

LET'S GO!

Our ultimate list of family vacation ideas.

BY TANVI CHHEDA



Slide on: Taking family time to the next level.

TOMAS RODRIGUEZ/CORBIS

All hail the family vacation – a cherished opportunity to unplug from daily routines, discover new destinations, and reconnect with one another (because quality time feels extra special while on a game drive in Kenya or at a private cooking class in Rome). These Virtuoso destinations, hotels, tour operators, on-site tour connections, and cruise lines specialize in family travel, from weekend getaways at the beach

to multigenerational trips of a lifetime. To inspire you, we've combed through their offerings to create this ultimate list of family vacations. Ski trips, off-the-beaten-path adventures, scavenger hunts in world-famous museums – there's a trip in here bound to get your clan excited to explore.

AFRICA

1 TRACK GORILLAS IN RWANDA.

A weeklong safari in Rwanda with tour operator **Wilderness Safaris** includes gorilla-trekking in the Virunga Mountains, chimpanzee observation in Gishwati Forest National Park, and other conservation-focused activities.

2 PRACTICE YOGA ATOP TABLE MOUNTAIN.

A great way to start the day in Cape Town: The 198-room **Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel** can arrange an AM yoga class on South Africa's famed mountain. (A concierge will make sure transfers, cable-car rides, and breakfast are handled too.)

3 GO ON THE SAFARI OF A LIFETIME IN EAST AFRICA.

Micato Safaris' 12-day itinerary through Kenya and Tanzania is a solid choice for a first visit to Africa – and can be custom-designed for families. You'll explore Serengeti National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater, and the Maasai Mara.

4 DIVE INTO MOROCCO.

Tour operator **Mountain Voyage Morocco** customizes 7- to 14-day itineraries for families traveling to the country, from wandering through Marrakech's colorful souks to exploring the coastal town of Essaouira.



Pool time at Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel.

(TIGERS) GLOBAL/GETTY IMAGES.
(FINS) MEBIRDY/GETTY IMAGES

ASIA PACIFIC



5 SWIM WITH MANTA RAYS.

Manta rays are found in Fiji's waters between May and October. During a snorkeling excursion arranged by the 32-room **Vomo Island** resort, families can take an hour-and-a-half boat ride to the Yasawa Islands to swim with the majestic sea creatures.

6 COOK A FAMILY MEAL FROM SCRATCH.

Embrace the estate-to-plate philosophy at the 13-room **Treetops Lodge & Estate** on New Zealand's North Island on a fly-fishing excursion, while picking herbs and vegetables in the hotel's gardens, or during a cooking class with a hotel chef.

7 FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HOBBITS.

After a *Lord of the Rings* movie marathon at home, visit real-life Middle-earth on **Abercrombie & Kent**

New Zealand's eight-day tour of the country. Highlights include a trip to Hobbiton and a helicopter flight over Milford Sound.

8 LEARN ABOUT ANIME IN TOKYO.

Tour operator **Context Travel** arranges informative, family-themed tours through more than 40 global cities. In Japan's capital, comic-book lovers can explore the often-misunderstood *otaku* subculture in the city's Akihabara district.



9 SEARCH FOR BENGAL TIGERS IN INDIA.

Tour operator **Big Five Tours & Expeditions'** 12-day, family-themed trip through India includes a visit to the Pench Tiger Reserve and a three-day junior naturalist program in Satpura National Park.

**10 BECOME AMBAS-
SADORS FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT.**

The Bula Club for kids at the 25-room **Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort Fiji** educates young ones about Fijian culture, marine life, and environmental sustainability.

**11 GO OFF THE
BEATEN PATH
IN CAMBODIA.**

Highlights of a ten-day family adventure through Cambodia with **Trails of Indochina** include a visit to the UNESCO-protected Angkor Archaeological Park and a carriage tour through the colonial capital city of Phnom Penh.

**12 MOVE INTO AN
OVERWATER BUNGA-
LOW FOR A WEEK.**

Tour operator **Travel2/ Islands in the Sun** creates custom, family-oriented adventures in the South Pacific; head to Tahiti, Fiji, or the Cook Islands to parasail, snorkel with sharks, and lounge around on the beach.



