

Baby on Board: Family Travel 101

Written by Nadine Bubeck

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Once upon a time not long ago, my husband and I could hop a plane to Vegas, stay up all night in the city, and relax beachside on vacation. Once upon a time travel was easy: we had a pre-flight cocktail, a mimosa when checking into our hotel, and a nightcap drink. And once upon a time, we slept in late, ordered room service, and napped throughout the day. Gosh what I would do for a nap right now.

Fast forward a few years...we are now proud parents of two kids under two. My sons are my blessings; but truth be told, those little people have changed everything when it comes to travel; just getting out of the house for an hour takes planning, packing, and a lot of diapers.

Through trial and error and a lot of research, I've come up with family travel tips and must-have products to make vacationing less stressful with baby on board.

Let's start with flying.

If you're brave enough to bring your baby on an airplane, here's what you need to know.

First, decide if you're going to buy your child a seat. Lap babies (under age two) fly free on domestic flights, so bring a copy of your child's birth certificate to prove they're within the age limits. However, if you want a seat for your baby, you must bring a car seat on the plane.

Speaking of car seats, they do not count as checked luggage. Note: you will not be charged. Invest in a durable car seat cover and check it for your trip. Tip: when your suitcase is over 50 pounds, avoid the overweight fees and stick some of those extra clothes in the car seat bag. Car seat bags are available at major baby retailers.

And the same goes for strollers. Yes, you can stroll your baby around the airport until takeoff, and then check it at the gate. I suggest purchasing a protective bag for your stroller so it doesn't come off the plane bruised and beaten. (I know this from experience—don't ask.) Idea: UPPAbaby offers the G-Series TravelBag. Any damage caused to your G-LUXE or G-LITE stroller during air travel is covered under a two-year warranty. www.uppababy.com

Next, I'm always looking for unique items that make life easier...and safer. I thought I'd mention a brilliant company targeting kids on the go (I'm talking to you, fellow parents of toddlers).

It can happen anywhere—especially in a big airport. Your attention shifts for a split second and suddenly your child wanders out of sight.

SafetyTat is a fun, colorful, temporary safety child ID tattoo that aims to provide parents with somewhat peace of mind. When applied to the arm of your child, SafetyTat gives an immediate, highly visible form of child identification that stays in place. The tattoos read: *If Lost, Please Call*, along with your cell phone number. www.safetytat.com

Now, what to bring on the plane.

Anything for baby can get through security. That means you can bring breast-milk, formula, baby food, and bottled water worry-free. A piece of advice, though: get travel-size baby essentials, as mean security people do exist and might make you dispose of any tubes that exceed the 3 ounce container rule. Idea: Babyganics purse-size items. All Babyganics products are made from natural baby-safe ingredients that won't irritate your skin. Check out the hand sanitizing wipes, toy-cleaning wipes, and diaper rash cream sized for travel. (Make sure to use the wipes to sanitize your seat surroundings: the plane tray, seat belt, etc. Disease-causing bacteria can linger for days on most airplane surfaces. Yuck.) www.babyganics.com



Of course you'll need a place to store formula and snacks, and for no-spill storage, I like Piyo Piyo feeding accessories. The super cute baby brand has an array of fabulous products that keep hungry and thirsty kids free from making a mess. Plus, Piyo Piyo is super budget friendly. Idea: Piyo Piyo's Non-Spill Milk Powder Dispenser (\$3.99) and the Keep-N-Trap snack container that encourages your child to eat independently without spilling (\$6.99). www.piyopiyou.com

And a final piece of flying two cents: feeding your baby with either a bottle or breast during take off and landing can help them adjust their ears to the change in cabin pressure.

Moving on.

If you prefer road tripping to flying the friendly skies, I have some tech-savvy products perfect for the open road.

First, consider buying the Infanttech Always in View baby monitor. This system is 100% wireless and completely portable, allowing consumers

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to use it at home or on the go. It gives greater security to parents about their babies, showing them what they are doing while they drive.

The video camera resides in a cute stuffed animal that securely snaps anywhere in your car. It's super simple: the camera transmits images to a hi-res monitor conveniently located on your car's dashboard. This system reduces distracted driving—you won't be tempted to turn your head to check on your fussy baby. There's even night vision so you can see your baby in the dark. Until now, I've always ridden in the back seat with my kids so I could keep constant watch while my husband drove. Now I am able to ride in the front like a real adult, monitoring my babies via Infanttech. www.infanttech.com

Next to add to your road trip wish list: an Apple iPad Mini 3 with 64GB. AT&T has the nation's most reliable 4G LTE network, as well as the strongest LTE signal, so your iPad mini can stay connected wherever you are. This mini tablet will undoubtedly keep your kids quietly entertained during a long car ride.

