

Exploring Uncharted Territory: Your Family Vacation

by: News Canada (NC)—Picture it – your minivan is stopped at a rest area. Your partner sits at the wheel while you are buried under a mess of unfolded maps. You feel tense as you debate over directions while your jumpy kids in the back seat are spreading chocolate over each other. Aah, the joys of a family vacation. Don't despair, not every trip has to be like that. By making plans in advance, you can help ease tensions on the trip and turn it into a family adventure filled with wonderful memories for everyone. Before getting started, consider these quick travel tips. Where are we? Try to map out your trip in advance or at least be prepared with a road atlas in the car. Michelin's 2003 North America Road Atlas is spiral bound and compact, which means it lies flat for easier navigating and folds over easily so it can be tucked away in the glove compartment. A great innovation is that maps are organized by geographic region, not by the alphabet ... according to the way you actually drive. Are we there yet? Let your children also have their own map so they can follow along with you. Use a road atlas to teach your children how to use maps and help them learn to answer that gnawing question, "Are we there yet?" Make a game out of it and try to see who can calculate the distance the fastest. I have to go! Plan exciting pit stops along the way to give everyone a chance to stretch their legs and use a restroom. Choose interesting locations and tourist attractions such as the world's largest coffee pot in Saskatchewan, magnetic hill in New Brunswick or a haunted lighthouse in Ontario. Make these stops part of the fond memories of your family trip. I'm bored! Entertaining car-based activities for the kids will help make the journey more pleasant for everyone. There are a variety of great board games available in compact sizes, which use magnets to ensure pieces stay on the board. Other options include reading out loud, singing or listening to audio books. Consider the classic games of "I Spy", a scavenger hunt or even counting cows, horses and other unique items you identify. I'm hungry! To avoid grumbling stomachs keep some snacks handy such as fruit, granola bars or juice boxes to keep everyone satisfied while you search for the next rest stop. Spending time together on a road trip is a great way to have quality time with your family. Don't let it ruin your trip. Instead make it part of the adventure and the wonderful memories. Not only will some advance planning make your trip a lot more pleasant, it may keep everyone talking to one another! - News Canada

About the Author

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