Wish upon a starfish at Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort Fiji.

**13 PARAGLIDE OVER
QUEENSTOWN.**

Many of **Seasonz - New Zealand's** custom itineraries throughout the country can include endeavors such as paragliding, heli-biking, and off-road driving - an

adrenaline-seeking option for adventurous families with adult children.

**14 BUY MATCHING
JEWELRY IN TAHITI.**

Combine leisure and learning with **Tahiti Legends'** eight-day



Polynesian family adventure. Excursions include snorkeling and a visit to a black-pearl farm.

EUROPE

**15 MARVEL AT THE
NORTHERN LIGHTS.**

Tour operator **Backroads** offers family-themed hiking and biking trips

across the globe, including a six-day walking, hiking, snowshoeing, and hot-springs-soaking adventure through Iceland.



Canal daydreams in Amsterdam.

**16 SPEND A WEEK
IN AMSTERDAM.**

Connecting guest rooms and family suites at the 225-room **Pulitzer Amsterdam** offer plenty of room for the whole gang - and the concierge can arrange age-appropriate neighborhood walking tours and boat rides.

**17 COOK TOGETHER
IN TUSCANY.**

With its surrounding olive groves and gardens, Florence's 41-room

Villa La Massa is a great place for a private family cooking class. Can you say *ravioli, per favore?*

**18 TAKE A STROLL
THROUGH SANTORINI.**

Your Virtuoso advisor can work with **Travel2-Greece by Travelive**, an on-site tour connection in Greece, to create a custom 7- to 12-day journey through the country, featuring history lessons in Athens, sunset sails in the Greek Isles, and more.

19 BIKE THROUGH THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE ...

At Provence's 115-room **Terre Blanche Hotel Spa Golf Resort**, families can take out the hotel's bikes and cruise to a nearby confectionery shop for treats.

20 ... OR PEDAL THROUGH THE BAVARIAN ALPS.

Explore the foothills of Germany's Wetterstein Mountains by bike from the 115-room **Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa, Retreat & Cultural Hideaway**, a 90-minute drive south of Munich. Afterward, book it to the family-friendly spa to wind down.

21 MOVE THE FAMILY INTO A GORGEOUS VILLA FOR THE WEEK.

Villas of Distinction rents family-friendly properties in the Caribbean, Mexico, Hawaii, France, and Italy, including a stunning nine-bedroom farmhouse in Provence that's ideal for a French-inspired reunion.

private pizza workshop in the village of Sant'Angelo Muxaro.

23 MAKE ART IN MALLORCA.

The 74-room **Belmond La Residencia** on the Spanish island of Mallorca can arrange an array of family activities, from a visit to a local guitar maker to a clay-making class with the hotel's sculptor-in-residence.

24 SEE THE SIGHTS IN LONDON AND PARIS.

Tour operator **Tauck Bridges** creates group trips with families in mind, including an eight-day tour of London and Paris. Highlights include the Tower of London, Windsor Castle, a West End theater show, Versailles, and the Eiffel Tower.

25 TRY FLY-FISHING IN IRELAND.

A 45-minute drive west of Dublin, the 134-room **K Club** offers a myriad of activities for families, including fly-fishing, archery, and kayaking.



Little ones can hang at the kids' club while parents play a round on the golf course.

26 CASTLE-HOP IN SCOTLAND.

Visit Stirling Castle, look for red deer in the Highlands, and take a boat ride on Loch Ness during tour operator **CIE Tours International's** eight-day, family-themed trip.

27 PLAN A WINTER SKI TRIP.

The 74-room **Cristallo, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa** sits above

the alpine town of Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy's Dolomites. After a day of cross-country skiing, dine together at The Chef's Private Table restaurant.

28 TRANSPORT HISTORY BUFFS TO ANCIENT GREECE.

Greece's Peloponnese peninsula is home to the ancient site of Olympia, the temples of Zeus and Hera, and much more. All of these make easy day trips from the nine-villa **Porto Zante Villas and Spa** on the island of Zakynthos.



