

THERE'S NO BEACH IN TEXAS



Pure Wander

A guide for debunking travel myths and planning the most awesome family vacation EVER

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A Guide to Debunking Travel Myths and Planning the Most Awesome Family Vacation EVER

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Introduction

I started Pure Wander with my co-founder, Eileen Cotter, back in May of 2013. When I approached her, a complete stranger at the time, with my idea she thought I was crazy—and rightly so! (I think that we all lose a little bit of our sanity when we become parents, but it's totally worth it.) Eileen actually didn't take too long to decide that she was on-board, and since that day, Pure Wander has grown exponentially.

Pure Wander is all about family and experiences. Our articles at www.purewander.com are all about inspiring you, the reader, to take trips with your children—at home and abroad—that you never thought were realistic with little ones in tow. We also strive to provide you with travel news and tips to make your vacations a bit easier.

Most of my articles on Pure Wander are based off of trips that I've taken with my son who is quickly approaching school age, and let me tell you, this little guy sure has a voice! We've been a bunch of places in the United States together from Maine to Colorado—and the list just keeps growing. This kid has caught my travel bug in a serious way. About every two weeks he asks his father and I when we can go on another vacation, so we are always looking into new trips that we will all enjoy or even a local hike or museum that we can do on a Saturday afternoon.

Eileen and I knew what we wanted this book to be about, but we couldn't come up with a name to save ourselves. Finally, we turned to my son for help.

"I asked him, "What was your favorite thing about seeing the sea turtles on the beach in Texas?"

"MOMMY!" he replied exasperated, "There's no beach in Texas!"

Silly me, I didn't know that! Did you?

But the name just stuck. Many of us have had qualms about being on the move with kids, and lots of single people always talk about waiting to have children because they want to travel the world. The honest truth is that travel is much more fun when I get to see and experience it through the eyes of my kids, and I couldn't imagine doing it any other way.

There's No Beach in Texas is all about how to tackle travel with children of all ages and ways to encourage them to connect with your adventure when you return home. It is a complete guide to help you through everything from planning to making the most of your resources when at your destination. It has everything you need—including a child's voice. We hope that you love it as much as we do!

Wander On,
Shauna Armitage
Executive Editor
Pure Wander Magazine



1 | Planning Like It's Your Job

You and your family have decided to take the leap. Maybe you've done Mickey land and are looking for something new. Perhaps you've been dreaming of a giant road trip to the unknown, or exploring an entirely new country together. Whatever the situation, we want to put your mind to ease—you CAN have an unbelievable vacation or trip experience, no matter your budget and children's ages. It just takes a little time, ingenuity and flexibility to make this happen. You can venture almost anywhere with a bit of time and savings—sometimes even the same amount it takes to go to your family's favorite campground or theme park. So let's dig into the planning!

We can recommend any amount of websites, smartphone apps, guidebooks and more to help you get started. But really we think the best thing to do first is to grab a pencil and some paper. Bring a few crayons as well along for the little ones.

Simply begin brainstorming.

Location

This is the fun part. Pull up a map online or buy one if necessary. Start with what you know about the globe and jot down potential destinations. Try not to stress about time frames or money yet and simply let your imaginations run wild with ideas.

Sampling real curry in India, taking some snorkelling classes in St. Thomas or soaking up the iconic view of Peru's Machu Picchu—all are possible! Choose your top 10 or so that fit various levels of potential for your family, such as a few that can definitely work and a few dream getaways to have a well-rounded idea. If you're super crafty, make a game of it and create a travel vision board with your family, cutting photos from magazines and drawing pictures of your future adventures.

Activities

This goes hand-in-hand with your location brainstorming, but decide on a few must-dos for your upcoming trip. If sun and sand are a must for your family, keep that in mind and nix landlocked locations. If you're active, mountains in New Zealand or western North America can be a fantastic option. Foodies and brave kids can look toward parts of Europe or Central America. Places with parks and rolling countryside can be ideal for families with babies. Check out Pure Wander's features for detailed inspiration on many destinations and activities across the globe.

Limitations

Sometimes knocking out the things you and your clan definitely don't want to do can be a great start to planning. Hate the cold? That takes away a good chunk of the world—at least in their wintertime. Not crazy about flights over 6 hours? That makes your possibilities a little more clear as well. Choose some things you absolutely are not interested in, which can bring other destinations and tours to light in comparison. Don't forget to ask the kids their input too—you'll both be happier in the long run for it!

Budgeting

When we ask families why they might not forgo a trip, often the number one reason is money. We all say we'd take that dream trip if we won the lottery and leave it at that. But you can do this. It can take time and some sacrificing, but if seeing the world with your loved is kept as a priority in life, it can be made a reality.

Remember—this is a chance for a vacation, but it can be so much more than that, as travel enhances a child's curiosity, worldliness, empathy and the overall bonds between everyone in the family. You need to decide if travel will be part of your lives right at the beginning of this process, or the financial investment will not seem worth it. Although we can help you get the most bang for your buck, you must realize that paying for an excursion is going to cost money.

Create a Spending Plan

Create a spreadsheet on your computer or by hand that lists anything you think you might spend money on while traveling.

Here's some ideas:

- Gear (suitcases, special clothing, baby rental equipment, snacks)
- ALL transportation (flights, train tickets, taxis, rickshaws, rocket ships)
- Accommodation (hotels, hostels, houseboats, homestays, igloos)
- Activities (tours, parks, museums, guided hikes, events)
- Food and drinks (restaurants, foodie festivals, cooking classes)
- Taxes, tips, fees, emergencies, passports, visas

Then start to do some research; visit the websites of the attractions you want to see and find out what their admission costs are. Shop around for deals on hotels or airfare (matrix.itasoftware.com by Google is great for flights as it compares all available flights on different carriers and shows you the cheapest options, and try Booking.com for accommodations to begin). Decide how much you want to allot for food and souvenirs, based on currency exchanges and your method of travel (budget, luxury, or something in between). Once you've created this list, add the numbers up and voila!—now you know how much you need to save. Divide your total costs by the number of weeks until you plan to leave and you will know how much to put away each week until your departure.

If needed, open a free checking account on the side just for travel. This will avoid temptations of dipping into savings. Have part of a pay check or any extra income go directly into this account. If planning a trip a year or two in advance, look into investing in some CDs or other high-interest accounts—then you definitely won't touch the money and it will offer a little kickback for your efforts, for free.

BIG TIP: Join frequent travel programs! You wouldn't believe what's out there these days to offer a few dollars off of almost everything. For instance, you can download an extension for your web browser through Hawaiian Airlines that earns you miles when you search through them instead of Google. Might seem silly, but if you use it a year or two before your Hawaii getaway, the points can add up! Southwest Airlines also has a great program where you simply register your debit or credit card for free and potentially earn extra miles when you dine out. This works for hotels, tours and even travel gear. Ask us at Pure Wander for guidance to this strategy anytime—we've tried it all.



Cut Back

You may not want to, but find some luxuries or perks you could do without until it's time to travel.

One obvious solution is to stop dining out for a while. Use it as an opportunity to spend more time in the kitchen with your kids instead, maybe even trying a few recipes from the destination you're about to explore to get them used to the cuisine. Pack them into the car and have them walk the aisles with you at the grocery store. They can pick out their favorite ingredients and act as your assistant while you cook. This not only saves money but it also provides a way for you to bond with your children while instilling a love for cooking in them.

Discover apps like Cute Food, which will allow kids to design their own healthy meals that you can then replicate in the kitchen. Be sure to plan your shopping trips out so you focus on buying only the essentials.

Sometimes it can be hard to give up the impulse buys, especially when you find great deals, but try to think about what you will gain in return. Tell your kids about the things they will soon get to experience on vacation if they give up a few new toys now. Instead of spending money to go out and see a movie, find museums or educational centers with free admission or explore a local park. You can even slice money off your expense list by running around your neighborhood instead of paying for a monthly gym membership or by doing your nails at home instead of shelling money out at a salon. The things you are sacrificing will be there when you get back from your trip, and who knows? Maybe you'll have such a blast that you will start saving up for round two when you return!

Get the Kids Involved

This is a family trip. Have your kids involved from the start. Show them your itinerary so they can get excited about the places you are planning to visit and the things you're going to do there.

Try to get them in on the saving as well!

You can have a garage sale to raise funds, and the kids can participate. Go through your house to find unused toys that your children don't play with anymore and clothes that don't fit them. Put the kids in charge of collecting the money from the sales of their toys and let them keep it to spend on souvenirs. Get a large jar and put it somewhere in the house where the kids can easily toss spare change in whenever they have any. It can add up quickly and give your children the feeling that they are helping fund the trip.

For your teens, have them crunch some numbers. Show them how much you need to save per week. You don't need to ask them to help out, but use it as an opportunity to teach them financial responsibility and the importance of saving money. Reward them on the trip for their help with their pick of activity or restaurant.



2 | Packing Like A Boss

Let's face it; packing is probably your least favorite aspect of travel—you know, besides the paying for it part. Packing doesn't get easier when you are traveling with kids. It can, however, be fun if you know what to do.



WHAT TO BRING

Step one in packing is to think about your destination—will you be lying out on a beach or strolling along a snowy European street? Will you be gone for a week or a month? Once you've got this figured out, hit the stores.

We all enjoy a good excuse to shop, but traveling is the ultimate excuse to do so. Whether your intended destination is cold or hot, the best plan for every member of the family is to plan outfits out in layers. Start with under garments and work your way up to accessories.

Underwear

If you want to over pack anything, it's underwear. Figure out how often you will be in clothes (versus bathing suits, of course) and plan accordingly. Thankfully, our undergarments are small enough to fit just about anywhere in a suitcase, so while you plan what to take from your panty drawer first, pack it last. Underwear, bras, socks, boxers and bathing suits can all be rolled up to fit inside shoes, in the netted area on the lid of a suitcase or even stuffed into the cracks in the sides when your luggage is overflowing with other good stuff.

