

Tips for going on holiday with your grandchildren



You know the nursery rhyme about the little girl with the curl? When she was good, she was very, very good and when she was bad, she was horrid. And so it seems to be with extended family holidays. But before you panic...there are plenty of things you can do to make sure you enjoy glorious quality time together rather than the holiday from hell <shudders>

1. Be prepared

If you're traveling with your grandchildren alone for the first time, and they are young, be sure to get a list of food likes/dislikes, fears and night time arrangements – water by the bed, stories, door open or shut etc. It is no bad thing to have a practice sleepover at your house too before a longer trip.

2. It's your trip too

Depending on their age, tell grandchildren about your needs and wishes too. If barging into your room at 5.30am isn't what you want, make it clear in advance. As a reminder you can always try popping a 'do not enter' sign on your door when you need to escape some peace and quiet.

3. Set some standards

Bathroom sharing can be a challenge: tidiness and cleanliness standards may be very different to your own. A couple of tatty plastic ducks may be acceptable, however make-up wipes and shaving remains may cause heated inter-generational discussions. Where possible, with adult children and older grandchildren, arrange one bathroom per nuclear family.

4. Table manners and meals



Traditions have changed. And what is/isn't acceptable can be a very grey area indeed. If you are in loco parentis then your rules go. If the parents are around, best to let them deal with discipline issues. That way you won't be seen as interfering (all the more important if you are an in-law). Broad ground rules around mobile phones might be agreed in advance so the time can be enjoyed together.

5. Money matters

Finance can be stony ground, so it is good to agree how bills will be split before you leave for the holiday. A kitty can work well, particularly for petrol. Or, if your financial positions are very different, perhaps take charge of all meals on specific days - then you can budget appropriately.

6. Sweets and treats

These can be a great motivator for youngsters, if used with care. But... every generation has a different view on what's appropriate particularly when it comes to sugary things and staying up late. Take the parents' lead as far as possible and bite your tongue when you need to.

7. Getting ready

It may take 10 minutes when you're at home, but it certainly won't when there's a whole group of you on holiday. A 45 minute warning (with 15 minute updates) may help get everyone out of the door without too many hiccups. And a check list by the front door may help too. Hats, suncream, soothers etc can all be forgotten if the driver starts getting fractious.

8. Excursions

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Avoid making these compulsory! And whilst absolute democracy is impossible, everyone's input is important: taking turns on where to go can be the best way to make things work.

9. Down time...

...along with gentle strolls can be great ways to relax and/or to diffuse tension. Quietly heading off with a teenager or grumpy adult will take the heat out of any situation. Coloring books, games and family friendly DVDs can be really useful too.

10. Most importantly

Relax and accept that this is not home, it's a holiday and the whole point is that it's different. More fun, less rules and somehow slightly messier than everyday life in every respect. Delight in the time together, it is a treat!