



10 GREAT

family resort stays



Poolside at the Malliouhana in Anguilla.

Kids and the Caribbean—it's a perfect pair. From the natural playground of their shores to man-made attractions like water parks and kids' clubs, the islands are a great pick for family travel. Here are some of the best family experiences in the region.

ciara lavelle

beaches turks and caicos

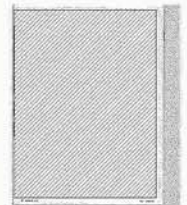
Every **Beaches** resort is designed with kids in mind, but the brand's Turks and Caicos location takes the cake for over-the-top amenities and attractions that the whole family can enjoy. For kids, the most exciting aspect of the resort is its 45,000-sq.-ft. *Pirates Island* water park, complete with seven water slides, a lazy river and a surfing simulator. Big kids can even kick back and relax like mom and dad at the swim-up soda bar. And little ones can get in on the action, too, with a zero-entry kiddie pool and gentle fountains and other spray features.

Add that to brand-wide features like the Xbox 360 Game Garage video game center, activities featuring characters from Sesame Street,

and Liquid, a teen hangout, and you have a destination packed full of activities for all ages. But not too packed; there's room enough here for even large families traveling together, with suites up to three bedrooms, some of which include Xbox consoles.

Of course, a family vacation is for the grownups, too. Parents can enjoy marble bathrooms with whirlpool tubs—separate from the kids' room—in *Italian Village* suites, as well as relaxing treatments at the *Red Lane Spa*. And at the end of a long, happy day of speeding down water slides, indulging in a massage or just relaxing on the resort's 12-mile

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Character breakfast at
Beaches Turks & Caicos.

beach, families come together for dinner at any of Beaches' 16 restaurants, ensuring there's a meal for even the pickiest eater. Rates start at \$500 pp per night; children 2-16 stay for \$105 per child per night.
Contact: (888) BEACHES; beaches.com

coconut bay resort and spa

Anyone who's been on a family vacation knows the importance of striking a balance between togetherness and privacy—enjoying time with your loved ones, with just enough space for you to relax on your own terms as well. That's a big part of what makes St. Lucia's **Coconut Bay's** layout so ideal for families traveling together. At one end of the resort, you'll find the *Splash* wing. This is the high-energy area of the resort, with the *CocoLand* water park (the island's largest) and its pools, fountains, lazy rivers and water slides. Young children take part in supervised activities like arts and crafts and playing in the shallow parts of the water park with *Coco Kidz*—and even get a visit from the coconut mascots of the resort, *Coco* and *Loco*. At *Da Buzz*, meanwhile, pre-teens and teenagers can hang out with video games and a ping pong table. But the real excitement is outdoors, where they can learn how to fly over the waves at the resort's onsite kiteboarding school, or play paintball at The Zone, the first paintball facility of its kind in the Caribbean.

The activities at *Splash* are available for every family member, but when parents need a break, they simply make their way to *Harmony*, an adults-only wing with a serene swimming pool surrounded by cabana beds. This is also where you'll find the *Kai Mer Spa*, offering a wide range of indulgent treatments. Rates start at \$310 per room per night dbl.
Contact: (877) 352-8898; coconutbayresortandspa.com

atlantis

With a wide range of amenities and attractions, **Atlantis** in The Bahamas has transformed itself into a playground appropriate for every age group. There's a wealth of accommodations, ranging from spacious studios to 3-bedroom villas with full kitchens. There's also a wide array of dining options, from casual and quick bites at buffets and cafes, to fancier restaurants for a quality family meal together. And, of course, there's an incredible array of activities for kids of every age. *Atlantis Kids Adventures* lets guests from age 3 to 12 participate in cooking lessons, theater performances and learning circus tricks, among other activities. Young kids have the chance to feed the fish in one of the resort's spectacular aquariums through the *Aqua Tots* program, while teens can hang out at the no-parents-allowed *Club Rush*, stocked with
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The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman offers the *Ambassadors of the Environment* program, where kids learn about the resort's tropical surroundings.

Xbox, PlayStation and Wii consoles as well as a wide screen for movies and live DJs every night.