22 ROLL DOUGH AT A GROUP PIZZA-MAKING LESSON.

Travel advisors can work with **Essence of Sicily**, a Virtuoso on-site tour connection on the island, to customize group adventures, from a tour of the Etna volcano to a



29 EMBARK ON A SCAVENGER HUNT THROUGH THE LOUVRE.

Travel advisors can work with **Découvertes**, an on-site tour connection in France, to arrange a scavenger hunt through the Louvre (for kids ages 6 to 12) that sneaks in some history and art education, and, of course, ends with a prize.

30 SPEND A WEEK IN IRELAND.

Your travel advisor can work with **Dream Escape - Ireland**, an on-site tour connection, to customize a family trip to the Emerald Isle. Visit Dublin's Leprechaun Museum, kayak through Killarney National Park, and more.

31 GO ON A SUPER-CALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS TOUR OF LONDON.

Advisors can also work with **Dream Escape - United Kingdom** to create signature tours in

London. A *Mary Poppins*-centric day in the city includes stops at the Houses of Parliament and a Mayfair chocolatier to sample English fondants.

32 GIVE FALCONRY A GO.

At the 232-room **Gleneagles**, a countryside retreat in the Scottish Highlands, families stay busy with falconry experiences, archery lessons, and horseback riding.



33 MAKE GELATO IN ROME.

Tour operator **Family Twist** specializes in elevated private trips

to Europe for families, including a three-day Rome adventure with a gelato-making class, a private visit to the Colosseum, and a hands-on mosaic design workshop on the agenda.



34 LEARN FLAMENCO TOGETHER.

Your travel advisor can work with **Made for Spain & Portugal**, a Virtuoso on-site tour connection, to tailor custom itineraries for families. A sample 12-day trip might cover Barcelona, Costa Brava, Madrid, Granada, and Seville.

35 RELAX FOR A WEEK IN SARDINIA.

Choose the Italian island of Sardinia for your next beach getaway: The 218-

room **Forte Village Hotel Castello**'s bungalows offer plenty of room to spread out, and Forte Village's Wonderland kids' club has a water park, swimming pools, and more.

36 SNAP A NEW FAMILY PHOTO IN FRANCE'S FAMOUS LAVENDER FIELDS.

Provence's lavender fields bloom in July, and they'll make a gorgeous backdrop for a new family portrait. The 349-room **Hôtel Barrière le Majestic Cannes** (and its great kids' program) is about a two-hour drive from the fields.

37 SKI UNDER THE FULL MOON.

Every January, February, and March, guests of Switzerland's 164-room **Kulm Hotel St. Moritz** can head out on a guided after-dark ski excursion. Novices and little ones can take ski lessons in partnership with a local school.



Falconry lessons at Scotland's Gleneagles.

SOUTH AMERICA



Princess Cruises' *Island Princess* takes on the Panama Canal.

38 SAIL DOWN THE PANAMA CANAL. **Princess Cruises'**

ten-day, round-trip-from-Fort Lauderdale cruise on the 2,200-passenger *Island Princess* calls on Colombia, Costa Rica, and other countries. A partnership with Discovery Family means activities are inspired by shows such as *Myth-Busters* and the cable channel Animal Planet. *Departures: Multiple dates, October 17 through December 20.*

39 EXPLORE MACHU PICCHU. **Peru Empire Co.'** nine-day, family-themed trip to Peru visits the Sacred Valley, Cuzco, Lake Titicaca, and, you guessed it, that famous



Inca citadel. Intrepid clans with older kids might even opt to hike and camp along the Inca Trail.

40 HEAD INTO THE RAIN FOREST. Take in the breathtaking natural wonders of the Brazilian Amazon on an 11-day adventure with **Abercrombie & Kent Brazil**. This journey off the beaten path also includes stops in São Paulo, the Pantanal wetlands, and Iguaçu Falls.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

41 GO SWIMMING IN SECRET ROCK POOLS. The Baths National Park on Virgin Gorda in the **British Virgin Islands** is a seven-acre geological wonder where granite boulders form shallow pools that are made for a day of swimming and snorkeling. (Good news: The islands have fully recovered after being hit by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in late 2017.)

