



15 ways to save money on family travel

By Gretta Schifano, [Mums do travel](#)

Get a free EHIC

If you're a UK citizen and you're travelling in Europe get a free EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) for each member of your family before you leave home. This entitles you to free or reduced cost public healthcare while you're away.

Take out insurance

Always buy travel insurance - it's false economy not to have it. The cheapest policy may be inadequate - look at the cover provided and make sure that it's enough for you. For example, the cancellation cover must meet the cost of your holiday and the insurer should provide 24-hour emergency assistance. Work out the value of your possessions and make sure that they'll be covered by the policy if they're lost or stolen. If you travel abroad more than once a year, it could be worth buying annual travel insurance.

Book your hire car in advance

You can save a lot of money by booking a hire car advance. Shop around online to find the best deals. If you have a portable SatNav which works abroad, take it with you to avoid paying for SatNav hire.

Be savvy about foreign currency

Avoid exchanging currency at airports as the exchange rates are likely to be less favourable than elsewhere. Exchange cash before you set off on your trip and shop around for the best rates. There are some very good plastic currency cards available which you preload with cash before you travel. If you want to use your debit or credit card abroad check what the fees are first.

Borrow guide books

Borrow guide books about your destination from your local library for free.

Pack wisely

Think carefully about what you need to take with you in order to avoid buying stuff while you're away. If your child has infant paracetamol when they're ill, pack some to take on your trip. If your kids have sensitive skin and there's a particular brand of sunscreen which suits them, take it with you rather than searching for it once you reach your destination.

Take a cool bag

If you're going somewhere hot, take a cool bag, an ice pack and some sandwich bags with you so that you can buy drinks and snacks at local shops and supermarkets to keep everyone fed and watered while you're out and about.

Be prepared for laundry

Pack some travel washing liquid and clothes pegs so that you can wash clothes if you need to.

Weigh your luggage

To avoid paying excess luggage charges on flights, check out the luggage size and weight restrictions for your airline and make sure that your luggage is within the limits. Invest in some digital luggage scales which you can take with you on your travels.

Stock up on snacks

Travelling can be hungry work for kids so take some snacks with you for the journey so that you don't end up stopping at cafes en route too much.

Get free water

If you're flying you can take empty water bottles through security and ask for them to be filled with tap water (as long as it's drinkable, obviously) at a cafe in the departure lounge. Otherwise buy a bottle of mineral water for each person in your group before you get on the plane.

Plan your transfers

Compare the cost and convenience of travelling by public transport with the cost of taking a taxi from your airport or railway station to your accommodation. Public transport is a great option in many places, but if there are a few of you travelling together a taxi may be cheaper.

Research your excursions

Research what's on offer in your destination in terms of trips and activities before you go. You can save money by booking direct with local providers rather than paying a hotel to arrange things for you.

Be independent

If you book travel and accommodation separately it can be much cheaper than going on a package holiday. Use websites such as expedia.com, booking.com, trivago.com and skyscanner.net to compare prices. Then contact accommodation providers to see if you can get it even cheaper by booking directly with them. Bear in mind that if you do this you won't have ATOL or ABTA protection.

This one's for parents of children who haven't started school yet....

Make the most of it!

You have 14 years of inflated school holiday travel prices ahead of you so make the most of it while you can. Travel during term time and enjoy fewer crowds and lower prices. Don't think that you can't travel with babies and small children - you really can, and this may be the last time that you can afford to go to far away places for many years.

Go for it!

Website: Mums do travel

Twitter: [@grettaschifano](https://twitter.com/grettaschifano)

Facebook: [MumsDoTravel](https://www.facebook.com/MumsDoTravel)

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