stuff) and let our parents do things we might not be interested in."

"A comfortable journey and stay, the right type of food and activities, and easy access to medical facilities close by – these are things I look into when planning a trip with older relatives," reveals Nisha Jha. "My mom is 82, my mother-in-law 88, and so we have to plan everything very meticulously much in advance. We just can't leave for a holiday on a whim. We look into travelling time, the type of journey (flight or car; train is almost always out of the question), food as per their comfort level, and, of course, we carry their medicines as well. We also know that we can't pack our days with activities, we expect to see a lot less than you normally would in a day, and we know that we should be ready to cut short the trip if required."

Obviously, some parents are more cued in to what they want to do. "My mom loves watching travel content, so she comes up with different destinations that she loves," Parichay Mehta says. "After that, we narrow down on a plan, book flights, stay, internal transportation and visas, if required. The three of us are involved in all stages of planning, so it is more fun. We love going to lesser-visited places and prefer active holidays. Initially, the challenge was to get them to experience and accept different cultures, but, after one trip to Europe, they became much more open to knowing and loving different cultures."

"My parents were inveterate travellers from the 1960s, at a time when it wasn't 'stylish' to travel for fun, and I have been a part of my parents' travel plans since I was seven months old," Priya Pathiyan tells us. "The bar is set quite high for me when planning a trip. The ideal family holiday needs to be exciting, the exploration of a new destination; sampling local flavours; comfortable yet affordable. For most trips around India, we've planned the macro bits like getting there, connections, and stays, but left the micro parts like choosing what to do each day quite flexible. We've only ever used travel agents for international holidays, as they manage to bring the costs down with great deals on airfare. When I've travelled with older family members, just the basic things are important – rest stops on road journeys, accommodation on the ground →



SUCHITRA RAO

Designer; "traveller/ wanderer at heart"

Travels with: her mom and siblings

Because: "We all live in different cities, and it's nice to go on a holiday when we're together. That way, no one is stuck cooking or doing chores."



NICOLE MODY

Author, food curator, wildlife enthusiast

Travels with: Earlier, with her parents, brother and uncle; now with her husband, and her mom; "we take multiple short trips together in a year."

Because: "Family holidays evoke a sense of comfort, and of knowing each other's minds."



LAVINA D'SOUZA

Analyst, multi-award nominated creator and the founder of untraditionalhumans.com, writes travel and culture stories on continenthop.com

Travels with: her father and mother; also with her parents and in-laws together

Because: "My dad lived abroad for most of his life; taking holidays together brought us together and helped them take a break. I never lived with my in-laws, so travelling together gave us a chance to take them to places we love and gave them a chance to connect with each other as well."

floor in the absence of elevators, room service at the resort, and amenities that are accessible to them — but they're usually quite sporting and, often, it's me agonising over these details while they are happily climbing stairs holding on to the banister!"

BALANCING INTERESTS

Advance planning also goes a long way in ensuring neither generation is bored, or frustrated on holiday. "If we are a large group, I let them decide what we are doing," reveals Nicole. "I look at it as an 80-20 distribution; we do what they want 80% of the time, and what I want 20%," says Nicole Mody. "I let them take the call on hotels, it's much easier that way — and you can't be blamed if they don't like them! The best thing is that everyone's common interest is food, and, as long as we are eating fantastic meals, the rest of the day is not that important. When it's just my mom and me, our interests are totally aligned — we are huge wildlife buffs and spend all our time in the jungle." "Earlier, I used to get worked up on my mom's behalf on our trips, but I've learnt over the years that our parents only long for our company; they don't need us to cater to them 24*7," says Mona. Tanayesh says, "We have days designated for each other's wish lists on which we enjoy these activities or experiences together, as well as days when my wife and I travel without Dad (he relaxes by the pool in the hotel). On these days, we pack in lots of adventure sports, explore offbeat places, and go pub-, nightclub- or restaurant-hopping." "We plan together so that everyone gets a chance to pick a spot they'd like," says Lavina. "We also leave gaps so that people can use that time to either relax or do things they like in the vicinity if possible and if they're comfortable heading out on their own." In Kritika's case, everyone does their own research and then they come to a mutually-agreed-upon itinerary for the trip. Parichay and his parents love similar things while travelling — nature, road trips, meeting new people and a little adventure. "But we sometimes also split up, so that nobody is forced to do something they are not very interested in."

Nisha, on the other hand, works a more overlapping plan. "If the older generation wants to visit a temple or go shopping, the children go for water activities or some other indoor games — with some adults, of course."

"Even with parents who have been my travel buddies since I was a child, there's sometimes a generation gap, which manifests

in what we want to do or how we do it. For example, my mum has always been a very adventurous traveller, planning the most exciting holidays for us into remote parts of India at a time when there was no Internet to 'research' the destinations; bookings in forest rest houses were done months in advance by postcard, and train tickets had to be booked by going personally to the railway office. But now, when she and I travel internationally, she often wants the security of going with other people or even on a group tour, while I'm all for independent travel. It's a tussle that can manifest even in small things, like, while she enjoyed exploring street food with me in the Dotonbori area of Osaka on our Japanese holiday, she probably would have liked to be shopping with her friends a bit more. I guess it's because she travels to connect (the need to interact with more people than the limited number she is now exposed to as a retired person), whereas I travel to disconnect (from my work life, which involves an overdose of people)."

CHOOSING HOTELS AND EXPERIENCES

Travelling with a group of people of varying ages does require more thought to be put into the selection of hotels and experiences. Parichay's parents like experiencing new things, so they were happy to stay in hostel dormitories in Europe, but most parents usually look for more. Nicole agrees, "While I would not be bothered about too many amenities and too much comfort in hotel rooms, with parents and other older people, that is definitely important — the room should be big enough to move around in comfortably, there should be a place to sit (aside from the bed)." Mona adds, "Seniors are definitely picky when it comes to tidiness, room service. Mom is quite particular about breakfast, too; she prefers a king's breakfast as she likes to eat light the rest of the travel day, so I generally choose a hotel that has a good breakfast buffet spread." "I tend to pick hotels in localities that are central so that there's access to stores even late at night," says Lavina. "We choose experiences that are more relaxed, like visits to spice farms or museums, sometimes even the more touristy spots as that's what they've always seen on the telly and have wanted to visit, and I tend to avoid high-adrenaline activities." "We make sure the room is close to Reception; or that they have wheelchairs or buggies in larger properties in case Mom gets tired and needs one," says Suchitra Rao. Tanayesh, too, picks a hotel or a rental apartment (rather than a hostel) in a convenient location when travelling with his father. Although they like to walk a lot and explore the destination, he also sometimes chooses to book group day tours to make things easier for his dad "so that we don't have to go through the hassle of taking multiple public transports."

Priya agrees that there are differences when choosing hotels. "Yes, but in a way you wouldn't expect. My family is much more budget conscious than my peers or myself. We book a hotel based on location, amenities, how good it looks online, but older family members often balk at higher tariffs, even though they can well afford them. I think it comes from growing up in times of rationing and living in an era when conspicuous consumption was less rampant."

Kritika has a different take: "If I were to travel with someone my age, I'm usually okay staying in an average place, or in a hostel, and I'd spend more on experiences. My parents, in general, can afford better trips than I can, so, when we travel together, it's more of a luxury experience with nicer hotels and experiences."

GREAT FAMILY EXPERIENCES

Suchitra: "Rajasthan with Mom; it really made her happy. She had had knee problems from a very young age, so it was really amazing to see her out and about."

Nicole: "Pench with Mom. It was mid June, and we had just got to the lodge when it started pouring. They asked if we wanted to cancel our safari, but we had come from Bombay to go into the jungle... What a spectacular drive that was! We saw a huge male tiger walking in the rain and thousands of deer out to enjoy the first rains..."

Mona: "Singapore. Mom had always wanted to go to Singapore, so we planned a New Year trip. It was an excellent holiday, since I got local information from



acquaintances there that I used while planning."

Tanayesh: "Greece. We explored Greek villages, took lessons in wine making and Greek cooking. We stayed with locals for a few days; it was a true immersion into the Greek lifestyle."

Lavina: "Goa. I remember our Goa trips fondly as my parents knew the area and were relaxed. There was always something new to do and it was never rushed."

Kritika: "Iceland. We did a two-week road trip. The place itself played a huge part in making this holiday special, but the fact that we were road tripping the country, taking turns to drive and exploring on our own really brought us all together in a unique way."

Nisha: "Ganapatipule, Maharashtra. We came together from different countries after many years to spend time together, rekindle our relationships, strengthen bonds between the younger generation... Those five days were pure bliss."

Parichay: "Iceland. For 20 days, we drove 4,000km around the country and this heightened our bonding to another level."

GO FOR IT!

Suchitra: "A family vacation is the best way to spend time together, especially now that families are so scattered and get just a few days a year, if you're lucky, to meet each other."

Tanayesh: "It's always so amazing to see my dad turn into a child once again as he sees unique things, gains experiences and laughs his heart out while travelling. The sparkle in his eyes makes me happy."

Lavina: "Remember, it's a holiday even if you just get together in the hotel lounge and play indoor games! Spending time together doing anything that is fun makes for a memorable holiday."

Kritika: "When I travel with my parents, I feel like I'm travelling with friends; I think I've bonded with them most on all our trips. My parents save their money religiously and then go all out while travelling, which I think is a value they've passed on to me as well."

Nisha: "Family holidays allow us to bond over stuff we otherwise don't find time to talk about – family matters, recipes, weddings..."

Priya: "As I grew up and went to college and then into the workplace, I was often asked how come I 'still' travel with my parents – because the common perception was that that would be rather boring and uncool. Well, my family is the furthest from boring and certainly cooler than most when it comes to travel, so our trips together have been truly memorable!"

Parichay: "We are much more closely bonded after every trip. Many people think that going on a trip with parents after a certain age isn't fun or comfortable, but give it a try. Your parents are likely more experimental than you think they are." →



Veneeta and her family at Lake Palace, Udaipur



TRAVEL PRO

ENEETA RAWAT

Founder and director of Amazing Vacations, a boutique travel company in Mumbai, and a budding home chef

Veneeta travels with her parents and brother; it's an annual tradition. She plans these holidays for when their calendars synchronise and also when it's low season in the travel industry. Good food and hotels are key. Both her parents are in their seventies, so she chooses a hotel that doesn't have too many steps or too long a walk to the room. One of their best family holidays was to Udaipur for her mother's birthday. "We chose the Lake Palace, because it was my mom's dream to visit. It was spectacular, as it was a shoulder period, and we had the best hospitality ever! Our suites were spectacular and my mom celebrated her birthday like a queen. We left the hotel only once as we just loved being around the summer palace of the previous rulers of Udaipur." Veneeta finds family vacations very special; "It's a time to bond; and the perfect stress buster. It's also a time to discover and learn; it could be as simple as learning to weave a bag with dried palm leaves on an island holiday, or trying that bungee jump..."

THE PRO TAKE

Most of Veneeta's clients travel as nuclear families or with friends. "Larger family travel is limited to special occasions," she says. She believes that travel designers like her take the stress out of planning for holiday makers. "We are travel designers – it's the same difference between going to a high-street store or for couture. We are the couturiers who design the vacation as per the requirements, so it's tailor-made." In order to plan such a customised holiday, "we always have a meeting with everyone travelling, from the five-year-old to the 50-year-old, and we talk to them about their likes and dislikes – right down to the vegetables they like or don't like!"

Veneeta's tips:

- Always take into consideration all the family members' likes and dislikes when deciding on a destination. "For example, if the grandson wants to dive and the grandfather wants to visit historical places, one of our recommendations would be Bali."
- Plan in advance to avoid disappointment.



PARICHAY MEHTA

Travel content creator at Awara Diaries

Travels with: His mom and dad

Because: "Travelling together brings us closer as a family."



TANAYESH TALUKDAR

Senior business consultant by profession and a travel blogger and content creator by passion

Travels with: his father (who is over 70) and his wife – "we have travelled to 26 countries, and seen five Wonders of the World. We've recently had a new addition to the family, so, after life returns to normal, my daughter will also travel with us. Sometimes, my uncle and aunt join us on holidays."

Because: "Memories and experiences become sweeter when family members and loved ones are a part of them."



KRITIKA GOEL

YouTuber and content creator, documenting travels and adventures around the world

Travels with: her parents and brother

Because: "Travel was a big part of our lives growing up; my parents have always loved travelling. So, although I do travel by myself or with friends as well now that I'm older, a huge part of travel for me is family time."

**PRIYA PATHIYAN**

Independent lifestyle writer and professional Mumbai tour guide
Travels with... earlier, "Mum and Dad; for the last 10 years, with my husband. After my dad passed away seven years ago, Mum and I have done several trips; my aunt and uncle have also joined us."

Because: "My family and I are on the same page when it comes to the idea of a holiday."

**NISHA JHA**

Freelance travel journalist and travel blogger

Travels with: her husband and child, but "also with my mother, sister, her family, my family, in-laws. In short, close relatives."

Because: "Family holidays allow us to spend quality time with each other, and strengthen our bonds. This is the only time when older relatives get a chance to spend time with the younger generation."

**MONA PUNJABI**

Professor of business communication, and freelance content curator

Travels with: her mom and husband

Because: "Family holidays give us a chance to reconnect and re-bond with one another and break free from the monotony of our work days."

TIPS

1 PREPARE THEM IN ADVANCE:

"Before travelling to a destination, show your parents videos and photographs of the places you plan to visit," advises Tanayesh. "This helps them to understand what to expect, and also to finalise the things they want to do and create a wishlist. This will help you to plan the holiday better."

2 HAVE A DETAILED PLAN IN PLACE:

Older travellers tend not to like surprises. Plot days with regular loo breaks, rest stops, even breathing space via *chai* breaks. And yet, as Lavina puts it, "it won't ever go according to plan no matter how well you plan it and that's okay! It's important to not lose your calm! Have a few alternative options ready or keep space to explore the vicinity if required."

3 CHOOSE THE MOST COMFORTABLE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION,

Parichay advises, "so that they are fresh even after the journey. Parents tend to get tired faster than we do."

4 LOOK INTO ACCESSIBILITY:

Older people and those with limited mobility might have problems with too many steps or too steep access routes. "Accessibility is a key concern when planning a getaway with my mom," reveals Suchitra. "After my mom's knee surgeries, my sister, Mom and I went to Rajasthan and she really enjoyed being able to walk and climb a bit. She never complains; when she accompanied us to forts, she would sit at the base and wait. In that respect, I think the Konkan trip with my sister-in-law and me was better for Mom; there weren't too many hikes." Adds Nisha, "Booking a wheelchair where available (like at the airport) is a good idea, even if they are able to walk," just to keep them from getting fatigued.

5 INVEST IN GOOD FOOTWEAR:

"Ensure that your parent (and you) have comfortable footwear before you head out on a trip, and break the shoes in before you travel," insists Mona. This is especially important when travelling with diabetic parents. "Diabetic patients generally have to be careful with their feet," she explains.

6 FACTOR IN FATIGUE:

Older people tend to get tired more easily and more quickly, especially in a new situation. "Don't plan too many things in one day," advises Nicole. "Balancing energy levels is also important. My dad is much older than my mom and he tires faster, so balancing the two becomes challenging. His pace



Mona and her mom on holiday

is much slower than hers, so we have to deal with both. If it's just my mom and me, she has more energy than I do; so it's usually me begging her to slow down or let me sleep!"

7 EXPECT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION:

You cannot expect older travellers to be as amenable as children, so an important part of keeping the peace is managing expectations.

8 KEEP HEALTH CONDITIONS TOP OF MIND:

Different health conditions come with their own medication demands, exercise routines, and exertion no-nos.

"Travelling with a diabetic parent requires me to carry healthy snacks, tidbits and drinking water to handle any change in sugar levels during travel," adds Mona.


9 DON'T CHANGE THEIR SCHEDULE TOO MUCH:

"Plan the itinerary in such a way that they don't have to make changes to their sleeping and waking-up time," insists Mona.