Tops

The next thing on your list should be tops. Do you have a new garment that you just adore? Now is the time to whip it out of the closet and show off your great sense of style. Pick colors or patterns that are easy to accessorize with and works well when matched up with other elements. If you are going somewhere chilly, find a sweater or light jacket that compliments all of your top choices so you can easily create the perfect outfit that is comfortable, functional and beautiful. You do not need any more than five to seven basic tops for any trip; plan to wash some clothes while you are on the road either by packing a small bottle and hand washing in your accommodation's sink, utilizing laundry services at a hotel or heading out to find a Laundromat once you arrive at your destination. Choosing versatile pieces allows you to mix and match so each outfit you put on is something new.

Having trouble deciding which shirts of your child's bazillion adorable tops to take? Grab your favorites and then let your little ones decide what she would like to wear on your vacation.

Bottoms

Once you've tackled the impossible task of narrowing down your top selection to a measly seven choices, it's time to pick some pants—or skirts, or leggings, or a Sarong, or whatever you'd like to adorn the bottom half with. Grab two or three of your most comfortable pairs that are good matches for several of your shirts for the trip. Be sure to put a comfy, durable pair (like leggings or stretchy jeans) aside for the airport or train ride. This is especially important for kids, as no one—not even you—wants to sit near the grouchy little girl on the plane who is uncomfortable and screaming because her skin-tight leggings are giving her a wedgie.



Shoes

Arguably the most important thing you will pack for your travels is a good pair of shoes. Footwear can take up a great deal of space in your luggage, so find a few pairs that match several of the outfits that you have already carefully crafted—which of course are uber comfortable. If you plan on spending the big portion of your vacation squishing sand in between your toes, you will still need comfy sneakers or boots for transportation days. If you are a master at putting those outfits together, you can find one or two pairs of shoes that match simply every combo that you can concoct. Reward yourself by packing a pair of sexy heels or funky flip flops for special dinners or events.

Shoes without laces that slip right off are ideal for all family members when traveling in airports. Challenge your little one to be responsible for her own bag and shoes. Get on your way to the terminal quickly by seeing which family member can get all of her bags together and shoes on first.

Accessories

No ensemble would be complete without stellar accessories, so stock up. Take along your favorite scarf or a multitude of costume jewelry. These items are small enough to fit into a compact travel bag and sit on top of your clothing, or squish into the netted compartment in a Ziplock bag alongside your unmentionables.

Allowing a child to pick out his or her own accessories—from plastic beads to baseball caps—is the ideal way to get them involved in packing their own bags and getting amped up for the trip. Be sure that accessories you plan to wear on travel days don't have metal in them. This can include everything from bracelets to bobby pins, so plan ahead and double check what your kiddos plan to bring so you can save the entire family some serious headaches in security.

Toiletries

It's never a bad idea to pack a toothbrush. (It's an even better idea to pack a toothbrush in your carry-on.) However, packing shampoo, conditioner, soap, face wash, etc. isn't entirely necessary. All of the toiletries you need will likely be complimentary at your accommodation or available nearby. If you just can't do without your own deodorant, or your child's skin is so sensitive that they need a particular brand of soap, be sure to follow the guidelines. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employs the 3-1-1 rule. This means that each family member can take 3.4 ounce or 100ml bottles or less when packed inside a one-quart, clear, plastic, zip-top bag for air travel. The fastest way to get through security in an airport is to pack this bag on top of your clothes so that it is easily accessible when it is your turn in line. 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin.



Make the List and Check it Twice

When traveling with children, you are bound to lose—well, everything. Grab a pen and pad or go high-tech and make a list of things you brought with you on your smartphone. When you are ready to depart for home, check each item off as you put it in the bag. After a fabulous family getaway, you may not be in the mindset to check under the beds, in between the sheets, under the sink—and you never know where your toddler hid that binky which is absolutely necessary to your survival on the plane ride home. Plus, it would be horrible to leave behind those stellar new earrings on the bathroom sink for the house cleaning staff to enjoy after you split.

The Bear Necessities

Remember that items such as sunscreen can easily be found just about anywhere you go. Some things, however, cannot. When you are traveling to a different country than your own, leave yourself enough time to have all the necessities prepared. This may include:

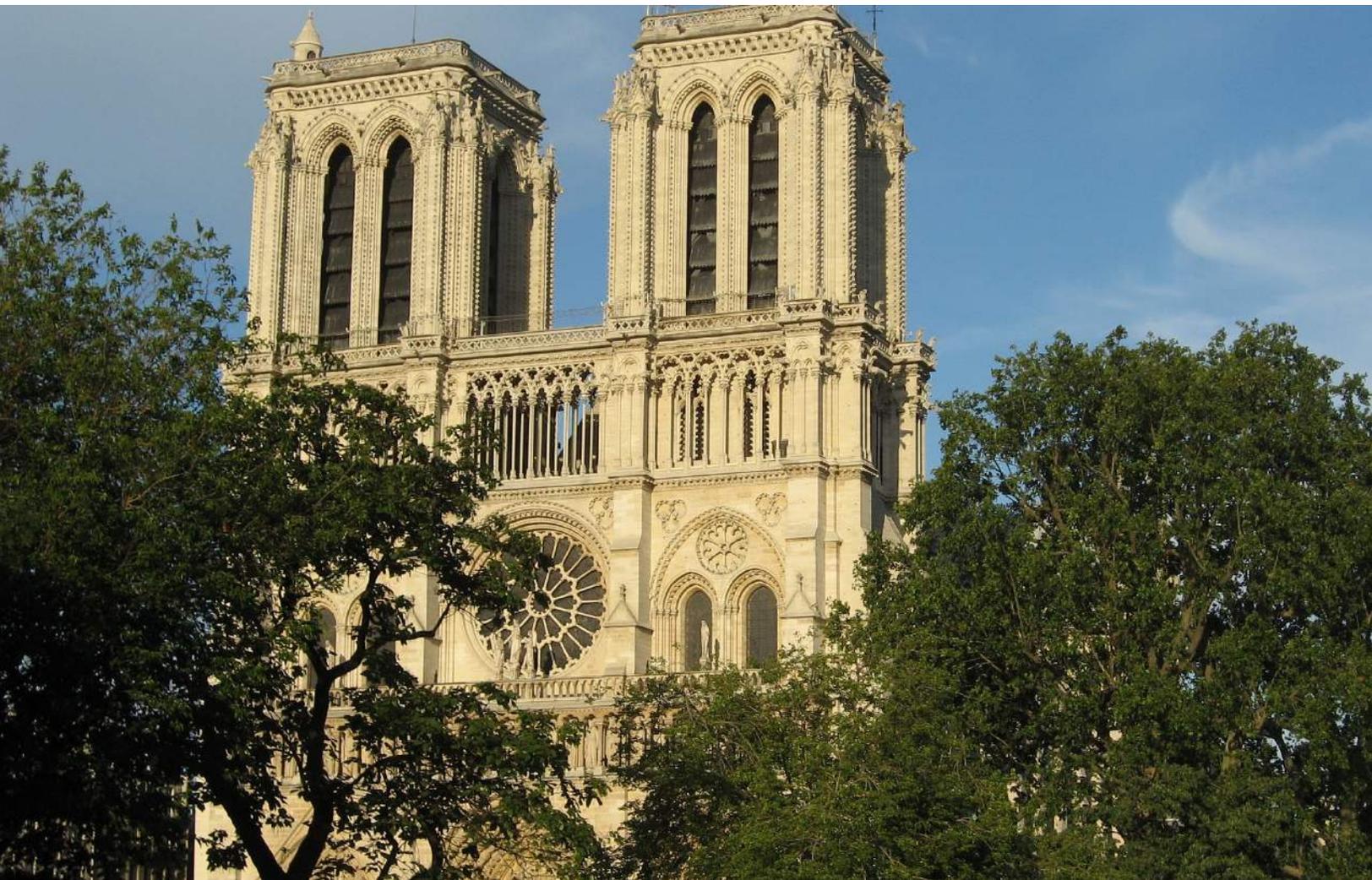
- Passports
- Visas
- International calling card
- Foreign currency
- And teddy bears of course

Passports

You've decided to take your family to a new country on vacation—what's the first thing you have to do? Get passports! If you have a mountain of paperwork for little ones and yourself to worry about, it can feel overwhelming. But take the process step by step and you will have the tools to jet-set for years to come.

Roughly one-third of U.S. citizens own passports. Percentages are even lower in other countries, showing that international travel is not nearly as common as some think. But just like any other aspect of traveling, it will take saving some pennies and taking the time to obtain documentation for the family.

Passports allow you to cross international borders. Only a few years ago just a license was required to go from the U.S. to Canada, but even this now requires a passport. Not only can they be used for travel, but they are important in case of an emergency for identification or even if you want to consider adopting internationally. Passports are ideal to have on hand not just for getaways, but for weddings abroad, quick weekends to Mexico or Canada and anything else you can imagine.



So, to get those documents:

- Make sure all your ducks are in a row first. Either visit a nearby post office (the most common place) or go online to get the application forms. You can fill these out in advance.
- Everyone in the family, big and small, will need their own. And, when turning in the applications, everyone under 16 years of age **MUST** be present. Children have to get new passports more often because their features are always changing. Keep this in mind, especially for teens reaching adulthood soon.
- Along with the application, you will need proof of citizenship. Usually a notarized birth certificate will suffice. If you are just updating your old one, you can bring your expired passport and that counts as proof.
- Then comes passport photos. If you're digitally savvy and have a good printer, you can take these at home. But be careful, because they have to be very specific and show the face up close and clearly. It might be better, especially with the kids, to get them done easily at a photo studio, big chain store or even the post office itself. They usually are pretty cheap. Get some extra copies printed too—they come in handy during emergencies abroad, if documents are lost or you need to show someone a photo of your kid quick.
- Passports do cost a fee, which depends on several variables. This is where planning in advance can save money—expedited applications can get pricey. As soon as you think you might travel internationally, put aside funds for passports and have them ready.

