

Busy mom's worry free travel checklist

- *The best way to travel with a carseat*
- *Top tips for keeping kids entertained on planes*
- *Free printable packing list!*



Having babies and small children doesn't mean the end of happy vacationing. It does mean that your planning process changes. Parents are often overwhelmed trying to sort out airline rules, determining how to keep their kids from having a revolt mid-flight, and figuring out how to become a pack mule to carry all the equipment that kids require. A travel consultant that specializes in family vacationing can point you toward the most family friendly airlines and travel spots. They can help arrange baby and child equipment rentals and supply orders.

Having someone confirm your specific airline's policy and help arrange the final details can be a big stress and time saver. If you're ready to start planning your next family vacation, give me a call and let's get started!

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Strollers & Carseats & Carriers - What do you *really* need to bring?

Strollers can be essential for navigating through a busy airport. Most airlines allow gate checks for strollers. This means you can leave your stroller at the door of the plane, and have it waiting for you when you leave the plane at your destination. Confirm your carrier's policies.

If you are traveling with an infant consider wearing your baby. There are a wide range of baby carriers available on the market. A yard of fabric can keep your baby close to you and both hands free. This style of wrap can be folded into a pocket size bag that will fit into a purse or small carry on. If you are not currently using a baby carrier practice before your trip.

Important: Some airlines will not count car seats and strollers into your checked baggage allowance, others do.

Always confirm your airline's policy.

Many times you can get by without a stroller if you are willing to carry or wear your baby for the entire trip, but one item that you might not be able to do without is a carseat.

The good news is that you have a few options when it comes to carseats ==>

1 Check your carseat with your bags:

The safest way to check your car seat is in the original packaging. Car seats are not safe after a car accident, and if you have ever seen baggage being handled on the tarmac you know to be concerned. While car seats are technically marked as fragile, there is no guarantee they will not be damaged.

2 Bring your carseat on board:

The safest option may be to bring it on board and use it during the flight. Car seats are not allowed in exit rows, and you may be asked to install your car seat in the window seat to avoid blocking anyone's exit. Be prepared, because not all car seats will fit rear facing into airline seats. You can prepare in advance by learning how to install your car seat without its base. Refer to the manual for specific instructions.

3 Rent a carseat at your destination:

There are companies that specialize in renting baby equipment. Since this is their sole function, their equipment is generally newer, in good repair, and clean. Many baby equipment rental agencies will meet you at the airport with your rental. These companies not only provide car seats but also typically have portable cribs, highchairs, and other essential equipment.

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Keeping Their Tummies Full

There are a lot of things that we pack to make our trips more enjoyable, but there are really only a few things that you absolutely cannot be without! For adults that's basically IDs and money, and medication, if you need it. When it comes to children, especially babies, you also need to make sure you have food they can eat since baby food is not always readily available.



If your child(ren) aren't yet eating solid food that you can easily purchase anywhere, it's essential that you are prepared with your own food that they can eat. If your baby is still exclusively breastfed then you are probably good to go! If not, make sure you understand the TSA's policies on liquids, including baby food and pack enough for at least a day or two more than you think you need so you are prepared for any delays. The 3oz of liquid carry-on rules do not apply to formula and pumped breast milk, but there are some regulations you need to be aware of. Before any flight, check the TSA website for the most up to date recommendations. You can find that information here ==> <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures/traveling-children>. As your travel agent, I'm also happy to help you navigate these sometimes confusing regulations.

Skip the airplane food, and expensive snacks. Pack healthy snacks for your little ones on solid food. Load up on celery and carrot sticks, chopped apples, and nuts. Skip anything that may raise TSA eyebrows — like yogurt, nut butters, and other creamy foods not in sealed packages. Also, many airlines will ask that you not eat peanuts or anything containing peanuts or peanut oil on a flight if there is someone on board with severe allergies. It's best to just avoid those items so that you are stuck with snacks you can't eat.

Remember that you don't need to pack a full trip's worth of supplies. Most of your destinations will have a grocery or department store waiting for you (and your credit card!) upon your arrival. Pack enough to get you through to your destination, plus a little more. Extra food, snacks, diapers, wipes, and toiletries can all be purchased when you arrive and have a place to put them.

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Keeping the Kids Entertained

You could just pack a tablet and some headphones and let your kids watch movies the entire flight - we've all been tempted - but in the long run, you will all be happier if you also bring along some more stimulating activities that encourage imagination and connection. After all, isn't that what family travel is all about? Here are some great ideas for some easy-to-pack toys and games.

Busy Bags: A few small brown paper lunch bags is all you need. A good rule of thumb is one bag per hour of your flight so that you can reveal a new surprise once an hour. Suggestions on contents of busy bags (depending on age) include: stickers, coloring book, small craft project (look at your local craft store for \$1.00 items), a small toy, soft cover book to read, or snacks.



Eye Spy Bottle: Fill up a regular clear plastic bottle (with a secure lid) with rice and add little items from around the house, such as a gemstone, bead, penny, small animals, a small wool fuzzy ball, buttons, and more. List all of the items on a piece of paper, words or images, and have your child check them off as they find them.

Fresh Coloring Books and Crayons

Soft cover books: Stop at the thrift store and pick up a bunch of "new" reads. This provides your kids with new reading material, but you won't have to be stressed about leaving behind a stack of library books.



Quiet Books / Cloth Activity Books

Magazines: Provides reading material for you, and a back up for kids. Have them search magazines like a treasure hunt. Find a dog, the letter z, etc.

Kid's Card Games: A deck of Go Fish or Old Maid cards can be a big hit.

Finger Puppets

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Your Printable Packing Checklist

Paperwork:

- Children leaving the country need the same paperwork as adults: passport, visa, immunizations.
- Children under 18 years old leaving the country with only one parent require additional documentation.
- Documentation of FFA approval for additional harness system you are bringing on board.
- Documentation of any medical information.

Diaper Bag Musts:

- Plan for twice as many diapers as you think you will need.
- Wipes, not just for diaper changes.
- A head to toe change of clothes.
- Any medications anyone needs.
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothes and diapers.
- Favorite blanket / toy / or stuffed friend.
- Small toys and books from entertainment list.

* You can save paper by printing just this page.

Food and Drink:

- Empty bottles and sippy cups.
- Powdered formula and bottled water (Do NOT use water from airplane bathroom taps).
- Breast milk (You will have to declare pumped milk).
- Baby food in sealed packaging.
- Healthy Snacks: Celery and Carrot sticks, nuts, crackers, cereal, dried fruit, etc.
- For older children, sucking on a lollipop or chewing gum during take off may keep them distracted and help with ear popping.

Equipment:

- Car seat or Airplane Harness.
- Collapsible Stroller.



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