Atlantis' wealth of kids-only activities ensures that parents don't have to feel guilty about spending a little time on their own—perhaps testing their luck at the largest casino in the Caribbean, or relaxing with a massage at its *Mandara Spa*. But family bonding is also on the itinerary here, with Dolphin Cove interactive dolphin encounters on site and the Caribbean's largest water park with seven water slides, plus pools, river rides and even a rock climbing station providing plenty of ways for families to have fun together. Rates start at \$455 per room per night. Contact: (888) 877-7525; atlantis.com

the ritz-carlton, grand cayman

It's rare to find an upscale resort that devotes a large amount of its amenities to the family travel set. But that's exactly what the **Ritz-Carlton** on Seven Mile Beach has done. Its kids' programs, which include the *Ambassadors of the Environment* by Jean-Michel Cousteau, aim to share the wonder of the resort's surrounding tropical environment with kids of all ages. Kids ages 4 to 7 can take part in submarine trips and explorations of the night sky in the *Ambassadors Kids* program; *Ambassadors Youth*, for kids 8 to 15, can get even more active with kayaking tours through Cayman's mangroves, photography lessons and snorkeling excursions. The lineup of activities also includes several that the whole family, parents and all, can enjoy, including visits to the blue iguana breeding facility at the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park.

And those are just the organized activities. Throughout the resort, families can play on the beach, swim in one of two spacious swimming pools, and schedule golf outings, tennis lessons and more at their

leisure. And at the end of the day, they'll return to a room or suite that's just their size. The Ritz-Carlton offers rooms with king beds and sleeper sofas, perfect for parents traveling with one or two small children, as well as more spacious suites with two bedrooms and full kitchens. Plus, every room comes with upscale touches like terraces or balconies and beautiful views—sure to make everyone in the family happy. Rates start at \$219 per room per night.

Contact: (800) 542-8680; ritzcayman.com

malliouhana

Most **Leading Small Hotels of the World** cater to intimate couples' travel. But Anguilla's **Malliouhana** isn't just any resort. Here, kids find a wealth of offerings just for them, from a 26-ft. pirate ship equipped with water canons and a 60-ft. water slide, to a diving pool where kids can make a big splash from one of two springboards into the water. There's also a shallow splash pool with fountains for toddlers, plus video games, ping pong and movies in a sun shelter. What's more, the kids' area is fully supervised for nearly the whole day, giving parents the chance to indulge in Malliouhana's more mature offerings: a treatment in the 15,000-sq.-ft. *Malliouhana Spa*, perhaps, or a relaxing soak in its heated jacuzzi.

But you'll also find plenty of ways to play together here, with a full array of watersports including motorized options such as water skiing, deep-sea fishing and scuba diving. Families shouldn't miss the resort's snorkeling trip, which visits a deserted bay every Monday, Wednesday and Friday—an exciting and picturesque way to explore the island.

Back at the resort, dining at Malliouhana's restaurants isn't to be missed; it was voted one of the top three places to eat in the Americas and Caribbean by *Condé Nast Traveler*. But that doesn't mean picky



eaters are out of luck. Amid the French-Caribbean fusion of flavors is a children's menu of tamer offerings for lunch and dinner. Rates start at \$430 per room per night; the resort is closed seasonally in September and October.

Contact: (800) 835-0796; mallouhana.com

half moon

Planning a big family gathering? We can't think of a better place than Jamaica's **Half Moon**. Its diversity of accommodations alone recommends it to large group travel, ranging from standard rooms with a choice of king or twin beds, to private villas with swimming pools and as many as seven bedrooms—an ideal option for large families who want to maximize their time together, as well as their budget. Rates for a 7-bedroom villa, capable of accommodating 14 people, start at \$1,750; that works out to about \$125 pp per night.

That's an even bigger bargain when you consider Half Moon's wealth of family-friendly amenities. At the *Anancy Children's Village*, kids ages 3 to 12 can put on live puppet shows, make their own souvenirs in the arts and crafts area, and listen to traditional Jamaican storytelling. Older kids have a place all their own in the *Teen Hype Zone*, stocked with games like foosball, air hockey and table tennis, as well as video games and a cyber lounge where they can keep in touch with their friends back home. Movie nights and karaoke parties give teens even

more entertainment options at night. And the whole family can come together for horseback tours at the resort's equestrian center, or to get up-close and personal with the friendly marine mammals at Dolphin Lagoon. Even Half Moon's location in Rose Hall is ideal: close to Montego Bay, and not too far from popular attractions near Ocho Rios like Mystic Mountain and Dunn's River Falls. Rates start at \$250 pp dbl.

Contact: (888) 830-5974; halfmoon.com/agents

grand case beach club

So your clients are on a budget—that doesn't mean they can't experience the best of what the Caribbean has to offer. Case in point (no pun intended): **Grand Case Beach Club** in French St. Martin. On the one hand, its condo-style apartments come equipped with plenty of space—from standard studios to spacious studio lofts to 1- and 2-bedroom suites—as well as money-saving features like full kitchens, ensuring your clients won't have to pay for an expensive meal every night of the week.

On the other hand, families staying here are surrounded by some of the Caribbean's most majestic scenery, dining and attractions. The resort itself is set on a quiet cove, with two pristine beaches to choose from. Its restaurant, set on a bluff overlooking the blue horizon, fits in perfectly with the foodie scene that's been evolving in Grand Case, earning the town the nickname, "The Dining Capital of the Caribbean." ▶▶



Atlantis' wealth of kid-friendly activities ensures that parents don't have to feel guilty about spending a little time on their own—perhaps testing their luck at the largest casino in the Caribbean....