Some families may opt to have a third party help, especially if you also need visas or anything special. This is up to your discretion, but the fees associated with these companies can add up.

Money

Travelers check used to be the norm, but not so these days. Hit your local bank to exchange currency so you have cash on hand for quaint little street vendors and local artists selling their work in the park when you arrive. The best and safest way to spend, however, is by using your credit card. Before you sail away, get in contact with your bank and let them know which countries, cities, etc. you will be visiting so they know that your charges abroad aren't fraudulent. To be safe out on streets, keep one card in your bag in a zipped up compartment that isn't easy to access and another card locked up in the safe at your hotel.

SUITCASES

No matter what mode of transportation you are using to travel, packing clothing, accessories, shoes and toiletries into a well-organized, consolidated suitcase can make your entire trip less stressful. More organized suitcases means less of a hassle getting from point A to point B, less of a chance to forget important items, a smoother experience unpacking (or living out of a suitcase if your trip is short) and less of a battle when it comes time to squeeze everything back in and head home. Whether you're packing for a weekend trip or an extended journey, these tips will help your family become expert suitcase packers:

- **Compartmentalize**—for families with tiny travelers that share a suitcase with mom and dad, consider packing smaller duffle bags inside your larger rolling luggage. Not only will this method help to make sure everyone's belongings have made it in the bag, but it will also make finding each family member's clothing easier upon arrival.
- **Consolidate**—unless you're relocating, you won't need full bottles of everyone's toiletry items. Save space by sharing toothpaste, shampoo, soap, etc. Even if you're not bringing toiletries in a carry-on, pack only what you need in smaller travel-sized bottles.
- **Plan day by day**—of course, it's easy to count out X pairs of underwear and X pairs of socks, but helping your kids put together outfits for each day of your trip can be a bit more challenging. Use gallon size zip block bags to separate outfits and help kids be more self-sufficient when it comes to packing and living out of a suitcase. Pick out one top, bottom, underwear and socks then zip the bag and start on the next day. If your kids like to help pack their own bags, you can use this method to easily check behind them without ripping apart their entire suitcase (Bonus: You can also use the bags to repack dirty clothes and keep them separate from clean clothing).
- **Prep for the return trip**—instead of planning on stuffing dirty clothes back in a suitcase with unworn outfits, tuck a drawstring laundry bag in each family member's suitcase so they can separate dirty clothes. (This also makes doing laundry post-trip much easier.)
- **Consider the climate**—if your final destination promises a drastic climate change (especially colder weather) pack a small suitcase with all of your family member's coats so they are easily accessible instead of buried at the bottom of individual bags.

When traveling with the littles, take a moment to think about what kind of suitcases you are bringing. Duffles may be great for solo travel, but holding one on a trip with the family may make it difficult to pick up young children with tired legs. A rolling duffle, on the other hand, makes a nice pillow during long layovers. A sturdy carry-on suitcase that rolls—front to back only—is the perfect means of transport for a young child in an airport. If your kid is less than 50 pounds and old enough to hold on for dear life, this will be a thrilling way for him to travel to the terminal, and you won't have to worry about him scurrying off.

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CARRY-ONS

Carry-on luggage is an important part of travel when you are on the road with kids because what they can fit in their own pack is usually what they have available to amuse themselves during the hours it takes to get from point A to point B. In addition to an extra set of clothing, consider making room for the following in your child's carry-on bag:

- A favorite stuffed animal—because no one is sleeping if it is stuffed into the luggage that never made it to baggage claim.
- Electronic device—believe it or not, kids will get bored with just an iPhone to play with. Make sure your chosen device has the capabilities to play music, stream video, show books and load up some good games before you hit the road.
- Art supplies—creating your own art kit for the road is easy and affordable. A hard pencil box full of tools is all a budding creative needs to make magic in any and every setting.
- Toys—a doll for your little one to care for or a car for her to push around on tray tables and in waiting areas will keep her mind active during flight and beyond.
- Snacks—food on the go—whether in the terminal, on the train or in the gas station—can be pricey. Pre-pack sandwich baggies full of popcorn, raisins, fruit, cheese sticks and other small snacks for optimum attitude and full, happy tummies.





GIFTS AND TRAVEL GEAR

It's no secret, travelers LOVE their gear. From the latest electronics and apps to handy guidebooks and bags of all shapes and sizes, adult globetrotters are all about products that help them to travel better. Young wanderers will quickly catch on to a traveling parent who is always on the lookout for nifty additions to add to their travel gear collections. So, if you're raising a little wanderer, make sure they have travel gear that will not only keep them entertained and make traveling a breeze on the road or in the sky, but will also inspire them to expand their views of the world even when your family isn't traveling.

Dreaming and Planning—Start Her Collection Early

Don't you just love the rush that comes when you discover a new destination that you just HAVE to add to your list of must-see places? Maybe you stumbled upon said destination during a travel blog binge or while leafing through the pages of a favorite travel magazine. Or, perhaps it was the setting of a book that inspired your wanderlust. Whatever it was, we think it's safe to say that this feeling is one of the most exciting parts of traveling, except for being on the road, of course.

So, why not surround your kids with opportunities to feel this same excitement? Books, magazines and even guidebooks are a great way to spark your kid's imagination and expose her to new cultures and destinations when you aren't on the road. And it's never too early for active imaginations, right?

Fill your nursery bookshelf with bedtime stories that will instill a love of travel in your little one right from the beginning. From stories featuring new words and languages to illustrations that depict unique cultures and places, travel-themed books are sure to expose your children to sights and sounds they may not see at home. For babies, we love the books from the Good Night Our World series, based on the classic children's book Good Night Moon, which features destination specific stories for places around the world. As your children grow, you can add to your collection with stories that feature their favorite characters in different parts of the world.

For a more interactive approach, travel-themed magazines are a great way to help your children learn about the world. We love National Geographic Little Kids magazine for ages 3–6 and National Geographic Kids magazine for kids up to 12 years old. With six and ten issues respectively, a subscription to one of these magazines provides colorful photos, exciting stories and interactive puzzles and games that expose your tiny travelers to new cultures and ecosystems. In addition to inspiring your kids to want to visit new destinations, the magazines seek to teach children what it really means to be a citizen of the world—an important lesson for travelers of all ages.

Get your teen dreaming about new and exciting destinations with their own guidebooks. If your family has an upcoming trip, guidebooks are the perfect way to engage your teen in the research and planning for the trip. Teens will love being able to suggest activities and experiences that interest them in a specific destination. They may even surprise you by knowing more about the destination than you do when it finally comes time for your trip.

Speak the Language

Families that travel internationally have the unique opportunity to expose their kids to languages outside of the home and the classroom. If you have an international trip planned, take advantage of this opportunity by exposing your kids to the local language before you go. After all, you probably wouldn't set foot in another country without practicing the most basic words and phrases, so make it a habit for your kids to do the same.



Even the tiniest travelers can begin to explore new languages—and will most likely pick it up faster than you do. Of course books and movies featuring other languages are a great way to foster you little one’s language skills, but we also love more organic toys like the language learning wooden blocks from Uncle Goose, which feature words, images and letters on stackable blocks that are perfect for tiny hands. Choose from a variety of languages and then let playtime begin.

Toddlers and kids, who have no doubt already commandeered your smartphone for a variety of other uses, will love language-learning apps that feature games geared just toward them. There are a number of free and reasonably priced apps on the market, but we are the most excited for the continued development of Rosetta Stone’s latest pre-school language app that launched in fall 2013. While the app is only currently available in Spanish, the company plans to offer a full suite of language apps—all developed using organic, kid-friendly learning styles.

Prep your teen with travel savvy pocket language books to help them practice everyday phrases in the country you will be visiting. Sure, they might be enrolled in a language course at school, but picking up colloquial phrases will surely make for a more enriching travel experience. Pocket guides are also perfect to take on the road and learn on the fly.

It's Never Too Early to Pack Like a Pro

Avid travelers pride themselves on tried and true packing methods that they have perfected over the years. Chronic over packers eventually learn to whittle down their excessive packing list to fit in a single suitcase (that comes in just below the airlines weight limit), and the packers who habitually forget their toothbrushes, underwear, left shoe—you name it—learn to triple check their bags before hitting the road.

Your kids will thank you later for helping them to combat their own packing vices by involving them in the family packing from an early age. Of course, this means they will need their own luggage.

Start small with tiny travelers by encouraging them to pack their own entertainment for the trip. A child-sized backpack is the perfect amount of responsibility for your toddler not to mention the fact that having their own backpack for toys, games, books, etc. will make entertainment on the road much more efficient. They will love the brightly colored designs featuring their favorite characters, and you will love the added visibility those bright colors bring to your child in a crowded airport. Tighten up the straps and you're toddler is ready to go without risking losing track of the backpack. And as an added bonus, their hands are free to hold onto a railing, grab a snack or hold hands with you as you travel.

After mastering the entertainment of packing as a toddler, kids will be psyched to upgrade to a child-sized rolling suitcase. Fun colors or a personalized bag with your child's name on it will help them to take pride in contributing to the family packing and toting their own luggage wherever your family roams. With added room, the packing possibilities are endless. Let your kids help pick out outfits for the trip and learn the best ways to fit everything they need into their bag. Before you know it, your little globetrotter will be folding, rolling and tucking like a pro. Like we said, start the good packing habits young.

