

5 Tips for Sneaking Romance on a Family Vacation

By Joyce Shulman | February 13th, 2018



Ah, family vacations. Making memories. Sharing experiences. Bonding as a pack.

Plus five suitcases, one bout of the sniffles, three meltdowns, and the occasional dose of sibling rivalry.

Is it possible to find romance amidst the clutter and clamor of a family vacation? We say "yes" if you plan ahead, adjust your expectations, and look for moments of opportunity. Here are five ways to do just that.

Think in Moments

Before kids, a romantic getaway likely included candlelit dinners, long walks on the beach, and leisurely mornings lounging in bed. No more. Finding romance on a family vacation is about finding a moment to take your partner's hand and gaze upon the brood you have created. Or snuggling with your honey on the floor of the walk-in closet on a pile of extra blankets you found in the top of the closet after you got the kids to sleep.

Finding romance on a family vacation is about moments.

Select Your Destination Carefully

Kids' clubs have come a long, long way since an unused ballroom and a bunch of crayons. Now they are engaging, enriching, and dare I say educational experiences that keep your kids going, for a morning, an afternoon, all day, or an evening. The list of destinations with fabulous kids' clubs is long, but here are five worth checking out:

- Tyler Place, *Vermont*
- Sonnenalp, *Vail*
- Club Med, *any location*
- Disney, Norwegian, or Royal Caribbean Cruises
- Four Seasons Kids for All Seasons

For me, romance is best found on the side of a mountain. A day of skiing alone with my husband, followed by a quick dip in the hot tub before picking the kids up from ski school -- that's the ideal day. So for years, when we head out on a family ski vacation, the deal is always that the kids spend one full day in ski school. Yup, they complain. Yup, they'd rather ski with us. Yup, my husband is a former ski instructor and could probably teach them just as well. Yup, ski school is crazy expensive. But that one day means their skiing improves and we get a day that is just for us.

Select Your Room Carefully

If possible, select a room that offers a bit of privacy so you can avoid the necessity of building a fort in the closet (though I confess some of my best memories are from those forts).

Most hotels offer the option of adjoining rooms, but you don't necessarily have to spring for a second room to find a little sense of privacy and space. You'd be hard-pressed to consider Great Wolf Lodge an ideal place to find a little romance, but their Kidcamp and Wolf Den rooms include a separate, themed area with bunk beds for the kids. The Wyndham Bonnet Creek also has a separate room within a room with bunk beds for the kids, and many of the family suites at Disney do a great job of creating the sense of separate spaces.

Invest the time to understand the available room types and select carefully.

Consider Babysitting Services

I know, it can be unsettling to leave your kids with a stranger, but many resorts offer access to babysitters who are carefully vetted and trained. We have also had great luck asking the counselors from the kids camp or instructors from ski school if they babysit (many of them do).

You might feel more comfortable leaving your kids for a couple of hours if you are staying on property, so consider booking one nice dinner at the restaurant in your hotel. That way you will be merely an elevator ride away if the kids need you (which they won't, but you'll feel better if you know you are close by.)

Finally, Put Aside the Guilt

Nope, your kids might not want to go to camp, or ski school, or movie night, or be left with a babysitter for two hours. They will complain. They might even cry. You will be tempted to cave. You will feel guilty.

Don't cave. Remember three things. First, we don't do our children any favors by giving them their way all the time. Second, this is your vacation too. Third, your kids actually want you and your partner to have a happy, healthy, positive, fun relationship. They are too young to understand that maintaining that relationship takes effort and work. But in the long run, they will be happier if your relationship is happier.