



# HAPPY

# holidays!

Looking for the perfect destination for your brood? **SUE WHITE** has tested these near and far family-friendly holiday adventures for you to enjoy

## LOCAL GETAWAYS

### CANBERRA, ACT

**PLAY:** Parents visiting Canberra often wonder why they don't do it more. There's family activities aplenty: try kid dress-ups at Old Parliament House or make your own coin at The Mint. The National Arboretum is an excellent place, with superb views, a well-priced cafe, and the impressive Pod Playground.  
**STAY:** Kids will love the jungle bungalows at The National Zoo and Aquarium's Jamala Wildlife Lodge (for ages six and over). [www.jamalawildlifelodge.com.au](http://www.jamalawildlifelodge.com.au)



### LORD HOWE ISLAND, NSW

**PLAY:** Boasting a world heritage listing, calm lagoons and far more bicycles than cars, families quickly fall in love with Lord Howe Island. Less than a two-hour flight from Sydney, the 11km-long lagoon is best visited between September and June.  
**STAY:** Pinetrees Lodge is so popular with families that visitors return for decades, eventually bringing the next generation with them. Even the property itself is sixth-generation owned. [www.pinetrees.com.au](http://www.pinetrees.com.au)



### CALOUNDRA, QLD

**PLAY:** On Queensland's Sunshine Coast, 90km north of Brisbane, Caloundra is a relaxed alternative to the ever-popular Noosa. The calm waters and free barbecues at centrally located Bulcock Beach make it a hit destination with children, and the locals delight in floating peacefully from one end to the other (do watch your little ones with the current, though).  
**STAY:** Dicky Beach Family Holiday Park has a pool, playground, fabulous beach frontage and accommodation options spanning from camping and caravan sites to self-contained studios. [www.sunshinecoastholidayparks.com.au](http://www.sunshinecoastholidayparks.com.au)



### BROOME, WA

**PLAY:** Broome is justifiably famous for its 22km-long Cable Beach (where camel rides are a classic family experience), but there's lots more to do here. Feeding crocodiles, wandering the weekend markets and splashing around at Town Beach's water park should also make your shortlist of fun days out.  
**STAY:** The lush Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa is surprisingly family-friendly. Accommodation options include bungalows with kitchens for self-catering, and there's a family precinct onsite featuring a family pool, water playground and mini golf. [www.cablebeachclub.com](http://www.cablebeachclub.com)



### KANGAROO ISLAND, SA

**PLAY:** With native penguins, seals, koalas, dolphins and (of course) kangaroos, this nature-lover's haven combines spectacular scenery with dozens of opportunities to admire Australian wildlife up close in their natural habitat.  
**STAY:** The west end of the island is a good choice if you're keen to do some dusk (or for the hardy, dawn) wildlife viewing. Try the self-contained cabins at Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, where you can take advantage of the opportunity to cook using some of Kangaroo Island's excellent seafood, honey or cheese. [www.hansonbay.com.au](http://www.hansonbay.com.au)



### SNOWY MOUNTAINS, NSW

**PLAY:** The Snowy Mountains area is not just a winter wonderland. In the alpine village of Thredbo children go free on many summer passes, including the chairlift to the top of Thredbo (for accessing the track to Mount Kosciuszko). For those who can't let go of snow, try the Thredbo Kids Snow Festival (September school holidays).  
**STAY:** The Novotel's Lake Crackenback Resort and Spa, which is about 15 minutes out of Thredbo, has plenty of family activities, including fishing and trampolining. You and your little ones will also love saying hello to the resident wombat, Wally. [www.lakecrackenback.com.au](http://www.lakecrackenback.com.au)

OVERSEAS GETAWAYS



**VANUA LEVU, FIJI**

**PLAY:** Fiji is perennially popular with families, but those who can face one more short flight won't regret leaving touristy Viti Levu behind. Vanua Levu is the second largest of Fiji's 300-plus islands, but its waterfalls, remote villages and laid-back atmosphere spell first-class tropical paradise.  
**STAY:** Kids are welcome at the high-end Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort. The offer of one nanny per child makes it easy to enjoy the complementary foot soak offered to adults on arrival, or relax in the beautiful bures (thatched roof huts).  
[www.fijiresort.com](http://www.fijiresort.com)



**WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND**

**PLAY:** While the South Island's Queenstown is world famous, nearby Wanaka deserves just as much praise. Out of snow season, think picnics – a short drive in almost any direction from this lakeside town will 'land' you in a spot where adults can soak up the mountain-filled landscape as the littles play.  
**STAY:** Spread over four acres, Alpine View Lodge offers both beautiful scenery and varied options. Accommodation ranges from studios to five-bedroom cottages and there are both self-catering and bed and breakfast options to choose from.  
[www.alpineviewlodge.co.nz](http://www.alpineviewlodge.co.nz)



**AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS**

**PLAY:** Playing in Amsterdam as a parent is quite different to visiting as a young backpacker, but wonderful nonetheless. Ride bicycles along canals, relax with locals in Vondelpark and soak up the scenic city. Many hire companies rent bikes with trailers or children's seats – though, make sure you're a confident rider, because you'll be competing with trams, cars and lots of cyclists.  
**STAY:** Next to the flower market right on the picturesque Singel Canal, the centrally-located Hotel Agora features a couple of family-friendly rooms (one big enough for five people).  
[www.hotelagora.nl](http://www.hotelagora.nl)



**KAUAI (HAWAII), USA**

**PLAY:** With tropical rainforests covering much of its surface, and waterfalls and beaches galore, Kauai is a quieter alternative to Oahu's Waikiki. Adults will love the jaw-dropping views of Waimea Canyon, while 'na keiki' (children) will be happiest splashing in Poipu Beach Park's natural pools.  
**STAY:** The Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa, located on the South Shore, has a two-hectare water park and a well-regarded kids' club, Camp Hyatt, where children can learn all about Hawaii via cultural arts and crafts activities.  
[www.kauai.hyatt.com](http://www.kauai.hyatt.com)



**LONDON, ENGLAND**

**PLAY:** Travelling to London with young ones offers a whole new perspective on the city. The Royal Opera House has shows for babies and toddlers; Kensington and Hampton Court Palaces offer play sessions for all ages (via their Tiny Explorers program); and the abundance of city parks makes for fun family downtime.  
**STAY:** At Mayfair's five-star Athenaeum Hotel, a kids' concierge organises toys, DVDs and everything from cots to nannies during your stay. The location also can't be beaten, it's opposite Green Park and a stone's throw to Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace.  
[www.athenaeumhotel.com](http://www.athenaeumhotel.com)



**PORT VILA, VANUATU**

**PLAY:** If you want to help Vanuatu after the devastation of May's Cyclone Pam, choose it as a holiday destination. It's located an easy three-and-a-half-hour's flight from Sydney and Vanuatu offers plenty for families. While it's an ideal trip for older children, under-fives will enjoy the vibrant colour of the local food markets, experience-expanding visits to traditional villages and of course, the natural playground that is the tropics.  
**STAY:** Warwick Le Lagon Resort and Spa in Port Vila boasts three pools (one is a cascade pool) and a kids' club.  
[www.warwickhotels.com/le-lagon-resort](http://www.warwickhotels.com/le-lagon-resort)

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