10 BOOK A GROUP DAY TRIP WITH A GUIDE:

Says Tanayesh, "Incentivise the guide at the start of the trip to take special care of your parents. This way, you can take a back seat and actually enjoy what's going on around you, rather than being glued to the maps app on your phone trying to navigate a maze of unfamiliar streets. Plus, it's so nice to have someone on hand who'll share local knowledge and answer their questions."

11 GIVE EVERYONE A GO-BAG:

Lavina advises, "This bag should include a refillable bottle of water, some snacks, medications and printouts of the day's itinerary, as well as a printout of the hotel's address, contact numbers and a card with limited balance." 



Nisha on a family vacation

TRAVELLING WITH THREE GENERATIONS

We will travel with our families in the most inclusive and immersive ways possible. Real travellers tell us how to make multigenerational holidays as stress free as possible

A holiday shared by three generations means that planning often goes into hyperdrive as you try to balance needs and desires across such vast age ranges. Major factors are physical capabilities and mindset problems (among the silver seniors), while kids will have unmatched energy and low boredom thresholds when dragged along to the more cultural pursuits that the older generation might favour. Add to this the fact that older people generally have strong opinions formed over decades, and the need for a flexible plan becomes even more evident.

"I plan to ensure the holiday is good for both the age groups I'm catering to," says Janice Goveas (see side bars on these pages to meet our collaborators). "I factor in downtime and the flexibility to drop things from the itinerary if they aren't up to it. And, yes, both Mum and Aiden seem constantly to be going in two different directions, but it works out; I just have to help them find a balance."

Manjulika Pramod, too, spends some time on ensuring that "everyone can have their share of fun. For instance, my Dad loves road trips, but my mom does not, and my husband prefers just chilling to sightseeing. I make sure there's something for everyone to see and enjoy."

"I try to incorporate everyone's likes during the trip," agrees Karen Alfonso Kotikalapudi. "My parents enjoyed their first international trip to Thailand with my then one-year-old because I made sure they got to meet a childhood friend, went shopping and generally focused more on relaxation."

"I'm one of the organisers on our big family reunion holidays," Jayanti Pandey says, "and we usually have a broad plan in place, but it is always flexible in terms of what fills the days. Only dates in and out are frozen. We don't really find it difficult to cater to different interests, but, then, since our vacations are to spend time →



Janice with her mother and son on a trip



Alka with her mother and daughter



MANJULIKA PRAMOD

Engineer and travel influencer

Travels with: her husband and parents, and, sometimes, friends like family

Because: "I like to share the happiness travelling brings me with the people I love."



KAREN ALFONSO KOTIKALAPUDI

Beauty editor with iDiva

Travels with: her husband and three-year-old, and sometimes with her parents, as well as extended family

Because: "My parents haven't travelled extensively, so I like being able to give them that experience. My husband loves to travel and so do I, but I didn't have many chances while growing up aside from visiting our native place."



JAYANTI PANDEY

Travel writer and curator at One Life to Travel, book reviewer, Italian translator, editor, and caregiver to her nonagenarian mother

Travels with: her husband and daughter, but also, once a year, with her husband's parents and siblings and their families

Because: "With everyone spread out across the world, a vacation is the only time we get together. We want our children to feel the same closeness we shared with our siblings."

with each other, no one really wants to go sightseeing."

"Initially the biggest challenge was the destination itself," remembers Madhulika Dash. "I had to pick a place that had enough for my granny and mum – both religious – to explore. But, then, as I got to know my slightly tomboyish, very politically-aware granny better, we decided to take trips that would help us go beyond the usual. For Mum, however, a city that has temples and old-style markets is still a must. She found Goa boring in that sense, but was happy to drive around South Goa that has temples, local produce markets and traditional things. My granny, on the other hand, enjoyed historical tours. The other consideration is, of course, flight time, their seats and a comfortable car for travelling. Given their upbringing and mom's time as an army officer's wife, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that they loved backpacking-style travel; they are fine with a simple but comfortable room and will spend their money on a spa!"

"Accessibility and access to a kitchen are my guiding principles when it comes to planning a multigenerational family holiday," Alka Kaushik says. "When Mom is travelling with us, we select stay options and sightseeing places that are reachable by car since, although a great traveller at heart, she cannot walk much with her arthritic knees. We add a hiking element when the kids (now grown-up adults) accompany us."

"We are blessed to travel in a group with ages ranging from 11 (my nephew) to 91, so I do have to work to ensure that everyone's requirements are met, and that everyone has a good time," says Shefali Mehta Goel. "I start planning at least two months in advance, and my husband and daughter are super amazing at it as well. They make flight bookings, get visa appointments, hotels, transfers and car bookings online for all

of us, after doing a lot of research and checking reviews. Surfing the net becomes a 24/7 task! We also work out how to get there – we split the group into two, and travel on two different flights. Grandma and Dad fly business class and the rest of us go 'cattle class'! I always try to cajole Grandma into sending the champagne and caviar down the aisle to me since she refuses to eat or drink or recline on a plane – she doesn't like the food and she worries that her perfect little bun will get messed up if she reclines! So she's there for the silence, while Dad, with his limited vision, needs easy access to the toilet. At the destination itself, the biggest challenge is keeping everyone happy. Grandma can't walk too much, so she has to be wheeled around, but she's as enthusiastic as an 18-year-old and gets major FOMO if we leave her behind even for a while. Dad needs a pee stop every hour on the hour, even if we're on a mountain or in the desert! Luckily, the kids are very sweet and non-demanding; they only need to be fed good food!"

Karen has also found that, often, parents might not be immediately open to new experiences, especially food-related ones. Also, they might find things too expensive because they come from a generation that is more careful with money. "So, yes, sometimes, it's a challenge dealing with toddler tantrums and senior citizen stubbornness."

THE STAY QUESTION

Different family groups favour different types of accommodation for very specific reasons. There is a pro-hotel brigade.

"When we travel with family, they like hotels where they don't have to cook, and they will be well taken care of," says Manjulika, "as opposed to when I travel with my husband and we do rented apartments. My grandparents need a garden, restaurant, open areas to stroll in."

"I've learnt the hard way that you have to find hotels that are senior citizen-friendly, and that offer pick-up and drop facilities, and that are close to major bus and train stations," says Karen. "Now, we make sure the hotels we choose have lifts, breakfast buffets, 24/7 room service and are close to supermarkets to ensure easy availability of food, because my father is diabetic and we often need to find something comforting for our young child."





MADHULIKA DASH

Food columnist, researcher and curator of chefs' retreats

Travels with: her mother usually, but "I have also travelled with both, my mother and my grandmother."

Because: "Travelling has been an annual family tradition since childhood. My father was in the army, which allowed us access to places not open to others, like the route on which the Dalai Lama was brought into India by the Assam Rifles and the valley of death near Maibang."



ALKA KAUSHIK

Travel journalist, blogger and translator

Travels with: her 72-year-old mother; earlier with her husband and kids...

Because: "I love our compatibility and comfort levels when we travel."



JANICE GOVEAS

PR professional and a weekend home chef of Mangalorean cuisine

Travel with: her seven-year-old son Aiden and her mum, who is 67

Because: "They know me, and I know their interests."



Heena with her family in Thailand

"I often choose five-star hotels for my mom and grandma because I love them to be pampered," says Madhulika, "but our most memorable trips have been those where they have travelled with me, my style – minimalistic."

Others like Jayanti's family prefer spacious homestays or rental apartments, in which the whole group can stay together. "One of our favourite in-laws family holidays was when 17 of us collected in Goa from Christmas to New Year; we stayed together in one large accommodation, which meant that no time was wasted in coordination and movement to get together."

"I usually book rental apartments when three generations travel together," says Alka, "it offers us greater flexibility, and it is a must in Europe since, being vegetarian, Mom has a limited choice in food. In general, I've found that having a kitchen is a very important factor with older people."



SHEFALI MEHTA GOEL

Full-time mom, part-time doodler

Travels with: "My maternal grandmother, aged 91 (mildly OCD, with the memory and mind of an 18-year-old) and her caretaker-cum-nurse; my 80-year-old Dad, with only five per cent peripheral vision, my sister's family, my husband, and children (elder daughter 27 and 16-year-old twins) – that's a grand total of 11."

Because: "My maternal grandparents lived in Hong Kong for 55 years; we spent all our holidays with them. They returned to India in 2001, but we would take them back every year, and that eventually became more trips together elsewhere as well!"

GO FOR IT

It takes some work and patience, but bringing children and grandparents together always offers great dividends in terms of making memories for a lifetime. Karen loves that these holidays offer her son a chance to bond with his grandparents; "even if he's too young to remember it, they will," she says. And there are other bonuses: On holiday, Manjulika says, "You get to see a different side of your parents' personality; they open up and share stories from their past. Those laughs and memories will remain with you forever."

"Family bonding, loads of laughter; the younger generation getting to bond and renew ties; the opportunity to put on lots of weight – what's not to like?" Jayanti laughs. "Family time is precious. Sure, we get together at home, but going out on holiday means everyone is carefree; and no one couple is tied down with playing host. Especially in these busy times of nuclear families, it is good to meet and rekindle bonds."

"Vacations in my family have always played the role of both teacher and salve," reveals Madhulika. "In fact, when I resumed travelling with my mother and granny six years after my dad's demise, it was a way of living life away from societal shackles. In the last 10 years I have travelled with her, my mother has learned to enjoy a daiquiri, can make an amazing sangria, has a new set of friends among chefs and others, and has even found her friends of 54 years. Today, they go on their own group trips, where all the arrangements are done by my mother."

Shefali has the final word: "Every holiday, I swear I will never do this again; then we get back, and I start planning again. Every holiday, we build memories, not just to last the older family members' lifetimes, but also for the younger generation. After all, how many people get to travel with their great grandmother?" →



Karen on holiday with her family

TRAVEL PRO



HEENA MUNSHAW

Managing Director – Beacon Holidays; travel is a passion – she loves exploring the road less travelled

Heena has three daughters and one son, and seven grandkids, “so we are a nice family group. Travelling together allows us to spend quality time with each other. Two of my daughters live in Australia with their families, so a family reunion every two years keeps us connected, and the cousins get to know each other. The kids have evolving interests, like and dislikes as they grow, which means we do different things each time. Everyone in the family is into food and wine, and exploring local food is something we look forward to.” Heena looks for fully-serviced, very spacious villas in great locations, with access to swimming pools. Rooming configuration and allocation are important, because “we have lots of kids, and the safety of the younger children is paramount. It’s more about spending time together, singing, eating and drinking, storytelling, fun and games, rather than just to tick off places sightseeing.”

According to Heena, “The biggest challenge on multigenerational holidays is to get everyone together for breakfast, as the youngsters sleep late and the elderly wake up early. The other challenge is ordering meals if we dine out. It’s better to preselect, and, of course, split the bills for drinks as there is always one person who wants to pay it all.” Heena counts a family holiday in Phuket, Thailand, as one of their best. “We had a five-bedroom villa with a full staff and a swimming pool and cinema, gym, pool table... It was absolutely stunning as the pool was right in the middle, and we spent all our time around it” Another great holiday was in Kenya where “we had a great time with safaris and sundowners.”

THE PRO TAKE

Says Heena. “Good travel planners go beyond the call of duty, and they have good knowledge of the travel requirements and experiences, and of the choice of accommodations available at a given destination, which helps them to plan to suit the travelling family.” They also have deals and service assurances in place that go a long way in enhancing the experience; they can recommend hidden gems in accommodation, and get value-adds for their clients. And then, you have someone to call for help when situations get out of hand, like natural disasters, extreme weather changes and flight cancellations. “I have personally assisted clients in cases of sickness and death on holiday, when they have needed to return immediately.” For Heena, the key to ensuring that everyone in the family has a good time lies in “asking a lot of questions and, if possible, meeting all the travellers as a group. It becomes easier with repeat clients who have confidence in your recommendations.”

Heena’s tips:

- Always **think of your travel consultant as part of your team**; share the correct budget, travel dates, and interests to get the best out of the trip. Personally, what’s not good enough for my family is not good enough for any client.
- **Book in advance** keeping in view the climate and availability of airline seats, and visa processing times.

TIPS

1 SLOW DOWN: “You cannot rush on multigenerational outings,” Manjulika avers. “Different generations need different types of breaks. A child needs to be fed; an older person needs lunch at a proper time.” “Factor more time for walking or rest breaks on excursions,” adds Karen.

2 AVOID EARLY STARTS AND LATE NIGHTS: These add unnecessary stress on both young children and elders.

3 PACK A LOT OF PATIENCE: If you’re otherwise used to a hectic schedule on holiday, this type of holiday will require you to pace yourself for the sake of the group.

4 BE PREPARED: “Have the calmest person of the group carry medicines and snacks in an easy-access bag,” advises Karen. “Take along some comfort food for when toddlers and older peeps can’t manage the local food.”

5 LET SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ELSE DO THE MOVING: On multigenerational trips, it often makes sense to go sightseeing on tour buses, hop-on-hop-off buses and cruises that allow you to sit down for long periods and are relatively less hectic, Karen adds.

6 CARRY MONEY FOR UNEXPECTED SPENDS: “Budget for taxis for when your parents are too tired to take public transportation as planned,” advises Karen. That might be the case for when you’re too tired to carry the kids around as well.

7 BE PREPARED FOR SHOPPING: The older generation quite often likes to bring home things from their travels, which might make return journeys more difficult. Madhulika agrees. “Both my mum and granny love shopping old style, so one day on the holiday has to be given over to shopping with the understanding that they will get down anywhere on the way if something unusual catches their eye. Most of my effort goes into coming back with 10 kilos more in luggage.”

8 GIVE THEM SPACE TOO: It’s easy to get anxious when travelling with older generations, as Madhulika used to. “I would constantly worry about whether they would be okay, about whether someone would swindle them... Then, on one holiday, my mom asked me to give her a map of the city and a car for the day, and they went around by themselves. And they were fine. That was the day I realised that, when you travel with older generations, it is always better to set them free with a few things taken care of.”

9 DO DIFFERENT THINGS WITHOUT MAKING ANYONE FEEL GUILTY: “Museums and gallery-hopping are not everyone’s cup of tea, so why penalise others by dragging them along?” reasons Alka. “On our last summer vacation in Europe, my mom went on a one-and-a-half-hour, hop-on-hop-off bus ride through Vienna, while my daughter and I explored the Mozart Museum, in which Mom had no interest.”

10 DON’T MESS UP THE BATHROOM EQUATION: Staying together is good, but make sure there are enough bathrooms to avoid fraught situations. Alka advises, “pick an apartment with two or more bathrooms for peace of mind.”



Let's go Travel



Across the world, there's something for families in every country. This excerpt from Lonely Planet's **Travel with Children: Family-Friendly Travel Without The Fuss** detail nine countries with destination ideas, kids' activities and practical information



For more travel inspiration, check out **Travel with Children: Family-Friendly Travel Without The Fuss**.

The parent-authors team provides ideas and advice for every aspect of travelling with junior adventurers, giving parents the tools and the confidence to plan the trip of a lifetime in more than 80 countries around the world.





Austria

I

N the land of Mozart and Empress Sisi, Austria's many castles have plenty of appeal for the very young, who will have a lot of fun while discovering the stories they hold.

The mountains are as inviting for outdoor pursuits in winter as in summer. The lakes more than make up for the sea when it comes to swimming. The neat villages and homely atmosphere make Austria an ideal starting point for parents taking their first steps as family travellers.





CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Memories of emperors, princes and princesses

- * In Vienna, the **Sisi Museum**: Set inside the Hofburg Palace, it features portraits and clothes of the famous empress.
- * The **Schönbrunn Palace**: This former royal summer residence houses a museum with little ones in mind. It depicts daily life for the royal children (dressing up is possible at the end of the visit!).
- * A **trip in a horse-drawn carriage** through the streets of Vienna
- * The **Kaiservilla** is another royal summer residence set in a pretty park in the spa town of Bad Ischl in Upper Austria.

A fairy-tale atmosphere

- * Painted houses, country villages, baroque churches topped with bells, bulb farms and fertile pastures with grazing cows: this land will transport you into a picture-book past, especially in the Tyrol, home to many Austrian traditions.
- * The castles of Salzburg: the **Hohensalzburg** fortress, which you reach by funicular; and **Hellbrunn Palace** with its 'trick' fountains
- * **Mozart's house**, to turn your little angels into budding music lovers

Custom-made entertainment

- * The puppet theatre

in Salzburg: classic opera pieces performed by wooden puppets!