Families can eat on site in its casual setting, or spend a fun night out exploring Grand Case's other acclaimed restaurants. (Kids and parents alike are sure to love the "lo-los," serving up local bbq pork, chicken and fish.) And with the money they're saving with the resort's low rates and optional dining out, the whole family can indulge in an excursion to deserted Tintamarre Beach for snorkeling, or head to Pinel Island for a day of sun, fine food and watersports. Rates start at \$155 dbl; children under 12 stay free.

Contact: (800) 344-3016; grandcasebeachclub.com

club med punta cana

What separates the Dominican Republic's **Club Med Punta Cana's** kids club from others we've seen? The fact that we witnessed several kids stubbornly refusing to leave at the end of the day. And no wonder. This resort's kids' program is all about catering to kids' specific needs. Kids from 4 months to 2 years old get afternoon snacks and naptime between outdoor play at *Baby Club Med*; 2- to 4-year-olds enjoy lunch designed specially for young children and activities like arts and crafts to match at *Petit Club Med*; and older kids, up to 11, have an amazing playground at their disposal thanks to the *Mini Club*. Whether they're playing in the shallow wading pool with slides, or on its jungle gym in the grass, we're betting they've never experienced such diverse, modern facilities on vacation before. They can even play tennis or basketball on scaled-down, kid-sized courts. Hey, we'd probably be begging Mom for five more minutes, too.

Thankfully, a stay at Club Med comes with family togetherness built in. Kids enrolled in its children's programs have a scheduled family dinner at the end of the day at a buffet restaurant with plenty of grownup and kiddie dining options. At the other end of the property, parents look on as daredevils ages 4 and older take part in circus school at no extra charge, learning the basics of juggling, tightrope walking and even a stint on the flying trapeze! Rates are \$185 pp.

Contact: (888) WEB-CLUB; clubmed.us

paradisus palma real

The Punta Cana and Bavaro areas along the Dominican Republic's southern coast are practically lined with all-inclusive resorts that target family travelers. So what sets the **Paradisus Palma Real** apart? The services and amenities that this **Leading Hotel of the World** dedicates specifically to families. Clients who book here can take advantage of the resort's *Family Concierge* program, designed to make the frustrations of travel a breeze, and the fun parts of travel even better. Upon

arrival at the resort, parents enjoy their own private check-in while kids hang out in a TV lounge. They'll come away from that check-in not just with keys to their room, but a *Paradisus Kids Kit* with hats, T-shirts and sunscreen just for the little ones. The *Family Concierge* program also offers special connecting suites, giving each generation of the family as much space as they need, as well as amenities like kid-sized slippers, robes and even PlayStation game consoles.

And the *Family Concierge* services don't end there. A concierge member helps families to plan events throughout the day; simply make a call from your provided resort cell phone or walkie talkie, and the concierge can make dinner reservations, or simply round up the children from the *Kids Zone* kids' club for a family lunch. Not that they'll necessarily want to leave the *Kids Zone*, with its mini water park, a mini disco and adventures like treasure hunts and tennis lessons. Rates start at \$330 per room per night dbl.

Contact: (888) 741-5600; paradisuspalmareal.com

hyatt regency aruba resort and casino

Aruba's Palm Beach is one of the most popular stretches of sand among family travelers to the Caribbean—and with properties like the **Hyatt Regency** lining its shores, it's easy to see why. From a multi-level pool that lets even kids too young to swim splash around, a 2-story water slide and a handful of waterfalls to keep more active kids entertained, to dining at Balashi Bar and Grill, a casual poolside restaurant designed to satisfy kids' cravings with minimal interruptions to their playtime, everything here seems to be aimed at keeping families happy.

Then, of course, there's the award-winning *Camp Hyatt* kids' program, educating children about the nature and culture of Aruba as it entertains them with arts and crafts, beach games and more. Through a partnership with *National Geographic Kids*, the program gives your littlest clients (ages 3 to 12) the chance to compete in a scavenger hunt for local items, explore nature trails, and even seek out constellations in the night sky.

While they're off having fun, mom and dad can indulge in a spa escape at *Stillwater Spa*, or schedule a romantic dinner at Foot Prints Beach Grill, an exclusive dining experience with just five tables, serving up 4-course meals to clients on the beach. Afterwards, everyone can get together for goofy games like water balloon toss on the beach, or rent a boat from **Red Sail Sports** on site for an independent family sea excursion. Rates start at \$315 per room per night.

Contact: (800) 492-8804; aruba.hyatt.com ■