



Tips for Meaningful *Intergenerational* Travel – Part 1

- **Become childlike.** Let children, especially younger ones, help grandparents to remember the pure joy of play and the wonder of wonder. Grandchildren can “give permission” to their elders to have fun in ways they don’t at home.
- **Record highs and lows.** Bring a voice or video recorder with you (most smart phones have this feature). Each evening, pass the recorder around and have each person state one high and one low for the day. You can do a summary of the whole trip on the last day. These comments will be treasures years later.
- **Tag team.** If your children are old enough, put one child in charge of one grandparent or older person on the trip. It gives the child a sense of responsibility, slows them down to keep pace and can foster deep appreciation from the elder traveler who sometimes gets left behind. If you have more kids than grandparents, rotate each day with a new kid. You might be surprised how children rise to the occasion and how powerful the bonding is that occurs.
- **Know your interests and dislikes before the trip.** Every generation you add to the mix also adds to the complexity and likelihood of different tastes, paces, interests and pet peeves. Discuss these beforehand. Know what you’re willing to compromise and what you’re not. But be brutally honest with everyone *before* the trip or else you may have tantrums and meltdowns during the trip...and not just among the children.
- **Make a base camp.** Lugging your bags to a new hotel each day is especially hard with children and elderly travelers. Instead, consider renting a home, condo, villa or farmhouse in a central location and using it as a hub or base for extended day trips. This saves both money (both on hotels and on food since you can eat many meals at home) and wear and tear. Plus, you get to know one place much better that way.
- **Split up.** Even if you’re good at compromise, you often will want to see very different things. Moreover, you will need some breathing room. Splitting up can be as simple as letting the grandparents rest while the kids play in a nearby park. Going your separate ways for a few hours or a whole day may require some logistical planning, but you’ll appreciate each other more when you get back together.
- **Collect stories.** Use your voice/video recorder and have the kids ask questions about grandparents’ life experiences during your long car/bus/plane rides. The distance from home can open people to share about things they’d never discuss at home.
- **Try a different form of travel.** Cruises may not seem very adventurous to some people. But with kids, grandparents or extended family, cruises can be wonderful and with the right deal, as affordable as staying in hotels. Each group can do what they want during the day and still come together in the evening for a shared dinner.