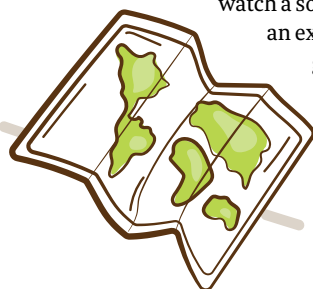
- * The **Prater**: home to amusement rides (including the famous big wheel!) and the puppet theatre in this vast park in Vienna
- * Shows at the **Spanish Riding School** (the world-renowned equestrian centre)

Outdoor activities

- * Cross-country and downhill skiing: national pastimes especially in the Tyrol and in the Austrian Alps. The ski resorts of **Filzmoos** (Salzburg region) and **Heiligenblut** (Carinthia) are particularly family friendly.
- * 50,000km of sign-posted pathways countrywide, ideal for walking, and the superb network of cycle paths
- * Swimming in the lakes when the weather is good... **Neusiedl Lake**, nicknamed the 'Viennese Sea', is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- * The **Danube Island** in Vienna, with its safe beaches and many recreational pursuits

Excursions for the adventurous

- * The **Erzberg iron ore mine**: you can explore underground galleries and, for a bit of a thrill, watch a sound and light re-enactment of an explosion. There is also an above-ground tour of the open pit on the back of a huge mining truck.
- * The **Eisriesenwelt** caves, the biggest glacial (in every sense!) caves open to visitors in the world →



BEST TIME TO GO

Winter sports season runs from mid-December to March. The resorts are packed (and more expensive) during the Christmas holidays. The rest of the time you can fully enjoy a rich natural environment, cycle, and swim in the lakes! Most major festivals take place between May and October.

COST

Austria is a fairly pricey place to travel, comparable to neighbouring Italy but not as expensive as Switzerland. Transport is a big expense (along with restaurants), although there are generous discounts for children. Guesthouses in the country are a good option with kids. In summer, many hotels and pensions in Vienna offer free B&B accommodation for up to two children under 12, if sharing their parents' room. Sausage stands are good for a quick, cheap meal.

GETTING AROUND

If you travel by car, you will need to pay a toll to use the motorways and certain highways by buying a windscreens sticker (called a *vignette*). These are available at the border, service stations, post offices and on the internet. Cycling enthusiasts are well served with thousands of kilometres of bike lanes. Bikes can be hired at one railway station and deposited at another: helpful! During school holidays and on Sundays, children 15 and under can use public transport for free. The rest of the time, children under six go free and it is half price for six- to 16-year-olds.

MEALTIMES

Your children will probably love *schnitzel* – meat or fish in breadcrumbs found on every menu – particularly the famous *Wiener schnitzel*, the Viennese veal cutlet. They will love the huge range of sausages (*wurst*) available in restaurants and from street stalls. Dishes are often served with potatoes. The Austrians have a well-earned reputation for desserts: tiny food lovers will adore *apfelstrudel* (flaky pastry with apple and raisins) or *sachertorte* (a Viennese specialty made with chocolate and apricot jam).

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Teenagers will enjoy Graham Greene's *The Third Man*.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Cuddly marmot toys
- * Walking sticks
- * Wooden toys, ideal for the very young





+ England & Wales

H

OME to Robin Hood, Paddington Bear and Harry Potter, England strikes a chord with every child. They will love following in the footsteps of their favourite heroes, while delicious scones and crumpets will win them over to the traditional tea time. Bucolic

Wales has gorgeous countryside, but the children are more likely to get excited over the unpronounceable town names and the myriad castles.





CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Iconic London

- * **London Dungeons:** skeletons and fake blood galore... It's perfect for children who love being 'scared'.
- * The changing of the guard at **Buckingham Palace:** timeless!
- * The classic and ever-popular **London Aquarium;** **Tower of London,** with its crown jewels; and the **Madame Tussauds** waxwork museum
- * The **London Eye,** a 135m-tall Ferris wheel offering spectacular views over the city
- * A musical in London's **West End**

The worlds of their favourite heroes

- * Following the trail of **Harry Potter:** many of the films' scenes at Hogwarts were filmed at **Oxford University,** while **Alnwick Castle,** Northumberland, was the setting for Hogwarts in the first movie.
- * The magnificent **Cardiff Castle,** Wales, where every room has a different theme... The splendid nursery is set aside for children's stories.
- * Medieval **Warwick Castle,** Warwickshire, with its historic costume entertainment for fans of the cape and sword
- * The **Beatrix Potter Gallery,** Hawkshead, in the sublime Lake District, where the author's original drawings are on show
- * **Sherwood Forest:** walk

in the hero's footsteps along the Robin Hood Trail and try your hand at archery.

Moors, lakes and Druids

- * A stroll over the heathland of **Dartmoor National Park** to admire the wildlife (buzzards, otters and wild ponies) and to try out canoeing or horse riding
- * The incredible standing stones of **Stonehenge** and **Avebury** will transport you into the world of the Druids.
- * A cruise on the **Norfolk Broads,** a labyrinth of lakes and rivers, to take in the rich natural habitat, picturesque villages and windmills from across the water
- * A steam-train trip through the dramatic mountain landscape of **Snowdonia,** in Wales
- * York's **Jorvik Viking festival,** held in February, with horned helmets and longboats galore
- * Bath's watery Roman ruins

Atmospheric beaches

- * The east coast of **Norfolk** and **Suffolk,** with windswept beaches and quaint towns and villages
- * **Brighton's** pebbly beaches and sideshows on the **Palace Pier**
- * Fish and chips by the sandy shore in **Cornwall,** one of the best places to enjoy a dip →



BEST TIME TO GO

In London, there is always something to do and see year-round, but, for the rest of England, November to February is less appealing; the days are short and often cold, particularly in the north. From April to September, it's mild and walking is a real pleasure, though this is peak tourist season.

COST

England and Wales are more expensive when compared with many other countries, particularly car hire, but you can control costs by planning ahead. You can also save money by self-catering, camping and choosing free activities (such as London's Natural History Museum). Stay and meals cost substantially less outside London, and there are often hefty discounts for children at camping grounds, hostels, hotels, museums and historic sites.

GETTING AROUND

Driving a car around these compact countries is easy when you are with the family. However, cars are a problem in London (you need to pay the congestion charge to enter the centre, and parking can be a nightmare); public transport is efficient, but can be expensive though, as it is in the other cities, despite discounts for children. The UK has good, if pricey, rail links; the buses are cheaper but slower.

KEEP IN MIND

In small towns, it can be difficult to find a place to eat after 7pm. Certain pubs do not accept children, even in big towns.

MEALTIMES

If grown-ups do not always appreciate English cuisine, most children have no problem with it: fish and chips, sausages and mash, or eggs and bacon for breakfast – the very food they love! They will also like simple, but tasty jacket potatoes with many different fillings. The standard pub ploughman's lunch of bread, cheese and pickles can be fun, while pies and pasties (best in Cornwall) are good for eating on the run. In Wales, the classic Welsh rarebit (toast with a cheese sauce), will go down well. Real foodies will appreciate the many different puddings.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

Lonely Planet's *Not for Parents: London* and *Not for Parents: Great Britain* will give kids eight and up the inside story – infamous people and dark history included.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

Models of a London taxi or double-decker bus.





Thailand

T

HAILAND is a magical kingdom for families. After hectic Bangkok – where the crowds can be frightening for youngsters – children will enjoy the mysterious jungle in the north. Southern Thailand offers islands and paradisaal beaches, with all the necessary facilities at a reasonable price for parents.

CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

The island paradises

- * Ko Samui and Ko Samet, Ko Pha-Ngan or Ko Phi Phi islands
- * The isles in the Ang Thong Maritime Park, ideal for playing castaways
- * Spotting whale sharks from the islands off the Similan Islands Marine National Park between January and April

The real jungle

- * Exploring the national parks of the Kanchanaburi Province, which are populated with elephants, tigers and gibbons
- * Khao Yai National Park, near Bangkok, home to elephants, monkeys, leopards and birds... They will also see superb waterfalls here.
- * The Erawan Waterfalls and the caves and subterranean galleries of the Khao Sok National Park, where the forest – one of the most ancient in the world – conjures up Jurassic Park!
- * ElephantsWorld (near Kanchanaburi) and Elephant Nature Park near Chiang Mai, where kids

can learn the elephants' stories, and participate in feeding and bathing

Folklore and traditions

- * Shows with striking one-metre-high puppets that relate popular legends with music, and the shadow theatre of flat puppets... Even if they cannot understand the language, children will be transfixed by the enchanting performances.
- * Ten days of shows (parades, battle reenactments, acrobatics) staged during November in Surin – all in a festive atmosphere

The most beautiful Buddhist temples

- * The famous Emerald Buddha in Wat Phra Kaew, Bangkok, and the impressive 46m-long reclining Buddha situated not far away in the Wat Pho compound
- * A perambulation through Sukhothai Historical Park, an ancient ruined city with serene Buddhas in the centre of the jungle
- * Glimpsing the past at the ruined temples and palaces of Ayuthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage site and an easy day trip from Bangkok →



BEST TIME TO GO

The ideal season to travel to the region is between November and April. The heat is not overwhelming, the rains are less frequent, and the principal festivals take place during this time. March to May or July and August are good times to head to the mountainous northern regions. The temperatures are milder at altitude.

COST

While it's not the cheapest country in Southeast Asia, one of the reasons Thailand is so popular with tourists is its affordability compared with the rest of the world. The busiest tourist spots, such as the islands, are the most expensive. Accommodation and food are very cheap, even at the higher end. Local agencies offer the lowest rates for car hire, but their vehicles are often less well maintained; check before committing.

GETTING AROUND

Air travel is the easiest and fastest way to travel south. Train is the best way to travel from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, but otherwise is only an option if you are not in a hurry. Thailand has an extensive bus network, which lets you cover the country easily. Use the reliable BKS buses. You can hire a car and drive yourself (good roads, driving on the left), but, in town, there is nothing more fun than a tuk-tuk or bike rickshaw. In Bangkok, you can get around on the klong (canals) on board long-tail boats.

MEALTIMES

Thai cuisine is delicious but often spicy. Fortunately, restaurants will reduce the level of spice on demand. Children should like the mild chicken dishes – be they grilled (gà yáhn), fried (gà tót) or sautéed in peanuts (gà pát mét má-mô-ang) – served with sautéed rice (kôw pát). They will gorge themselves on tropical fruits, particularly mangoes. Mango with sticky rice (kôw nee-o má-mô-ang) will probably be a hit too.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Look for a copy of *Thai Tales: Folktales of Thailand*, retold by Supaporn Vathanaprida.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Dolls dressed in rich batik recalling the cultural diversity of the kingdom
- * Scaled down 'royal puppets'



France

T

RAVELLING en famille in France means you'll probably have to abandon dreams of eating five-course meals and savouring the Louvre. But it hardly matters when there's so much you can all enjoy together, whether it's running through fields of lavender, picnicking on baguettes and brie, or paddling on the Atlantic coast.

CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Paris for petits

- * Taking the lift or climbing to the top of the Eiffel Tower
- * Disneyland Resort, just outside Paris, where all those well-known characters speak French
- * The Jardin du Luxembourg, where crêpes, pony rides, miniature boats and carousel are all part of an enduring tradition
- * The Cité des Sciences et de L'Industrie, in Paris, a science museum with 20 themed exhibits, hands-on installations and a real submarine, and the adjacent Parc de la Villette

The great outdoors

- * Pottering on the lovely beaches of scenic Île de Ré, on the Atlantic coast
- * Learning to ski at a *jardin de neige* in the Alps
- * Canoeing in the Dordogne through delightful flower-filled villages
- * A boat trip along an underground river, the Gouffre de Padirac, southeast of Carennac... Nearby, in Quercy, you can rent houseboats on the River Lot.

Nods to history

- * The eye-opening prehistoric cave paintings (and accompanying theme parks and museums) in the Vézère Valley and at Lascaux, both in the Dordogne
- * The medieval walled town of Carcassonne, in Languedoc, whose conical-topped buildings send children's imaginations into overdrive
- * The chateaux of the Loire (most notably Chambord and islandlike Azay-le-Rideau), with twisting staircases to turrets and crenellated towers overlooking patterned formal gardens
- * The Roman ruins among the lavender fields of Provence

Pure joie de vivre

- * The state-of-the-art aquarium in sunny, family-friendly La Rochelle
- * The green parks and puppet theatres of Lyon's Parc de la Tête d'Or
- * The enchanting Christmas markets, decorations and celebrations of Alsace
- * Parc Astérix, a theme park 30km north of Paris, which, despite its Gaullish comic-book name, covers the whole gambit of history, with adrenaline-pumping attractions and shows suitable for all ages

BEST TIME TO GO

Spring has some of the best weather and it's usually warm enough for the beach in May. Autumn isn't necessarily cold, but short days mean limited sunlight, even along the Côte d'Azur. Winter is snow season in France's Alps and Pyrenees, reaching a crowd peak over the Christmas school holidays. Most city dwellers take their annual vacation to the coasts and mountains from mid-July to the end of August, and the emptied-out cities tend to shut down at the same time.

COST

Accommodation and restaurant meals are usually expensive in France, even from a European perspective, but self-catering and camper-vanning are enjoyable ways to rough it and save money, and long-term rentals can also work out quite cheaply.

GETTING AROUND

France has an efficient and far-reaching rail network with superfast TGVs travelling in all directions. Reduced fares are available for adults travelling with a child aged four to 11, in addition to child discounts. Within Paris, the metro is fast, efficient and easy to navigate (though not with a stroller). Arranging car rental from abroad can be less expensive than doing it once you arrive.

MEALTIMES

French regional dishes that really appeal to children include Brittany's crêpes and galettes, Provençal pizza, and cheesy fondue and raclette from the Alps. But eating out can pose a few challenges. Highchairs, children's menus and half-portions are thin on the ground, but cafétérias usually have simple dishes like *croque monsieur* (toasted cheese and ham sandwiches) and ready-made food you can see before ordering, something that works for many kids. Picnicking and self-catering are probably the best ways to keep the family fed, however. Grab a *baguette*, some cheese, a bunch of grapes *et voilà!* If you are eating out, having the main meal at lunchtime can work well for families. Dinner can often take hours, and many restaurants, especially in the south, don't open for dinner until 8pm. Also, French children have immaculate table manners and know how to behave – if yours don't, avoid classy restaurants.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Lonely Planet's *Not for Parents: Paris* will give kids eight and up the inside story on one of the world's most famous cities.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Mini Eiffel towers – kids love the glowing fibre-optic ones
- * Cute ceramic or glass jars that hold yoghurt and dairy products from the supermarket (great for storing shell collections or pencils)





Turkey

W

ITH its azure seas and mysterious fairy chimneys, its ancient ruins and exotic bazaars, Turkey is everything any child could wish for. It is an easy destination for a family. You can visit the country for its beaches (perhaps under sail) or mountains, particularly Cappadocia.

CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Fairy-tale Istanbul

- * The bazaars, where the smallest trinket seems like a valuable treasure
- * A cruise on the **Bosphorus** or the **Golden Horn**
- * The mosques (the **Blue Mosque**, **Aya Sofya**), and palaces from the *Arabian Nights* (**Topkapı**, **Dolmabahçe**)
- * A bike ride or tour in a phaeton (horse and carriage) on **Princes' Islands**

Fun in the sea

- * Swimming in the **Mediterranean, Aegean** or **Black Seas**: there's 7,000km of coastline to enjoy!
- * Family outings in sea kayaks or canoes along the **Turquoise Coast**, leaving from **Kas**
- * A day-long cruise around **Bodrum**, **Marmaris**, **Fethiye** or **Antalya** on board

a beautiful *gület* (traditional wooden sailing boat)

Mountain sights

- * A flight in a hot-air balloon over the natural fairy chimneys (in particular **Göreme**) in **Cappadocia**
- * The spectacular underground cities, including **Derinkuyu** and **Kaymaklı**, in Cappadocia

Ancient ruins

- * The monumental sculpted heads on the summit of **Mt Nemrut**
- * The ruins of the Greco-Roman city of **Ephesus**, with **Hadrian's Temple** and elaborate mosaics
- * Monasteries built into the cliffs, such as **Sumela** in the northeast of the country
- * The tombs carved out of the rock at **Fethiye**, a miniature version of **Petra** in **Jordan**

BEST TIME TO GO

Visit in spring (April to May) or autumn (September to October), as the weather will be ideal in Istanbul and on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. From mid-May to September, it's beach weather. Take care: the east of the country becomes a furnace in summer.

