



The Family Vacation, Reinvented

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IT seems that a one-week trip to the shore, with days spent digging for clams and nights spent camping under the stars, has long ago ceased to be enough of a diversion for families planning their summer getaways. Now, the options range from cooking lessons in Italy (with even toddlers getting some kitchen time) to marionette-making courses in Prague to “volunteer vacations” that include trips to orphanages in China.

“Family travel continues to grow as more and more parents, particularly those working full time, view vacations as a way to ‘re-unite’ the family, more than an occasion for rest and relaxation,” said Peter Yesawich, chief executive of Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell, a travel marketing firm. According to the 2007 National Leisure Travel Monitor, a yearly report by the company, family travel will be up this summer, as nearly 40 percent of adults plan to take a vacation with children, up from 32 percent five years ago.

Here are some of the many choices available for families this summer.

ON THE CHEAPER SIDE

Many hotels are offering special discount-

ed rates and packages to attract families. At the Hilton Los Cabos Beach and Golf Resort in **Mexico**, the Family Fun Summer Promotion, available July 1 to Oct. 15, offers guests a chance to watch a poolside movie; (800) 445-8667; www.hiltonloscabos.com. There is a kids' concierge service to help plan activities and inform families about the weekly piñata party, cooking classes and kids' karaoke show. Rates start at \$199 a night for a double room; children 12 and under stay and eat (from the children's menu) free.

Families who like the outdoors and want to test their rock climbing skills will love the summer packages offered at the Mount Washington Resort in Bretton Woods, N.H.; (877) 873-0626, www.mtwashington.com. In the Hotel to Hut package guests spend part of their resort stay in an **Appalachian Mountain Club** full-service hut, where families can hike the trails and experience nature from steps away. Rates start at \$185 a night; \$109 a child aged 4 to 12. The Family Rocks package sends families rock climbing with the help of guides. Rates start at \$279; \$140 a child age 4 to 12. Both packages include accommodations and meals.

The Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska is celebrating its 90th anniversary, and the **Denali Park Resorts** — the McKinley Chalet Resort, the Grande Denali Lodge, the McKinley Village Lodge and the Denali Bluffs Hotel — are offering \$90 room rates on specific dates throughout June, July and August; (800) 276-7234; www.denaliparkresorts.com. The \$90 is a 60 percent saving from standard rates. ■