

Planning a Family Vacation

Explore possibilities. Prepare for the journey. Make room for family experiences.

● What does planning a family vacation involve?

A family vacation may be a weekend away, road trip, visit with relatives, camping trip, or longer domestic or international journey. Planning can help families compare options, anticipate expenses and travel needs, and decide what is realistic for their household. There is no required length, destination, or style of vacation.

● Start with the experience your family wants

Purpose and interests:

Rest, visiting loved ones, outdoor activities, cultural experiences, recreation, or trying something new.

People traveling:

Consider ages, interests, accessibility needs, mobility, routines, and individual preferences.

Timing:

Compare school and work schedules, season, weather, travel time, and how much flexibility the household has.

Destination and travel:

Compare distances, transportation choices, lodging, available activities, and any required reservations.

● Understand the full cost of the trip

A vacation budget can include transportation, lodging, meals, activities, fees, parking, baggage, equipment, pet care, and a reserve for unexpected expenses. Compare the total expected cost rather than only the advertised rate. Review cancellation and refund terms before paying. Families may choose to save over time, shorten a trip, change destinations, or consider another type of experience.

● Prepare for the travel details

Transportation:	Confirm departure times, baggage rules, child passenger safety needs, and transportation at the destination.
Documents:	Check travel identification and ticket requirements. For international travel, confirm passport, visa, entry/exit, and child-travel consent rules for every destination.
Health and safety:	Review destination-specific health information and discuss individual concerns with a healthcare professional when appropriate. Carry needed medications and emergency contacts.
Accessibility:	Contact accommodations, transportation providers, and attractions about the specific supports or features your family needs.
Balance and flexibility:	Consider rest, meals, breaks, weather alternatives, and time for spontaneous activities.

Remember: A meaningful family vacation does not have to be expensive, long, or filled with activities. Families can choose the experience that fits their priorities and circumstances.



My Family Vacation Planner

Use this printable worksheet to organize ideas, compare possibilities, and prepare for your next step.

1 What kind of experience are we considering?

☐ Relaxing/restful☐ Visiting people☐ Nature/outdoors☐ Arts/culture☐ Amusement/recreation☐ Other: _____

Who will travel? _____

Preferred dates: _____

What would each person especially enjoy? _____

2 Compare two trip options

Consideration	● Option A	◆ Option B
Destination / dates		
Travel and lodging		
Activities / accessibility		
Estimated total cost		
Notes / questions		

3 Estimate our vacation costs

Transportation \$ _____ Lodging \$ _____ Meals \$ _____ Activities \$ _____

Fees / supplies \$ _____ Extra reserve \$ _____ Estimated total \$ _____

4 Before we leave

- ☐ Confirm reservations and cancellation terms
- ☐ Review documents and transportation rules
- ☐ Check health, medication, and accessibility needs
- ☐ Save important contacts and an alternative plan

5 My next step

One thing I need to research or confirm: _____

Person / website to contact: _____ Target date: _____

Trusted resources

Consumer.gov — Making a Budget

<https://consumer.gov/your-money/making-budget>

TSA — Acceptable Identification

<https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification>

National Park Service — Accessibility Trip Planning

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/accessibility/plan-your-visit.htm>

CDC — Traveling with Children

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/children/>

U.S. Department of State — Travel with Minors

<https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/planning/personal-needs/minors.html>

Explore further with OH FAMILY

<https://www.ohfamilyinc.org> — Explore & Connect

About this guide

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Disclosure: This guide provides general educational planning information, not individualized legal, financial, or medical advice. Prices, provider policies, transportation and documentation requirements, accessibility arrangements, and destination conditions vary and may change. Confirm current information with relevant providers, agencies, and qualified professionals before making decisions.