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Tips for Planning an Incredible Budget-Friendly Family Road Trip

Taking the whole family on a road trip is an excellent way to spend a couple of weeks exploring and bonding. If you really want to experience the country, a road trip is preferable to flying. You'll come across numerous attractions and hidden gems you wouldn't have seen otherwise. If a road trip sounds like the perfect way to spend some time off with your loved ones, consider these tips as you plan your big adventure.

Finding Accommodations

You'll have plenty of options for accommodations during your trip, from wilderness camping to fancy hotels. [Camping](#) is a great option for families who want to keep it cheap and adventurous. However, you will have to haul along extra supplies and face the threat of inclement weather.

If you'd rather have a solid roof over your head, consider [vacation rentals](#) — this is a much better option than cramming your entire family into a hotel room. Additionally, you can find a vacation rental near the activities you want to explore, which will save you money on gas and transportation.

Compromising on Activities

Your road trip doesn't have to be spent chasing down children's attractions just because you have kids in tow. When planning your road trip activities, try to find a happy balance between adult activities and children's adventures. Some ideas include visiting a museum, hiking at a national park, or going for a swim in the pool at the hotel or rental.

When you're figuring out what to do, ask everyone in your family to create a list of things they want to see or do, then try to incorporate these into your itinerary. [Google My Maps](#) can be useful for creating a custom route. You can keep your kids happy on your road trip by making detours to drive by funky [road-side attractions](#). Also, keep an eye out for free museums and zoos along your route to give your wallet a bit of a break. For long stretches of road, [keep your kids entertained](#) with audiobooks, travel games, or coloring books.

Discovering Hidden Sights

The best way to save money and enrich your road trip experience is to stray from the beaten path. Get off the highway, take the back roads, and explore little towns you may have otherwise missed. You can pick up free brochures from visitor centers and ask for local recommendations while you're there — this is an excellent way to [discover hidden gems](#) like secret beaches, tranquil lakes, or hiking trails. A road trip is just as much about the journey as it is about your destination, so take the [scenic route](#) whenever possible!

Budgeting Your Meals

According to BudgetTravel, one of the [biggest mistakes](#) that will bust your road trip budget is eating out for every meal. While you may want to indulge in some local cuisine once in a while, try to plan ahead by booking vacation rentals with kitchens and packing some pantry essentials. Make sure you also pack meals to keep your family satisfied on the road. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, chilled pasta salad, and granola bars are all great [travel-friendly options](#) everyone will enjoy. When you do eat out, look for deals online or seek out restaurants where kids eat for free.

Although a long road trip can seem a bit overwhelming, the beauty of travelling in your own vehicle is that you can plan as you go. Instead of planning every detail of your trip from start to finish, allow yourself some flexibility. You may decide to skip a stop that's overly crowded or stay in a beautiful area an extra day or two to relax. In the end, you'll have the most rewarding road trip experience if you treat it as an adventure!