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**MUMS' TIPS
FOR A FAMILY ADVENTURE**

We all know that journeys - at the best of times - can take it out of you. Everyone wants to arrive at their destination stress free and ready for fun. We asked MummyPages mums to give us their top tips to keep you and your little ones smiling on your holiday in Ireland this summer.

PLANNING

- **Research is key:** Make sure you do your research. Check that your desired destination is family friendly and that there are suitable activities to keep your little ones entertained regardless of the weather.
- **Reviews:** Check reviews online for restaurants, bars and visitor attractions in the area you're staying, it's surprising how many little gems there are in Ireland!
- **Pre-booking:** Pre-book all activities on line to avoid queuing with impatient kids.
- **Include the kids:** Have a talk with your kids about what they would like to do. By getting the children involved in the planning, they will be more enthusiastic and appreciate the trip more.
- **Packing in advance:** Packing should be done a few days before your scheduled trip to make sure that everything is there and that nothing important is left.
- **Pre-Order food:** Take the hassle out of packing food for self-catering holidays by pre-ordering a grocery delivery to be delivered shortly after your arrival time.
- **Comfort:** Bring a little piece of home with you. As exciting as a holiday is kids love the comfort of home so whether it be toys, blanket, DVD or something personal let them bring it with them. You'll be surprised how much they'll appreciate especially on a day that they are tired.
- **Pack for every eventuality:** Pack for all kinds of weather so that you can have family fun whatever the weather - raincoats, wellies, sun cream, flip flops, etc.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Bring an emergency supply of essential in the boot of the car:

- Baby wipes - for messy situations
- Bin liners for muddy wellies, damp towels and the clothes you are going to wash when you get home
- Bag of clothes/shoes
- Extra bottles of water - for washing feet after the beach
- Swimming togs, picnic blanket, meds, maps

TRAVELLING

- **Plan frequent rest stops:** If you are travelling a long distance, make sure you have lots of stops planned along the way so your kids can use the bathroom and stretch their legs. Stop in fun spots where the kids can run around and burn some energy.
- **Plan frequent food stops:** Ensure you feed little ones (& even big ones) regularly by planning if possible your food stops - nothing ruins a day out more than hungry grumpy kids/parents.
- **Plan around nap times:** If possible plan your trip around toddler/baby nap times so they don't feel the length of the car journey and wake up fresh and ready to go when you arrive.
- **Be encouraging and give the occasional treat:** It helps to continually encourage your child throughout the trip. Treats for good behaviour shouldn't be too frequent but on long journeys they will make the trip seem shorter.
- **Give your child a map:** Giving children a map to follow will distract them and make them feel like they are contributing to the journey. It will also cut down on the constant 'are we there yet?' Draw out simplified maps for the younger ones so that so they can follow where you are. They get really excited when we hit each town and it makes the journey fun for them.
- **Goody Bags:** Pack a goody bag for each child. Put in bits and pieces like healthy snacks, book/comic, sketch pad, puzzle book, stickers, sweeties etc.
- **Travel Friendly Games:** Make car traveling interesting, print out games like car bingo or play 'I Spy'
- **Print out Booklets:** Make a booklet each with different pictures eg. red cars, cows, flower pots etc so they can mark them off as they go along.
- **Explore:** Don't be afraid to go off the beaten track, there are so many hidden gems to be found.



ENTERTAINING

- **Bring things to occupy their time:** Books, colouring items, CDs, and games suitable for travelling are the perfect way to keep kids from fighting and complaining when they get tired from travelling.
- **Be prepared for all weather:** When you arrive at your destination, be sure to have options of activities to suit all weather scenarios. Whether you're out and about in the sunshine or doing some indoor camping, your kids will have smiles on their faces.
- **Learn-to Holidays:** Why not combine your holiday with an exciting new skill. From surfing to pottery making, horse riding to cooking, there are countless terrific courses to dive into. Your kids will be kept busy and will be dying to tell their friends all about the new skills they've learned.
- **Special toys:** Let kids bring some special toys/games...but check their bags before you go, as you don't want them to include half their bookshelves, a big collection of large stones and 15 teddy bears! Allow them to choose, but within reason.
- **Festival Fun:** There are festivals on year round across the country. Why not check if there are any local festivals in or around where you are planning to go. It will keep your little ones entertained and you can experience something a little different.
- **Mark a map:** Have a map of Ireland and show your little ones where you are going, all the interesting places that are on the map for them to see (seaside, castles, cliffs etc) then you can mark them off when you've visited them.
- **Keep it interesting:** Try visit places of interest to your children. Visit places that the children have learnt about in school, so they are interested and enjoy it.
- **Daily itinerary:** Have an idea what you're going to be doing every day - make an itinerary and give it to the kids. Let each child pick one activity that everyone has to join in with. They feel like they're calling the shots and get more enthusiastic for the activities.
- **Capture Memories:** Get the kids involved in a scrap book to help store those golden memories! Bring a notepad and pen for a holiday diary. If possible have a camera each for the kids so they can take their own photos of the holiday and then make an album from there pictures. It's great to see pictures from their perspective



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