

Read This Before You Take a Road Trip with Your Children

Read This Before You Take a Road Trip with Your Children

Taking a road trip with your children can be a great opportunity to spend quality time together. However, you may wind up wishing you stayed home unless you prepare for the challenges of sharing a small space for many miles.

Driving cross-country can be a lot different than your usual local errands. You're less familiar with the route, and your kids may become bored along the way.

With careful planning, your vacation can be safe and fun. Follow these suggestions for your next family road trip.

Staying Safe:

1. **Buckle up.** Your kids are probably used to putting on their seat belts. However, it's worth reminding them to stay buckled up even while sleeping. Seat belts save lives and prevent injuries.
2. **Check your car seats.** Visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website to find a child safety seat inspection station near you. Certified technicians will check that your seat is correctly installed and appropriate for your child's age and size.
3. **Plan for emergencies.** Prepare for icy roads or bee stings. Store bottled water and blankets in your trunk. Bring along a first aid kit and contact information for your pediatrician.
4. **Arrange seating.** Cut down on squabbling with strategic seat assignments. **It**

might help to have at least one adult in the backseat.

5. **Drive responsibly.** Talk with your kids about why it's important for the driver to keep their eyes on the road. Ban excessive noise or roughhousing. Pull over if you need to send a text or referee a disagreement.

Providing Entertainment:

1. **Play games.** Choose from a wide variety of classic and computer road games. Introduce your kids to I Spy and 20 Questions. Write your own Mad Libs or buy a magnetic Scrabble board.
2. **Make crafts.** Browse online for digital art activities or paper crafts that are easy to do while riding in a car. **Buy grown up coloring books, too, so you can share the fun with your kids.**
3. **Listen to music.** If you need a break from Baby Shark, apps like Spotify will generate a wide selection of music for kids. Wear headphones or pick tunes that you can sing together.
4. **Bring audiobooks.** While you want to spend time interacting, you may also need a little quiet. Audiobooks or movies can keep kids occupied until you're refreshed.

Other Road Trip Tips:

1. **Research rest stops. Give yourself enough time so you can get out of the car frequently to move around and take in the scenery.** Visit amusement parks and historic sites. Take hikes and picnic in state parks along the way.

2. **Cool off.** On a hot summer day, cold water feels refreshing even if your car is air conditioned. Make a list of beaches, lakes, and water parks that will be within driving distance.

3. **Eat healthy.** Are you looking for an alternative to the fast food places that surround most highways? Pack a cooler with nutritious snacks and salads. Search online for Indian or vegetarian restaurants that may be just a few miles away.

4. **Tidy up.** You'll probably feel more stressed and irritable if your car starts looking like a garbage bin. Keep clutter and spills under control with simple rules and organizing products. Hang a pouch over the back of car seats to hold toys and books.

5. **Share conversation. Having time for extended discussions is one of the greatest joys of family car trips.** Think of some conversation starters before you leave, like funny stories about your own childhood or interesting news events.

Make your next family road trip more relaxing and enjoyable. You'll return home with lots of happy memories that will last a lifetime.