

## Family-Friendly Vacation Ideas That Won't Break the Bank



The local amusement park can make for a great summer getaway for families looking to save money but still have a good time together.

With the economy still not back to full strength, many families are looking for ways to stretch their vacation dollars this summer. One of the ways in which families are doing just that is by cutting travel costs and exploring what their own regions have to offer.

Though such vacations might not have the initial appeal of a trip to Hawaii or an overseas excursion, they can prove just as fun and possibly even educational as well. The following ideas can help trim travel costs this summer while still showing that fun in the summer sun can be had close to home.

### Family and Friends

Families today have become geographically diverse. Rare is the family that does not have at least one member living in a neighboring state or even on the opposite side of the country. If relatives live too far to see regularly but close enough to drive to and visit, plan a trip to see them. Kids will still get to spend a night or two away from home, and parents will get the chance to catch up with siblings, cousins or even friends they have not seen in awhile.

### Hunt Down Local History

Nearly every piece of land across the globe can tell a story. History has taken place all over the world, from the ancient Pyramids to the English countryside to possibly even one's own backyard. Families can learn something about their own town or region by hunting down local history. Do some research at the local library and then take the family out on a historical excursion.

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### State Parks

Kids typically love going to the park, and most regions boast a host of state or government-operated parks that offer a wide range of activities at little or no cost. Affordable campgrounds are often family favorites and many even provide similar amenities to those a person is used to at home, such as indoor plumbing and even areas to barbecue. Parents can pack along some food the whole family will like, including hot dogs, hamburgers and the camping staple s'mores, that will cost them a fraction of what a restaurant meal will run them.

When looking for a state park, seek ones that present more than just hiking and camping. Some offer swimming, fishing, kayaking, and a host of other family-friendly activities.

### Amusement Park

Few destinations will make kids happier than the local amusement park. Most areas feature an amusement park within driving distance, and parents who plan ahead might even find discounted tickets or can plan to go on days when admission is reduced to entice more customers. Just be sure when planning a visit to the local amusement park that kids are old enough to ride the rides and then buckle in for a fun day.

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