

Ten Tips for Traveling with Children

Keeping children interested and busy while not wearing them out can be quite challenging during a family vacation. Here are some tips to build the anticipation for the trip as well as keeping children happy during the trip.

1. **Count Down to Your Departure.** Count down the last 30 or so days before the trip on a calendar, creating excitement about the event. You can also include things like "Day 21: Shop for film, hiking boots", or "Day 5: Start packing."
2. **Kids Love Maps.** Trace the route of the trip on a map before leaving, giving kids a better idea of how far they are traveling, where they will be going, and what to expect. You can also bring the map on the trip to trace your route as you go.
3. **Make a Trip to the Bookstore.** Purchase books and stories about the destinations you will visit on the trip. Kids who have a basic knowledge of areas and cultures beforehand will have a greater understanding and appreciation for that they see and do on the trip.
4. **Kids Love Animals.** When preparing for a wildlife-viewing adventure, buy a guide to the wildlife of the region you will be visiting. Keep a journal of all species sighted.
5. **Prepare for Your Flights.** Pack your child's favorite snacks and dole them out as treats periodically. Carrying juice boxes or bottled water is a good idea. Pack small bags of surprises for them to open every so often, making the flight go faster.
6. **Single Parents.** Bring a Notarized Letter. If traveling with one parent, or with another family member, this letter grants permission for this child to travel with this person. Also have signed medical release forms.
7. **Document your Trip Through Pictures.** Give each child a disposable camera to take their own pictures for a scrapbook after the trip. Encourage them to keep ticket stubs, brochures, etc. to add to the scrapbook.
8. **Send Postcards.** Encourage children to buy a postcard at each different destination visited. At the end of each day, they can write their comments on the back.
9. **Keep a Diary.** Create a travel diary in advance, writing each date at the top of a page. Every evening, set aside time for the child to write about the day's activities. You can also bring glue stick for the child to add ticket stubs, postcards, etc. to the diary.
10. **Everybody Loves Shopping.** Give each child a small allowance for picking out and buying souvenirs. They will enjoy shopping more and get to choose their own mementos of the trip.

Traveling with children can be very rewarding and give the family lasting memories. A bit of forethought before the vacation takes place can make traveling with children a great time for all!