



Avoiding the Burden of Travel: Tips for women traveling with children

Traveling can be a stressful time for anyone, but it can be particularly nerve-wracking for a woman traveling alone or with small children. Traffic delays, lost luggage and long airport security lines really can cause a headache – and on top of this, women have to worry about their safety and their children's safety. But with a little planning and preparation, traveling can be safe and enjoyable.

When taking a trip, it pays to be prepared. "Pack your car with some sort of safety kit," said Courtney Caldwell, editor in chief, *Road & Travel* magazine, a publication committed to the safety of women travelers. She advised including a flashlight, extra batteries, water, blankets, gloves, sand or salt, and an extra change of clothes. "In case your car breaks down, you need to stay warm," she said. While traveling with children, it is important to keep them happy and comfortable.

If a woman's method of travel is by airplane, packing must be taken closely under consideration. Packing only the necessities can make traveling less of a hassle. It also pays for flyers to keep airport security in mind when packing. "Don't lock your suitcase," Caldwell said. "It must be able to be opened at random." Always bring valuables and medications onto the plane in carry-on bags, she said. Items packed in suitcases must follow the guidelines set forth by the Transportation Security Administration. It is a good idea to check with the particular airline for acceptable items because each airline has different rules, Caldwell said.

In the Air

Keeping an eye on children while on a flight can be exhausting. If a young child is crying and screaming, it might be because the plane's cabin pressure is causing the child's ears to pop. Caldwell said. "Bring along something for the child to suck on, like a bottle. Or if the child is a little older, bring some chewing gum," she said. This will help alleviate the uncomfortable ear popping. Airspace.com offers some tips for traveling with children:

- Prepare for possible emergencies: Make sure you are aware of emergency equipment or procedures that would apply to your child. Pay attention to the standard preflight emergency briefing.
- Supervise young children at all times: An unsupervised or unrestrained child could quickly wander into dangerous areas, especially if the responsible adult falls asleep. The parent also should be careful when walking about the aircraft with his or her child so they don't reach for cups of hot coffee, silverware and other hazards.
- Seat children away from an aisle: Small children could get hurt if their arms get bumped by a person or serving cart passing down the aisle. Allow the child to take the window seat.
- If emergency oxygen masks deploy, put your mask on first: If the brain is starved of oxygen (hypoxia), one can get confused or pass out and be unable to help the child. By putting on the mask first, the parent will reduce the chances of falling victim to hypoxia.
- Bring along safe toys: Try to avoid bringing along toys that are sharp, heavy or that break easily.

When You Get There

Women must be sure to keep safety in mind when selecting a hotel or other lodging. According to the Women's Travel Club, it is a good idea to find a hotel with fewer than 100 rooms, on a well-trafficked street with busy neighbors (restaurants, late night food stores, etc). The Women's Travel Club offers these tips for women staying in hotels:

- Ask for a room near the elevators.



- Use all available locks on doors, preferably a bar lock.
- Ask for a room on an upper floor, away from catwalks and terraces, if possible.
- Do not use the "maid clean" sign; call housekeeping if necessary.
- Use the "privacy please" sign if you want people to think your room is occupied.
- Lock up all valuables in the safe and larger items in your suitcase.
- Put expensive clothing on hangers under other clothing.
- Use the concierge to help with safe travel to and from restaurants.

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