COST

Turkey offers good value for money. Costs are lowest in eastern Anatolia, while Cappadocia, Selçuk, Pamukkale and Olympus still offer bargain prices. Prices are highest in Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara and the touristy cities on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, where hotels and tours are fairly pricey – Mediterranean diving, however, is good value. Food and drink are reasonably cheap, and a lot of historical sites are free.

GETTING AROUND

For travel between the towns and villages, *dolmuş* (a sort of minibus) are practical. There is an extensive network of comfortable and reasonably-priced buses. For long distances, there is the train or domestic flights, offered by a number of carriers. Hiring a car is a good option;

the roads are in good condition, but watch out for a disregard for rules.

MEALTIMES

Children will love tasting the different *mezze*, with helpings of vegetables, meat or seafood. Dishes include meat prepared in many different ways, often as *kebabs* or *köfte* (meatballs). Fish is usually grilled. *Pide*, a sort of Turkish pizza, comes garnished with cheese, egg or minced meat. The sweet-toothed will enjoy the *baklavas*, *lokum* (Turkish delight) and *dondurma* (ice cream).

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * *The Stone of Destiny: Tales from Turkey* by Elspeth Tavaci, is a rich collection aimed at pre-teens.
- * *The Trojan War*, retold by Olivia E Coolidge, is a great interpretation for school children.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * For older children, a game of *okey* or *tavla* (backgammon), Turkish board games
- * Puppets or *kukla*, stars of traditional Turkish theatre
- * A blue evil-eye good-luck charm, mirrors and other accessories



Italy

I

TALY is one big open-air museum, a treasure trove of ancient ruins, gardens and Renaissance palaces dotted across plains and mountains. But beware of cultural overload: for a truly child-friendly visit to Italy, it pays to keep the focus on gelato and the lakes and beaches, a welcome respite in summer when the scorching sun beats down on the country.

CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Roman Italy

- * The Colosseum, where gladiator duels and wild animal hunts were held, and the nearby Forum (which has somewhat less of the grisly appeal)
- * The ruins of Herculaneum, which are as impressive as those of Pompeii, but, being more compact, are better suited to children
- * Villa Adriana, the home of Emperor Hadrian, at the gates of Rome; and the ancient harbour of Ostia (Ostia Antica), which kept the capital supplied

Beaches, islands and lakes

- * Canoeing or windsurfing on Lombardy's enchanting alpine lakes: Maggiore, Como and Garda... Close to the latter are two giant amusement parks – Gardaland, the largest in Italy, and CanevaWorld, with an aqua park and movie studios
- * Swimming on the Adriatic Coast, where the beaches slope into shallow waters, perfect for young children, particularly around Ferrara
- * The beaches of the south in Puglia (Apulia), Basilicata, Calabria, particularly those of Otranto in Porto Cesareo, the islands of Tremiti and Gallipoli
- * The island of Elba, edged with beaches

lapped by blue water

- * Exploring the Amalfi coast by boat; the beaches are not very practical with children
- * The islands of Sardinia and Sicily, with fascinating history, captivating towns and spectacular beaches

Venice, home to explorer Marco Polo

- * Exploring the city of canals (and no cars) on foot, by gondola or vaporetto (water taxi)
- * Piazza San Marco, where they can chase the pigeons before climbing the Campanile (bell tower) for a panoramic view of the city
- * The islands of Murano, to see glass blowers at work, and Burano, with its colourful buildings that look like dolls' houses

Strange towns and extraordinary gardens

- * Bizarre displays at the Specola Natural History Museum in Florence, and a visit to Palazzo Vecchio with actors in period costume
- * Walking, cycling or rollerblading round the ramparts of Lucca
- * The Tower of Pisa... the 'lean' is still impressive.
- * The water features in the Villa d'Este in Tivoli
- * The monsters lurking in the gardens of Bomarzo (Parco dei Mostri), near Viterbo
- * The trulli villages of Puglia, with their curious, conical houses →

BEST TIME TO GO

While Italy is a place you can visit year-round, it is during spring and autumn that you will reap the most from its charms. The tourist sites are less crowded and the temperatures more comfortable. In summer (and often in spring), swimming is as exquisite off the Tyrrhenian shore as in the Adriatic.

COST

Be prepared to pay top euro – particularly for accommodation – in Venice and Rome. In Tuscany, choose agriturismo (accommodation on a farm) rather than a hotel in the town.

GETTING AROUND

There is no problem getting around Italy where the roads are in a good state of repair. Car rental is expensive (as are petrol and tolls), and is best arranged before leaving home. The motorways are tolled; buy a pre-paid card to avoid the long queues, especially in summer. Avoid driving in Naples where anarchy rules. Trains on certain lines are short on comfort and somewhat tatty looking; the bus network is fairly extensive. Large car ferries travel between the mainland and Sicily and Sardinia, while smaller ferries and hydrofoils run to other islands. There are also ferries between Sardinia and Corsica. Many ferries travel overnight, in which case a cabin is worthwhile.

MEALTIMES

The advantage of pasta is children are pretty much guaranteed to like it. Lasagna, cannelloni and bolognese sauce with tagliatelle are always winners. And there's pizza! Veal Milanese (schnitzel in breadcrumbs) is also much appreciated. In the land of gelato, ice cream tastes heavenly, and there is no end to the different flavours you can try.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Lonely Planet's *Not for Parents: Rome* will give kids eight and up the inside story on the secrets of Rome.
- * Peter Connolly's *Ancient Rome* is an excellent first history with fantastic illustrations that will bring the ancient sites to life.
- * For under-10s, pack Geraldine McCaughreans's *Roman Myths*.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Carnival masks from Venice
- * A wooden Pinocchio
- * Scale-model cars from the Fiat 500 to the latest Ferrari



Let's

Go

Travel



Dubai & The United Arab Emirates



A

futuristic city perched on the edge of the Persian Gulf, Dubai is an easy holiday destination with children, as long as you take care in the sun. But there's a lot more to it than just sandcastles and sea.

When you tire of the city, you can leave it behind and head off for a desert adventure in complete safety.





CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Futuristic buildings

- * The skyscrapers, including the **Burj al-Arab**, shaped like a sail hoisted above the water
- * The **Burj Khalifa**, the highest building in the world at 828m! Take the lift, which shoots up 124 floors in just a few seconds – quite an experience for anyone, but especially a child.
- * **Palm Jumeirah**, an artificial peninsula in the shape of a palm tree with amazing villas and hotels

Beaches and water sports

- * Beaches, such as **Jumeirah Beach Park**, positioned on the edge of parks allowing you to play in the shade
- * Beaches at the luxury hotels (open to non-residents), offering water sports and great facilities for children

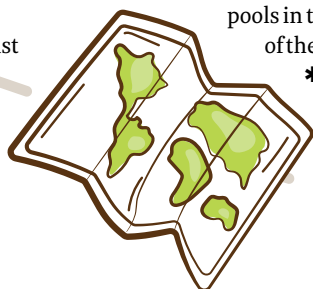
Traditions full of Eastern promise

- * An excursion on board a *dhow*... Set off from Abu Dhabi along the coast to see fishing ports and dolphins.
- * Spectating at a horse race and going to watch the camels train at the camel racetrack

- * Watching a falcon on the wing at the **Heritage Village** (Abu Dhabi), a well thought-out museum on Emirati traditions
- * A glimpse of the Emirates before the oil boom at the small emirate of **Umm al-Quwain**, with its old town, superb beaches and bird colonies
- * The old district of **Bur Dubai** and of **Shindagha**, and the *souks* selling gold and spices in **Deira**

Original experiences

- * The water slides at the **Wild Wadi Water Park** – guaranteed thrills!
- * Spending a morning surfing on the sand dunes, before throwing yourself down the slopes at **Ski Dubai**, the indoor snow dome at the **Mall of the Emirates**.
- * Flying over the desert at dawn in a hot-air balloon (from age five)
- * Taking a dip in the **Hatta Pools** in the **Hajar Mountains**... These natural bathing pools in the gorges are in the northeast of the Emirates.
- * A 4WD excursion or camel ride into the desert from Abu Dhabi, followed by dinner in a tent with the Bedouins →



BEST TIME TO GO

October to November and March to April are the most pleasant times, as it is hot but not unbearable (30°C in the day, 20°C at night). From December to February, it is milder (24°C on average) with slightly cooler evenings. Apart from these times, the heat is infernal (48°C in July/August, and very humid).

COST

Dubai is notoriously expensive, and its seven-star hotels can be exorbitant, but more affordable (and still luxurious) accommodation is popping up all the time. On the other hand, there is practically no cheap accommodation in Abu Dhabi. Throughout the Emirates, if you avoid the top restaurants you'll find that delicious local food is quite cheap. Budget for activities such as indoor skiing, as they are quite expensive.

GETTING AROUND

In Dubai, taxi, buses, *abra* (floating taxis) and the driverless metro make getting around easy. Collective taxis are practical for longer journeys. Driving in the Emirates can be taxing – the Emirati tend to follow their own personal highway code. Nonetheless, with a little care, hiring a car can be the best way to tackle a one- or two-day trip from Dubai.

MEALTIMES

There is a strong Lebanese influence in Dubai cuisine. Children will enjoy the *mezze*, and mixed grills, which let you try several different dishes. *Shwarma* are everywhere and are tasty, filling and cheap. Specialties from Iran might be worth sampling; some kids love the spices and the sweet and savoury combinations. But, with so many restaurants specialising in foreign food (European, Indian, American, Russian, Chinese), there is something for everyone. Most restaurants offer children's menus.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

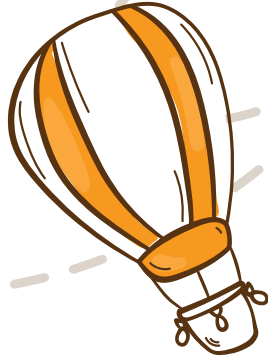
- * *The Turtle Secret*, by Julia Johnson, is a great story for pre-teens that touches on the wildlife and culture of the Emirates.
- * *I Spy From a Beach in Dubai*, by Suzanne Kalloghlian, is an inspirational rhyming picture book for little ones.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Cuddly toy camels: small, large or huge!

KEEP IN MIND

During Ramadan, it is forbidden to eat, drink or smoke in public during daylight hours. Some businesses close or operate on limited hours. However, children are not affected, and restaurants in most international hotels remain open.



Eastern United States

N

EW York City from up high, vast torrents of water shunting over Niagara Falls, sandcastles and lighthouses on a Cape Cod beach, eyeing up dinosaur skeletons... You visit the eastern United States in the same way you flick through a comic

book: for fun! Here, every town, every museum, every natural park is packed with activities for children of all ages.





CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

America XXL

- * The skyscrapers of **Chicago**, viewed while enjoying a mini boat cruise
- * **Manhattan**, New York, seen from the top of a skyscraper; **Times Square**, for its giant screens, hustle and bustle, and mind-blowing shops
- * The awesome **Niagara Falls** and **Niagara Gorge Discovery Center**, featuring interactive displays and activities for kids, including a rock-climbing wall
- * Cape Cod's oldest, tallest and brightest lighthouse, **Highland Light**... Kids must be 122cm (48in) tall to scale the 69 steps and steep ladder, but even just clamouring around inside a genuine lighthouse is exhilarating.

The best of the best attractions

- * **Orlando**, the town of theme parks... Don't miss **Walt Disney World®**, **Universal Studios** and **Islands of Adventure**.
- * **Noah's Ark Waterpark**, the biggest aquatic park in the USA, at Wisconsin Dells
- * The **Chicago Aquarium**, the biggest in the world
- * A musical on **Broadway**: *Shrek*, *The Lion King*, *The Little Mermaid*...
- * The **Kennedy Space Center** in Florida, where space-capsule

models and all kinds of NASA rockets are displayed

Adventures in the great outdoors

- * Bathing at the foot of waterfalls in Virginia's **Shenandoah National Park**, cycling through the lush countryside, fishing, and bumping into a lynx
- * Weaving their way through swamps on a hydroplane in Florida's **Everglades**
- * Learning how to crack open a lobster, and heading out on whale- and puffin-watching tours in **Maine**
- * The **Florida Keys**, a 200km string of islands with warm, shallow water and some of the country's best snorkelling – ideal for wannabe pirates

Weird and wonderful experiences

- * Feeding alligators in the Louisiana bayous (under supervision) at the **Bayou Pierre Alligator Park**
- * Visiting **Miami** in an amphibious bus to discover the city and the islands
- * Crossing the incredible road bridges that hover above the surface of the water en route to the Florida Keys
- * Paying homage to Elvis Presley in his **Graceland** residence with its rock'n'roll decor →



BEST TIME TO GO

Summer, an ideal time to cross the country, is also when Americans go on holiday. There can be crowds, particularly in the national parks, and higher prices. Spring and autumn are just as pleasant whether you're at the Great Lakes or in Louisiana. In Florida, the weather is great year-round. In New York and in all the northern states, the winters can be harsh.

COST

The USA is huge, and prices vary greatly depending on what region you are in. Accommodation in New York is much more expensive than in other cities, but the east coast is generally cheaper than the west. Public transport is reasonably priced, and food is cheap, with lots of budget restaurant chains. Shopping is generally cheap, and you can buy anything you need once you arrive. Don't leave home without health insurance. Operations and hospital stays can be very expensive; and, with no public health system, the patient foots the bill. Tipping is not optional; only withhold tips in cases of outrageously bad service.

GETTING AROUND

Outside the cities, where public transport is practical and efficient, hiring a car is a good way to see the country, but distances are huge and taking an internal flight means a lot of time saved between stops. The Visit North America Pass, where the fare is worked out according to the number of miles covered, is an interesting proposition. Camper vans are a unique experience for children, but they can work out to be more expensive than a car and hotel deal when you factor in the camping pitch fee.

MEALTIMES

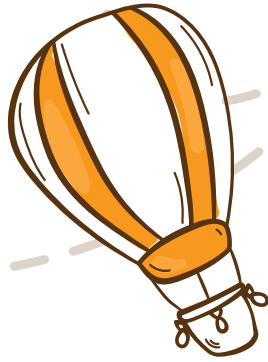
There are myriad places where you can eat well in the United States. In NYC, try slices of crusty pizza, hot dogs, super-sized sandwiches and pretzels (sold on virtually every street corner) – all ideal for a picnic in the park. American diners are a good alternative to fast-food outlets; breakfasts here are hearty affairs and are usually delicious. There are so many foreign influences that children can take a tour around the world just by looking at their plate: Italian, Asian, Mexican, Cuban and Caribbean. Don't forget the famous Texan barbecue and the unique flavours of Louisiana – among many others.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Lonely Planet's *Not For Parents: New York City* is packed with tales of deep subways, towering skyscrapers and superheroes.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- > American sports clothes and accessories
- > Beautiful American cars in miniature



Western United States

T

HE country of cowboys, hamburgers and vast, wild expanses is a dream destination and a land of endless discovery for young travellers. While cities such as Las Vegas, Los Angeles and San Francisco are emblematic and full of surprises, it is in the countryside that you will find the real spirit of the American West.