42 TUBE DOWN A RIVER IN JAMAICA. Families staying at the 63-room **Round Hill Hotel and Villas** in Montego Bay can keep it as low-key or high-energy as they'd like, from splashing in the pool to heading out for a tubing excursion on the Jungle River.

43 TAKE A WHALE-WATCHING CRUISE. Humpback whales swim off the coast of the Dominican Republic from January through March; the concierge at the 34-room **Eden Roc at Cap Cana** can arrange boat tours.

44 GET OUTSIDE IN COSTA RICA. Hit the beach during a five-day stay at the 181-room Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo, which can be set up by your travel advisor via **Gogo Vacations**. The tour operator arranges vacation packages worldwide.

45 ISLAND-HOP IN THE CARIBBEAN ON THE WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIP. **Royal Caribbean's** 6,680-passenger *Symphony of the Seas* has enough onboard activities to keep families busy for days – a laser-tag arena, surfing simulator, zip line, and the Ultimate Abyss slide are just a few of the diversions.

46 KEEP IT ALL-INCLUSIVE IN MEXICO. While the parents are hopping from pool to pool or relaxing at the spa at the 539-room **Grand Velas Riviera Maya**, children ages 4 to 12 stay busy at the kids' club, watching movies, making arts and crafts, or learning about local Mayan culture.



47 WATCH BABY TURTLES HATCH ON THE BEACH.

Sea turtles come to nest on Jamaica's shores – including along the 210-room **Half Moon's** two-mile-long beach – from April through July. Guests visiting in August through

November can cheer the hatchlings on as they race to the sea.

48 CHECK OUT A COOL CARIBBEAN KIDS' CLUB.

The 365-room **Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman's** Ambassadors of the

Environment program entertains children with snorkeling lessons, stargazing sessions, science experiments, and more.

49 LET THE KIDS PLAY ALL DAY.

Guests staying at the 497-room **Reef at Atlantis** in the Bahamas have complimentary access to many of the mega-resort's impressive features, including Dolphin Cay and the Aquaventure water park.

50 SET SAIL FOR CUBA.

Wander around Havana during an overnight stop in the city on **Norwegian Cruise Line's** five-day, round-trip-from-Miami cruise. The 1,936-passenger *Norwegian Sun* has plenty

of cabins and suites for families. *Departure: April 6.*

51 HANG TEN IN BAJA CALIFORNIA.

The concierge at the 174-room **One&Only Palmilla** in Los Cabos, Mexico, can arrange private group surf lessons on the resort's beach – one of the few swimmable stretches of sand in the area.

52 SOAK UP SAINT KITTS.

After a morning on the beach, get dressed for afternoon tea in the Great House at the 126-room **Park Hyatt St. Kitts**, where you'll learn about the island's history as one of the Caribbean's biggest producers of sugarcane.



Night light: Half Moon's Rose Halls Villa glows in Jamaica.

UNITED STATES & CANADA

53 EXPLORE NOVA SCOTIA.

Advisors can work with Virtuoso on-site tour connections **American Excursionist** and **Canadian Excursionist** to customize trips close to home. In Nova Scotia, for example, shipbuilding workshops and fossil-hunting expeditions await.

54 HEAD TO AMERICA'S LAST FRONTIER.

During an eight-day, Juneau-to-Sitka family cruise with **Lindblad Expeditions** on the 100-passenger *National Geographic Venture*, kids learn about area wildlife (bears, orcas, bald eagles) from a team of National Geographic pros. *Departures: Multiple dates, May 26 through September 1.*

55 HIKE THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

Austin Adventures' six-day family adventure through Banff and Jasper national parks includes whitewater rafting and horseback riding, plus opportunities to spot caribou, moose, and bighorn sheep.



56 ISLAND-HOP IN HAWAII.

Tour operator **Journese's** eight-day Hawaii vacation covers impressive ground on Oahu and

Maui; travelers visit the Dole pineapple plantation, take a hula lesson at an Oahu ranch, and go snorkeling off the island of Molokini.

57 STARGAZE IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK.

Climb boulders, tour the Cholla Cactus Garden, and admire the night sky amidst the namesake shrubs of Joshua Tree. It's

all an easy 40-minute drive from the 530-room **Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa.**

58 VENTURE TO THE WIZARDING WORLD OF HARRY POTTER.

A stay at the 750-room **Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando** comes with early admission to the neighboring Islands of Adventure – home



Whale watching in Alaska with Lindblad Expeditions.



