

Time for a Family Road Trip!

By Leola Motley



Deciding on a family road trip can be a daunting challenge, not to mention an exercise in patience. However, if you prepare ahead of time, the trip can be one of the most memorable experiences of your family's life.

Here are some quick and easy tips for making your family road trip a fun and safe one.

First, prepare a checklist of items you will need. This will include first aid kit, food, snacks, drinks, and lots of toys, coloring books, paper and crayons, a portable DVD player so your kids can watch their favorite movies; and a cooler. Also, the kids what games they would like to take, within limits of course.

Ensure that the snacks are healthy in nature. Too many sugar snacks can have the kids bouncing off the car seats. Remember, this is a relaxing family vacation and you want to avoid the kids getting bored or repeatedly asking you when you are going to arrive.

Check online to print out games for the road that you and the kids can play along the way. There are an assortment of puzzles and riddles as well.

In addition, if you have very young children you will need to take the diaper bag and wipes for the occasional spills, blankets and pillows if applicable and a favorite item or stuffed animal for the young ones is a good idea as well.

Second, plan your route, and check online to find gas stations along the way that offer the cheapest gas. Also, if there are any points of interest along the route mark them on the map and plan to stop at these sites.

Third, while on the road ensure that you make pit stops regularly. This will allow the kids to run around and let off some steam, while allowing the adults to stretch and reenergize. Bring along a football or soccer ball so that the entire family can have some fun while exercising at the same time.

Finally, it is very important that safety concerns are met. This includes having the car checked at your local mechanic or gas station. Ensure that the oil and filter are changed; the tires are well inflated (don't forget the

spare tire, too); the windshield wipers are replaced (if needed); and the car is in great condition before you head out.

In addition, you may want to place the following items in your trunk: a lawn chair, extra blanket, emergency road kit, umbrellas, water, flashlight and batteries, a battery-powered radio, and windshield wiper cleaner. In the glove compartment include a first aid kit and cell phone charger. Keep all medications in a Ziploc bag in the glove compartment as well.

Another good idea is to take a list of telephone numbers including the hotel or motel where you are staying as well as those of family and friends you may need to contact.

If you enjoy scrapbooking, this road trip may be a perfect opportunity to add new treasures to the book. As you make stops at some scenic sites, ask the kids to find an item they would like to include in the scrapbook. If the kids point out something along the way that they find fascinating, take a picture of it to include in the scrapbook as well.

Engage the kids in the decision making, age appropriate, and allow them to decide what they would like to bring. Have them pack their clothes (check the suitcases afterwards) so they feel part of the overall experience. Planning of time for a family road trip will save you time, stress, and money. And the kids will enjoy this adventure, too!

Questions

1. Who plan you family trips?
2. Is planning for trips stressful?

3. When going on family trips do you engage your family in the decision making?
4. What was your most memorable trip
5. How long were you there?
6. What places did you visit there?