

Willamette International Travel

FAMILY TRAVEL TIPS

(for traveling with a young family)

HAPPY FAMILY VACATIONS

- ❖ Work your vacation plans around keeping the youngest members of your family happy and amused. If they are happy, the vacation will be a success for everyone!
- ❖ Slow down! There is no way children can handle the same pace or the same amount of stimulation as adults.
- ❖ Stay put. Small children don't adapt well to new places. Moving frequently can be very stressful for them. Rent self-catering accommodation and use it as the base for your vacation.
- ❖ The best memories for children will be the family time you had together, not the sights or museums you visit. So limit sightseeing activities to a maximum of two a day, and allow time to play on the beach, sit by the pool, linger in the park and spend time with your children.

PRE-TRIP PLANNING

- ❖ The more you explain to your child about the trip...
 - where you're going...
 - what to expect...
 - what you will do when you get there...
 - where it is on the map...
 - show them pictures...

...the less anxious they will be about the travel process and the destination.

- ❖ Talk to them about your travel plans as they progress and solidify. They will enjoy the anticipation and excitement as much – if not more – than you will.
- ❖ Let them help pack. Have them pack their own backpack with favorite books and games. Explain what you need to pack and why, so what you're taking makes sense to them. Include at least one familiar item – a blanket, nightlight, stuffed animal.
- ❖ Tape your child's favorite books yourself. On a plane, they can look at the book and pictures while listening to your voice telling them the story on headphones.

DURING THE TRIP

- ❖ Ritual is vital to small children (and adults too!) Try to keep up familiar routines for mealtimes, bath-time and bedtime, especially bedtime. Kids can be stressed out by a busy day of activity, but reading them a familiar book at bedtime will ease their tension and relieve their stress.
- ❖ Every morning, mentally walk through your day and pack accordingly.
- ❖ For the beach: towel, sunscreen, bottled water, snacks, Handiwipes, toys, hat.
- ❖ From ship to port: necessary documentation, change of clothes, Handiwipes, camera, pennies for fountains. If lunch is included, take snacks in case lunch doesn't suit them, and take stickers or crayons so they have something to do.
- ❖ Let them choose postcards for friends, relatives, day care providers, etc. You can write what they want to say and let them stick the stamps on. This also helps them to recap and retain what they've been doing.

AIRPLANE TRAVEL

- ❖ Explain to your young child how things work and what people do. For instance:

- The different noises the airplane makes.
- Who are the flight attendants and what do they do.
- Airplane etiquette: Talk quietly. Walk around only when you're going to the toilet. Leave your seatbelt on until you get up from your seat. Don't kick the back of seats.
- ❖ What to take on board:
 - Snacks and juice.
 - A favorite blanket, soothing toy, child's pillow, comfy slippers.
 - Change of clothes, for parents too!
 - Handiwipes, tummy medicine, something to suck as the plane takes off and lands.
- ❖ Many airports now have excellent activity areas for children where you can keep them occupied during layovers.

LODGING:

- 👉 Verify hotel amenities with your travel agent – swimming pool, restaurant, what is nearby – and share this with your child.
- 👉 Book all-suite hotels or condos, which have more space to spread out and mimic home more – like a kitchen to prepare favorite meals and snacks.
- 👉 Think about the hotel setting, and your needs. Does the beach have “sand-fills-your-swimsuit” waves or shallow, lapping wavelets that a toddler can sit in? Is the pool an event in itself, with slides, or a basic rectangle? Will you be sitting in your room during a nap or when your child goes to bed for the night? If so, does the room need a nice view? Would room service be helpful?

CAR:

- 🚗 Rent a four-door – much easier to load and unload families. Generally it costs about \$2-3 per day extra to guarantee a 4-door.
- 🚗 Decide if you're taking your own infant or child seat. If not, you must rent one from the car rental company, and these are usually not in great shape! Some clients purchase an inexpensive seat to take with them, and then donate it to a shelter; don't have to move their seats.
- 🚗 Take airsick bags from the plane to keep in the car.

TAXI:

- 🚕 Make sure you know the child seat law of your destination. Most taxis don't carry them, so if your child is going to need one, you will need to order a taxi that does have a car seat.

CRUISING:

- 🚢 Check the cabin size – a 150- 200 sq. ft. cabin feels very small! A test: have your family live in your largest walk in closet or bathroom for a few hours ☺ Most ships allow only a maximum of 4 guests to cabin, and not all cabins accommodate more than 2. If connecting cabins are needed, advance planning is imperative, especially over holidays and Spring Break.
- 🚢 Find out if there is a shower or shower/tub combo. If your child cannot take a shower alone, there is no way you can assist them without flooding the bathroom.
- 🚢 Check if the cabin has individual climate control - shipboard ones won't match everyone.
- 🚢 Check the kids club - when they are open, any additional costs, what are the age groupings?
- 🚢 Make sure the cabin TV works and offers family-style movies.
- 🚢 Make sure there is adequate storage space especially if the cabin size is small.
- 🚢 Make sure there are extra blankets and pillows.
- 🚢 Know how to make use of the service staff. What can your cabin steward do for you? What hours does he work? Who do you contact if he is unavailable?

- Tip your waiter and bus boy lavishly if they have been sensitive to your child's needs and desires. A happy mealtime atmosphere is worth every penny.
- Keep in mind that on-board cruise staff are often away from their families for months at a time, so with little encouragement they are delighted to lavish affection on yours!