

# Way to go...



Whether you are driving, taking the train or flying, you just gotta plan it right and you can make any journey worthwhile and memorable when you travel with your kid. M&B shows you how!

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## RIGHT ON TRACK

**Schedule right:** "We wake up our kids early in the morning and place them in the car with their night clothes on whenever we travel," says Priyanka Pathak, mum to Ahaana, five, and Ayaan, four. "It is much easier to leave at four in the morning and reach a place where we can halt for the day by noon and start driving again the next

morning," she adds. Breaking up your driving time in this manner helps because the kids sleep through the morning and are up only for breakfast and thereafter. To save time in the morning and ensure leaving on time, load the luggage in the car a night prior.

**Pack it all:** Food, including fruits like oranges, pears and apples, can be taken along. Carry a knife, plates and spoons and also your child's sipper or a tumbler with a cap for fluid consumption. Baby bottles and steriliser are a must if your baby is weaned. If your child is past the milk powder stage, carry tetrapaks of milk. Use the toned variety because it is easier to digest and kids prefer its taste to the full cream one. Doctors also advise toned milk for kids over the age of two years. Lots of biscuits and dry snacks help when tummies are growling. Paper napkins, wipes and lots of water are a must in a car. Carry a camper of cold water if you have space or keep several bottles of drinking water which can be used for washing as well, if needed.

**Carry entertainment:** Magnetic board

games, colours drawing paper and their favourite toys must go in the car. Keep the small variety ready for such occasions "Another trick is to stash away a few favourites for a month or so before your trip, and re-introduce along the way. Wrapping the toys can mean an extra few minutes of dedication as well," says Corinne McDermott, mother to Megan, five, and Riley, 18 months, a resident of Canada and creator of [havebabywilltravel.com](http://havebabywilltravel.com).

**Take time to rest:** It pays to keep your mileage ambitions realistic when travelling with kids. Fewer hours of drive in a day keeps the kids enthusiastic about the journey. Longer hours obviously tire them out and make them cranky. In case you and your spouse are sharing driving duties, it is better that you nap when the kids do. Be relaxed about your journey so that in case of bad weather, you can allow yourselves extra time to get wherever you are going," adds Eileen Ogintz, nationally syndicated family travel columnist based in Connecticut and the creator of [www.takingthekids.com](http://www.takingthekids.com).

**Install a car seat:** This is a must if you don't have one already. It is a must when driving with children under 12 years for their safety. Buy one from a reputed brand and make sure you have installed it properly and strapped your baby in correctly.

**Carry a portable toilet:** It is a good idea to carry a small potty seat for your child which can easily fit into your car without taking much space. Line it with a big plastic bag in which your child can poop and pee when required. The bag can then be disposed off. Make sure you take toilet breaks every hour or so to avoid any 'accidents' in the car. When kids are busy, they cannot remember petty things like these!

**Get your car serviced:** Remember to check for wheel alignment and fluid levels and all that your car manufacturer's manual suggests. This is a must-do before any long journey. "Check for tyre integrity and pressure and see to it that your tyres are not worn out," suggests KK Gandhi, Executive Director (Technical), Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. Check for routes that offer more ways to unwind and are more fun for kids. The websites [www.mapsofindia.com](http://www.mapsofindia.com) and [www.oktatabyebye.com](http://www.oktatabyebye.com) offer maps of routes which you can traverse making driving easy for you. Also check out route reviews on the Internet before you leave.

## CHUG ALONG

**Schedule right:** An overnight journey in a train with kids in tow is always preferable to a day-long one. No disturbed sleep and no need to think about entertainment! Book tickets accordingly.

**Pack it all:** Carry food from home for your child to avoid any tummy infections. You can treat her with ice-cream available as dessert with your meal, but never give her the salad to chew on. It can be a big source of infection. There are cases of branded mineral water bottles being packed with tap water, so it is best to carry your own water for your kids. Pack an extra sheet for your child to use under the blanket provided by the railways. Also pack extra clothes as they will be needed in the train. Kids like to run around in their socks so you will need several pairs to change. Carry a light jacket to keep warm in case the air-conditioning gets cold.

**Invest in a big bag with sections:** Ensure that it can hold baby diapers, nappies, clothes, bottles, food, toys, tickets and important documents and everything that you need on hand while travelling. This will ensure that you don't need to open another bag during your journey.

## LIKE A LITTLE BIRDIE

**Schedule right:** While a long night flight can affect your sleep, it can help if you don't have to bother about keeping a baby or toddler entertained most of the time. So, if you think your little one wouldn't mind sleeping on his seat, take a night flight.

**Pack it all:** See to it that you do not pack your belongings in one case. Divide your stuff into all bags, so that in case your baggage arrives late (which happens many a time during an international flight), your child is not left without undergarments! Always pack double the number of supplies that you think you'd need during your journey. So, if you think you will require five diapers, make it 10 straight away. Take an extra woollen sweater or jacket for the flight as it is always colder inside. Carry candies for older kids to suck on during takeoff. Breastfeed or bottlefeed your infant to avoid any ear pain.

**While at the airport:** It is always a good thing to keep some cushion time and reach the airport early, especially if you have to

board an international flight. Check the rules about packing of fluids, etc. before hand so that you don't have to struggle shifting things from one bag to another.

**Visit the loo:** "Before the flight takes off, make sure your children have attended to nature's call!" suggests Prachi Johar, mum to Atharva, five, and Gayatri, four.

"The key to a hassle-free holiday with a kid is to be organised," says Corinne. "Gone are the days where you could simply throw a few things in a bag and go! If you prepare in advance using detailed packing lists, research your destination so you know what kiddie things are available, and try as best you can to stick to your child's eating and sleeping routine, you are sure to have a wonderful time," she adds. M&B

## SOME SMART PACKING TIPS

Carry an extra bag in your suitcase to get back lots of goodies, or leave extra space in your bags while packing. "I pack small items like undergarments, socks and kerchiefs in small quilted boxes that I have got specially made for the purpose. In case I run out of these, I use zip-lock pouches available in the market," says Kalpana Makhijani of Delhi, mum to Sia, four, and Mahi, two.