The new iPad model is great for travel because it's compact and easily fits in your bag. The crystal clear screen is fit for watching movies, reading books, and playing games. Go for the 64GB because you'll rarely run out of storage; yes, this model is for my fellow obsessive-compulsive picture-taking moms—consider your iPad a perfect place to store your travel photos.

Our next stop: room and board.

I remember the first time we brought our first born to a hotel. I was nervous. I was scared. I feared every single germ lurking around the room. I didn't know what to expect considering I was switching up my baby's beloved routine. Was I totally crazy for vacationing with my mini me?

With that being said, I was determined to have travel success, as vacationing is probably my husband's and my favorite pastime.

I learned a few things during that first hotel stay. One: many hotels provide cribs so you don't have to worry about schlepping a pack-and-play. We most recently had a mini vacation at the Hyatt Mission Bay-San Diego. OMG—SO kid friendly and convenient. They were overly accommodating with pack-n-plays, plus, the pool has awesome waterslides for fabulous enjoyment. It's a great place for family R&R in SD.

With that being said, if you're a germaphobe and not comfortable using a hotel crib—which is totally understandable—buy this: the Lotus Everywhere Crib by Guava Family.

This portable product is easy, light, and beautiful. It takes seconds to set up, is made of breathable clear view mesh, and is totally safe. The Lotus packs into a carry case that doubles as a backpack. It's fairly light—13 pounds—and is GREENGUARD Gold certified, making it the only travel crib in the world to have received this rigorous certification. Use it for playtime and sleep time—fit for infants, babies, and toddlers. Mattress included. www.guavafamily.com



Another thing to consider for hotel stays: figure out where baby will eat. I highly recommend buying the Boppy Baby Chair.

This new Boppy product is part highchair, part booster, and part floor seat, designed to go from floor seat to table seat. The sturdy and safe travel-friendly chair includes a three-point harness for baby and chair attachment straps. It folds fairly flat for easy storage, portability, and travel, and comes equipped with a tray for clean eating. It's recommended for kids 3 months to one year old. www.boppy.com

My final thought: breathe. You'll get annoyed. You'll get frustrated. Your child won't nap. You'll be up early...and late. Travel as you once knew will change, but embrace it. Savor giving your children the gift of creating family memories. Be flexible. Screw your normal routine. Have ice cream for dinner. Stay at the pool all day. Put your feet in the sand. Find your inner child and youthful spirit. Be silly. Be adventurous. Be patient. And take tons of pictures.

Some other tips:

- Make lists. A week before you travel, start a running packing list—your “don't forget essentials.” (And make sure to bring an emergency kit just in case.)
- Speaking of packing, bring something for rain and shine. You never know when a sunny day at the beach will turn breezy.
- Oh, and don't forget baby's blanket. Pack your child's security stuffed animal or lovey.
- Always ask hotel personnel about discounted rates, free meals for children, and an upgrade at check in – they can only say no.
- For hotel stays, bring childproof supplies, such as electrical outlet covers and baby gates.
- Save on H2O. A family of four could easily spend \$20 or more a day buying water alone. To counter this cost, bring individual refillable water bottles. As a budget saving bonus, this is also an eco-friendly solution.
- Encourage older kids to keep a travel diary. For each day of your trip, have your kids write about or draw a picture of their favorite activity in a notebook. Bring scissors, glue and tape and add fun mementos from along the way, like ticket stubs, postcards, maps, and brochures. It will make a meaningful and inexpensive souvenir/keepsake.

Good luck and safe travels!

Xo~Nadine

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About Nadine

Nadine Bubeck is a mom, wife, TV personality, host, author, blogger, keynote speaker, and PR professional. She has been an anchor/reporter at TV stations in San Diego, California, and Phoenix, Arizona. She contributes to numerous motherhood-based publications and is often featured as a [parenting expert on television, among other media outlets](#). Nadine can often be found at mommy-and-me classes, playgrounds, and kid-friendly restaurants. She lives in Scottsdale, Arizona with her husband and sons, Nicholas and Zachary. She's a blessed boy mom and queen of the house. For more: www.allthingsmama.tv

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