

Published based on [From Packing To Passports: Constructing Your Vacation Plan](#)

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Planning out your vacation can be very exciting, but it can also be very stressful. Knowing exactly what you need to do can take a little weight off your shoulders and make planning less of a nightmare. Make sure you have a passport before you even start planning. If not, [expedited passport renewal](#) is getting easier and definitely isn't the nightmare it used to be. Also, it's never too early to start planning for a vacation. Oftentimes, getting everything booked in advance ends up saving you a lot of money.

The most exciting part about planning a vacation is picking the destination. Keep in mind exactly who you will be bringing with you and when you are going to go. The weather and the season heavily influence the outcome of your vacation. You don't want to be traveling to Canada in the middle of the winter. Also, keep an eye out for family-friendly attractions and activities. Taking the children to Tijuana probably isn't the best idea, and there are many other destinations that are both kid and adult-friendly.

Paperwork is a necessary and sometimes time-consuming part of planning a vacation. If you have a damaged, expired, or lost passport, you will want to get a [replacement passport](#) as soon as you can. Processing for a passport can take up to six weeks, and you want to be sure to have it in time before you leave. Do some research and see what sort of vaccines you and your family will need for traveling. Every country has different requirements, so be sure to check with the embassy in that country. Also, see if you will need a visa or if you will need to pay entrance fees for the country you will be traveling to.

Making a budget is an important part in picking a location. Sit down with your spouse and decide exactly how much money you are willing to spend. A vacation can still be enjoyable without having to completely obliterate your bank account. Simply searching for cheap flights, hotels, and rental cars can end up saving you a lot of money in the end. Many websites offer affordable packages for flights, hotels, and rental cars. Ask friends and families which travel sites they use the most. Doing this can save you a lot of time and money when it comes to planning your vacation.

Leave important phone numbers and a copy of your itinerary with a family member or friend if you're going to be gone for a long period of time. Also leave this information with babysitters, pet sitters, and house sitters so they can always reach you. Refill any prescriptions and have enough medication for those who need it for the trip.

No matter how big your family is, there are vacation destinations that can fit into any budget. Many of the best family activities that produce the best memories are absolutely free. If you have a damaged passport, invest in a [U.S. online passport renewal](#) and make sure all your passports are valid and in a safe location. Finally, pack batteries for your digital camera and get ready for a great trip.

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