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FIVE WAYS TO KEEP
YOUR KIDS IN A GOOD
MOOD DURING YOUR
TRAVELS.

WORDS JUSTINE LOPEZ

June is fast approaching, which means your next family vacation is right around the corner. Whether you plan to take a road trip to Bandung, have a beach getaway in Bali or travel to some far-flung international destination, traveling with kids can be tricky.

When it comes to family vacations, it's always best to plan ahead and be prepared with an arsenal of fun activities to keep your children occupied. The goal is to maximize the fun times and minimize the tantrums.

To ensure that your next family vacation is a success here are a few tried and true tips on how to keep your little ones entertained:

ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS TO DOCUMENT THE TRIP

We all know kids love taking pictures. So why not give your children their own cameras so they can document the trip themselves? You can give each child a disposable camera, especially if they're younger. Or, if your kids are older consider letting them use your mobile phone or, if possible, surprise them with a cheap digital camera. They will love acting as family photographer and recording their own home videos. Not only will this keep them entertained but it will serve as a fun keepsake.



It may be first class all the way, but even the Pitt-Jolie brood need some entertainment on the road.

PACK LOTS OF SNACKS

Bringing an abundance of snacks is a must for any family excursion. Not only do "snack breaks" help break up long travel days, but they are the key to keeping your little ones from getting grumpy. Since you're on vacation, it's OK to pack some candies, chips and other treats as a reward. But make sure to also bring along some healthier options. Before you head out cut up a selection of fruits (like pineapples, bananas and apples) and veggies (like carrots, cucumbers and snap peas).

MAKE A VACATION BOOK

Children typically have a difficult time understanding what to expect during a family vacation, especially if they've never visited the destination before. Compiling



Photos AFP

a binder filled with information about your upcoming trip can be educational, entertaining and interactive. Print out maps of the areas you'll be traveling though and bring along a highlighter so your kids can trace the route on the map as you go. Also include pictures of all of the kid-friendly attractions you'll be visiting and include some fun facts about your destination. Not only will this help them understand where they're headed

but they will get excited about the trip.

LET YOUR KIDS PACK THEIR OWN TRAVEL BAG

If you're embarking on a lengthy car or plane ride, bringing along a plethora of toys, books and games to keep your kids occupied is crucial. But why not involve them in the packing process? Give each of your children a small backpack or case and let them bring along whichever toys, books and games they want. That way they'll have a few of their favorite items to entertain them throughout the trip. It's a good idea to set some guidelines. For example, no loud toys that will disrupt others.

PUT DOWN THE ELECTRONICS AND GET ARTSY

In this day and age parents depend on video games and movies to keep their kids entertained. Obviously this is fine, and oftentimes necessary, during long trips. But mixing things up is a good thing. In addition to electronics, bring along art supplies – including stickers, drawing pads, colorful pens and crayons. Have them draw pictures of the vacation spot, family portraits or even their favorite animal they saw. For older kids, have them keep a diary, where they can either draw pictures or write down their favorite experiences each day. ■