

FAMILY TRAVEL

Keep The Family Busy And Bonding On A Road Trip

by *Emily Kaufman*

(NAPSA)—If you find yourself saying “Are we there yet?” as often as your kids on road trips, you may be on the wrong route for family travel.

Today, with both high-tech and low-tech ways to keep the family entertained, kids can have as much fun in the car as when they arrive.

Here are some tips on how families can make the most of every minute and every dollar on the road this year:

1) Avoid high-tech disconnect

—A number of cars today, including the Volkswagen Routan, have lots of great high-tech features such as DVD players and Wi-Fi.

Instead of having everyone plug in and tune out, use this technology to bond. Have the kids research and learn more about where you're visiting and what fun things the family can do there together. You can watch an educational DVD about your destination. On the way back, use your technology to make a slide show of your trip pictures and send it to friends and families.

2) Embrace some low-tech time

—While technology can be a great travel tool for part of the trip, families should take advantage of the time in the car together to reconnect. Play card games, sing songs together, tell stories about when you were kids and create new vacation memories. Another low-tech fun thing to do is to listen to stories on tape—it's a great way



A little planning can put your next family car trip on the road to fun.

for the whole family, including the driver, to do something together. The Routan has a USB port, allowing you to download your favorite books and songs.

3) Plan ahead to avoid splurging on the road

—There are two major ways to waste money on a road trip—on food and drinks and on your gas. Make sure you get your oil changed and tires pumped up to avoid potential unnecessary stops along the way and increasing your gas mileage. Because Carefree Maintenance is standard on all current Routans, it makes preparation easier so you can drive more and worry less. As for food, there's something about a road trip that gives families the munchies. Prep healthy meals and snacks ahead of time, such as sandwiches and sliced fruits and vegetables. And don't forget to bring water and avoid sugary drinks. Some say sugar highs and lows make both

kids and parents cranky. Don't forget to take a cookie sheet along and use it as a tabletop for eating or even as a desk for drawing.

4) Create a boredom bag

—Get a few inexpensive toys, games and crafts and use them as prizes for car games or to reward good behavior. The new toys will be such a great surprise to the kids and yet make a small dent to the road-trip budget.

For more information on the Routan or other VW products, visit www.vw.com.

• *Emily Kaufman, known as America's Travel Mom, is a proud mother of two and a nationally recognized travel expert. She's regularly featured on TV and radio, in publications and online, offering her practical pointers for family travel with children of all ages. Kaufman believes travel can be a wonderful way for families to share time together.*



Emily Kaufman