By their teenage years, you've probably succeeded brilliantly at passing down your love of travel (and hopefully some sensible packing tips) to your offspring, which means they will be itching to get out and explore more of the world on their own. Whether they are embarking without parents on class trips or summer-long sport camps or continuing to explore the world on family trips, your traveling teen will definitely benefit from upgrading to a full set of their own luggage. These bags are likely to accompany your teen on some of the most exciting journeys of their youth, so be sure to choose something practical, durable and you know, cool.

Ahh, technology

Even though technology can take away from truly experiencing travel at times, no parent can deny the inevitable need to turn to technology for entertainment on the road every now and then. Whether you're looking for a solution to make naptime more manageable, to keep antsy kids entertained or give your teen some much needed alone time, techy travel gear can be appreciated by every age group.

Bring soothing naptime lights and sounds on the road with the battery powered CloudB nursery toys that come in a variety of plush animal shapes. With calming music or mesmerizing lights, you can create a peaceful environment for your tiny traveler no matter where your family goes without packing extra cords or draining the battery on your phone.

Keep the peace (and your sanity) on long car rides with kid-sized headphones for your toddlers and kids. Larger ear-pieces and smaller headbands allow for the headphones to fit comfortably on smaller heads, and fun colors or characters, like the Listening First Stereo Headphones by Caliphone at too cute to resist.

These days, teens probably have every electronic device under the sun. Help them to keep everything up and running on the road with a multi-device portable charging hub so they can stay entertained and in touch during their travels. Prices can vary depending on complexity and features, but we recommend the portable charging station with cable rack system from AviiQ.



Document the Journey

Your family's travel memories may last a lifetime through the photos you take and carefully selected souvenirs that come home with you after your trip. But what could be more special than helping your children capture their experience through their own lens?

Make documenting your travels a family affair by helping small children craft their own memory books. Sort through photos and tiny treasures picked up along the way to find your children's favorites and then use destination themed stickers, crayons and other art supplies to bring your memories to life. Kids with an interest in photography can even help to document your family's travels with their own kid-friendly camera; choose from plenty of models that feature a durable outer shell and come in a variety of fun colors.

Teens on the go will appreciate the portability and ease of their own digital camera. Consider a waterproof design for adventurous travelers, or for teens who already use a smartphone to snap pictures of their travels, we love the compact Olloclip lens—a quick and easy upgrade to their iPhone.

Whatever gear is right for your kids to document their journey, looking back at memories of your family trips through pictures, scrapbooks and memorabilia that they help to create will surely become a family favorite travel tradition.

Put it in Perspective

Chances are your travel-loving ways have already filled your home with maps of favorite places and places you plan to travel. Not only are maps a great way to document your travels, they are also a great learning tool to expand your children's view of the world. (What parent would complain about a little geography refresher now and then?)

Decorate your playroom with a giant map that doubles as a floor mat. Babies and toddlers on the move can explore the world as they play, and kids can use the over-sized pieces as a puzzle while pointing out destinations they have visited.

A scratch-off map is perfect for families that like to keep track of their travels. Choose from world maps or maps of specific continents. Then, find a coin and start personalizing your map to document all of the places you've explored together.

Or, for a wow factor, choose a huge wall map to document past and future destinations. Little ones will love using colorful stickers to denote cities you have visited or explore the distance from home to a new destination. Older kids and teens will appreciate the old-fashioned pins. Mount your map on a corkboard and start pinning away. Use one color for past destinations and another for future destinations, or assign a different "dream destination" color to each family member and let the planning begin.

3 | Getting There



Getting from home to destination is one of the hardest—and most rewarding—parts of going away. Watch your toddler's face when she sees a train pull into the station for the first time or witness how responsible your child is in the airport now that she has her own set of luggage. Every mode of travel has its own benefits and challenges; we broke it down so you can get a feel for what will work best on your next family adventure.

BABIES

The thought of flying with an infant can be terrifying—lots of necessities, crowded airports and in-flight screaming. Sound familiar? Because flying is one of the fastest travel options, it is important to figure out how to make your trip with the little one a success—and you CAN be successful.

When you pack for your baby, make sure that you have bottles, snacks, binkies, a favorite stuffed animal and plenty of diaper changing supplies. All of the movement in the terminal is bound to keep an infant enthralled, but an infant with an empty tummy will make life on you—and your fellow passengers—impossible to bare. Once the flight has begun, you can keep your infant amused with a number of things. A tablet with video is bound to do the trick, as well as making googly faces, moving the complimentary pretzels from the package into an empty cup and scribbling on napkins with a pen.

It is important to remember to bring a binky along whether your child uses one or not. Even if you broke the habit months ago, binkies can be an essential tool when flying with infants. Babies can't chew gum—or do anything really—to relieve the pressure in their head and ears that occurs when you fly. Binkies, along with bottles, are a great way for babies to work out their jaw muscles for a soothing effect at high altitudes.

A word of caution: be sure that infants are properly rested. An exhausted baby doesn't necessarily mean a sleepy baby and allowing him to cry it out like he does in the crib at home simply isn't an option.

Trains are also a wonderful way to get from place to place and make for pretty easy travel with infants. The subtle rocking of the train can be soothing for them, and a train is typically a pretty quiet mode of transport. Riding in a train with your infant will likely give you more space than in a plane or a car as well. If there are empty seats around you, feel free to utilize them to give your baby some room to sit or stretch out. You can bring any food you like on a train, so you should have plenty to keep that little tummy full. If baby is still feeling a bit anxious, throw him in the carrier, use the seat backs for support, and walk up and down the aisles to calm him down.

We all know that car rides can be long and tedious—and the same goes for infants. Plan your trip out well, and the whole family will enjoy the ride!

Start by consulting the internet—Google Maps, MapQuest, or whatever your preferred mapping source happens to be. How long will the entire trip take? Where are good, safe places to stop for bottle or diapering breaks? Knowing your own limits and gauging the limits of your little one is the best place to start.

Before you hit the open road, be sure to have lots of spares—spare diapers, spare clothes, spare toys, spare binkies, spare sippies, spare bottles, etc. Babies learn how fun ‘fetch’ can be at a very young age, and you don’t want to spend half of your trip unbuckled, facing backward trying to pick up dirty items off the car floor. Have clean ones in the front seat with you that are ready to send back if need be.

Also before you take off, be sure that baby has been recently fed and diapered, as no one wants to stop in the first 20 minutes of your journey to tackle a poopy diaper. Many times a full belly means a sleepy baby, so you could give yourself a good two-hour head start while the little one catches some Z’s. If the baby isn’t sleeping, be sure to make stops often—or often enough. Check that diaper every two hours or so to avoid diaper rash and a cranky infant for the remainder of your vacation.

When your infant is awake, she can be occupied by many things from dangly toys to the sound of your voice. Sing songs together or put on some music in the background to keep her content.

Buses are a cheap and convenient way to travel and are best used for short trips. Use the time on the bus to interact with your infant. Cuddle her close while you nurse or feed her a bottle, and play peekaboo games with her while she stares up into your face. Bounce your baby on your knee or play together with small, bright toys.

There isn’t much space on a bus to go change a diaper, and there really isn’t any means of escape if she gets cranky, so take time and distance into account before you plan a bus trip with your little one.

Imagine traveling across the country without having to stop for every feeding, diaper change or cranky outburst. Traveling by RV offers just that when you’ve got a baby in tow. Access to diapers, trash bags, food and toys is much simpler and you won’t have to climb over seats as you bang your head on the ceiling to appease you baby.

Of course, babies should remain buckled safely in their car seats during the majority of the trip, but an RV does provide a level of on-road flexibility that you won’t find when road tripping in a car. Additionally, you won’t have to skimp when it comes to packing extra supplies (no one likes going on diaper runs mid-vacation). Pack everything your baby needs on the road and at your final destination with the added space provided by your RV.

Unless you grew up on the water, a boat might be the absolute last place you would ever consider taking your baby, but with the right safety precautions, your baby will love spending a day boating or traveling by boat to your destination.

The U.S. Coast Guard recommends waiting until your baby can comfortably fit in a life jacket (not just a bathing suit with a floatation device sewn in) and sit up on his own. Have your little one practice wearing a life jacket in the pool so they are comfortable wearing it the entire time they are on the boat. When you're riding on the boat, your baby should be on your lap with your arms around her like a seat belt. Even though the seat belts of a car seat may seem safer, you should never use a car seat on a boat, as it is not built to float.

With so much to see and do on the water, your baby will be more than entertained bouncing over waves, watching birds fly by and float on the water and taking in all of the activities going on around her. Take your boating experience to the next level by traveling on a cruise ship. Safety issues are extremely minimized on these colossal ships, and your baby will enjoy the on board activities as much as you will.





TODDLERS

Everything about flying is exciting for toddlers. They have likely started to discover transportation from their own toys or shows that they watch on television, and seeing a plane in real life will be an awe-inspiring experience for them.

Start your trip while packing the bags; ask your toddler to identify small toys she would like to bring and have her fit it all in themselves. Get your little one involved in picking out clothing she would like to wear on the go, and remind her that the bag of toys is her own responsibility. Toddlers love feeling that sense of self, and a bright, unique bag is a great way to keep her easy to see at times when you don't have a free hand to hold on to her.

Before you leave for the airport, explain the rules clearly. Your toddler should know that there will be a ton of people there and that she needs to stay close to you at all times. Be sure to tell her how the security machine works to alleviate any potential fears she may have about this humongous machine she is supposed to step into on her own.

At the gate, allow your toddler to roam a bit—within reason of course. This is her last chance to exert some physical energy before she is expected to sit and behave for what could be several hours.