Showing off: Universal Studios' Hogwarts Castle in Orlando during a nighttime celebration.

to Hogwarts Castle, Hogsmeade, Diagon Alley, and more J.K. Rowling-approved attractions.

59 SEE PANDAS AT THE SAN DIEGO ZOO.

The 249-room **Fairmont Grand Del Mar** is a great base for exploring Southern California's family-friendly attractions, including the zoo, the Legoland theme park, and La Jolla's beaches.

60 SPEND A SUMMER WEEKEND IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES.

Vail's 127-room **Sonnenalp Hotel** is appealing even when the surrounding peaks aren't snowcapped. A guided hike with a professional photographer lets aspiring shutterbugs of all ages practice their skills.

61 BOOK IT TO THE CALIFORNIA COAST.

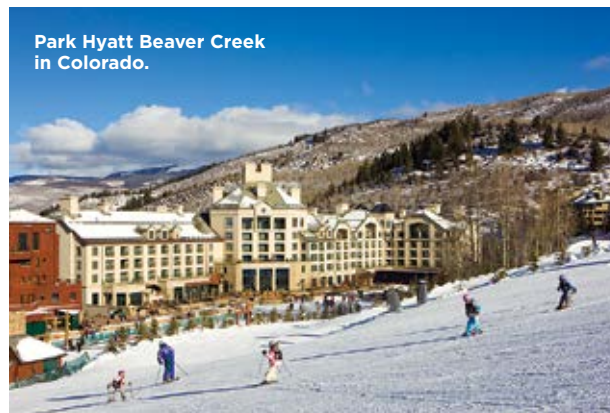
Dana Point's 400-room **Monarch Beach Resort** has a kids' club and offers a variety of programming for the entire family, including stand-up paddleboarding lessons.

62 TACKLE A ROPES COURSE TOGETHER.

With zip-lining, paintball, and an eight-lane bowling alley, Pennsylvania's 323-room **Nemacolin Woodlands Resort** feels like summer camp for the entire family.

63 HIT THE BUNNY SLOPES.

Kids (and adults) can sign up for lessons through the ski valet at Colorado's 190-room **Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort and Spa**. Other wintry family adventures include sleigh rides, dog sledding, and riding snowmobiles.



Park Hyatt Beaver Creek in Colorado.

64 VISIT ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S COOLEST CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS.

The DoSeum in **San Antonio, Texas**, wows with its Spy Academy (where kids use math skills to solve covert missions) and a 39,000-square-foot outdoor play area.

65 TOBOGGAN AT WHISTLER OLYMPIC PARK.

At one of the host sites of the 2010 Winter Olympics in **Whistler, British Columbia**, families can zip down the snowy hill and then head inside for some hot chocolate.

66 IMMERSE YOURSELF IN A LITTLE NATURE.

Naturalists at Georgia's 256-room **Cloister at Sea Island** can guide groups through the area's surrounding marshlands, where they'll educate guests about the area's ecosystem and wildlife.

67 SWIM WITH DOLPHINS IN HAWAII.

Oahu's 338-room **Kahala Hotel and Resort** is the only property on the island with a resident dolphin lagoon. Guests can learn about Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and hop into the water for an up close and personal experience.

68 EMBRACE LOG CABIN LIVING IN WYOMING.

Spread out in one of the rustic-luxe cabins at the 60-room **Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch**. Popular summertime activities include fly-fishing, horseback riding, rock climbing, and more.

69 SADDLE UP IN UTAH.

Horseback riding on miles of trails will be one of the many family-friendly activities at **The Lodge at Blue Sky** when it opens this May. The 46-room retreat is located on 3,500 acres of land just outside Park City.

70 TAKE A MINI ROAD TRIP ON MAUI.

The 64-mile road to Hana is a scenic coastal drive dotted with waterfalls, hiking trails, and incredible lookout points. The concierge at the 463-room **Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua** can arrange a chauffeured tour or a car rental for a self-guided adventure.