

TRAVEL WITH YOUR WORLD

Some of our greatest travel memories are made with family – with our children, with our parents, or with both children and parents. These family holidays build memories for a lifetime, but they can also be stressful. In this feature, we bring you tips, tricks and insights from your fellow travellers and professional travel planners to make your vacations *en famille* occasions for joy

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BUT, FIRST, A CONFESSION

I wasn't great at travelling with my infant son. All I can remember of the first time I took a flight with him is how many things I managed to drop – first, the boarding passes, then the napkins that are always a part of paraphernalia of carrying babies around, and, finally, the diaper bag itself when its strap decided that the airport was the best place possible to give way. It didn't get much better as he grew into a small boy – not for any fault of his; he was and remains a thoroughly amenable traveller; I was usually too stressed to go with the flow. And, then, there was that road trip where he couldn't bring himself to pee into the bushes. He was distraught at the idea.

We waited. We finally started doing serious trips when he was nine, did not have to be carried, and very visibly enjoyed every aspect of our carefully-curated trips. From child-friendly destinations like Singapore, to slightly-more adult ones like Bangkok and, in recent times, culinary journeys through Italy and Turkey; from, parallelly, eating only burgers and fries no matter what the destination to sampling tripe sandwiches in Florence and a chicken dessert in Turkey, we have come of family travel age.

As I put this feature together and spoke to many parents (see side bars on these pages to meet our collaborators), I could no longer deny the fact: I had done him a disservice.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY

Smriti Lamech has been doing road trips since her daughter was barely a month old. Radhika Dossa D'Cruz took her daughter Alekhya everywhere with her from the time she was six months old. As did Ami Bhat her daughter. Says Hrish Thota, "My wife and I did three 'babymoos' when she was pregnant, so I like to think our son developed his love for travel from the womb itself!" For Anu and Pavan, "Travelling with Kabir was the most natural progression for us. We both knew that we wanted to travel the world with him, not only for the experiences and memories it would give us, but for what travel would give him. In 2018, when he was a year-and-a-half old, we challenged ourselves to do #12months12trips. We travelled with him every month, both locally and internationally, during which we all learned more than we could imagine and grew together as a family." Lynette Menezes has been travelling with her husband and three (now grown-up) children since the youngest turned four.



Pavan, Kabir and Anu on holiday



Judy and her family in Paris

IT'S ABOUT FAMILY TIME OFF SITE

Spending time together is a key aspect of a family holiday. "We love travelling together," agrees Smriti. "Well, we, as parents, love travelling with the kids. I'm not sure how much they enjoy our company!" "We make sure we take at least two long vacations a year, and as many road trips on long weekends as possible," Ami adds. "It is a great time to bond and destress from the routine of regular life, which is extremely important given that we all have crazy schedules." Radhika agrees: "A family holiday for us is quality time just being together, because we don't see enough of each other otherwise; Robin produces TV commercials and is always travelling, and Alekhya has been studying abroad since she was 16." "We enjoy the time we spend together bonding," says Lynette. "Sometimes, the close proximity brings up issues that have been pushed aside and, →



RADHIKA DOSSA D'CRUZ

Animal whisperer with a passion for film, food, words and the world at large

Travels with: daughter Alekhya ("only child; best friend") and husband Robin

Best family holiday: "Italy in 2018. Alekhya graduated, and we had a month-long break. We did Italy by train and road with long stops in Tuscany exploring the countryside, getting lost."



ANU & PAVAN

Pavan is a restaurateur and cofounder of a food start-up, Tasty Tales; Anu is a former professional dancer, teaches children performing arts, and manages Hungry Travellers (@ @ hungry_travellers)

Travel with: their four-year-old son, Kabir



Ami and her family in Bhutan

Time for you, time for us

It's fine to want some time alone on a family holiday. Work it so one parent gets a break while the other is with the children, and then switch. If you have reliable babysitting in place, a lunch date might be better than a dinner; things going awry are always set right much easier in the daylight.



Gunjal with her husband and daughters on vacation

although this is stressful, we have always had a lot of relational and emotional healing during holidays." Now that her children are adults, "our holidays have been relaxing; they really like being together."

A CHANCE TO TEACH... AND LEARN

Someone I admire used to take her kids out of school if something came up in travel. She always said that travel could teach them more about the world than sitting in a classroom ever could. It's not something I was ever able to do, but there's no denying that travel expands the mind in the least painful way possible.

"We travel with our son so that he can learn about the world practically rather than just through books," says Hrish. Adds Gunjal Jain: "I have always believed that no classroom teaching can substitute for real-life experiences, and that travel to new places with exposure to new cultures is a lesson in itself." Anu agrees: "I think our biggest takeaway is that kids are far more resilient and adaptable than we give them credit for. They enjoy the feeling of being on the move and they thrive on all the stimulation. The interactions along the way, the exposure to new food, new cultures, new languages have a deep impact on their development. Kabir has learnt so many life skills thanks to our travels – interacting with people of different ages, making friends with children even when there is a language barrier, becoming flexible enough to sleep on the go, opening up to trying out new cuisines..."

DO PLAN....

Travelling with children can be unpredictable. Planning can take some of the sting out of mishaps. Although seasoned and brave travellers like Smriti don't plan, for most, it begins long before the holiday – with the itinerary and day-to-day schedule. "You need to plan your day with a good amount of breaks, and keep kids hydrated and well fed," says Hrish. Judy Morris and her husband plan keeping climatic conditions in mind. Gunjal works to have free days interspersed with planned days. Lynette remembers that when her children were young, she used to plot a fairly full itinerary. "It would be all about what they would love doing – visits to zoos, butterfly parks, theme parks, etc. Children have short attention spans. While I would like to trawl through an entire museum or historical site, they would get hungry, bored or irritated a lot faster. I used to include short visits to historical sights, important scientific places, museums, art galleries, alongside the fun activities. I would also schedule sightseeing or major walking only every alternate day, allowing for a chill day in between when we would sleep in, swim in the pool, eat full meals."

...BUT BE READY TO GO WITH THE FLOW

The best-laid plans can go awry, when a child needs to go suddenly to the loo and you all miss the train, or a tantrum derails a tight itinerary. "Travelling with kids requires a lot of flexibility," Smriti points out. "They get tired, fall ill, want to do something else. You have to be able to pivot, and fast." "I learned the hard way not to ruin my own holiday by being on too tight a timetable," says Radhika. "I like to go with the flow, to enjoy the day without that extra stress. Of course, we still need to catch trains and planes on time!" While Judy does plan carefully for big holidays, "when we venture out on extended weekends, we go with the flow." "Though we have some days planned, especially when we have to visit museums or adventure parks, we intersperse them with free days, to explore the unexplored and to travel to offbeat smaller villages and towns," says Gunjal, "because that's where real fun is, and that's where real learning takes place; it teaches us to come out of our comfort zones and learn to adapt!" Ami works with a free-flowing plan at the destination for most family holidays. "The only thing we book are the hotels. The activities are generally a bucket list that we put into action after we've reached the place. The reason for this is so we can take in local inputs and make the



SMRITI LAMECH

Independent media professional, and English language teacher

Travels with: her husband and two teenaged kids; once in a while with her parents, or his school friends ("a huge gang")

Great family holiday:

"Australia. We dived at the Great Barrier Reef, and hired a car and drove all over the country. It was spectacular."

most of the local deals that are available. Sure, this exploratory travel can sometimes go wrong, but we've now learned to just accept that sportingly as a part of our travel experience." "My husband is a lot more relaxed than I am when our plans fall through and we have to think of something else," Lynette admits. "He's great at making the most of every situation. We had once planned a drive through northern Europe, and I had all the maps in place to go to Norway and Sweden. But then a cold wave hit and it began to snow heavily, so we just drove south, going where we felt like, and had one of our best holidays ever."

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A HOLIDAY FOR EVERYONE

Keeping children engaged is half the battle won. Keeping them excited is the jackpot. Working with different interests is key to a holiday that will be remembered for years to come – and for all the right reasons. It's important to keep in mind that the holiday is a break for everyone – including the parents, which means the intention to cater to different interests is already a great first step. "We work consciously to find things everyone enjoys," says Radhika. "When Alekhya was 10, she and I went diving in Havelock. She got her certification too. We had a blast, we spent time together. We did not go out every night that time, but, when Robin is around, we do go out more. On the other hand, museum fatigue after Paris meant we skipped the museums in Amsterdam and, instead, spent the time with cousins, cycling and swimming and exploring small towns. That said, some educational and cultural things are non-negotiable. Like, in Paris, →

Radhika, Alekhya and Robin on holiday



Lynette with her husband and children in Italy



Hrish, Sunitha and Reyanish in Sydney, Australia

TRAVEL PRO



SUMITRA SENAPATY

Founder of WOW Club – inspiring all women to travel, and an avid traveller herself

Sumitra sees holidays with immediate family as a way of bonding. With all her experience in travel, she sees the itinerary and choice of destination as important first points to focus on when planning a holiday, with flights and length of holiday the next considerations. She always ensures there is enough leisure time built into the holiday, and that the programme is not too rushed, and that it includes a few interesting features like concerts or a gourmet meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant. One of her most memorable family holidays was in Uganda. "We walked with the silverback gorillas; I loved that holiday because it was so different and unusual, and offered the right amount of relaxation and adventure."

THE PRO TAKE

Sumitra sees more nuclear family units going on holidays, probably because it's easier to plan and execute, whereas, on a multigenerational holiday, all might not be able to cope physically with the demands on energy levels and enthusiasm. When you go with a travel professional, she avers, all the nitty gritty are ironed out, and the family can look forward to informed travel recommendations. A travel professional would also be better able to include unique experiences that will be enjoyed by all, depending upon their age group and budget.

Sumitra's tips:

- Try to restrict driving time to a maximum of four hours a day on a family holiday.
- Start your day at 9am, not earlier.



JUDY MORRIS

Lifestyle blogger at The Other Brain Inc and sustainable travel and lifestyle micro-influencer (@freemindtree)

Travels with: her husband and son Riaan

Best family holiday:

"Our vacation in Europe was fantastic; one, because it was our first major trip as a family and, two, because all our interests were covered in this trip."



LYNETTE MENEZES

Pastor – Every Nation Church; mother and grandmother

Travels with: her husband Kevin and three children

Best family holiday: "We flew to Frankfurt and hired a car, drove to Austria, Monaco, Italy, Switzerland and southern France. It was just before my oldest daughter moved to Singapore to work and we knew it would be one of the last we would do together."





HRISH THOTA

Digital marketing manager, content writer in the software industry (@dhempe)

Travels with: his wife Sunitha Bora and their seven-year-old son, Reyansh



GUNJAL JAIN

Mother, storyteller and travel blogger

Travels with: her husband and two daughters usually, but annually also with family or family friends

Best family holiday:

"Vietnam – full of hope and lovely people! We danced with the locals on streets, ate on pavements, shopped at local stalls, and stayed at some of the world's leading hotels. It is a country etched in all our hearts!"



AMI BHAT

Full time travel writer and blogger – www.thrillingtravel.in

Travels with: her husband and daughter; sometimes extended family, including cousins

Best family holiday: "Bhutan!"

It was interesting to see how each one of us feel in love with the place – but for different reasons. For my daughter, it was the thrill of the mountains, for my hubby, it was the calm, and, for me, it was the culture."

you cannot not see the Louvre." "We mix up the holiday," Smriti says, "A little shopping, a little adventure, a little museum." "We ensure that at least one adult engages the kids with back-up activities in case they are not interested in the main activity," adds Hrish. "I've learned that if we do our research and plan well in advance, it's not very difficult to keep everyone's interest piqued," says Gunjal. "From travelling extensively to 35+ countries, I've learnt that every country – off-beat or touristy – has something that caters to all age groups." And it's fine to separate and indulge. "At any destination, we try and pick at least one activity that each of us likes," reveals Ami. "For example, a trip to Bhutan had the dzong and heritage trail for me, hiking for all of us, a relaxed evening by the river for my husband. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, I went diving, there was whale-watching for my daughter, and beach-hopping for him."

BITING INTO THE FOOD QUESTION

One of the things that used to really rattle me when we first travelled with my son was how he just wouldn't eat local food. With time, I realised that, since burgers and fries were rare treats at home, it was fine if he wanted to taste every type in, say, Singapore, instead of the local chilli crab. He ate well – just differently. Ami obviously has had better luck with that than we did: "We have always encouraged our daughter to try local food. Even when she was a baby, we used to go to local joints and get her the local vegetables and boiled rice. Since she has learnt to adapt, food has never been an issue. Of course, we always keep some back-up snacks for long waits and emergencies." As has Judy: "Kids are more adaptive than we think. Most children are now acquainted with world cuisines and willing to try new foods."

"Make sure everyone tanks up on breakfast, and plan where you want to eat," advises Radhika. "Queues around food places near tourist sights are the worst, and meltdowns will happen! I'm diabetic, so I'm always prepared with food. And keep in mind that it's a holiday, so have fun: pizza, gelato, picnic food are all good!" "I make sure we shop for basic food as soon as we land," says Lynette. "Some chips and chocolates, but lots of cereal, milk, juice cartons, bread and cheese. We carry these wherever we go each day, so we don't have major hunger pangs in expensive places. We also keep stopping for street food and then have a proper dinner back at the hotel." "Food is not an issue at all," Smriti adds. "My kids will have plain bread and water if that's all that's available, they'll wait to get to a destination without a word even if they're starving."

REALITY CHECK: YOU ARE WITH CHILD

When it comes down to it, family holidays with children are about the children. Careful planning will ensure that you enjoy them too, but the primary idea is that you slow down and absorb the world – like a child would.

"Travelling with children should be about them," avers Radhika. "Not about wanting to put them to bed or leaving them with a babysitter, and partying. Kids don't ask for too much – just lots of love and attention and simple things

like a beach, a pool, fun food, games and the space to be themselves. Work around their needs and moods."

"We try to maintain discipline in terms of time and punctuality but, at the same time, a holiday with kids should be fun – devoid of too many rules and regulations and, of course, no books or officework!" Gunjal points out. "It is just our time together as a small world in this big world!" →



TRAVEL PRO

MANU KASHYAP

Luxury holiday designer and director – Windmill Holidays

Manu's first family holiday was when her son Anay was two months old. "We travelled to Goa with lots of butterflies in our stomach, but his paediatrician was super supportive, and said: Go, the sooner you start travelling, the easier it gets." And easy it has been.

Manu loves planning the holiday herself, but also ensures that her husband and son are happy. "We usually take a one-week break, and each one chooses one activity; the remaining time is to enjoy because you are on holiday. Earlier, I used to get very tense; everything had to be perfect, but, over time, I've become more relaxed and chilled out. That's why we now leave a lot of breathing space in the itinerary to just immerse ourselves in local culture and cuisine."

THE PRO TAKE

Manu believes that health and wellbeing are important considerations when planning a family holiday, as well as convenience; remember to check out how far the rooms will be, whether there is a lift and close enough, whether there is a buggy service, enough bathrooms, whether the food is what all family members will like... "It's fun to plan for different generations going on a holiday together. I love listening to various viewpoints and trying to manage their expectations."

Manu's tips:

- For smooth sailing when it comes to planning, **appoint one person in the family to work with the travel planner;** everyone else can be marked in carbon copy (cc) in the correspondence.
- **The more inputs you give the planner** in the brief, the better they will be able to ensure that everyone's interests will be addressed.
- **Be patient, with other family members as well as with the travel planner.** This is what will help everyone to get into the holiday spirit.

TAKE A TIP, OR 42

BEFORE YOU GO

1 INVOLVE THE CHILDREN IN THE PLANNING: It builds excitement, allows them to relate where they're going to what they're learning. It also shows kids their opinion counts, and the discussion helps them understand why something can't be done. Explaining the trip helps kids participate and prepare themselves and, if you're lucky, get excited about the trip. You'll also be able to address any expressed anxieties.

2 PLAN TO STAY LONGER, GO DEEPER: Sustainability in travel is an important lesson to teach early; additionally, rushing children from one place to another is not a good idea.

3 PLAN AN ITINERARY WITH PLENTY OF WIGGLE ROOM: Factor in downtime and rest periods. Even in the day plan itself, remember to factor in time for tired little feet and getting child-related paraphernalia through airports and into hotels. Plan to arrive so you have time to have a good night's sleep before starting your explorations. If you're not staying in a hotel with room service, pick up food on the way to your accommodation (or carry it along), so you don't have to go out again that day, but can just rest and prepare for the days ahead. And go with the flow when it comes to unexpected situations.

4 PREBOOK, PREBOOK, PREBOOK: If you're flying to your destination, prebook a car or shuttle from the airport to your stay with enough leeway for delays and getting children to the meeting point. Pre-book sightseeing tours, private tour guides, and certainly timed tickets to attractions and museums in advance. These help you skip the lines, and usually will allow you to go in with the guide, have them explain things to you, and then permit you to stay on and explore at your own pace. Don't forget to look for or even ask for child and

family discounts. If you are reserving a rental car, ascertain that car seats are available for hire too. In many countries, you cannot drive with a child not secured into a car seat.

5 TALK TO OLDER KIDS about budgets and priorities, about why you can incorporate some attractions and not others, why you'll rough it out on a budget airline so you can spend more at the destination, and why taking the train makes sense over flying...

6 CHOOSE CHILD-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION: Location is key; pick as central a place as you can when with young children to reduce strain on yourselves and them. If your child is young, confirm that the stay option has baby beds or cribs, high chairs, can help you with food requests, might even have a stroller you can borrow; with older children, a pool and games room (in case of bad weather) might be a bonus. Or pick a serviced apartment where light cooking is possible, and where you all have space beyond a single room to spread yourselves out.

7 PACK LIGHT – AND PACK SMART: Take as few pieces of luggage as you can, and keep them as lightweight as you can. You know better than most that children need frequent and unexpected changes. Take simple clothes of the easy-wash, easy-dry, no-ironing-required type. A portable washing line is a good idea to carry along. Don't forget smart swimming togs. And favour layers to handle changeable weather conditions.

Kids usually enjoy pulling along their own colourful strollers. Encourage this, and fill each with stuff they will need on the journey – whether on a plane, train or car.

Make sure you carry water bottles that you can fill, so that you will not need to buy water in disposable bottles along the way.

8 CARRY THE FAMILIAR AND THE ENTERTAINING: If your child needs a particular toy to sleep with, that goes in. If something will make your life on the road more comfortable, that, too, should go in. If Peppa Pig is what helps, so be it. A limited amount of digital screen time is permissible on the road, especially to engage during long waits. Keep in mind that you might not always have an internet connection, so download apps, movies, TV shows. Have some new toys and books – even ebooks – at hand that you can unveil on the vacation. Pack daybags, preferably a backpack or two, that you can take with you at the destination.

9 BE UP TO DATE WITH MEDICATIONS: All prescription meds must be carried with a printed prescription, which is also scanned into your email. Some countries require additional documentation. If there are allergies in the mix, ensure you have them printed out on cards in the destination language so you can show a doctor (for medical conditions) or a food server (for food allergies).

10 GET YOUR DOCUMENTS ONLINE: Scan your passport (relevant pages), visa and insurance papers, and have them available online for any emergency. Also carry photocopies of your passport (front and back pages) to quickly buy local telephone SIMs and the like. And carry extra passport photos.

11 ANTICIPATE SEPARATION: It's a parent's worst nightmare, but preparing for your child getting lost will reduce the anxiety. Older children must know your local number and address (have a plan of where you will meet in place), young children can wear a band or tag that will help wellwishers or the police get them back to you. →

GETTING THERE

12 WORK OUT WHICH MODE OF TRANSPORT WOULD

BE BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY: Options include a road trip, a train journey, or a flight, or, of course, a combination of these.

13 PLAN ROAD TRIPS WITH BREAKS AND FLEXIBILITY:

If you're doing a road trip, plot your route to allow for enough food and loo stops in places you will be happy with. "We prefer self-driving holidays because driving offers us flexibility with the kids, and gives us the freedom to go as and when and where we like – especially on the unplanned days," says Gunjal. "Road trips are made easy and fun by playing simple games and music; we also carry books to read and some board games to keep the children occupied." "We used to fly to a destination and then drive when our kids were young," adds Lynette. "We would hire a car at the airport and just have one or two hotel nights booked. The advantage of this is that you can be quite flexible if someone is tired or sick (both have happened). It is also a lot of fun because you can end up in unusual places (as long as they are safe) and see life in another culture, rather than just be a tourist. We usually had a lot of books and games – cards, colouring books, quizzes (my kids learned the capitals and currency of every country in the world on long drives). We let them choose what they wanted to eat." "Play 'I Spy' games with your kids on road trips," says Hrish. "It keeps them engaged and you can concentrate on the road."

14 TRY A TRAIN TRIP OR TWO:

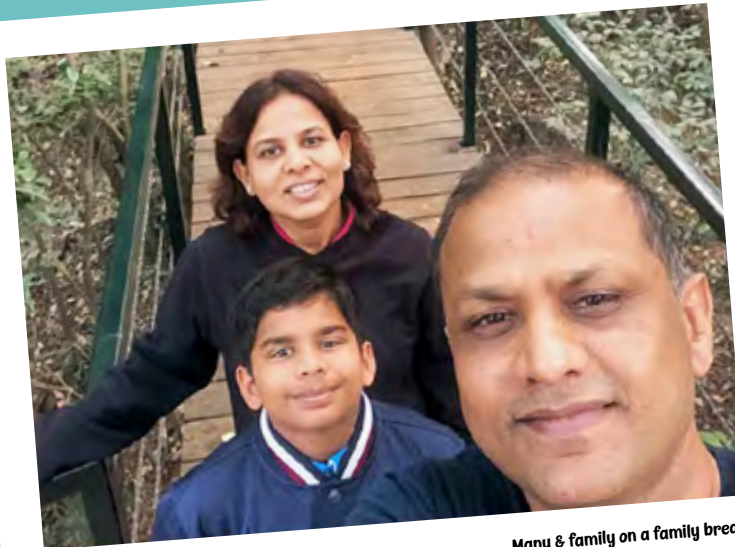
Every child should experience at least one trip by train in this vast country of ours. There is great adventure in meeting new people on the train, eating on the train (both what you have brought from home, and 'train food'), and even sleeping on the train. Explain carefully in advance how it works: No wandering off too far, no going near the doors, no going to the loo on their own (in the case of small children). There are also cabins and coupes available on certain Indian trains that will allow the family to have its own space while on the train. If you're worried about the cleanliness of the loos, book as high a class as you can, and carry lots of sanitiser and toilet paper to do a little cleaning of your own.

15 PLAN TO MAKE FLYING EASIER:

When booking flights, choose comfort over budget; you will need all the ease you can get on a family holiday.

16 CHOOSE FLIGHTS AND TRAVEL TIMINGS CAREFULLY:

Work with what you know your children can manage.



Manu & family on a family break

Sometimes, a night flight will coincide wonderfully with their sleep patterns. Avoid layovers in the middle of the night. It's best to have them bright and excited through layovers.

17 DON'T BOOK TOO TIGHT LAYOVERS:

Adults can make it quickly from one gate to another across the airport, and even between terminals. Children might not be able to manage, and you could miss your connecting flight. Try to keep layovers fun or, at least, easy for you. Check online if there are play areas in the layover airports that the kids could enjoy. "We used to walk a lot at airports, so that we would get tired and pass out on the flight," Lynette tells us. Adds Judy, "If we have a long halt between inter-connecting flights, we usually explore the airport, do some quick shopping and, of course, visit the play area. Riaan, our son, tends to befriend kids of any nationality fast, and then gets busy playing with them."

18 WORK THE LOUNGES OR TRANSIT HOTELS:

Spend some time online to see if there are lounges or transit hotels in all airports you will touch – just in case you need them due to unexpected flight delays or cancellations.

19 CHECK IN ONLINE:

This will allow you to get seats together, and reduce waiting time in the airport (this is currently *de rigueur* in the light of COVID-19).

20 EXPLAIN AIRPORT PROCEDURES TO YOUNG CHILDREN:

Airports are busy places, and might be overwhelming for children the first time. Tell them about the different stages – baggage scanning, check-in, security check, immigration (if relevant), waiting and then boarding. Don't forget to emphasise the need for wearing a seat belt on the plane.

21 PACK FOR EASE OF UNPACKING AT SECURITY CHECKPOINTS:

Messenger bags are best for parents to put all documents into, and leave hands free to handle children and baggage.

22 CONSIDER TAKING ALONG A SLING OR TRAVEL STROLLER, OR BOTH, IF YOUR CHILD IS VERY YOUNG:

A travel stroller – also called an umbrella stroller – folds up compactly and might prove invaluable in the airports and at your destination. A sling – light and easy to pack – works great if your destination has bumpy streets, or you're going into the countryside. If you can take both, nothing like it.

23 LET YOUR KIDS HANDLE THEIR PERSONAL BAGS:

Carry-ons must include a change of clothing, wet wipes, a few snacks, personal headphones, a book and toy, even gum for blocked ears. "I encourage my daughter to pack her own knapsack with all that she wants to do during long waits," says Ami.

24 AVAIL OF FAMILY-FIRST PRIVILEGES

when boarding. Let staff at the gate know when you arrive at the waiting area.

25 ASK THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS FOR THE KIDS' ENTERTAINMENT PACKS:

These usually include colouring books and other goodies, and guarantee at least a few hours of engagement. Book these in advance to ensure they are available on the flight.

26 BE PREPARED FOR BLOCKED EARS WHEN FLYING:

Breastfeeding or sucking on milk in a bottle will help infants; older children can chew gum.

ON THE TRIP

27 STOCK UP ON FOOD:

Soon after you get to your destination, take slightly older kids to the local store to provision yourselves with food and snacks. It gives children a chance to see what food stores look like in another place or country, get an idea of price differences, and immerses them into local life. Pick up healthy snacks for when you're out and about, and provisions if you're staying in a self-catering apartment.

28 PUT THE CHILDREN IN CHARGE OF SOMETHING:

Let them handle ensuring that you pack snacks and water into the daypacks. Older children can handle the navigation on a phone app. This leads to involvement and engagement.

29 MAKE SURE THEY'RE AWARE OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS:

Orient everyone in the group to where you're staying, the name of the hotel or apartment building, the area. With older children, distribute phone numbers to be stowed securely. Put a plan into place in case you get separated. Work out meeting points, phone numbers, connectivity.

30 ALLOT EACH CHILD A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY TO SPEND:

This adds excitement and helps them make decisions.

31 LIMIT SCREEN TIME AT THE DESTINATION:

While screen time might work well to fill gaps in travel time, encourage being out and about at the destination itself.