On the plane, take off can be scary for a little one, so turn the experience into a positive one with big smiles and fun antics. Hold up your arms like you are on a roller coaster as the plane lifts into the sky, or give your toddler the window seat and help her to identify buildings, cars, and boats below.

During the flight, utilize everything at your disposal. Do art projects, play with dolls or action figures, and give her the electronic devices for as long as necessary. Take a walk to the bathroom when the seat belt light has been turned off just to take a walk and show her the funny, loud noises the toilet makes. Give her the opportunity to stand in your row to eat her complimentary snacks so she has a chance to stretch her legs without bothering the people around you.

Another wonderful travel experience is in store for toddlers traveling by train. As the big, metal beast rolls into the station, your toddler can see up close how large they are—which is something she never would have imagined just from playing with her train table at home. The lights will flash and whistles will blow, making the arrival alone a spectacular event. Have your toddler lead the family onto the train and pick out seats for everyone. Once the baggage is stowed, it's time to leave the station.

As the train begins to slowly start its journey, have your toddler sit by the window and point out city sights. Library, bridge, truck—it's all new and interesting from this different perspective. Unlike when traveling by plane, sitting on a train allows you to get a feel for how fast you are going, which is bound to delight a toddler. Sit by the window together until the passing trees become a complete blur.

Trains do allow a certain amount of freedom of movement, so allow your toddler some space to roam. Let her sit on the seat or on the floor to play with her cars and dolls or take a walk down to the food car for a juice.

Toddlers are tricky. It's hard to keep them still for any period of time, so car rides can pose many problems. Have a little "station" prepared for them, so they are engaged from the second they get into the car to the moment you arrive. Put toys at a reachable distance by stowing them in a carrier on the back of the seat in front of your little one. Put a tray and a container with art supplies next to them on the seat so they can grab it when they are feeling creative. Load up plenty of games and movies on your device before taking off so they can have some downtime to veg out as well. Lastly, be sure to have plenty of fluids available and snacks at the ready in no-spill containers, of course.

Energetic toddlers may enjoy the first part of riding on the bus—getting tickets, boarding, finding seats, and taking off. After the initial experience is over, however, riding the bus is a waiting game. Whether your bus trip with your toddler is long or short, be prepared with lots of activities to keep her mind busy and her hands entertained.

Talk about your final destination and the fun things you will do and the great people you will see. Ask her about what she wants to eat, where she wants to sleep, and what she expects to do on your vacation. Movies on a tablet—with headphones of course—are ideal for bus trips, so cuddle up with her and her favorite stuffed animal, relax and enjoy the show.

RVs can be a bunch of fun. However, you may be hard pressed to keep your active toddler in her car seat (which is recommended while the vehicle is in motion) when your mode of transportation looks so much like home. But the extra space and added comforts will surely be appreciated when you stop along the way on an extended road trip. Let your little one hunker down for nap on a comfy couch or stretch their legs in the living room.

A refrigerator makes snacking on the road easy and much healthier than frequent fast food stops. Plus, you'll be able to easily move around to offer refills and pass out snacks. Spills and messes are avoided (or at least reduced) with access to a table, too.

Your toddler will also love that they have easy access to you instead of being separated by a row of seats. Enjoy the extra freedom and space the RV provides to play games, read stories or just snuggle together while you travel toward your final destination.

As with babies, well-fitted life jackets are extremely important when traveling by boat with toddlers and should be worn at all times. Explain how important life jackets are to your toddlers so it becomes second nature to them anytime they are on or around boats. If you own your own boat or plan to use one multiple times during the year, consider buying your own life vest (there are plenty with your toddler's favorite colors and characters available that will make wearing a life jacket fun for them).

Once on board, your toddler will love learning about how the boat works or even becoming a part of the crew by helping to steer or playing lookout. Wave to other boats passing by as you travel along the waves. Toddlers will also love taking in the activities going on around them. From boats coming in and out of the marina to interesting displays of wildlife, a day on the boat is an endless source of entertainment for curious toddlers.

If you decide to take a cruise with your toddler, they will be amazed at just how big your boat is. Spend time exploring together and make sure to give your little one a boost so they can see over the edge as you come in and out of port.



KIDS

Flying with kids is all about strategizing and getting them in on the action. Let your kid help to pack her own carry-on bags so they know exactly what toys, games, books, etc. are available to her during the flight. As an added bonus, pack a new toy that she can take out when she is getting antsy. Even something as simple as a new coloring book can keep everyone happy when the plane is waiting on the tarmac before taking off.

When booking your flights, try your best to choose your seats (some airlines allow you to do this in advance), or come up with a plan of action as to who is sitting with who before boarding the plane. For some families, letting the kids sit next to each other on the plane while the parents sit an aisle over or a few rows back is the perfect form of built-in entertainment. Other families may witness WWII over who gets the window seat. Moral of the story, seating is key to keeping kiddos happy on long flights.

If you split your seating so each parent is with one or more of the children, take advantage of this precious (most likely) WiFi-free time to really enjoy traveling with your kids. Once you're in your seats, your travel time is stress-free—at least until you have to run to board your connection, catch a cab, or any other of many situations that may force the family to rush. Rummage through her carry-on bag to find an activity you can do together, or simply revel in the time you have together chatting about the little towns and fluffy clouds out your window.

Back on the ground, it's back to strategizing. Now that your little travelers are no longer in strollers, your family may actually be a bit slower when it comes to navigating through the airport. (No more breaking out in a sprint with the rolling suitcase while your hubby pushes the stroller at lightning speed so you don't miss your next flight.) Save yourself and your kids the stress by taking a look at the layout of the airports you hit during your travels. In a pinch, it helps to have some idea how to navigate from one terminal to the next before you are faced with racing the clock and kids in tow.

While trains aren't the most common mode of transportation in the U.S., you can, in fact, travel to and from many major cities by train. It's an especially great option when traveling during the holidays so you can beat traffic and save yourself from hundreds of choruses of "are we there yet" along the way. Families who like to get the bulk of their travel under their belts at night might even enjoy taking an overnight train and arriving at their destination refreshed and ready for a day of adventure. But with all of the exciting things to see and do on board, you may not want your kids to snooze through the whole trip.

Glorified by the Hogwarts Express, train travel can actually be quite exciting for kids. They may be disappointed to find that there are no chocolate frogs available, but a trip to the dining car (on longer train rides) is an exciting adventure in itself. Curious kids will also love learning about the various jobs on board—discussing the role of the conductor and spotting the ticket collector trolling down the aisle.

Frequent stops at stations along the way are always amusing. You can make a game out of imagining where new passengers are headed as they board. Or, if you've visited any of the stops along your route before, you can reminisce about past adventures in those cities.

By now, your kids probably have a few major road trips under their belts. But taking on more hours in a car to head to a new destination can still be a bit of a drag (there are only so many episodes of cartoons you can watch on the iPad before even the biggest TV junkie gets bored). Switch up your usual road trip routine with exciting activities that will make the miles fly by for your kids.

Mark the hours with a book on tape that the whole family can enjoy. Plan on listening to one chapter every so many miles or on the hour so your family can stay engaged and kids will have sense of how much longer the trip is (five more chapters sounds a lot more promising than five more hours).

In between chapters, plan some uncommon activities to engage your kids. Window markers can turn your car windows into blank canvases. A traveling dress up box will spark little imaginations as your kids don scarves, hats, glasses, etc. and act out characters based on their new ensembles. Turn their attention outside with games the whole family can engage in like playing bingo based on landmarks and license plates (we recommend creating these games before you hit the road). Take into account things you're sure to pass along the way so the game is personalized for this specific route.

On the return trip, let your kids document their journey by writing stories or drawing pictures about their favorite parts of the trip—the Pure Wander 'Art of Travel' section is swarming with great craft ideas for the road. If you are traveling at night, break out the glow sticks for a surprise activity that will light up their faces just as much as the car.





At this age, your kids have probably experienced a bus in one way or another. Even if they don't board a bright yellow school bus five days a week, they've probably taken a bus on a class field trip, as part of public transit or at summer camp. Of course, all of these experiences are short lived in comparison to the longer bus trip your family has planned, but they are perfect examples to use when you start talking about your upcoming trip and prepping your kids for what to expect.

Although the traveling by bus could take longer (based on the number of stops the bus has to make along the route) than traveling by car, your family gets the added bonus of more time to interact with each other since you won't be the one steering and navigating. Pack games and activities you can engage in as a family; your kids will love having an extra playmate on the road. Before you know it, you'll be hopping off at the station and on to your next adventure.

Traveling in an RV with kids is like traveling in a playhouse on wheels. Forget limiting them to a carry-on size bag of activities. You'll have plenty of space to bring along all the entertainment options they could ever need. Utilize the table to play board games or card games together, or set up a craft station with stickers, markers, crayons—you name it.

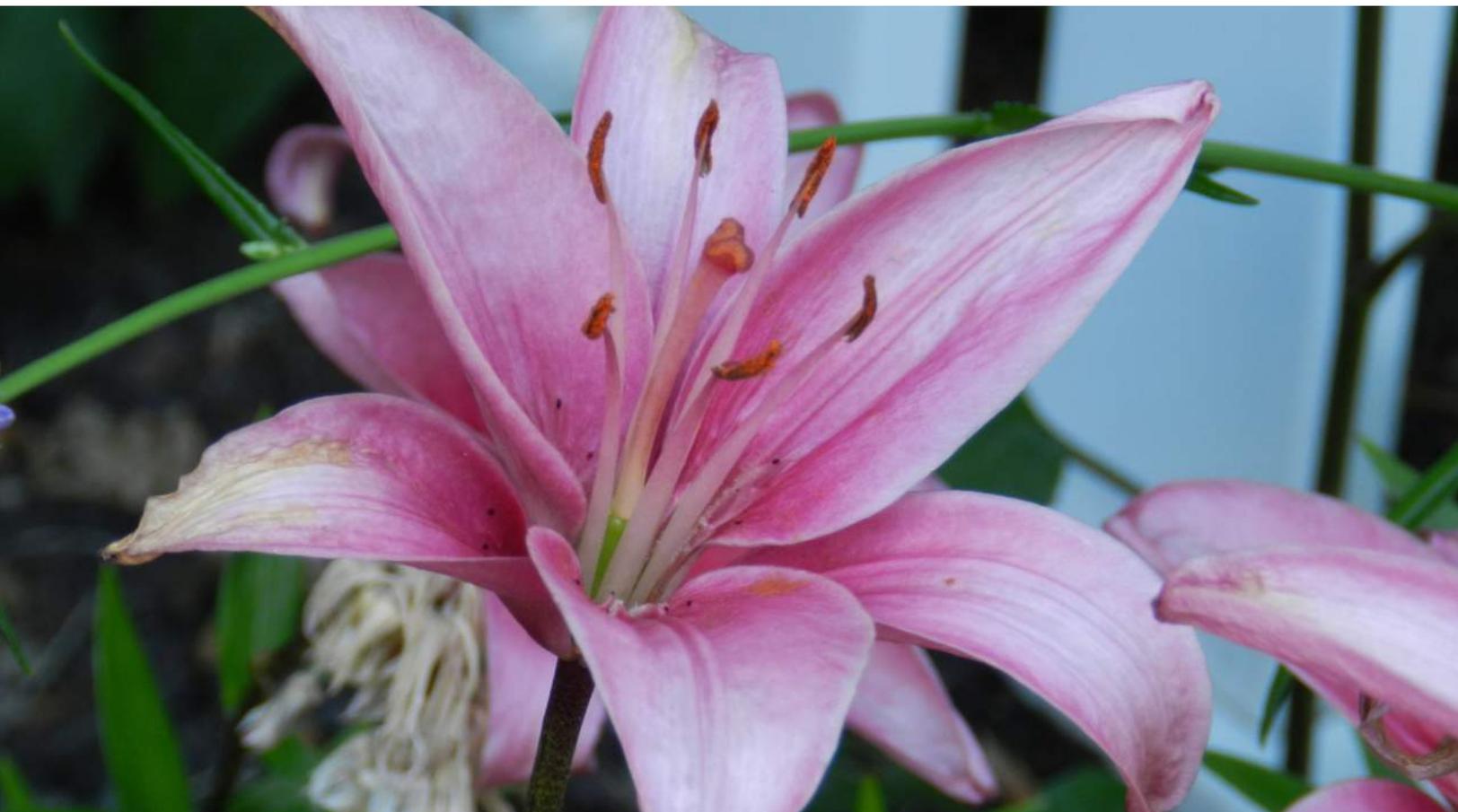
Kids will love that they can help themselves to snacks in the fridge or pantry, and with a bathroom on board, you won't have to worry about reminding them to take it easy with the juice boxes.

Having your accommodations right there with you also makes it easy to get off the beaten path. Plan a few side trips along your route that kids will love. Stop by a historical marker they learned about at school, or visit that place displayed on that cool billboard you keep seeing along the way. With an RV, you won't have to worry about making it to the next hotel reservation—travel at your own pace and let your kids enjoy the ride.

The world of water travel opens up so much to kids. By now, they've probably made it through a summer or two of swimming lessons, and even though a life jacket is still required, you'll feel much better taking them on a watery adventure knowing they have a bit of experience.

Explore marshes or rivers via canoe or kayak. Your kids will love the freedom of directing where their vessel goes, and the energy they use to paddle will make for tired travelers at the end of the day (that's what we're always shooting for, right?). On a boat with a bit more power, kids will get a kick out of playing captain and helping to steer. Or first mate is always a good option—after all, those knots aren't going to tie themselves. Learning about the ins and outs of boating can be just as much fun as the ride itself.

Cruise ships are a kid's paradise. With onboard clubs and activities, you'll be hard pressed to keep your kids in one place as they scamper from one thing to the next. When you do get a bit of time together, stroll the edges of the ship together as you point out the life boats, portholes and other features your kids don't see on your average trip to grandma's house.



TEENS

Traveling by air can be done simply with teenagers. Because they are older, you do not have to worry about watching them every second as you would with little ones. You won't have to hold their hands or explain to them where to go—it's likely that they will follow close behind you. Make sure they dress comfortably—and fashionably if they can manage both—so they won't be complaining during the flight. Have your teen keep anything she will absolutely need in her carry-on bags in case of lost luggage—no one wants to get to Jamaica to find that the bag with their hair straightener is lost.

Teenagers will love the in-flight movies, especially if you will be spending a long time on the plane. Many lengthy flights now have a touch-screen option where you can select movies on your own (or television shows!) instead of being forced to watch one film. If you are traveling internationally, this is a great option for teens because they will be able to find something that aligns with their interests to keep them occupied on the plane. It may also be a good idea for them to bring along some puzzle books, homework (if school is in session) or a book to read. (You remember when people read books for entertainment, right?) You could also bring some of those guide books along so they can scope out places to visit and get excited for the trip. Keeping them busy with something they are interested in will make it smooth sailing for all.

Traveling by train holds an air of mystery and excitement that airplanes don't seem to capture. Teens will find enjoyment in being able to watch the scenery out the window, especially during long trips through foreign countries or states—and they will have more personal space to sulk if they aren't interested in being close to the group. They will love to see how the place they are traveling through changes with distance. There's also much less hassle riding a train because you don't have to deal with long security lines or limited legroom.

Trains are an extra awesome option for teens because they can adapt more easily to changing surroundings than younger children might. The movement of the train can be relaxing as she curls up to go to sleep or jams out with her iPod. Some trains have WiFi so your teen can upload some blurry, moving train photos of the ride to Instagram while en route.

Teens are pretty easy to work with so traveling by car is always a good option. Using your own vehicle is best for nearby trips or long road trips within your country. This is a great method when you want your teen to experience a bunch of different places along the way, like museums or historical points. Plus, you will have your own vehicle once you reach your destination, which will ultimately make the whole trip a lot easier and give you more freedom to see whatever you want to see.



Teens can keep busy during long trips with an iPod, books or short naps—and we all know how teens like to nap. It’s also a fun opportunity to bond if you can get your teen to play ‘I Spy’ or by singing “The Song That Never Ends”. Finding games to play together will bring you closer as a family, but it will also make the time pass more quickly and result in laughter and fond memories. (They’ll thank you later, we promise.)

Most of the time, long bus rides are not much fun. It all depends on what kind of bus you choose. Teenagers sometimes look for reasons to complain or things to pout over so find a bus that is nice and comfortable with plenty of personal space. Some buses have bathrooms, which are a plus with teens because they will not have to wait until the bus stops to use the restroom. Bring along activities you can do together such as playing cards, books or mutually agreeable music to listen to through a shared set of headphones.

Buses are very similar to trains in that you can look out the windows and take in the views around you, but they don't hold the same level of excitement. They also don't move as quickly so the ride may be excruciating, depending on the distance you are traveling and whether or not you get stuck in traffic. Bus stations are pretty prominent though, so you may be able to reach a wider array of travel destinations by bus than you will by plane.

A RV may be the perfect way to take family road trips. You have all the benefits of taking your own vehicle—the ability to stop whenever and wherever you want, as well as the freedom to explore during your trip. Encourage your teenager to consult the map—or the internet—and see what interesting places she might want to stop along the way. You will all have everything you need at your fingertips, and teens will have a place to retreat if they need some space during the long ride.

Teens can aptly take part in all the boating options—speed boats, yachts, kayaks riverboats, paddleboats, cruises, etc. Teens will be thrilled as a boat glides over choppy waters taking them to their tropical travel destination or delighted to stand out on the deck of a massive cruise ship to watch the zillions of stars twinkle on dark Mediterranean nights. A cruise can be a blast for teenagers; this is a different sort of trip—it does lead you to your destination but it is an adventure in and of itself.

Cruises offer a variety of activities, pools, restaurants and events to experience on the open sea and they also take you to different travel destinations, enabling your whole family to see more places than you might be able to if traveling by plane, train or car.

For a truly unique experience, try sailing a small boat together. There are many places from Key West to the Caribbean to take a class, so make a trip out of it. While you are learning what port and starboard mean, your active teen will be trimming the sails and positioning buoys—before you know it you will be unconsciously bonding! You'll all head home tired, happy, and incredibly proud.



LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Walking

Your own two feet can often be the most adventurous way to explore your favorite travel destinations. While wandering, you can take in more of the local scenery and see the sights up close as well as interact with other people along the way. Create games to engage your little ones on your walking adventures—try playing a new version of “I Spy” where your child looks for specific buildings or trees or flowers. Take turns and let them describe something to you as well.

Be sure you know your child’s limitations. Kids sometimes tire more easily than adults so you don’t want to push them too far. If they are very young, make sure to bring along a child carrier or a stroller in case they feel they cannot go any further. You should also apply sunscreen to exposed skin and keep a hat and sunglasses handy for that overhead sun. It’s always a good idea to bring some snacks and water along as well.

Walking will allow you to teach your youngster about the pedestrian rules of the road and safety tips for walking, including looking for cars before crossing the street. Walking also facilitates a healthy and active lifestyle, something that will often stick with your child if it is practiced enough. The exercise may be therapeutic and allow kids to feel happier and more independent. Not to mention the benefits for your wallet and the environment!