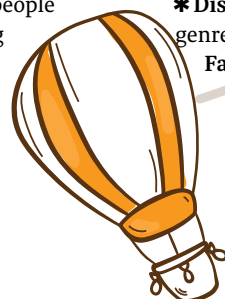
CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

The great Wild West

- * The **New Mexico Desert**, seen from onboard former freight wagons in the Santa Fe region
- * **Yellowstone National Park** (Wyoming) for the incredible geyser display
- * Snapping the **American Big Five** (black bear, grizzly, moose, puma and lynx) during a Rockies photo safari
- * The giant sequoias at **Redwood National Park** in northern California
- * The cave dwellings dotting the cliffs of **Mesa Verde National Park** (Colorado), where Ancestral Puebloans lived
- * The **Grand Canyon** (Arizona) and **Bryce Canyon** (Utah) for a vertiginous walk
- * Rafting down the **Colorado River** in summer, when the current is not too strong
- * A sea excursion in **Oregon** to watch whales

The world of cowboys and indians

- * Visiting Wyoming for the rodeo in **Jackson** and the fascinating museums in **Cody**, the hometown of Buffalo Bill... For total immersion in the Wild West of yesteryear, spend a night in the reconstructed village of **Rawhide** (Arizona)
- * Meeting Hopi and Navajo tribespeople in **Monument Valley** and sleeping in a *hogan* (traditional Native American home)
- * Attending a powwow with traditional dances and songs at **Window Rock** (Arizona) or at **Shiprock** (New Mexico) in September



- * Playing at cowboys in the **Big Bend National Park** (Texas), a Stetson perched on their heads
- * Scenery like something straight from a Western, punctuated by waterfalls and canyons formed by the **Rio Grande**.
- * Attending a rodeo and trying out a few country dance steps at **Billy Bob's Texas** in Fort Worth

Sequins and stars

- * A trip to **Hollywood** (Los Angeles), following in the footsteps of the stars and visiting **Universal Studios**
- * **Las Vegas** (Nevada) for its fantasy buildings, replicas of Paris and New York monuments and outstanding shows including **Cirque du Soleil**, the **Bellagio Fountains** displays and enchanting tours to the **Puppet Magic Center**
- * **San Francisco** with its legendary cable car, the **Golden Gate Bridge** – which can be driven, walked or cycled over or viewed from the ferry – and whale-watching in the surrounding area
- * Seeing the faces of American presidents immortalised in the rock of **Mt Rushmore** (South Dakota)

Attractions 100% for children

- * **Disneyland** (California), the first of the genre, and the less hectic **Knott's Berry Farm**, an enormous fun park with a Wild West theme.
- * **San Diego Zoo** (California), with 3,200 animals in an exceptional environment
- * **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** (California), an immense fun park on the beach →

BEST TIME TO GO

The differences in climate are massive between the desert south (dry all year, but torrid in summer) and the regions north of San Francisco where rain falls year-round. In summer, the sun warms up the northwest beaches and the mountains, but also inflames prices. If you wish to travel in winter, it will be warmer in the south, and you can ski in the Rockies.

COST

Prices vary greatly depending on what region you are in. The cost of living is slightly higher in the western states than in the east. Save by purchasing a national parks pass in advance. Shopping is cheap, and you can buy anything you need once you arrive, including cheap, reliable umbrella strollers. Don't leave home without health insurance. Operations and hospital stays can be very expensive; and, with no public health system, the patient foots the bill. Tipping is not optional; only withhold tips in cases of outrageously bad service.

GETTING AROUND

While hiring a car is perfect for crossing vast rural America, consider domestic flights to reduce transit time – even if it costs more than the bus (for which children two to 11 can benefit from a 40% discount) or the train (which might be worth considering for the stunning scenery on certain railway lines). It is possible to buy a special air pass, but only in conjunction with an international flight. Buses, metro systems and taxis will get you around the towns, and San Francisco has an over-ground cable car.

MEALTIMES

In the land of hamburgers, pizzas, chips and Coke, children will be delighted...at least the first few times! In larger cities the cuisine is more varied due to the cultural mix, but even small towns enjoy the ethnic offerings of local Chinese or Mexican restaurants. Fish and seafood appear on many menus, as do vegetables and fruit. Western USA has some interesting food, including buffalo steaks on the Great Plains (or in Wyoming), or the Southwest's cross-border fare such as New Mexico's red and green chillies. Portions are huge and it is possible to share a dish with a child.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * *The Misadventures of Maude March*, by Audrey Coulombis, is a Wild West adventure novel for pre-teens.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * Kachina dolls made by Hopi tribespeople
- * A cowboy hat

Let's

Go

Travel



JAPAN

I

In a country of mangas and games consoles, children will quickly find their feet. But, perhaps surprisingly, they will be equally thrilled by the discovery of the more traditional side of Japan: temples, imperial sites, and a landscape where mountains meet the sea.

Japan is an Asian holiday destination that is easy to explore with young travellers and, with planning, less expensive than you might imagine.

CHILDREN WILL LOVE...

Robots and mangas

- * Toyko's **Ghibli Museum**, a magical place conceived by Hayao Miyazaki, the writer and director of the animated features *Princess Mononoké* and *Spirited Away*
- * The **National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation** in Tokyo, with robotic humanoids and housing modules for a space station
- * Tokyo's **Harajuku bridge** at the weekend, where they can watch the cosplay zoku – groups of young people in outrageous costumes and make-up like something straight out of a manga
- * The **Sony Building** in Tokyo, where you can see the manufacturer's latest gadgets
- * The **Kyoto International Manga Museum** with its children's library and designers at work

Temples and samurai

- * Total immersion in the Japan of yesteryear in Kyoto... As well as the temples, pretty wooden houses and the shogun castle, do not miss the **Tōei Uzumasa Movie Village**, a sort of theme park where samurai films were made... You can walk around the sets, help with fights and dress up.

- * The great **Buddha of Nara**, one of the biggest bronze statues in the world, and **Nara-Koen Park** with its 1,200 deer, eager to accept treats
- * **Sendai City Museum** (Tōhoku region), where they can see the helmet that inspired that of Darth Vader

Volcanoes and beaches

- * The Pacific coast of **Shikoku**, for its beaches and whale-watching trips
- * The wilds of **Hokkaidō**, with its mountains and volcanic scenery
- * The beaches and semi-tropical vegetation on the **Amami-Ōshima, Yoron-tō, Aka-jima** and **Iriomote-jima** islands

Quirky Japan

- * Kyoto boutiques where professionals transform parents into geisha or samurai
- * Karaoke in their own room in a karaoke parlour
- * A *bunraku* show, where large puppets are carried around the stage by black-clad puppeteers
- * Coming face-to-face with a huge whale shark at **Osaka Aquarium**, one of the best in the world

BEST TIME TO GO

Spring (March to May) and autumn (Sept to Nov) are the most pleasant times to visit. The heat and humidity of summer can be disagreeable; there is also the risk of typhoons at the end of August. In winter, the snow is an extra worry when travelling in Hokkaido and on the coast. Nonetheless, there are plenty of deals on holidays, especially in Kyoto, and, though it's freezing in Honshu, autumn and winter are perfect for topping up the tan in Okinawa.

COST

You can't expect Southeast Asian prices, but, in terms of what you get for your money, Japan is good value indeed. Accommodation is the top reason you'll burn through your money. If you're travelling in the peak periods of spring and autumn, you'll be competing against domestic tourists as well as foreign visitors, so booking accommodation and transport well in advance is vital. There are cheap food chains everywhere where you can grab udon noodles, curry or ramen; otherwise self-catering is a good way to go.

GETTING AROUND

There are several formulas for substantial cost cutting (usually involving reserving tickets well ahead). Flying is the best way to reach the smaller islands, although a longer ferry ride can be an enjoyable mini-cruise. Whether it is the Shinkansen (bullet train) or the express train, the Japanese rail network is extensive. The Japan Rail Pass, valid for seven to 21 days of unlimited travel, is good value. Slower and almost as expensive, buses are sometimes the only way to reach off-the-beaten-track places. In the cities, the subways (or trams) are the easiest and quickest way to get around. In the countryside, and especially in Hokkaido, a car is often the easiest way to get around quickly.

MEALTIMES

Japanese food is tasty and varied; children will find just what they want in *yakitori-ya* (restaurants serving skewers of grilled chicken and vegetables) and *ramen-ya* (Japanese noodles) and, perhaps, in *sushi-ya* (for sushi). They can also try *okonomiyaki* (savoury pancakes) and *omuraisu* (rice-filled omelettes).

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG TRAVELLER

- * Pre-teens will enjoy *Shipwrecked: The True Adventures of a Japanese Boy*, by Rhoda Blumberg.

CHILDREN'S SOUVENIRS

- * *Ningyo* (traditional dolls) are little works of art in porcelain, wood and fabric; or ninja or samurai dolls

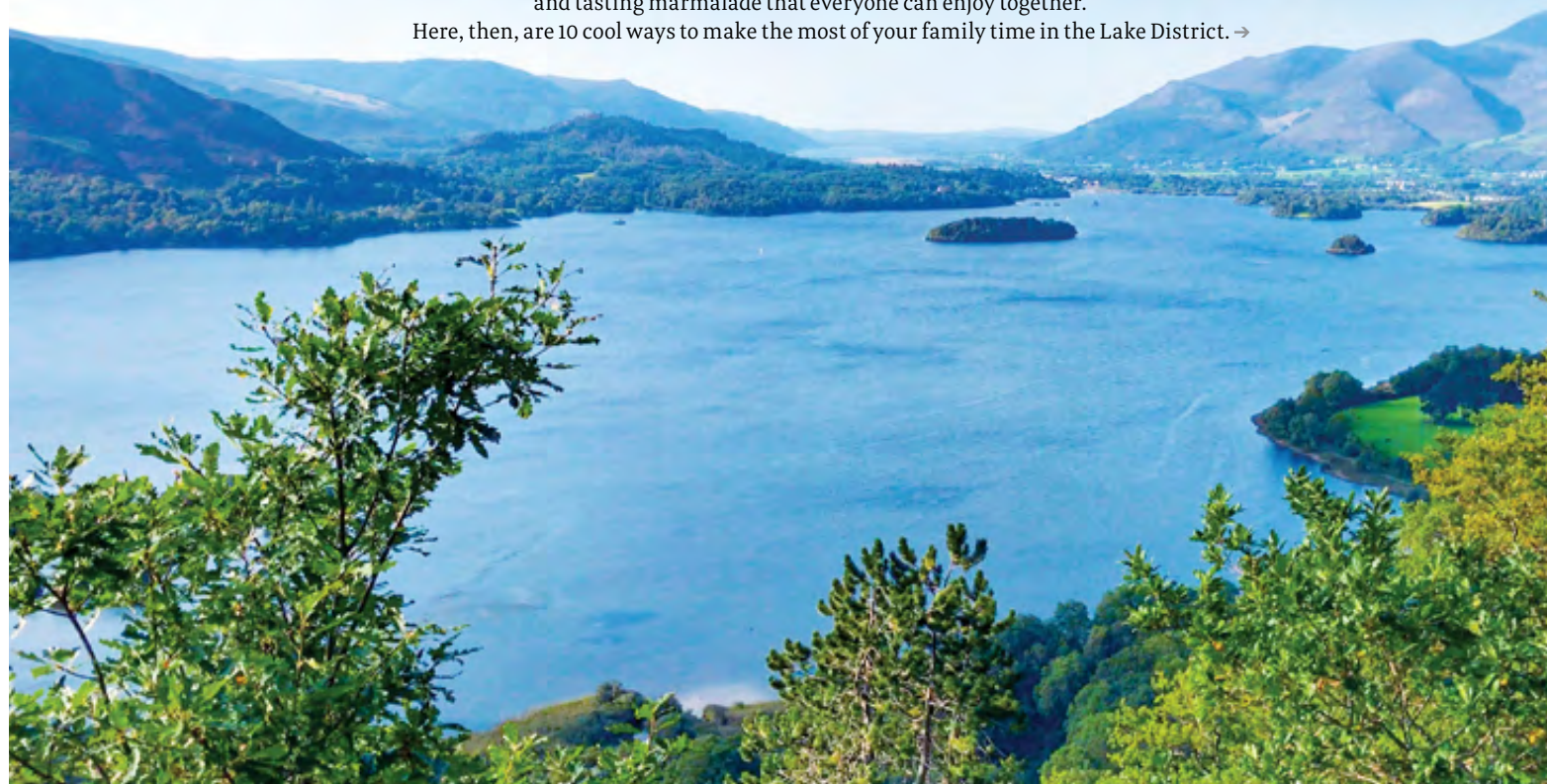
10 fun family things to do in the Lake District

This UNESCO World Heritage site in the United Kingdom is dotted with quaint villages and charming towns, making it perfect for an unforgettable family road trip

WORDS **RAHUL JAGTIANI** @rahul.jagtiani Plush Living

FAMILY holidays need to cater to a wide variety of needs, with each generation having its own demands, interests and limitations. It's essential then to choose a destination that caters to all. And that's exactly what the Lake District in the United Kingdom has to offer. Each morning in the Lake District, I couldn't wait to get out of bed and hit the road – around every bend were astounding views. It was with this destination that my travel series, *Plush Places*, began evolving into one that showcases destinations in a road-trip format. My rendezvous with the locals was equally gratifying and gave me a real sense of the way of life in the Lakes. I also loved that many establishments here are embracing practices that support a sustainable way of living – sourcing local produce, using biomass boilers to heat the buildings, and supporting charities that conserve wildlife and repair mountain paths in the region. And, while some activities such as whisky distillery tours or kayaking will only draw a select few from the family, there are plenty of other options such as exploring castles and tasting marmalade that everyone can enjoy together.

Here, then, are 10 cool ways to make the most of your family time in the Lake District. →





1 EXPLORE A CASTLE RUIN AND FIND AN ADVENTURE

Lowther Castle & The Lost Castle

Who doesn't love a castle, especially one that is a symbol of mind-boggling extravagance? The historical ruins of Lowther Castle in **Penrith**, built around the turn of the 20th century, are spectacularly set amid thousands of acres of farmland. Hugh Lowther, the fifth earl of Lonsdale at the time, and nicknamed the 'Yellow Earl' because of his penchant for the colour, lived a decadent lifestyle, often entertaining European royalty and breeding expensive race horses. His household travelled in a special first-class train and his fondness for cars made him the first president of the automobile association. Hugh Lowther's prodigal habits depleted his estate and forced his successors to auction off all the items in the castle, stripping it down to a mere shell to avoid paying taxes on it. Not even the roof was spared; just the facade and the outer walls remained.

The castle was used by the British army during World War II and remained derelict for several years. Then, with a £9-million restoration fund earmarked for the property and the Lowther family back at the helm of affairs to manage it, the castle officially reopened in 2017 and is now one of the top attractions in the Lake District.

While the elders and history buffs delve into the past, there's more in store for kids, young adults and adults who want some physical activity; the woods around the main property are home to The Lost Castle, a brainchild of Jim Lowther and one of the largest adventure playgrounds in England.

Built from 18,000 metres of sustainable timber from the region, the architecture of the canopy is a nod to the original Lowther Castle. With zip wires, walkways and slides galore, there's never a dull moment here and it remains a much sought-after spot for a family day out.

00-44-1931-712192; www.lowthercastle.org; Penrith, Cumbria; 10am – 5pm; from ₹1,079 adult, ₹687 child

2 INDULGE YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Dalemain Mansion and Historic Gardens

"It's very good, isn't it?" asked Jane Hasell McCosh, her smile broadening as she intently watched me savour a spoonful of marmalade straight from the jar. Jane owns and runs Dalemain Mansion and Historic Gardens, a stunning Georgian country house, and a beloved home to 11 generations of the Hasells since 1679. As one of the leading authorities on marmalade making, she founded the World's Original Marmalade Awards & Festival to preserve and grow this very British custom. Over the last decade-and-a-half, these quirky awards have taken a life of their own and evolved into a true celebration of citrus, with over 3,000 entries from 40 countries across the globe.

The Artisan Awards are a huge marketing boost to the winners among small-scale, family-owned producers of marmalade as the award roundel can be displayed on their jars, declaring it to be one of the best quality preserves in the world! The Homemade Awards can be entered into by anyone, with categories varying from Children's Marmalade to Merry (with alcohol). Marmalade enthusiasts around the world look forward to this festival, usually held in the month of March every year.

And, while those with a sweet tooth indulge away, the rest of the family will have plenty else to do across the estate. There's a river for kayaking or canoeing, a deer conservation park, and even locations where films and TV series have been shot.

