

All families need time to get away from the daily routine for rest and relaxation, but it often seems undoable when operating on a tight budget. With a little creativity, though, everyone can find a way to escape together as family!

Vacation with Friends...

Meals and lodging are a significant expense to consider when planning a vacation. They are not a fixed cost, and always seem to be the expense that makes vacation budgets go over the top. To alleviate this problem, one year we decided to go in together with some good friends and rent a condo that was big enough for both families at a destination we both wanted to visit. Not only did that cut the lodging cost in half, but cooking in the condo's kitchen reduced food expenses as well. As a bonus, we got to share the experience with lifelong friends!

State Park Vacations...

If you're like me, when you envision state park vacations you think of sleeping bags on the ground in a tent. While some women enjoy that, I DO NOT! A state park vacation was suggested to me, and since the budget was tight we decided to investigate this affordable option. We discovered that most state parks not only have cabins with all the modern amenities, but also offer recreational activities that the whole family can enjoy. Many state parks can even be found in areas with tourist attractions within driving distance!



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Vacations as Gifts...

One year for Christmas my husband's grandmother gave our family money. We'd missed our vacation that year due to a lack of funds, so we decided to use it to go on vacation and build memories with our children (instead of buying future garage sale merchandise). Over the next few months we asked for restaurant gift cards for Valentine's Day, birthdays, etc., and by the time we left, much of the week-long vacation had been paid for as gifts to us!

Off-Season Travel...

Off-season travel is a great way to get good deals on popular vacation places! For our ten year anniversary, my husband and I wanted to go on a cruise to celebrate. Our anniversary is in the summer, however, which is a really expensive time to go on a cruise. As we researched, we realized that if we went during an "off-peak" time the trip was significantly more affordable. We booked our trip after school let out in December, but before Christmas, which allowed both my husband and I to cruise cheaper than the price of one ticket during the summer months.

Mix Business with Pleasure...

A great way to get a more financially reasonable vacation is to mix business with pleasure. For instance, one summer my husband had to go to Chicago for a conference. Since his plane ticket, hotel room, and food were paid for through the company, I decided to tag along. During the day while he was attending workshops, I rested, read, lounged by the hotel pool, etc. When he was done for the day, we explored Chicago together. If work schedules allow, you may also choose to stay an extra day or two together after the conference. Either way, you have a fun vacation at about half the price!



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