

Family Travel Tips

PLANNING

Trip Research

- Your Maritime Travel counsellor has all the details on great family friendly resorts in your destination of choice. Make sure to check out our Recommended Resorts for Families brochure, which gives our top choices for family resorts in Mexico, Jamaica, Cuba and throughout the Caribbean.
- Resorts may offer a variety of age-appropriate kid friendly activities and our knowledgeable counsellors will help you select the resort that's the best fit for your family.
- Certain tour companies offer services and extras tailored to families, such as special booking deals and promotions. Your Maritime Travel counsellor has the inside scoop on these offers.
- Thinking about a family cruise vacation? Your Maritime Travel counsellor can help you choose the right cruise line and itinerary for your family. Our Maritime Travel Cruising Guide offers a true insider's look into the world of cruising, along with lots of tips and information. Get the inside scoop on our recommended cruise lines and itineraries and then talk to your Maritime Travel counsellor about how to put it all together for the family cruise of a lifetime.
- Research your cruise ship before you go to familiarize yourself with all the onboard amenities and activities available to your group. Once on board, check in with guest services or the shore excursion desk so you know what to expect in the different ports of call.
- You may want to consider pre-booking shore excursions as spaces can fill up fast.

Flights and Travel Arrangements

- When it comes to travelling with children, airline policies can vary widely. For example, not all airlines have a kids-fly-free policy for children under the age of two. Your travel counsellor will help you to navigate the options.
- If possible, choose flights with times that work best for your kids' daily routine.
- Get appropriate health and travel insurance in the event of a last-minute illness or family emergency. It is a small cost that offers huge protection.

- Some tour operators offer discounts for moms or dads travelling alone with children under the age of 13. Ask your Maritime Travel counsellor about available deals and discounts.
- Double-check the flight schedule 24 hours in advance to make sure you are aware of any changes. Sign up online for email and cell phone alerts in case there are last-minute changes.
- Check in for your flight as soon as this service becomes available to you (generally 24 hours before scheduled departure), so you have the best choices for seat selection. If your budget allows, it can be worth the extra fee to pre-select your seats when you book your trip, or even to purchase an extra seat to give you more flexibility.

Documents

- Check passport expiry dates as soon as possible to avoid last-minute panic!
- All Canadian children, newborn to 16, require a passport of their own to travel. For information on obtaining a passport for your child, visit: www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/child/
- Canadian children are required to carry a consent letter if they are travelling abroad alone, with only one parent/guardian, or friends or relatives, or with a group. For more information, visit: www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter

Tips

- Take care of yourself! Flying with children can be stressful, so taking care of your mental wellbeing is important. When possible, don't leave things to the last-minute – get your packing done and organized well in advance, and ensure all your travel documents are in order. When planning your trip, make a to-do list, so you can avoid last-minute running around, including trips to the bank, calls to credit card companies to alert them to your travel plans, etc.
- Plan to arrive at the airport with plenty of time to spare to ease some of your travel-day stress.
- Keep everyone's documents together in one easy-to-access location.

Family Travel Tips

PACKING

Packing Tips

- All airlines have strict baggage allowances for both carry-on and checked luggage. Familiarize yourself with your airline's baggage policies (i.e. weight and size restrictions) to avoid unexpected surcharges and fees at the airport.
- Familiarize yourself with the restrictions on travelling with liquids, gels and aerosols in your carry-on luggage. There is a 100-ml maximum for containers storing these substances and all of these containers must fit in a 1-quart-size zip-lock bag. Each passenger is only allowed one of these bags.
- You may take baby formula, food, or milk for a child under the age of two (pack extra in the event of travel delays). Mothers travelling with or without children can now take breast milk through security. If you are bringing breast milk/formula onboard, you will need to declare it to the officials when passing through security. It is important to note that airlines are unlikely to be able to store any food for you, so you should make sure you have a small cooler bag for this purpose.
- Pack extra hats and sunscreen if travelling south – you will want to ensure your kids are adequately protected from the sun.
- Wondering how many diapers and wipes to bring? Take note of how many you use in a day to give you an idea of how much you will need to bring. All-inclusive resorts do not typically have diapers for purchase on-site and while certain cruise lines carry some of these items in their onboard stores, it's not a reliable option. If you are travelling to a destination where you are renting a home or staying in a hotel with amenities close by, then it may be worth it for you to bring enough diapers and wipes for your travel time and then purchase more once you arrive to cut down on the amount you need to pack.
- Bring all medicines, a thermometer and a first-aid kit as you never know when your kids may get a temperature or feel unwell.
- If you do not already have one, consider investing in a small umbrella stroller that's easy to transport. You will need to collapse the stroller and leave it at the gate before boarding the airplane. Once your plane lands and you disembark you will need to wait for the stroller to be brought up.
- You may wish to bring a child-size carry-on, but be practical – i.e. is your child old enough to take on the responsibility

of taking on their own carry-on, or will you end up pulling it along with your own? Some children like to bring a wheelie bag and carry it themselves as well as sit on it in the airport – do what works best for you and your family.

