

**D**id your parents tell you to phone home, don't stay out late, wear comfy shoes—but have a good time? Timeless advice includes taking this Inside Scoop with your travel documents; it's packed with tips for a sane, safe and enjoyable trip.

**travel:** delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

### Taking an Infant?

Prepare to feed infants for take off and landing when ear pressure affects them—sucking alleviates their pain. Toddlers? Sucking pacifiers helps equalize their ear pressure. Bring any medication they might need during your entire trip: it might be hard to buy your preferred or necessary brands en route or at your destination. Excellent tips, <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/travelling-with-children>.

### Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate getaways. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- required documentation
- how to prepare the kids
- Kids Club & activities
- what to bring from home.

## Maritime Travel

We Know Travel Best.™

# Maritime Travel

## Inside Scoop: Solo Parents

**Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey**

**T**ravelling with children has its own rewards in seeing the world through their eyes, as well as ensuring they become travel savvy. Whether playing on a warm beach or trying new foods, everything is an experience for them. Experienced solo parents know the journey is often not the best part so try to travel at their pace: relax and be a good travelling role model. Parents love to share tips, like these:

- Plan a transition day after trips. Don't expect a child to wind down immediately and get back into firm routines such as bedtime and school.
- For young kids, buy a fold-up umbrella stroller. With rentals at some attractions costing \$15 a day, you'll pay for it your first day; it's also great for ferrying groceries and toys.
- If you can, upgrade to a suite; they're useful when kids (and you) have different bedtimes.
- Internet access is increasingly available and affordable worldwide.
- To balance online info from tourism websites such as events and weather, get books from your library. It's a great way to get kids excited and become familiar with the destination. Make recipes from the countries you're going.
- Build excitement before going—have kids mark each day off a calendar.
- Tell kids what to expect—explain that “travelling days” are not normal. Reinforce they must listen to you, stay by you for safety reasons and be patient.
- Travelling where English isn't the main language? Teach them some basic words and phrases. Let them use a phone or tablet's translation app and help you communicate—kids pick up languages quickly and will feel increasingly competent.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—your child is watching. Having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through anything (you know that already—you're a parent).

### Documentation is Your Friend

Each traveller must have a valid passport (including for the US), [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport), for children, [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/child/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/child/index.asp). Be prepared to show passports often (keep boarding passes tucked in): at check-in, through security, when boarding aircraft and at customs. You must bring legal documents: e.g., if a single mother with no father on the birth certificate, you must have a long form birth certificate. If a single parent, you must have a notarized letter from the other parent confirming that travel is allowed specifying the dates, places, the relationship to the child(ren), contact information—it must be signed by the other parent.

If the child travels without either parent, a consent letter must be signed, <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter>. If the child you're travelling with is not your biological child, carry legal guardianship forms. To avoid aggravation, consider notarization; there have been cases of refusal to enter a country. If the other parent is deceased, you may be asked for a death certificate. Ensure all birth dates and names are correct on all legal/travel documents. **Getting through documentation might seem onerous: but it's for a child's protection.** The Canadian government maintains this helpful site, <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children>.

Get children used to travel: when old enough, have them present their passport and boarding pass. Besides making kids feel responsible, it's an extra set of hands (but promptly get documents back for safe-keeping). Put a list of names and phone numbers (such as your lodging) with your photograph in each child's pocket and instruct them as to what to do if you should be separated. Of course you carry recent

photos of your children! Give contact info/itinerary to contacts at home. Some merchants require photo ID to use credit cards. Snap a cell picture of cards and passport info (and keep your phone safe). For cell phones, check with your provider on roaming packages. **Tip:** We strongly recommend Maritime Travel cancellation/medical insurance also for the kids. It's valuable peace of mind. See travel advisories for your destination(s) and other advice, <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>.



## Your Airline

As your plane might be coming in from elsewhere and delayed, confirm your flight prior to departure. CATSA can prohibit items as security risks

[www.catsa.gc.ca/home](http://www.catsa.gc.ca/home) and note

*“Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).”* Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in (and bag-drop) closes 1hr before departure. If late, you're not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal

“code-shares;” you have tickets for one airline and travel on another airline.

**Baggage:** Size/weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies: check with the airline. **Entry & Departure:** ask your counsellor for updated advisories on passports, tourist cards and required documentation. Your counsellor will tell you if any departure taxes have been covered; have local cash when leaving in case not.



## Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips

at [www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops](http://www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops)

☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

## When Leaving

Do a room sweep for belongings. In developing countries, many visitors leave children's' clothing, toiletries and/or school supplies. If you leave something for a staff member, add a note as s/he will need it to pass hotel security. Although check-out is usually noon, you may be able to pay a late fee to stay longer, otherwise pack what's needed for the hours before departure and check luggage with the hotel. Don't buy or take anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs (such as plants, meat/animal products, wood with holes, endangered species parts). You are to know the limits for what you're allowed to bring home, [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html).

## Being Away Together

Enjoy local specialties in moderation and avoid uncooked food and street vendors. Tell your child(ren) to not go near street animals (possible rabies). Drink bottled water and encourage children to wash their hands often. If you're at a resort, ice is safe, just check with the tour rep. Don't feel you have to take them to every activity—they need unstructured play. Although on vacation, try to keep to a routine; all kids need downtime. Bring books; after you're done, a local library or school will welcome them (in any language).

You may be approached to buy items. If you're not interested, be firm but polite. If visiting attractions or theme parks, go early for less crowds and don't stay all day. No child (or solo parent) has that much stamina. Return to your room for an afternoon nap (yea! you too!) or a swim. All parents worry about safety and streetproofing. Travelling challenges include using public washrooms but gender-free washrooms are increasing so go with them. When they're old enough to protest, assure them you'll wait outside.

Tell kids to not open your hotel room door. Getting on and off elevators, keep them beside you in case doors close quickly. In case you get separated, tell kids to find a woman with a nametag (all resort employees wear them) and/or find their way to the hotel's front desk. Depending on roaming packages for cell phones and if your child has one, use texts to keep in touch.

At a resort? Most hotels provide hair dryers so save that space for a stuffie. There's usually orientation; make sure you all attend. Ask the tour rep or Kids Club staff (meet them with your kids so they know who you are, kids don't have to go every day) if there are other solo parents. Local schools are great places for visits and most welcome you (go to a dollar store for school supplies before leaving Canada). These visits also gently show children about life elsewhere and encourage compassion.

## The Language of Courtesy

Delays and cancellations are part of travelling. Indeed a slower pace is guaranteed in other countries: enjoy it! Tread lightly—on holiday we're more casual; when you brush your teeth, don't run water until rinsing. At buffets, start small—if a food isn't to one's liking, waste is reduced. Most staff work long hours—smiles, tips, patience and a kind word are always welcome.

## Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black luggage so put coloured tape or ribbon on your bags to spot them quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. Use luggage with built-in wheels—when juggling kids, these are life-savers. If your child is 5 years+, s/he can likely (and will be proud to) pull their own; colourful wheeled bags are reasonably priced.

With random checks at airport security, wear loafers or slip-on shoes: even children are checked. Security might ask you to turn on electronic games—even toys. Take food even if you've ordered a child's meal (or there's no meal): pack trail mix, crackers (no meat, veg, dairy across borders). In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with dosage and doctor's phone number.

In carry-on, pack passports, travel and legal documents, pens for filling out forms, money, extra glasses, a t-shirt/undies and swimsuits in case you're at a resort and your room isn't ready. Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/ resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre. You may take baby formula, food or milk if a child aged 2 and under (0-24 months) travels.

Resealable plastic bags are great for items through security and all sorts of kid collections for when you come back. Items suggested by parents to take (besides a sense of humour): facial tissues, disinfectant wipes and pens/a notebook so kids can draw what they see.

Also permitted in carry-on: cell phones, portable music players, nail clippers, disposable razors and umbrellas. Items you can't take on include sports equipment; always check in advance what's allowed with your airline.

## Now Book a Dedicated Tour!

Increasingly, tour companies are making travel more affordable and accessible for solo parents travelling with kids. Besides dedicated trips encouraging children to form friendships with other children, these tours give a solo parent opportunities to spend time with other adults (yipes!). Some tours even offer accommodation based on single occupancy prices with varying fees for children depending on their ages. Such tours aren't just to popular destinations and tourist spots—talk to your counsellor about Costa Rica, Thailand, India, Egypt, Vietnam and Morocco, such trips including all sorts of adventures for all ages.

## Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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[www.maritimetravel.ca](http://www.maritimetravel.ca)



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadian citizens: Emergency? See <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>. Contact Global Affairs 1-800-387-3124 in Canada/US or 1-613-996-8885 (collect if needed), [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca).