



Get the Whole Family Involved in Vacation Planning!

A Fun Approach to Getting the Entire Family Engaged.

By Shannon Jones | April 14, 2021

As part of our series of articles on getting the most out of your family vacations, we're exploring each stage of the travel planning process. We started with "Travel Dreaming", coming up with your family travel wish list, then brought you "Planning Your Family Vacation Roadmap", narrowing down your dream list to the next vacation.

In this installment, we pick up with the next step, ways to get the whole family (especially your kids) involved in planning and, specifically, to help choose what activities to do along the way and at your destination.

No matter where you're going or for how long, having your children involved and selecting what to do is a great way to get them even more excited about the trip and engaged in the adventures.

It could be a long weekend and your children can help select an activity they want to do, a site they want to see or a restaurant where they want to eat. On an extended vacation, have them help plan a half day or full day of the adventure -- what they want to do, how to get there, where to eat, etc.

Allowing everyone to be involved in activity planning creates more quality time together, too.

We've Put Together this Fun Approach for You!

Prep Ahead

- Knowing you're going to have the whole family help pick destinations or activities, pull together resources to help with the selection. You can have a list of websites and online resources, pre-order guidebooks and maps. You want everyone to have things about your destination to explore. You can even get the family involved in gathering the resources.

Get the Family Together

- Let the family know they will all get to share in selecting what you do and where you go.
- Share your resources with the family and allow everyone to explore and make their choices, whether it's picking an activity or restaurant or planning a whole day.
- Depending on your children's age, you can provide the resources to them or, if they are too young for research, you can list some of the family activities to do at the destination and let them choose. They learn more by planning together.

Explore

- Now it's time to dig in. You can start the project together, then have each member go off and do their "homework". Make an event of this. Again, another excuse to get excited.
- Play music from your destination on your favorite music streaming service to set the mood. Have a favorite meal or make a local dish to the destination. For example, make crepes while you talk about your Paris trip.
- One approach, for example, if you know you will go to a museum, like The Louvre in Paris, pre-order the Top 10 Guidebook to the Louvre. Guidebooks are often loaded with photos, so even your young child can pick out images of things that look interesting to them.
- You can spend a few hours or days letting the family develop ideas and their plan.

Family Vacation Planning

Gather Again to Share Ideas and Create Your Itinerary

- Pull the family back together to share their ideas.
- Unless there is an activity or destination that is logistically impossible (closed due to COVID, only allows a specific age range), respect each family members' idea.
- Start to build or add to your itinerary with everyone's choices. They can even do more research and planning before you go.
- **EXTRA CREDIT POINTS:** When you visit the destinations, celebrate the person who selected the attraction.

Here's How Travel Mom Michelle Involved the Whole Family in Planning Their Vacation

For Michelle's family trip to London, everyone got to pick the one activity they wanted to do while there. Before they left, they checked out a bunch of books from the library. She gave the boys stickie notes and had them do some research. Then, they came back together to share their selections.

Michelle's pick was High Tea and her husband's pick was The Churchill War Rooms. Her 5th-grader picked The British Museum. They got a map of the museum the night before and let him map their route for the day. He had just finished studying Egypt and was so excited to see the Rosetta Stone and many of the artifacts he had researched. Her 2nd-grader picked The London Eye. Her son loved it! They all wound up enjoying the views of where they'd been across the city over the previous days.

Getting the family involved in the planning creates a more fun, rewarding and memorable vacation for everyone!