00-44-17684-86450; www.dalemain.com; Dalemain House and Gardens, Penrith, Cumbria; 11am – 4pm Sun – Fri; entry from ₹962 adult, child under 16 free



3 SOAK IT IN ON A STEAMER

Ullswater Steamer Cruise

Take a two-hour ride from **Pooley Bridge** to **Glenridding** on the Ullswater Steamer around an 8-mile stretch with breath-taking views of the Lake District's iconic fells.

"There are worse ways to spend an afternoon," quipped a co-passenger in a strong Yorkshire accent as the steamer glided over the tranquil waters. Checking the company website for special upcoming 'theme cruises' is always a good idea. Photography cruises with experts on-board provide great tips to enthusiasts and hobbyists alike, while kids will be enraptured by the magic show on board the 'Ghostly Galleon' cruise.

Combine this cruise with a nature walk at **Aira Force Waterfalls** to truly appreciate nature in this part of the world. With a 65-foot drop, the majestic falls offer perfectly Instagrammable moments. While one can choose a longer walk around here, there is also the option of driving to the place, handy for the elders in the family. 00-44-17684-82229; www.ullswatersteamers.co.uk; The Pier House, Glenridding, Cumbria; check website for timings; entry: adult from ₹1,450, child from ₹440



4 GET YOUR SPIRITS HIGH FROM CASK TO GLASS

The Lakes Distillery

This one's more for the adults in the group, but read on to know why the young and young at heart will enjoy it too: Much like neighbouring Scotland that's known for its top class-whisky, England is a world-renowned producer of gin. The Lakes Distillery, although smaller than some of its Scottish counterparts, is now England's largest whisky distillery, while maintaining its regional status as a producer of high-quality gin and vodka as well.

Nestled in a refurbished Victorian farmhouse along the shores of **Lake Bassenthwaite**, The Lakes Distillery offers visitors a vivid exploration of the senses as they follow the journey of their favourite spirits. Ruth, the expert guide, led a small group of us to the still room where we discovered the impact that oak and cask seasoning have on the flavour of the spirits. This was followed by an exquisite tasting of Lakes whisky, vodka and gin.

"The longer the legs of the whisky, the better the quality," explained Ruth, referring to the line forming inside a glass of whiskey as we tilted it to the side. "Sip on it and feel the spice and nuttiness," she instructed. I misinterpreted nuttiness for naughtiness and that was my cue to stop drinking.

A new add-on at the distillery is a **Whiskey and Chocolate Pairing Tour**, where master chocolatier Ian Burnett's award-winning truffles are meticulously handpicked to contrast the flavours of the distillery's single malt whisky.

While adults will appreciate this sensory experience, the younger ones would be easily distracted by the herd of friendly alpacas on the farm just behind the distillery. Alpacas are a real treat to be around, and I soon noticed a stream of men and women as well, gleefully trotting from the tasting session into the farm for a chance to hand-feed these furry animals. Why let a good buzz go to waste? → 00-44-17687-88850; www.lakesdistillery.com; Setmurthy, near Bassenthwaite Lake; 10am – 6pm Sun – Wed, 10am – 7pm Thur – Sat; distillery tours: ₹1,225 adult, ₹490 child above 12



5 HAVE A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH WOLVES – AND LIKE IT!

The Predator Experience

Enjoy an hour of unusual learning alongside your children. The movies might have portrayed wolves to be vicious predators, but these animals are calm and non-aggressive, unless threatened of course. Dee and Daniel Ashman, keen environmentalists and directors at The Predator Experience, educate and thrill you in a one-hour session with Maska and Kajika, as visitors get acquainted with the peculiar traits of these hybrid wolves. Bearing an uncanny physical similarity to huskies, the wolves need to get familiar with our scent before they are let out of the cage. Their appearance is also where the similarity ends. "Don't stare them in the eye as it could be misinterpreted as a challenge to them on their turf," warned Dee. A couple of nerve-racking yet electrifying moments later, I was able to handle the leash by myself and saunter along the massive five-acre farm.

The expert duo, however, left the most phenomenal moments for the very end. "Let's all howl in unison," directed Daniel. Almost 30 seconds of five humans emulating a wolf howl prompted Maska and Kajika to do the same, and they joined the chorus. This experience alone left me spiritually and emotionally overwhelmed.

00-44-07733-366748; www.predatorexperience.co.uk; Ayside, Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria; Walking With Wolves from ₹9,307 /person

6 DRAMA IN, DRAMA OUT

Theatre By The Lake

Pay a visit to the Theatre by the Lake, which sits on the shores of **Derwentwater**, in the idyllic town of **Keswick**. You'll be mesmerised by unmatched views of the lake and the surrounding rugged peaks outside the theatre, and equally delighted by the world-class live productions inside it. The entire family can watch a show together, making it an activity you can bond over; of course, you'll have to be mindful of the production's kid-friendliness.

One company of actors performs several plays during a week and it isn't uncommon to watch the same actor essay multiple roles in different plays.

Theatre by the Lake presents up to nine productions of classic, modern and new plays every year across its two stages: a 400-seat Main House and a more intimate 100-seat Studio.

Catch a comedy like PG Wodehouse's *Jeeves & Wooster*, among a primarily English audience in a packed Main House to get a real feel of the place and an insight into local cultural leanings.

00-44-17687-74411; www.theatrebythelake.com; Lakeside, Keswick; 9.30am – 7.30pm Mon – Sat, 11am – 7.30pm Sun





8 DIG INTO THE WORLD'S BEST GINGERBREAD

Grasmere Gingerbread Shop

St Oswald's Church in the blissful village of **Grasmere** is where members of the Wordsworth family are buried, making it one of the most-visited literary shrines in the world. Perhaps what keeps their spirits alive, and ravenous in their graves, is the aroma of freshly-baked gingerbread wafting through the chimneys of Grasmere Gingerbread right next door.

This chewy, crispy mix between a cake and a biscuit was invented by Sarah Nelson in 1854 and soon gained a reputation all over England. The recipe is still very much a secret and the traditionally-run family business has expanded, now selling a variety of ginger-themed foods including toffee, fudge, cake and their own award-winning brand of rum butter.

While the staff is friendly and will assist in every way possible, it might be too crowded for you to get enough time learning about the shop. If your family is interested, you could pre-book a talk for groups, which is conducted in front of the shop, by a staff member in full Victorian costume no less. →

00-44-15394-35428; www.grasmeregingerbread.co.uk; Church Cottage, Grasmere, Ambleside; 9.15am – 5pm; pack of six pieces of gingerbread from ₹400

7 POETRY IN THE HILLS

Rydal Mount

Cast your mind back to the days of learning poetry in school and probably one of the first names that springs to mind is William Wordsworth. When you see the gorgeous countryside of the Lake District it's easy to understand why it is synonymous with poetry. Plan a visit to the stately mansion of Rydal Mount, which was home to Wordsworth for 37 years until his death in 1850. It was here that he penned the famous *Daffodils*; small wonder, given the incredible views of **Lake Windermere** and the surrounding fells from the house.

Descendants of the great poet still own the 16th-century house and it's an absolute haven for bibliophiles, filled as it is with family heirlooms and original furniture pieces, including his bookcase in the living room. Wordsworth's love for the verdant is well documented and is reflected in his elegant prose. An avid gardener, he landscaped the whole area around his landmark country home himself.

Different members of the family can choose to do their own thing here: take a leisurely stroll around the manicured gardens, gaze out the window in Wordsworth's room and admire the view, or settle in for traditional English tea at the tearoom.

00-44-15394-33002; www.rydalmount.co.uk; Ambleside; 9.30am – 5pm; entry: adult from ₹490, ₹392 child below 15



9 TAKE A CHILL THRILL

Chill Swim

While your entire trip to the Lake District will, of course, revolve around the lakes, aside from water-related activities such as kayaking or paddling, I'd insist that you include a swim on your itinerary. The youngsters might seem like the obvious candidates for this activity, but don't discount the elders joining in; they just might surprise you.

An open-water swim, or a wild swim in the lakes as it is often referred to, is fast gaining popularity among adventure enthusiasts and families alike, and it's best undertaken under professional guidance. Fortunately for me, I had Colin Hill from Chill Swim for company. Among his accomplishments are crossings of the English Channel and hence a dip for an hour or two is hardly a task for him.

I shrugged off the overcast conditions and arrived early at 6.30am at **Lake Windermere**, the longest one in Lake District and a popular venue for swimming events. Colin's energy was infectious and, once I'd slipped into a wetsuit, he prepped me in the shallows with a few underwater breathing techniques before we swam towards the deeper end. During this exhilarating experience, I made another compelling observation: only an Englishman can be so chirpy early on a grey and drizzly morning.

00-44-1257 251217; www.chillswim.com; 308 Mossy Lea Road, Wroughtington, Lancashire; from ₹58,000

10 GET WATERSPORTY WITH IT

Low Wood Bay Hotel & Spa

Low Wood Bay Hotel & Spa, sitting enviably on the banks of **Lake Windermere**, has its own water sports centre across the street. Don't dismiss this as something for the adrenaline junkies in the family only though. Sure, Low Wood Bay Watersports has flyboarding and wakeboarding, but there are more relaxed options such as canoeing and kayaking, perfect for the older members of the family who want to take to the water.

My splendid attempt at stand-up paddle boarding had me toppling over more often than I care to admit, and my goal to master wakeboarding remains unfulfilled to this day. But hopefully, you'll have better luck than I did. 🏄

00-44-15394-39441; www.englishlakes.co.uk/low-wood-bay/watersports; Ambleside Road, Windermere; 9am – 7pm
Wed – Sun, wakeboarding from ₹6,000/ boat



MAKE IT HAPPEN: LAKE DISTRICT, THE UK

Essentials

We accept that travel to the Lake District, the UK, is not advisable at present. We hope that the information will prove useful once restrictions are lifted.

→ BEST TIME TO VISIT

The peak season in the Lake District is between April to October, with July and August being busiest. Temperatures start to drop from late September onwards into winter.

→ GETTING THERE

British Airways, Spice Jet and Virgin Atlantic, among others, fly from major Indian cities to London's **Heathrow Airport** (return fares from ₹47,500).

→ GETTING AROUND

The best way to explore the Lake District is by car. Rental companies like Hertz have pick-up locations in Lancaster, Barrow-in-Furness and Carlisle, though a private tour company with a knowledgeable driver or guide is strongly recommended for a richer Lake District experience.

→ VISA

Indian citizens visiting the UK will require a short-term (six-month) visa, which takes up to three working days to be processed (www.vfsglobal.com; from ₹9,000).

→ EMBASSY ALERT

High Commission of India, the UK www.hcilondon.gov.in

On this page:
*The many hues
of green in the
Lake District*



WHERE TO STAY

MACDONALD LEEMING HOUSE:

This 200-year-old country house is set amid 22 acres of garden with direct access to the shores of **Ullswater**. Of its 40 rooms, some have a private balcony. An activity centre will keep not just the kids but everyone in the family busy (www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/our-hotels/the-lake-district/ullswater/macdonald-leeming-house; from ₹35,000/ room for two adults and a child).

YHA GRASMERE BUTHARLYP HOWE:

This Victorian mansion in **Grasmere village** has amazing views and many walking trails nearby. Kids will enjoy the bunk beds, games room and spacious grounds (00-44-345-371-9319; www.yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-grasmere-butharlyp-howe; Easedale Road, Grasmere, Cumbria; from ₹3,800/ two adults & child).

QUAYSIDERS CLUB:

On **Lake Windermere's** shores, this hotel in **Waterhead** has a mix of self-catering apartments and hotel rooms, a courtyard and a spa (00-44-1539-433969; www.quaysiders.co.uk; Borrans Road, Ambleside, Cumbria; from ₹12,000/ two adults & child).

WHERE TO EAT

LAKE VIEW RESTAURANT:

This winner of two AA Rosette awards at Inn On The Lake offers an imaginative menu with a focus on locally-sourced produce from the Cumbrian region. The food is innovative and the views of **Lake Ullswater**, enchanting. Kids will love the sweet treats on the menu (00-44-17684-82444; www.lakedistricthotels.net; Inn on the Lake, Ullswater, Glenridding; 7.30am – 10.30am, 12pm – 2.30pm, 6pm – 9pm).

THE MORTAL MAN:

An old-fashioned English pub with a soul, this is the ideal joint for a pint or two and friendly conversation. Burgers, kebabs (vegetarian included), pies and good ol' fish and chips are on the menu. On a warm and sunny day, grab a seat outside in the stunning beer garden, known to be one of the best in the country. There's also a kids' menu (00-44-15394-33193; www.themortalman.co.uk; Troutbeck, Cumbria; 12pm – 9pm; kids' mains from ₹600).

DRUNKEN DUCK INN & RESTAURANT:

An eye-opener for those who think British food is boring, this cosy, much-loved pub's menu has options such as treacle-glazed ox cheek with onion jam and jalapeños, and cod loin with tartare sauce. Veg options are available too. Wash it down with one of the in-house brewed ales (00-44-15394 36347; <http://drunkenduckinn.co.uk>; Barnegates, Ambleside, Cumbria; 12pm – 1.45pm weekdays, 12pm – 2.30pm weekends, 6pm – 8.30pm; mains from ₹2,300).



10

EASY WAYS TO PLAN A PERFECT **FAMILY VACATION**

Family vacations can sometimes burn a hole in your pocket; here's how to keep that burn to just a scorch – with some friendly advice from travel experts

WORDS **AMIT GAIKWAD** @guiltyasframed

NOW that the world is finally freeing itself from the shackles of this devastating pandemic, or learning to live with it, our first trip, deservedly, might well be with our families.

“Wouldn’t that be expensive?” you ask. Not necessarily, if you plan way in advance and have a budget in place for your vacation. Don’t be put off by the word “budget”. With a little help from our experts, you can plan a trip that not only helps you cut costs but also have a holiday full of experiences and great memories in the making.

First things first. It might seem like an unnecessary indulgence at the moment, but everyone deserves a vacation. Plan a trip with your family once every year. It doesn’t have to be fancy or luxurious, but it will still be a trip that everyone looks forward to

Here’s how to go about it...

START SAVING FOR YOUR VACATION

People often zero in on a destination, and then work on a budget, but try the opposite way. Depending on your monthly or annual income, set aside money to make your holidays possible. Stick to a monthly saving schedule to collect a certain amount that will help you reach your budget at the end of the year. This will go a long way in making your vacation plan a reality.

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3 **DECIDE** ON A DESTINATION

The current COVID-19 situation means that it is a lot safer travelling within our country, which benefits us in several ways. Domestic travel is usually a lot more doable, affordable and safer for the family, especially with kids and senior citizens – as long as you keep sanitation and general safety protocols in the reckoning for some time to come.

“Indians are known to be smart travellers, especially when it comes to choosing destinations and optimising costs,” says Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head – Holidays, MICE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. “The smart Indian traveller is constantly on the lookout for bargains on tickets, combo deals, etc to maximise value in terms of time and money. Our trends at Thomas Cook India indicate that a first-time, value-conscious Indian traveller tends to look at short-haul destinations with easy access of around three to five hours’ flying time and simplified visa processes such as e-visa, visa-on-arrival or easy visa regimes.”

“A number of Indians look to travel to places offering great experiences on a limited budget,” agrees Daniel D’Souza, President & Country Head, Leisure, SOTC Travel. “Having said that, the criteria for deciding a holiday varies from individual to individual. In some cases, travellers first decide the destination based on their individual research, referrals and other influences, after which they work their budget around it, to keep their travel plans economical. Value-driven packages with attractive pricing offered across destinations are chief characteristics.”

“While planning, it is always advisable that you pick a destination that is near your hometown,” advises Sana Mehta, Marketing and Operations Manager, Comfort Voyages. “This will help you save on flight tickets. Look at destinations where the local currency is lower than or equivalent to your country’s currency as this will help you manage finances much better. One should also look at destinations that have rental apartments, hostels and motels, which offer great rates on weekdays rather than the weekends.” →

2 **GET AN IDEA OF THE COSTS INVOLVED**

It’s always a great idea to start planning for your vacation way in advance. Involve family members in helping you chalk out a detailed holiday plan. Spend time researching, check out costs online or reach out to travel agents, browse through travel blogs and articles to give you a fair estimate of the costs involved. This will also help you set a budget for the trip, and help you work out how much you need to save each month.



