



Planning Tips for Family Adventure

Involving your kids in planning an adventurous trip will make preparations for and the actual vacation more fun. They'll never be able to say disparagingly to their friends "This trip was my parents' idea."

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: A few hours

Here's How:

1. Brainstorm

Hold a brainstorming session. Let each child describe his or her version of an adventurous family trip then add your own vision. Perhaps they'll want to visit a region they saw in a movie. Or, try a sport that one of their friends raved about. Pull out the common denominators, such as hiking, rafting or horseback riding. Let your kids know up front which ideas have to be discarded because there's not enough time for such a trip or if it won't fit your travel budget

2. Collect Information Together

Let the kids help gather information about trips that include these activities. Together, use Web search engines to learn more about these activities, locales where you can enjoy them and tour operators who focus on your interests. Interested in visiting a certain locale? Let older kids contact local chambers of commerce or a country's national tourism authority for information.

3. Share Trip Preparations

Once you've collected the information hold an informal meeting during a family dinner to decide where you will actually go. Draw the kids into finalizing plans by letting each one be responsible for an aspect of the trip, whether it's having the younger kids plan snacks to bring along or encouraging teens to research any special experiences for their age group.

4. Talk to Adventure Travel Companies

Once you've narrowed down the list call the companies and ask about the trips you are interested in taking. Discuss your children's abilities and interests to see if the trips are right for your family. If you didn't choose this company via word-of-mouth, ask for references from satisfied travelers who have taken the trip you are considering.

5. You've Chosen a Trip, Now What?

The "what" depends upon the type of trip. Bottom line: make sure your kids have enough stamina for the trip. If it's hiking, start taking walks with the kids. If they don't carry backpacks, get one for each and fill them with a water bottle, a windbreaker or change of clothing and high-energy snack bars so they get used to carrying the weight. If you're going rafting, canoeing or kayaking and there's a lake nearby spend an afternoon paddling a boat.

6. Learn More About Your Destination

Here's a reason to spend evenings as a family making an armchair tour of your destination. Pick up guide books or brochures about the region you'll be visiting. Ask the tour operator or outfitter for a list of suggested reading. If one child has a special interest -- such as birds and butterflies -- and you're going on a hiking trip, get a book describing creatures in that region. Let older kids scout the Web for information.

7. Packing for Your Trip

Ask your outfitter for a list of recommended clothing and gear. Waterproof and breathable clothing, sun-protected clothing and pants with zip-off bottoms are all high-priority items for adventure travel.

8. Here's a "Must Take" List

- First Aid Kit: To make a first-aid kit and learn some first-aid fundamentals visit the Calgary Co-op Pharmacy department. Or, go to [Red Cross](#) shop and look at the Family First Aid Kit.
- Extra medicine, in case of a travel delay and your trip takes several days longer than planned.
- A backup pair of eye glasses.

9. Bring Copies of Key Documents

Photocopies of key documents – driver's license, passport, toll-free numbers to report lost or stolen credit cards.

10. Heading to a Remote Location or an Exotic Country?

If you're heading to a remote location or an exotic locale vaccinations or other pre-trip health preparations might be necessary. A strong healthcare component to any travel insurance you purchase should be considered.

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