



# GREAT FAMILY VACATIONS

## Avoid the Tourist Trap: Tips To Get Local On Your Next Family Vacation

(NAPSA)—Whether you're taking the kids to the beach, visiting a museum or traveling into uncharted territory, family trips can be a great way to create lasting memories. Many parents plan ahead by surfing the Web or perusing bulky—and oftentimes dull—travel guidebooks that can leave readers confused or overwhelmed. This year, however, you can toss the tour book to the wayside and discover a city's hidden treasures for families by becoming a local explorer.

Rather than retracing the steps of countless tourists before you, do a little researching before you go to find the true heart of a city. The following tips can help parents and kids unlock a city's secrets and learn what's unbelievable, awesome, fun and, ideally, completely original in any destination across the country.

• **Put your walking shoes on.** Choose a hotel in a central city locale. Once settled, set out to explore your destination on foot—with family in tow—to get a feel for the layout of the city. Make sure to take notice of good places to stop for a meal or snack and interesting shops and museums you may want to visit. But don't let street signs hold you back.



Journey off the main road and wander until you discover something special.

• **Let the locals be your guide.** As you make your way through countless pizzerias, theme parks and museums, tap into the locals' insight and ask for recommendations about other fun and family-friendly activities. Ask if the city is known for a specific dish or if there's a favorite local hang-out. While many restaurant and hotel staff are very knowledgeable about their cities, don't be afraid to ask for recommendations from the family you're standing next to in line for lunch or a local you pass on your way to the park.

• **Extra! Extra! Read all about it!** Reading the local news-

paper is a great way to get acquainted with the hot spots and happenings of a new city. Use the neighborhood news and calendar listings as your personal guides to seeing the latest kids' movies and cool museum exhibits and experiencing the best local cuisine.

• **Choose a family-friendly hotel.** Since your hotel can be one of your main resources while you're away from home, it's important that it considers the wants and needs of the whole family—not just the grown-ups. For example, Embassy Suites Hotels recently unveiled its Kids-Eye View program, which provides the inside scoop on the "funnest" spots in 20 of the nation's cities. The hotel company surveyed kids to find out what's hip, hot and happening in their hometowns—talk about good advice from locals! From watching jelly beans grow to assuming a spy identity at a local museum, Kids-Eye View shares cities' best-kept secrets.

So before you create an itinerary for your next family vacation, get your feet ready for walking, keep your mind open for adventure and consider checking out [www.embassysuites.com](http://www.embassysuites.com) to learn more about Kids-Eye View. Who knows what adventures await...