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Travellers currently are choosing destinations that are closer to home for quick getaways. We have witnessed a great interest for staycation and workations for adventure or wellness short breaks at affordable price points.

”

– DANIEL D’SOUZA,
President & Country Head, Leisure, SOTC Travel

4 REAP SUBSCRIPTION BENEFITS

Make browsing through travel and tourism websites a regular habit; these often have discounts and travel benefits designed for families. Subscribing to these always comes in handy as they often send notifications and newsletters in to your inbox that might help your budget.



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When planning a vacation with the family, it is important to take into consideration various factors such as one's own work schedule and the children's school break. Apart from the annual vacation, we have been witnessing a rising demand among Indian travellers for multiple, smaller holidays, or mini-cations that allow them to take breaks beyond the traditional summer vacation period as well.

- RAJEEV KALE,

President & Country Head – Holidays, MICE, Visa,
Thomas Cook (India) Ltd.

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5 TAKE ON THE OFF-SEASON

Most people around the world have started to understand and reap the benefits of travelling in the off-season. A substantial drop in prices across all sectors make travelling a more affordable experience. “For unique and brag-worthy experiences, India's value-seeking travellers are not shying away from maximising on this underleveraged season,” agrees Rajeev Kale. “Our data further shows that the demand for such travel is majorly led by millennials, young professionals, DINKs (Double Income, No Kids) and families. Interestingly, in the past few years, consumers from tier 2 and 3 cities have also started showing interest in autumn travel.”



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Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bhutan, Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore are some of the most popular budget-friendly destinations.

- SANA MEHTA,

Marketing and Operations
Manager, Comfort Voyages

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MAKE THE MOST OF DISCOUNTED PACKAGES BUT TREAD WITH CAUTION

Don't get carried away with the discounts and services available through these packages. Check that these discounts are actually as useful as they seem. For example, to promote bookings during the off-season, rooms are often sold with free wi-fi, but there's a possibility of losing out on complimentary breakfast. Make sure your discount package covers at least 50 to 60% of your costs.

“The discerning traveller looks for value-centric or pocket-friendly holidays; a discounted package should have attractive inclusions like flight tickets, travel insurance, safely-curated travel itineraries with safety and hygiene measures across the tour,” points out Daniel D'Souza. “Hotel upgrades and complimentary offers add to a value-centric travel package.”

“Apart from price, check on inclusions and exclusions such as flights, accommodation, sightseeing, meals, visa and transfers,” advises Rajeev Kale. “Given the current situation, do also check for flexibility of travel dates and cancellation policies. It is also important to check about health and safety initiatives.”

7 THINK BEYOND HOTEL ROOMS

Accommodation can be a major cost centre in your travel budget.. "Homestay accommodation is now easier and more cost-effective," advises Sana Mehta. "Also one need not stay in the heart of the city or right next to most of the tourist areas; you can choose to stay a bit further away and still be within good reach of the city centre. Also, if one books through a travel agent or in a group booking, those benefits really help in saving on money." Rajeev Kale adds, "Additionally, apartment hotels or studio apartments offer modern amenities, a well-equipped kitchenette (for people who prefer home-cooked meals) and bathrooms (some also include a washing machine and dryer) and hence have been increasingly trending on Indian travellers' radar because of the convenience, especially for a family of four. Hotels also might not be able to offer rooms adjacent to one another, which means that the per night stay cost goes up. Apartment hotels, in such scenarios, are budget friendly and make one feel at home."

If you still prefer hotels, there are ways to save: "Most hotels offer early-bird schemes to inspire demand much in advance of the traditional booking season when supply is at its peak to ensure they fill up their inventory," Rajeev Kale says. "Offers like upgrades on room categories, as also free breakfast or transfers are available to early bookers. Waiting till the last minute to book is highly risky as one might well be left with a possible stay at a location far from the city centre, which might not be as per your preference or convenience and at rates that are unaffordable due to peak season."



When travelling to Europe, the peak season starts from July and ends in September, one can plan for the end of June or the beginning of October as the rates overall drop for that particular destination. Additionally, certain popular metro cities have rates higher on the weekends; book your trip on the weekdays.



– SANA MEHTA,
Marketing and Operations
Manager, Comfort Voyages



8 SELECT THE RIGHT MODE OF TRANSPORT

Flights, rental cars and fuel often eat up most of your budget. Planning for an economical mode of transport will help you save. "Travellers today are smartly economising on local on-ground spends, shopping or modes of transport, etc. to ensure that their budget is maintained," says Rajeev Kale. "Opting for local transport instead of private vehicles and cabs will help one save further. One can make best use of travel passes such as the Eurail Pass that lets you travel across Europe at your own pace, Hop-On-Hop-Of" city tours in London, or the Paris Visite travel pass that allows one to save extensively on travel."

9 PLAN AND CHOOSE YOUR ACTIVITIES

"Check the official government tourism website, which often offers multi-day and multi-spot sightseeing tours," says Sana. "A lot of local sightseeing tour operators offer discounts on last-minute tours. And, of course, one need not always go for the regular sightseeing spots; even riding a local tram, or visiting an unusual museum can turn into a fun activity. Make a list of all the activities you wish to do in advance as this helps to save time and makes it easier for you to do more things in a short span of time. Compare different vendors for any activity, read the reviews, and pick one offering a good price."

Don't forget to check out free activities that the destination offers; these include free entry to some attractions like museums on certain days of the week. Lonely Planet's *The Best Things in Life are Free* is packed with money-saving tips, tricks and recommendations for destinations around the world.

10 GET VALUE FOR YOUR MEALS

Food can get expensive on holiday, but a little research online will reveal affordable dining options that you can earmark at your destination. You can also save by choosing accommodation with a small kitchen for some light cooking; ensure that there is a supermarket nearby. And this strategy works especially well when you're travelling with children and/ or senior citizens. Sana advises, "Always try finding a hotel that offers complimentary breakfast or rooms with kitchenettes. A lot of hotels also offer happy-hour buffet lunches. Avoid going to fancy restaurants and try the local cuisine or street food. Also, one should have a back-up plan in case you do not find a suitable place to eat; go to a local grocery and pick up items like bread, butter, snacks for a quick and easy meal."

Always keep the COVID-19 filter in place. "In this new era of travel, look for restaurants and eateries that offer the highest levels of hygiene and sanitation," Rajeev Kale insists. "Look for health and safety certificates from local authorities and those that cater to one group at a time and ensure social distancing."

10

FOLLOW US ON



Stay Together

When choosing a property for a family holiday, there are several things to bear in mind. Are there on-property dining facilities? What kind of rooms will you need to fit everyone in? Are there enough options to keep the young ones occupied? While these are but a few of the many considerations, given that Indians love to travel together, most destinations offer up wonderful facilities so that everyone is well attended to. Join us on a journey across the country through 31 properties that ensure the whole family has a memorable holiday

Compiled by AISHWARYA MENON @aishwaryamenon & SAMARPAN BHOWMIK @sum.err.pun

SAMODE SAFARI LODGE BANDHAVGARH, MADHYA PRADESH

A stay at Samode Safari Lodge makes you feel at home, with elegance and luxury, bang in the middle of one of India's biggest forests. You and your loved ones are sure to have a gala time here! This property is especially good for families with kids as they have a fun kid's club and also offer babysitting services.

Good to know: Keep your camera handy as Samode Safari Lodge is among the best places to spot tigers. 00-91-83195-76811; www.samode.com; Village Mardhari, Dhamokhar; contact property for prices





MUSA JUNGLE RETREAT MANAS NATIONAL PARK, ASSAM

Children will love the 20 cottages with names such as Striped Panther and Grazing Rhino close to the beautiful Manas National Park.

Good to know: Striped Panther is great for a mid-sized to large family.

00-91-78964-71992; www.musa.co.in; Gyatigaon, PO Barengabari, Bansbari; from ₹3,700



VILLAGE NIRVANA KANKAVLI, MAHARASHTRA

A large, spacious bungalow all to yourself and your family – sounds wonderful, right? Kids especially will love the kiddie pool in the backyard and the many trees laden with ripe fruit to guess about and pick. The meals here are all prepared on the premises and the super-friendly hosts just add to the charm of the stay.

Good to know: Just 20 minutes away is Mithmumbari Beach; ask the staff for directions. 00-91-99696-31947; www.villagenirvana.in/; Datta Mandir Road, Deulwadi, Naringre; from ₹5,000

KAYAL ISLAND RETREAT ALAPPUZHA, KERALA

On Kakkathuruthu, the Island of Crows, Kayal is an intimate space where families come together and enjoy time spent together. The serene property mirrors the undiscovered, unspoiled natural beauty of Kerala. And the best part? The only way you can get here is by traditional rowboat.

Good to know: If you are more of an experiential traveller, the staff will be happy to arrange for you to join a toddy tapper up a tree or the womenfolk in their local festivals.

00-91-77360-00989; www.kayalstrandretreat.com; Door No. VIII/265-A, Kakkathuruthu, Eramalloor; from ₹9,000



JIM'S JUNGLE RESORT JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK, UTTARAKHAND

Nestled on the border of Jim Corbett National Park, Jim's Jungle Retreat acts as a perfect gateway to the forest, and the wildlife in it. This eco-conscious property should ideally be visited between the months of June and November to make the most of your trip. While tigers might be what you've come here for, there are plenty others that might catch your fancy.

Good to know: Corbett National Park is the only tiger reserve that allows an overnight stay in the forest!

00-91-97117-89828; www.jimsjungleretreat.com, info@jimsjungleretreat.com; Village & PO Dhela, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar; from ₹8,000



DIPHLU RIVER LODGE KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK, ASSAM

For an ideal getaway with your family, especially children, in tow, Diphlu River Lodge, close to Kaziranga National Park, is a perfect choice.

Good to know: The unique weaves and artefacts that adorn the lodge are handmade by local artisans. This could serve as a great history lesson for kids.

00-91-361-266-7871; www.diphfluriverlodge.com; Kaziranga National Park, near Bagori Police Outpost, Kuthari; from ₹15,400/ night/ person with stay, safaris, meals, entry fees and transport



LE FARM KAMSHET, MAHARASHTRA

If you are an especially large family (this property can accommodate about 24 people) looking to bunk for the weekend on the outskirts of Mumbai, Le Farm works. This standalone property on 15 acres of private land offers seclusion, backwaters and lots of kid-friendly amenities.

Good to know: This is a pet-friendly property, so bring your pets along for a good time. 00-91-99202-43309; www.lefarm.in; Kamshet, near Tata Power Somwadi Dam, Vadivali Lake, Maval Taluka, Lonavala; weekdays from ₹35,000, weekends from ₹45,000 →

THE HOUSE OF MG AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT

This stately and luxurious property built in the early 20th century is great for immersion into local craftsmanship and cuisine for adults, while the special play section will keep the kids entertained.

Good to know: The Modern Heritage Grand Room is best suited for a mid-sized family. It comes with a small library and a traditional sofa-swing.

00-91-79-2550-6946; www.houseofmg.com; Bhadra Road, opposite Sidi, Old City, Saiyad Jali, Lal Darwaja; from ₹4,700



SUKOON KASHMIR SRINAGAR, JAMMU & KASHMIR

Apt for families of four and above who want to stay together, this houseboat offers good food and a great time for those looking to spend a holiday weekend on the shimmering Dal Lake in the shadow of the snow-clad Pir Panjal mountain range.

Good to know: Bring a couple of board and card games along to keep younger kids entertained. 00-91-194-250-0450; www.abchapriretreats.in; Kabootar Khana, near Rani Mahal, Dal Lake; from ₹10,000



PANJIM INN PANAJI, GOA

Spacious, colourful and a vibrant cultural centre of arts, Panjim Inn offers comfortable stays for small- and mid-sized families. If your plan in Goa is to simply unwind and relax, this property will not disappoint.

Good to know: Kids might enjoy the heritage walks in and around Panjim, especially Fountainhas. 00-91-832-222-6523; www.panjiminn.com; E-212, 31st January Road, Fountainhas; from ₹3,500



BRIAR TEA BUNGALOWS COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU

Take a step back in time as you sink into the lap of luxury at Briar Tea Bungalows. Apt for large families and reunions, this property is sited against the backdrops of a spectacular countryside, valleys, lakes and wildlife.

Good to know: Young birding enthusiasts can make the most of the trip here as the place is replete with avian life. 00-91-94422-02001; www.teabungalows.com; meghamalai, reservations@teil.in; Woodbriar Group 10, Damu Nagar; from ₹8,400



VILLA SHANTI PUDUCHERRY

Located close to the promenade, Villa Shanti is a heritage hotel that also offers activities such as cycling and cheese making. Kids will especially love the game and video rooms here!

Good to know: The 15-room villa was once home to a French mayor and provides a great glimpse into the politician's past. 00-91-413-420-0028; www.lavillashanti.com/en; 14 rue, Suffren Street, White Town; from ₹5,000



NARENDRA BHAVAN BIKANER, RAJASTHAN

With eclectic rooms that come with an infinity pool, Narendra Bhavan is apt for families looking to indulge in a regal break! The space transforms at twilight with starlit skies, live grills and party music.

Good to know: The Spa at Narendra Bhawan Bikaner is a much sought-after experience. 00-91-78271-51151; www.narendrabhawan.com; Samvit Shikshan Sansthan, Gandhi Colony, Samta Nagar; from ₹5,300



TRANQUIL – A PLANTATION HIDEAWAY WAYANAD, KERALA

Wake up to the sweet sound of birdsong and rest in the lap of nature's calming melodies in this treehouse stay option. Perfect for families with slightly older kids, the serene landscape, breathtaking views, and stunning walking trails will all mesmerise you from the get go!

Good to know: Tranquil is located amid 400 acres of coffee plantation. Make the most of this; shop, drink, and more. 00-91-994-758-8507; www.tranquilresort.com, tranquilresort@gmail.com; Kuppamudi Estate, Kolaaapara; from ₹6,000 →



GARDEN PALACE HERITAGE HOMESTAY BALASINOR, GUJARAT

Families who come with kids of all age groups are sure to love the Dinosaur Fossil Park here with Princess Aaliya (Doctor Dinosaur) as your guide. The property itself is a palace with modern amenities.