- Consider backpacks for older children. Backpacks are easy to manoeuvre with in the airport and it allows the kids to pack their own items to keep them entertained during the journey.

What to Bring on the Plane

- Pack lots of snacks in the event the airline does not have adequate snacks or runs out of their onboard supply of various items (the further back you sit, the more likely you will have less selection if they begin to run low).
- Bring extra wipes, extra diapers/pull-ups.
- Bring your child's favorite blanket, toy or soother (bring extra!) to help them settle.
- Simple games and books will help keep children entertained on board in addition to inflight entertainment. It's important to note that some airplanes may not have in-flight entertainment available, so be prepared with a backup option (movies/shows downloaded on a laptop or tablet) if this turns out to be the case.
- You may want to consider buying an inexpensive pair of child-sized headphones that go over the ears as some children may find it difficult to use the earbuds provided by the airline.
- Wondering about your car seat? If you aren't planning on using it on the plane, then you may want to consider either renting one with your car rental or borrowing from relatives or friends to use when you arrive at your destination.
- You may wish to bring a baby carrier onboard if this helps soothe your baby. You or your partner can walk baby around at intervals.
- Some parents like to bring a "plane bag" onboard to surprise their kids. These bags can contain snacks, candy, coloring books, dollar store toys, etc.
- What to wear? Comfortable clothing with layers – for both you and your kids. Pajamas are great for early morning/late night flights. You may want to consider packing the bulky winter jackets in your checked luggage to help reduce the number of items you need to remove for security and bring on the plane. Children old enough to walk may be asked to remove their shoes so slip-on or Velcro footwear is best.

Family Travel Tips

AT THE AIRPORT

Security

- Be ready for security. Strollers and car seats must go through the X-ray machine, so remove kids and their items in advance. If travelling with an infant, you will be asked to walk through the metal detector holding the baby.

Pre-boarding

- Take advantage of early boarding! Use this time to get on the plane and settle everyone in and organize your bags onboard for easy access.

Onboard

- As with adults, takeoff and landing can produce ear pain in children due to changes in air pressure. Try breastfeeding, or offer your child a pacifier, a bottle or food since swallowing helps relieve your little one's ear pain.
- You may not be permitted to change your baby on the seat, so plan to use the washroom onboard which has a change table. Washrooms are small, so take only what you need to change baby and leave your diaper bag on the seat.
- You may worry about your children's behavior on the plane. Some parents choose to bring funny notes/gifts (earplugs) for those sitting close to them, but remember that you can only do your best. Babies may cry and kids may get restless/cranky regardless of how prepared you are.
- There are many creative ways you can try to get your kids to behave – one of our favorites is telling kids that the airplane police are on every flight and looking out for badly behaved children (what to do if they catch them is another story!).
- Relax and try to remember that you are not the only ones travelling with children!

DESTINATION TIPS

Resorts

- The first few hours in-resort can be overwhelming, so check in with the concierge or representative on how to make the most of your stay with your family, including information on kids' clubs, special events, etc.
- If your child thrives on a schedule, try to stick to it as much as possible. This will help to keep kids rested and more relaxed.

Cruises

- Certain cruise lines offer daycare for tots as young as six months – but be sure to book space as soon as you embark because daycare spots fill up quickly.
- Kids clubs are a great onboard resource for children – once you are settled in it is recommended that you visit the kids club to register your child and find out the schedule for | the week.
- Some cruise lines do not permit the use of swim diapers in the pool areas, so you will need to check on rules and policies.
- Try to stick to your normal schedule as much as possible. If your child eats at a designated time and you would like to eat at various restaurants during your cruise, make sure to plan ahead by making your dinner reservations in advance of your sailing. Early dinner times usually fill up first. Once onboard, you can always call to re-schedule as needed. The cruise buffets are flexible with dining times.
- Most restaurants offer children's menus.
- A small umbrella stroller is a great way to manoeuvre small children around the ship!

Maritime Travel
We Know Travel Best.™

Stay
Connected



like us:
[maritimetravel.ca](https://www.maritimetravel.ca)



watch us:
[maritimetraveltube](https://www.maritimetraveltube.com)



follow us:
[maritime_travel](https://twitter.com/maritime_travel)



pin it:
[maritimetravel](https://www.maritimetravel.com)