Rental Cars

In big cities, public transit and walking may be the easiest ways to get around, but if the sights you plan to see are not close together, a rental car is a good way to get around. Having your own mode of transportation makes it easier to come and go as you please. If your little one gets cranky and needs a nap, you can zip back to the hotel without having to wait at a bus or train stop. In addition, you can make your vacation more widespread by taking day trips to cities outside of where you’re staying. You may also want to double check if the car comes with a type of entertainment system, like a way to play DVDs or audio books to keep your child entertained and learning on longer trips.

Possibly the most important thing to consider when renting a car on vacation is whether you want to rent a car seat or bring your own. Although it may seem inconvenient, many parents like to know that the seat their child is riding in is safe. When renting car seats, you have less knowledge on the safety and cleanliness of the seat. It may also cost you extra money on top of the car itself. Although it will likely be a pain to lug it through the airport, it may be something you want to consider if you’re planning to rent a car on your trip.

Taxis

Taking a taxi with your child can be a major toss-up. Sometimes it is the easiest way to get where you want to go. You don't have to go through the hassle of renting a car but you don't have to wait for public transit to arrive either. However, child safety can be an issue when traveling by taxi. Different regions have different laws regarding the use of child seats in taxis, but they are not always enforced. You will want to call ahead to the taxi company to ensure that the driver brings a child seat, which can eliminate the appeal of the instantaneous transportation that taxis provide in big cities. With the high expenses of taxicab travel, it may be easier and cheaper to find a different mode of transportation.

Buses

Traveling around a city by bus is a thrilling way to see the city with kids. It will provide them with a new and unique experience. Toddlers especially will be overjoyed to get on the bus and look out the windows at everything passing by. Since the bus will have its own driver, parents are free to enjoy the scenes right alongside their children. This provides you with the opportunity to view the city through the eyes of your child as you discuss the things you see out the window.

Buses are not always the quickest way to reach your destination but the time spent bonding with your little one during the journey will make it worth the extra travel time. You will also have to factor in time spent waiting at bus stops as well as any transfers you may have to make to get where you're going. Try to get at least one seat so your child can sit down. Bus travel can be shaky and sudden stops can jostle little ones. If you are forced to stand, keep a hold of your child's hand to help maintain balance.

Traveling by bus is easiest in bigger cities that have more developed transit systems. In smaller or more rural areas, it may not be the best option—or it may be the only option. Typically, this is an inexpensive way to travel and will provide your child with some extra excitement if it is convenient enough.



Subways and Trains

Transit systems like underground subways or aboveground metro trains are also a fun way to travel with kids. They provide another unique experience that is perfect for little ones who love trains. Aboveground trains like San Francisco's Muni are a good way to see the parts of the city you don't plan to stop at. You can still catch glimpses as you pass by. Underground subway systems, like the Metro in Paris, don't have the same views, but they typically move very quickly and can help maximize sightseeing time.

There is a sense of adventure surrounding subways and trains that often appeals to teenagers. With a map in hand, these trains are easy to navigate and it gives teens a feeling of excitement and accomplishment when they are able to find their own way around big cities. That being said, you will want to research the safety of the transit system before you let them wander off on their own to make sure that the trains aren't susceptible to muggings and other crime. The same can be said for taking your youngsters along. Double-checking the safety of your mode of transportation is always important.

Mass transit systems are fairly cheap so they can be a very cost-effective way to travel compared to rental cars or taxis. Part of the excitement of exploring is the journey you take to get there so, for that reason alone, subways and trains are often ideal.

Hiring a Guide

Some families may choose to hire a guide to show them around during vacations. This is a great way to immerse your family in the local culture. With a knowledgeable local at your side, you will have someone who is familiar with the not-so-safe areas of town, the best places to eat and the historical aspects of the city that it is hard to learn on your own. A guide can take you to places that you may never have found otherwise and help you avoid the overrated tourist traps that are overcrowded and don't live up to the hype. This can also be beneficial if you are not familiar with the local language—you will have a translator by your side, which will eliminate your chances of getting lost or misunderstanding the locals.

Try to check out reviews or get a recommendation from friends before you hire your guide. You want to ensure your family's safety and the best way to do this is to get your guide through someone you already know and trust. While choosing the right person to lead you through your trip, also consider the method of transportation the guide will use. Some will have a private vehicle to escort you around town while others will focus heavily on walking or public transportation. Hiring a guide will let you choose the method that is right for you and your family while gaining some extra insight during your trip.





4 | Wandering

You've made it all the way to some exciting, fresh and unknown destination with kids in tow—congrats, that's half the battle! Now it's time to pull all this planning, budgeting and creating the best vacation ever together with some solid tips to make it all go smoothly.

The main thing is and forever will be—go with the flow. Especially with children, being in a new place and loving this adventure together relies on your attitude of staying calm, collected and laughing if anything absurd pops up. Things might go wrong, you might get lost and the carefully planned itinerary might be blown—it's OK! As we all know, life with kids is never perfect, and this especially goes for being on the road. Take it all in stride as best you can and thrive on the moments that will happen. That big grin from your little one trying a new food in China, excitedly pointing out a new landmark while in Chile or the whole family hand-in hand admiring the most beautiful sunset of your lives on a Caribbean island is what you'll ALL remember in the end.

Don't put so much pressure on yourself, especially if this is your first big vacation away from the norm. It'll all be great, trust us.

Score Bargains and Save

Of course you want to not spend your life savings on travel—then how could you plan great getaways over and over again? So we will want you to know how to keep an eye out for the easiest and ideal ways to pinch a few pennies, making your overall experience cheaper, but just as fulfilling. Feel free to skip this over if you have a bottomless budget—but these days, not many do. Most likely these guidelines can help you out before, during and even after your trip.

Include the kids in this process! You don't have to be completely transparent about money, but let them choose between activities, where they might like to stay or eat. Let them know you can't do it all, but options X, Y, and Z are available.

Accommodations: Before bargain hunting on accommodations, realize what is important to you and your family. A bungalow with hammocks can seem like a thrill for some, but a nightmare for others, even if it is low cost. Choose what you are willing to compromise on first, then set out on finding the right hotel, home rental, hostel or other option.

Once that is settled, begin by calling around to local tourism boards—careful, they can suggest pricey selections sometimes) and check online. Use sites such as Priceline.com to actually negotiate room rates, or something like AirBnb.com—this site lists great home rentals for private use or shared rooms. It's an easy way to be immersed in your destination and not pay overhead costs for cleaning, toiletries and other hotel extras.

Food: If in a major city, discover what their local equivalent of Groupon might be. By planning a head a few days, these quick deals often offer half off meals, giving you the opportunity to try various restaurants for a fraction of the price.

Rural areas can be a bit tougher, but this is where the culinary adventures can really begin. Check out our World Calendar of Events to see food-themed festivals going on in the area that you'll be in. For a small entrance fee, you can sample tons of local delights and get a real feel for fresh ingredients in a fun, casual way at these special events. If you don't feel like putting in all that work, chat with some locals. Many times, no matter where you are in the world, people will have fantastic advice on the most affordable and delicious meals available. In fact, making these connections on the road can lead to amazing friendships for you and your children, as well as invitations to share meals in their homes—a truly unique immersion experience that no family members will ever forget.

Activities: Plan ahead for a few must-do activities, but check for last minute deals as well. Sometimes families can barter for spots on tour buses or even ferry rides in slower seasons when seats go empty. Double check if this is appropriate to do at your destination—some cultures might not be keen on negotiating. Also have realistic expectations—high-end tours will not simply give away spots, even if they are vacant.

A larger family can have the advantage; countless theatre shows, festival events, concerts and even foodie tours will have discounts for big parties. If not listed on their website, don't be afraid to ask.

Other: Utilize forums. Ask other families who have been in your shoes where kids might like to eat at your destination, or which hotel allows for larger family-style rooms. TripAdvisor has some great resources, as well as the Lonely Planet forums. Of course, we at Pure Wander are more than happy to answer any and all of your questions in our comments sections or via e-mail—our fantastic staff has trekked to almost every corner of the globe!



Safety and Smarts

Many parents hold back from exotic vacations because they are concerned about safety.

That is totally understandable. Do understand that there are dangers no matter where you roam, but these can be minimized with the right knowledge and planning. Try some of these tips to put your mind at ease:

- Bring along a business card from the hotel. Seems simple, but can be a huge help, especially if in a country that doesn't speak your language. Use this information, guaranteed to be accurate, to direct taxi drivers, ask for directions and to offer to personnel in case of emergency.
- Have a plan. Quickly note via GPS on your phone or by asking a local where the nearest hospital and police station is located. If children are old enough, let them know too. Have a meeting spot that's obvious, always, in case anyone gets separated from the pack. This is very important in foreign countries where phones might not work.
- Nothing is worth more than your safety. Losing a camera, wallet or other item can be difficult, but if confronted, simply give it up and walk away. This is common sense, but goes for almost anywhere you are in the world.
- Learn a couple local words. Yes, mastering Thai or Cantonese or Portuguese is likely impossible to do before your flight takes off, but make a fun lesson out of the kids learning 'Hello', 'thanks', and 'help'. It's amazing how far a little effort can take you when in a new place—especially with words like 'please' and 'thank you'. There are countless resources online that will have a list of useful phrase wherever you decide to roam, and you can be sure that the locals will appreciate the effort you're making to communicate with them on their own turf.



Lessons Learned

Sure you are going to hear the occasional groan, but making sure your little ones are staying curious, engaged and ever learning while on a trip can be an enlightening experience for both you and them. Vacations are one thing, but a trip to South America, Europe, Asia and beyond can lend for some incredible and unforgettable life lessons.