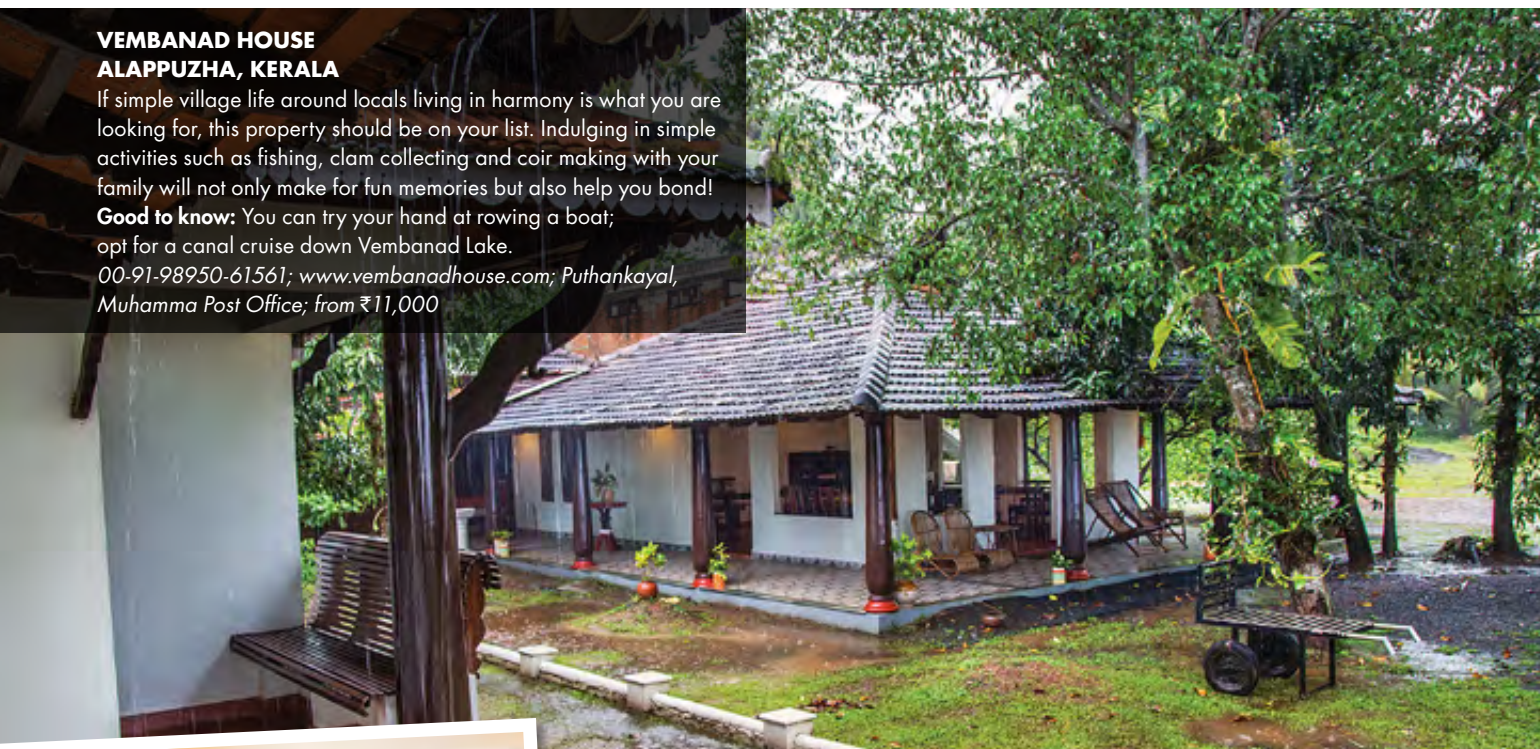
Good to know: Adults can take part in cooking workshops here, conducted by the begum of the palace herself. 00-91-98253-15382; Balasinor; from ₹3,600; Dinosaur Fossil Park entry: ₹500



VEMBANAD HOUSE ALAPPUZHA, KERALA

If simple village life around locals living in harmony is what you are looking for, this property should be on your list. Indulging in simple activities such as fishing, clam collecting and coir making with your family will not only make for fun memories but also help you bond!

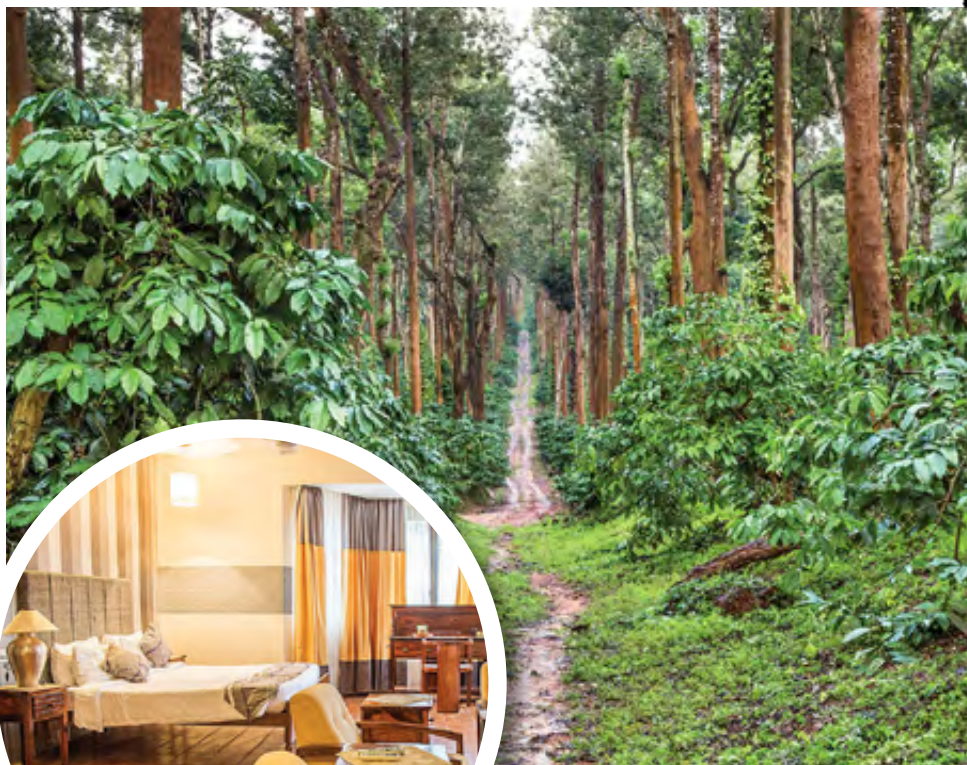
Good to know: You can try your hand at rowing a boat; opt for a canal cruise down Vembanad Lake.
00-91-98950-61561; www.vembanadhouse.com; Puthankayal, Muhamma Post Office; from ₹11,000



THANEERHULLA BUNGALOW COORG, KARNATAKA

Named for the Kodagu term for "cold water", at Thaneerhulla Bungalow, you will stay amid serenity, solitude and lots and lots of coffee, as well as Coorg's ultimate draw, plenty of *pandi* curry. If you are with younglings, opt for short hikes around the property to spot a variety of avian life such as woodpeckers, wagtails, herons and laughing thrushes.

Good to know: It's best to have all meals at the property but you have to order 12 hours before.
00-91-99160-73156; www.amastaysandtrails.com; book@amastaysandtrails.com; Tata Coffee Ltd, Thaneerhulla Estate, Pollibetta; from ₹7,500



GRATITUDE HERITAGE PUDUCHERRY

A restored homestay, Gratitude Heritage was built over 200 years ago. It is spacious enough for a very large family and welcomes people who are like-minded and who would enjoy staying in a restored heritage building. Kids will enjoy their time here to the fullest as there are lots of games and a kid-safe pool.

Good to know: You can indulge in a relaxing massage or get hands-on with a cooking session at the property.
00-91-413-222-6029; www.gratitudeheritage.in; 52, Romain Rolland Street, White Town; from ₹3,500



RED EARTH KABINI NAGARHOLE NATIONAL PARK, KARNATAKA

Unpretentious and beautiful, Red Earth Kabini is situated on the backwaters of the Kabini Dam. Choose from among the 20 'Earth' cottages that come with an open jacuzzi, a spacious patio and lots of birds for company. Kids will enjoy this immersion into nature, but carry a couple of board games for quiet times.

Good to know: When in Kabini, do as the locals do: wobble in a coracle.

00-91-87227-45555; www.redearthkabini.in; Badane Kuppe, Via Antharasante, near Hosmalla, HD Kote Taluk, Mysore; from ₹9,100



PEEPAL KOTHI KOTA KHANDEWLA, HARYANA

Overlooking the majestic Aravalli hills, Peepal Kothi has six well-appointed rooms, three of which are compact cottages, although big enough for a family of four. Additionally, there are three *kothis* – The Malabar, The Patiala and The Avadh, which take you back to early 20th-century Punjab with its period furniture and artefacts as their names suggest.

Good to know: In the heart of India's golfing country, Peepal Kothi offers guests a chance to tee off on some of India's most iconic golf courses.

00-91-96502-07467; www.peepalkothi.com; Village Kota Khandewla, PO Hasanpur, Tehsil Tauru, District Mewat; from ₹8,000

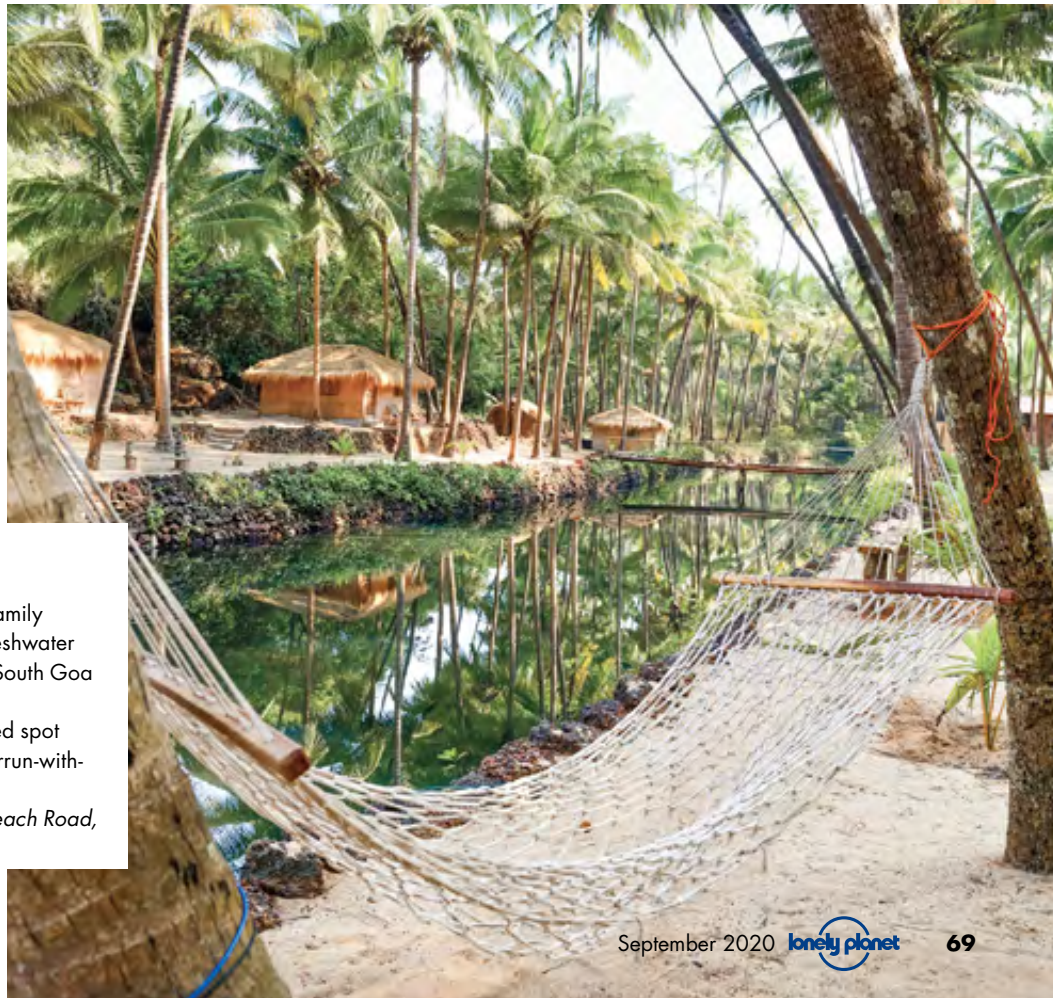


RENAI KAPPAD BEACH RESORT KOZHIKODE, KERALA

All of the rooms at this great-for-families property located very close to Kappad Beach are sea-facing; brace yourselves for great morning views!

Good to know: There are plenty of fun activities on the property's premises; check with the reception.

00-91-496-268-8777; www.renaicochin.in/kappad-beach-resort; Chemancherry PO, Thoovappara, Kappad; from ₹5,000



DWARKA ECO BEACH RESORT CANACONA, GOA

With cottages spacious enough to accommodate a family of four, and set fortuitously between the sea and a freshwater lagoon, this eco-friendly property off Cola Beach in South Goa is perfect for a family holiday.

Good to know: You'll find this a relatively less-crowded spot at which to bond with the family, in an otherwise overrun-with-travellers Goa.

00-91-98233-77025; www.dwarkagoa.com; Cola Beach Road, Mattimol; contact property for prices →

COLONEL'S RESORT

BIR BILLING, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Nestled in the foothills of the Dhauladhar mountains, Colonel's Resort offers soothing views of tea gardens, apple orchards and the mountains itself. Catering to families, solo travellers and small groups, this is the perfect place at which to base yourself if you want to surround yourself with natural beauty.

Good to know: Pack tea to take home, harvested by the hosts themselves.
00-91-98823-77469; www.colonelsresort.com;
VPO Bir, Baijnath; from ₹4,500



GURUNG GUESTHOUSE

TINCHULEY, WEST BENGAL

Nestled in the Himalayan hamlet of Tinchuley, West Bengal, Gurung Guesthouse is a home within a home. The personal care and attention one gets is indescribable. The property is child-friendly, and welcomes families warmly. Come here with an open mind and soak in the limitless magic of Tinchuley.

Good to know: Food is available at the homestay and all meals are fixed.
00-91-99330-36336; www.tinchuley.com;
Tinchuley Lopchu Road, Tukdah Forest;
from ₹3,000

JILLING TERRACES

UTTARAKHAND

While on clear days you can sit on the porch and sip on a cup of tea, soaking in the views of the Nanda Devi peak, on clearer days, you can set out on hikes across a hundred acres of untouched forest.

Good to know: At Jilling, you'll have access to mountain spring water and fresh local produce at all times. Opt for the spacious family suite if you are travelling with two or more families.
00-91-70420-84935; www.jillingterraces.com,
info@jillingterraces.com;
Bhatelia-Dhanachuli-Bhimtal Road,
South Gola Range, Matial Village,
Dhari Thesil; from ₹6,000



WINDSONG

AMRITSAR, PUNJAB

Life flows at a slower pace amid the bright yellow mustard fields in Punjab at this charming homestay. Apt for small families, Windsong offers the right amount of happy vibes. Carry a book, sit by the tranquil poolside or in the lush gardens, and simply soak up the sun.

Good to know: Rooms here are named after the rivers that flow in North India; choose the one that catches your fancy.
00-91-97809-07878; www.windsongboutiquebnb.com;
8/9 Palm Grove; contact property for prices



NARAIN NIWAS PALACE HOTEL

JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

Revel in the grandeur of Rajput royalty at this heritage property; choose from among the 52 luxury rooms as per your family size, all of which speak eloquently of Rajput elegance with their high ceilings, exquisite chandeliers, four-poster beds, ornate tapestry and more.

Good to know: All places of interest are close to the property, which helps save travel time.
00-91-11-4014-0559; <https://hotelnarainniwas.com>;
Kanota Bagh, Narayan Singh Road;
from ₹7,500



THE SERAI KABINI NAGARHOLE NATIONAL PARK, KARNATAKA

Great for families who like indulging in activities and having a relaxed time, too, the Serai Kabini offers both a dose of adrenaline as well as tradition.

Good to know: Over 200 species of birds have made Kabini forest their abode; a guided walk here is a great choice. 00-91-99456-02305; www.theserai.in/kabini-resort; No - 60/1, Nishana, Karapura Taluk Antarasante, Uttarahalli Hobli, Heggadadevankote; from ₹16,000



THE RETREAT BHIMTAL, UTTARAKHAND

The Retreat is a charming, family-owned, 19th-century property that welcomes families of any and all sizes. Feel the Colonial vibe here, enjoy fresh, locally-sourced produce for meals and end your days with long, serene walks through the forest, while spotting indigenous birds.

Good to know: If you are a keen angler, and want to take part in some responsible fishing, permits can be arranged to allow you to indulge in your pastime.

00-91-81710-31968; www.theretreatbhimtal.in; Jones Estate, Bhimtal; from ₹7,000



SHIKARBADI UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

Fancy staying in a royal palace that overlooks the beautiful Aravalli range? Treat your family to a stay at Shikarbadi, just a couple miles from the City Palace. If you're a large family with older kids, there's lots to do here, like a game of cricket on the vast grounds or strolling through the deer park.

Good to know: If you're fond of horses, there's a stud farm located on the premises with a number of indigenous breeds. 00-91-294-258-3201; www.hrrhotels.com/hotels/shikarbadi_hotel; Goverdhan Vilas, Sector 14, Hiran Magri; contact property for prices



NISARG FAMILY RESORT ALIBAUG, MAHARASHTRA

A wonderful mix of coastal Goa and the Sahyadri hills of southern Maharashtra, Nisarg Family Resort is a good budget option for a short weekend trip, providing all the amenities a family with children would need.

Good to know: If you're a fan of Malvani food, make sure to dine at the in-house restaurant, which specialises in it.

00-91-77759-35139; www.nisargfamilyguesthouse.com; near Bhavani Mandir Road, Beach Village, Varasoli; contact property for prices

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