

5 KEYS to Making Your Family Vacation



the Best Ever!

Great family vacations take careful planning beyond how to get to our destination, and what to pack for the time away. Great family vacations happen when we pay attention to family relationships and what we can do to nurture them.

The five keys to making your family vacation the best ever starts with your family meeting together well before leaving for your trip. Meet to discuss the first THREE keys to making your family vacation the best ever.

Don't forget to include the kids. Even very young children can participate. The time spent investing in this planning stage will help build anticipation and excitement for your time together. And it will help build better family relationships.



1. Know what you want.

Spend time clarifying your expectations. Write them down. What type of family vacation do you want this to be? The more you know what you want, the easier it will be to get it. If you're not sure what you want you leave yourself open to disappointment. If you're clear with what you want, you can take steps to get it. Think this through before you go.



2. Mind readers are staying home.

Don't expect people to read your mind, because mind readers aren't coming with you. Tell people what you would like to make the vacation a good one for you. Share your exceptions with your family before you leave on your trip. Don't assume the rest of your family will know what you want, because they won't. Remember what's been said of assumptions: *Assumption is the lowest form of communication... followed closely by email.*



3. Listen to what others want.

A family vacation isn't just about you. The rest of your family has expectations just as you do. Find out what they are. Ask. Draw people out. Get the rest of your family to express what they want. The more you know the expectations of others, the less tension there will be, and the fewer the surprises. Do this before you leave the house.



4. Find humor in the disappointments.

We've all heard that the two things that are inevitable are death and taxes. To these we can add some disappointment in a family vacation. The weather won't be quite right. The traffic may be congested. Someone will get sick. You'll lose something. It's all part of life. It's all part of what to expect. Looking for humor in what goes wrong will help create memories to laugh about at Thanksgiving dinner.



5. Debrief at the end of each day.

Meet as a group and share with your family what went well, and what didn't. What was funny, what was disappointing? Were expectations met, both yours and others? Talk about any mid-course corrections that may need to be made. Have expectations changed? What part can everyone play in making tomorrow better for everyone? Find someone to complement or affirm for how they acted today.