- New cultures are number one. Kids most likely will have a million questions about what they will see – new clothes, food, music, architecture, everything! If this destination is new to adults too they won't have answers for everything, but a little preparation can go a long way. Read up a little on the place you will be exploring so you can field questions from inquisitive minds.
- Have early school-aged children? This is a perfect time to work on counting! They might be learning about dollars and cents in school, so showing them new, fascinating foreign currency will blow their minds. Keep it simple, but let them feel out the new money and even take a few coins home for a new collection.
- The food battle. Parents with picky eaters can be scared to bring their kids abroad for this reason alone. By all means pack some granola bars and familiar foods, but be prepared to make some games and challenges while eating out. Look for children's cooking classes or patient restaurants that have small plates—this way kids (and teens too) will have the chance to try many things, thus most likely finding some new favorites. Prepare them before you even leave the house by trying to cook some local dishes from your destination together at home.





5 | Remembering The Experience

Photos and Scrapbooks

Once your vacation has come to an end, you will find yourself thinking back to the intricate designs in the local architecture or how the breeze felt rolling over your skin as you relaxed on a foreign coastline. Reliving your trip will be a lot easier if you get creative; you can even use it as a way to bond over your travels with your little one.

Whether you are visiting far-off destinations or exploring hidden gems in your own backyard, bring a digital camera along and take more pictures than you could possibly need. Sometimes it takes a couple shots of the same scene to get the picture you desire—and since they are digital, you can easily delete the extras once you get home. While you are wielding your camera, look for scenes that would make for incredible photo opportunities. The time just before sunset is known as “Golden Hour” because of the beautiful golden glow the sunlight casts. This is the perfect time to head outside with your family to take group pictures. Become familiar with your camera’s self-timer (most will have it) so that you will be able to jump in the pictures with your children. When they are older, they will want to look back and remember the times you had together so it is important that parents don’t get left out of vacation photos. If the self-timer function is too confusing for you, feel free to ask others to take your family’s pictures; chances are they have done the same on their vacations!

Candid shots are also a great way to document your travels. If your family doesn't know that you're recording their actions, they will be a more realistic picture of what your vacation was like. These genuine images are what will make you recall the bonding time and the downtime of your vacations as opposed to only documenting the momentous events and locations. The final type of shot you will want to include the detail shot. This will help you remember the little things, like the indigenous flowers, the food you ate and how your rooms looked.

Once you return home and finish sorting through all of the images you took, print your favorites and get ready to get creative with your child. Head to a scrapbooking store or even a craft store to find themed pages, colorful stickers, stencils, funky-shaped scissors and lots of glue. You will also need to purchase some kind of album to hold your pages. Different sizes are available depending on what you are looking for—if you plan to make one for each trip, you might consider a smaller size so as to have enough room on your bookshelf for every scrapbook. If you are only planning to make them for your biggest and most memorable trips, get a bigger size so you can include more.

Once you have all of the necessary materials, you and your child can lay out the pages, including the photos you took on the trip as well as any other mementos like entrance tickets, metro passes or wristbands. After everything is in place, paste it down and add stickers and other embellishments to complete your scrapbook—because what child doesn't like to play with stickers?. You will have created the ultimate souvenir that your family can treasure for years to come. Because it is so visual, it is also a wonderful way to show your friends and family how much fun you had while you wandering.

Journals

Travel journals provide wanderers with endless opportunities to track many different aspects of their travels—things that may be easily forgotten without the aid of these small books. You can start filling it with information before you even set off, listing restaurants you'd like to eat at or directions from your hotel to different sights. Plan your trip out by writing daily itineraries or keep track of confirmation numbers for flights, car rentals and hotel accommodations.

Practical uses may appeal to parents, but why not get your children interested in travel journals too? They can use them to record the sights and sounds of all of your travel destinations. They allow you to record the intimate details that can only be written from experience. In a month, your children might forget how the air smelled or the way foreign foods tasted, but if they are able to keep track of these memories, they will be able to look back at them for a long time. Aside from the specifics, writing in a travel journal can help youngsters express their feelings about the trip and the thoughts they have while traveling.

Learning to surf Hawaiian waves or sitting atop an elephant's back in Thailand can cause a child's heart to skip a beat and feel overcome by happiness. These are the kinds of moments your children will want to remember so encourage them to be open in their writing to express the way they feel. They will love looking back on these types of adventures when they are older and remembering just how they felt in that moment.

Make this an interactive experience with your child. If you both keep a travel journal, encourage your little one to make at least one entry for every day of adventures, whether they are near or far. Before you fall asleep, you and your child can compare your entries, making it an exciting new tradition that will encourage the use of the journal while allowing you to bond over your travels.



The Art of Travel

Art isn't simply fun and games; it is a way for children to connect to their experiences. Use your own travel kit to create masterpieces on the road, but also plan some specific projects to do as a family when you return home.

Drawing: Use crayons, markers, colored pencils or chalk—whatever medium your child likes to mess around with works! Give kids postcard-sized card stock as a canvas and ask them to draw their favorite highlights from the trip. From mountains to buildings to the smiling faces of family members, these homemade postcards are ideal for developing fine motor skills on youngsters, and it is a great way to see the trip through your child's eyes. After spraying the final product with a sealant to avoid smudges and accidental damage, ask your little one to explain the picture to grandma or grandpa while you record her thoughts. Send it off to family or store it away as a memento to share with your child when she grows up.

Painting: There is no right or wrong way when it comes to art. If you had the good fortune to visit a museum while away on vacation, break out the paints when you get home. Ask your child what she remembers from your visit and look it up online. Whether she is using her color palate to recreate the works of the masters or to paint a dinosaur skeleton she thought was cool, it will be a great way for the entire family to relive their experience.

Photography: Pick a favorite photo spot or landmark while on your trip and take a fun bunch of photos in front of it. Change positions slightly for every shot snapped, and when you get home, have them printed out. Put them in order (a series of 20 – 50 photos is best) and you have your own moving cartoon! Add your own captions with thought or word bubble stickers.

Sculpture: Use clay or toothpicks, the medium doesn't matter when you challenge your kids to recreate architecture they saw on your family trip. Set up an old sheet or tarp on the kitchen table and spend an afternoon building. Young children can use Play Doh to show you what structure they found the most interesting, while older children and teens can be challenged to make a replica of the most fascinating building they saw. Want to make it interesting? Recreate one of the many fountains you saw in Italy using mini marshmallows or construct Seattle's Smith Tower out of Twizzlers.

Creative Arts: A trip journal is a great way to encourage your child to record his memories, but writing creatively is a great chance for him to connect with the destination you left behind. Give him pictures you took or look things up online and ask him to write you a story about a special occasion or epic adventure that took place there—you'll be surprised the little details he remembers and how his tale makes your family's vacation spot come to life.



6 | This Is The End, Really

You've just tackled A LOT of information. But every word was necessary—we really, truly want to put your mind at ease and make you feel anything is possible when it comes to traveling with family. As a growing team at Pure Wander, we've all played roles as fellow travelers with kids—parents, au pairs, nannies, aunts, uncles, siblings, grandparents and teachers. Every one of these labels gives us the ability to be world adventure-seekers alongside our little counterparts. Seeing exotic sites and far away destinations is not just for glamour gods or solo travelers with bottomless wallets. It's for you, and us!

Never hesitate to contact us at Pure Wander with your dreams, fears, hopes, questions, comments and even complaints. That's what makes us unique—our writing is not for us to brag or blast information at you, we strive to build a community of help and understanding to integrate travel into everyone's lives. Maybe you can only manage a backyard camping night or maybe you hope to hop to Bora Bora. Either way, we want you to feel the passion we do for all people, cultures, places and things of this earth, because it can add incredible awareness, love and excitement to your family's lives.

If you've used There's No Beach In Texas to plan your trip, tell us! We've love to hear your story about how you've worked hard, pushed the limits and conquered the world with your wonderful family. And please, feel free to pass it along to friends or use it as a hardcopy gift if you find our advice useful.

So, we've learned:

- Go nuts in your dreams and come up with some crazy, creative ideas!
- Come back to earth and plan that pesky budget.
- Packing wisely leads to happy and safe kids.
- Getting there is half the battle. Cater to your kid's age ranges and conquer.
- Once you arrive, move about with ease by considering various modes of local transportation.
- Tips are like liquid gold. Gathering them from us, friends, family and travel is a breeze.
- Savor every moment of your trip afterwards. Record and reminisce to keep memories alive.

Happy Wandering Friends!

Eileen Cotter

Executive Editor

Pure Wander Magazine



About The Authors



Shauna Armitage is a graduate of Wheelock College in Boston and York College of Pennsylvania. Her first real adventure was a college trip to Egypt when she was 18 years old. She instantly fell in love and has never stopped exploring since. When she became a mother, Shauna became passionate about parenting also and wanted to give her children a taste of travel—and so Pure Wander was dreamed into existence.

The first time **Eileen Cotter** left the country—on the very first day—her passport was stolen. She almost turned back home that moment, but stuck it out instead and realized the world of traveling would change her life. With a few continents and countries now under her belt, she's devoted her career to telling the stories of those she meets abroad and the adventures she gets into as a freelance travel writer. Classically trained in journalism at Bonaventure University, Eileen has been published in CrookedFlight.com, In The Know Traveler and several other publications.

Ashley Ryan graduated from California State University Long Beach with a degree in journalism and anthropology. She has written for a variety of publications including Newport Beach Magazine, Loews Magazine, and Bespoke Magazine. She dreams of studying different cultures around the world. Of the places she has traveled to, Paris, San Francisco, Maui, and Krakow are among her favorite places to roam.

Meghan Miranda is a freelance writer based in the Southeastern United States. She has a Bachelor's of Communication from Wake Forest University and now works with a number of travel and lifestyle publications including Little PINK Book and Four Seasons Magazine.