

TRAVEL TRENDS

Family Vacations—Family Decisions

(NAPSA)—An impressive 87 percent of parents in the U.S. and Europe give kids a say in vacation destination planning. One in three U.S. millennial parents (34 percent) even empower their kids to have full control over the final vacation destination decision.

That's according to the new *HomeAway Kidfluencer Survey*, fielded by independent market research firm YouGov, which surveyed kids (ages six to 18) and parents based in the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, and Spain. Findings show that not only do kids have significant decision making over the entire travel-planning process but most also said their favorite thing about vacations is being together with family.

The majority of U.S. parents view kids' input as a way to get more out of the vacation. More than half (53 percent) involve their children in the planning process to get them excited about the trip, 42 percent say they involve their kids so they can learn about new things, and nearly a quarter (24 percent) of parents use vacation planning as an educational opportunity.

"We are surprised the survey shows kids have such a strong influence on family travel decisions," says Brian Sharples, co-founder and CEO of HomeAway, the world's leading whole-home vacation rental marketplace with more than one million listings ranging from condos to castles and tiny houses to luxury villas. "Now, it seems the whole family is invested in the experience, with kids bringing their own travel preferences to the table."

Get Ready For Your Next Getaway

Not sure on how to best involve your kids in planning a vacation? Ranier Jenss, president and founder of the Family Travel Association, offers his top six tips:

1. Create a family tree. Use what you discover about your relatives as inspiration for where to go and what to do. Family history and heritage can ground a trip in very meaningful ways.



Kids today have a major say in family vacation destinations.

2. Once an itinerary has been set and before you depart, immerse yourselves and your children in the cultures and the places you'll visit. For example, read stories about the destinations and dine on the local cuisines.

3. Develop a list of before-departure challenges and learning goals about the places you'll go. Provide a list of websites, atlases, world books, destination brochures and magazines. Have children find where you're going on a map, note the time zones and master a few basic but essential words of the local languages.

4. List several stops on your itinerary and ask your kids to assemble a selection of preferred activities in those destinations. Together, find times and places for curiosity detours, as building in room for surprise and serendipity is fundamental to fun travel.

5. Establish a way for your kids to chronicle what they learn, for both personal use and as class presentations, including descriptions of people, pictures and video (offer them some camera or phone time).

6. Let kids weigh in on where you stay—it may add to a more harmonious trip. According to the Kidfluencer survey, more than one-third of kids in the U.S and Europe (40 percent) prefer to stay in a vacation rental over other types of places, such as hotels, cruises or RVs. U.S. kids note "getting their own room or bed" is what they think would be the best part of staying in a whole house (39 percent).

For more vacation inspiration or planning tips, visit HomeAway.com and FamilyTravel.org.