32 DON'T LET FOOD SPOIL THE FUN:

Yes, most of us would like our children to experience local food, but kids might not be ready. Don't let it be the deal breaker; just make sure they're well fed and happy.

33 GO LOCAL:

In all other ways, be a family that travels consciously, responsibly and immersively. Try out local transport, eat at local restaurants, and interact politely but enthusiastically with the people of the area. This gives our children cues for travel – and boundaries – in the future. "Ask locals for their guidance and suggestions – their favourite restaurants and places that are their go-to spots for weekends," advises Gunjal. "And, in a dire situation, always seek help from locals. Generally, people everywhere are very helpful, especially when you have kids."

34 GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE:

Being in a new place is a great opportunity to try things you don't otherwise do. Try parasailing, rappelling or even new foods – all with the safety filter in place, of course.

35 EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED:

Impromptu loo breaks and sudden bouts of vomiting are par for the course when travelling with young children; have Plan B in place, and be ready to smile through aggravation. "It's okay to have a mommy bag," Radhika advises. "And to have the entire house in it, sunscreen and wet wipes and spare clothes and treats and anything else."

36 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR:

Your attitude and mindset set the tone on holiday; if you seem to be calm and enjoying yourself, your children are less likely to be rattled.

"Do as you would want your child to," advise Anu and Pavan. "If you model patient, kind, adventurous behaviour, your child will do the same. Flight delayed? Boring wait in a queue? Play an imaginative game. Trying new food? Try it out yourself and watch your child follow! You create your child's reality and world. Make it fun!"

Says Hrish, "Kids can be more patient when they are experiencing something new while travelling than you would imagine."

Be polite, courteous and enthusiastic. "Hotel staff, for example, is always happy to help if you're polite," Smriti points out. "They will accommodate strange requests at odd hours if they see you have kids with you."

37 ENCOURAGE PHOTOGRAPHY:

With younger children, phone cameras are perfect for capturing some moments; older children may be encouraged to use inexpensive cameras.

38 START THEM ON JOURNALLING:

Encourage children to place tickets, postcards and notes in a personal travel journal; besides documenting memories for a lifetime, these are great for show-and-tell when they get back to school.

39 TAKE STOCK DAILY:

In the downtime at dinner each night or before bed, review the day and praise enthusiasm and helping behaviours. Bring out small surprises – they can be tiny, but they will always be received with great enthusiasm.

AFTER THE TRIP

40 TALK AND REVIEW: Urge children to talk about the holiday, to tell you what they enjoyed, what they didn't. This will give you cues for other holidays, and you will also be able to address any misconceptions that might have arisen.

41 USE THE LEARNINGS: Reinforce any good behaviours (not littering, eschewing plastic) the child might have practised or witnessed on the holiday in regular life.

42 COOK THE FOOD: One of the best ways of reliving the holiday experience at home is by rustling up a few dishes you ate or learned about on the vacation.

GO ON, DO IT!

"Don't spoil your family time with timetables," says Radhika. "Hang out by the pool, go on long walks, connect with each other. Every trip Alekhya and I do, the differences and spaces between us melt away after the first two days. Suddenly, we're not just mother and daughter. We're best friends and two crazy women; we do argue or disagree, but that's okay."

"Travel with kids; start as early as possible," advises Gunjal. "Don't let them be a reason to 'not travel.'"

Says Judy, "Many parents plan a foreign trip as a couple, claiming that kids won't remember much from the travel, but travelling and meeting new people broadens a child's thought processes like no other activity."

Say Anu and Pavan, "In this world today, it is even more important that we raise children with an open mind, to be accepting and loving of all people, cultures, language, art, and with a deep love for our planet. We hope that, with travel, we are able to give Kabir not only exposure to worlds outside of his own, but also to new experiences that will push him and us in various ways. We hope we are able to live outside our comfort zone. Because that's where the magic is!" →