



SOUTHERN
LIVING
Editors'
Picks

12 Ultimate Trips for Kids

From the tried-and-true (Disney World) to the surprising (Jekyll Island): a dozen essential destinations for Southern families

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Spin your way through a family vacation—Disney style.

Your kids spend all year getting book smarts at school. Summer is the time to teach them why the South is utterly unique—and the best way is to travel. But with so many places to go, where to start? We canvassed our staff’s travel experts; drove from Texas to Florida to Maryland; and got tips from teens, moms, and dads to compile this list of quintessential Southern experiences. Now all you have to do is unplug the Wii—and hit the road.

1 Do Disney the Right Way We’re lucky that **Walt Disney World Resort** is in our backyard. With four parks to explore, there’s no end of options, which is both wonderful and overwhelming. Some tips to make the most of your trip: First, wait until your children are at least 6 years old. Before you go, visit Disney’s Web site to order a free customized map. You can also call up to three months in advance to book a seat at the breakfast in Cinderella Castle with the princess herself. www.disneyworld.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can your little girl be transformed into a princess by a fairy godmother-in-training.

2 Soak in Sun Studio Slide up to the microphone where U2’s

Bono recorded vocals on *Rattle and Hum*. At least that’s how you sell **Sun Studio** in Memphis to your kid. The truth? You’re aching to introduce him to the roots of Southern music. C’mon, this is where the King got his start! While in town, swing by **Graceland** and check out Elvis and Cilla’s over-the-top wardrobes. www.sunstudio.com; www.elvis.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you step back into a time when shag carpet and faux-fur bedspreads were all the rage.

3 Visit an Authentic Crab Shack Fresh blue crabs are an iconic Southern food, right up there with barbecue and sweet tea. For the freshest, head to Maryland. We like **Cantler’s Riverside Inn** in Annapolis, which has been around for more

than 30 years and offers fresh catch all year. www.cantlers.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you race crabs (National Hard Crab Derby in Crisfield, Maryland, on Labor Day weekend).

4 Take a NOLA Road Trip If your kids are used to being shuttled around in a minivan, a ride to the zoo and aquarium in a **New Orleans streetcar** will astound. You’ll love the historic homes; your kids will love the Komodo dragons at the zoo and the white alligator at the aquarium, both accessible from the streetcar lines. What they’ll remember is the clang and clap of the streetcar and a peek into a different era. www.norta.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you ride on a vehicle that inspired *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

5 Go Boating in San Antonio Sure, you know about the **River Walk** in San Antonio. But you can only appreciate the town’s unique flair and history from the water. A boat tour is the best way to see this famed river that runs through the most “Texas” city in the state. Buy the 24-hour pass for \$10—it’s a steal compared to \$4 for one-way stops. www.riosanantonio.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you watch high school mariachi bands performing “Guadalajara” on a boat.

6 Ride a Horse on the Beach Kids love horses. They also love the beach. On a trip to **Jekyll Island, Georgia**, you’ll find both. Arrange a trip with Victoria’s Carriages & Beach Trail Rides ([912] 635-9500). When the Spanish moss-draped forests open up to the beach and you see the vast Atlantic blue against the horizon, you’ll hear only one word from your kid: “Wow!” www.jekyllexperience.com
ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you ride horses on a pristine beach that has been home to English settlers, French landowners, and turn-of-the-century American elite.



4 Hop aboard vintage streetcars in the Big Easy.



2 Grab the mike at a Memphis music icon.



6 Saddle up for a beach ride.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARY MARGARET CHAMBLISS, ART MERIPOL



7 Wedge your way through Fat Man's Squeeze.

7 See Rock City

If you've been anywhere in the Southeast, you've seen the words painted on barns and birdhouses: **See Rock City**. Heed the advice. This kitschy attraction atop Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, Tennessee, displays our region's quirky sense of humor. But it also showcases its breathtaking beauty. Your kids can see seven states, stand under a waterfall, and take a walk through a cavern full of glowing gnome statues. There's nothing high-def or virtual reality about it—Rock City is just pure, simple fun. www.seerockcity.com

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...would anybody think to take a narrow cave, call it Fat Man's Squeeze, and charge admission. Genius.

8 Watch the Blue Angels Soar

The United States Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, performs unforgettable practice

air shows in Pensacola, Florida, most Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 8:30 a.m. (through November). Seeing these jets twist, turn, and roll with the synchronicity of a dance troupe is mind-boggling at any age. Following the Wednesday practices, get pilots' autographs at the National Naval Aviation Museum, which shares a home with the Angels. www.navalaviationmuseum.org

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you go to the beach and feel a tidal wave of patriotism.

9 Look at D.C. in a New Way

Our Nation's Capital is the South's cultural mecca. Here's a new way to see three of its iconic sights: Set out on a scavenger hunt. The first stop is **Washington National Cathedral**. Ask your kids to find the carved Darth Vader grotesque, added during the 1980s. (Hint: It's in the building's northwest corner.) Then tell them to touch a piece

of the moon at the **National Air and Space Museum**. The last item: the Ruby Slippers worn by Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*, now at the **Smithsonian National Museum of American History**. The first one to find all three wins a souvenir from mom and dad from our favorite kids' museum in the city: the **International Spy Museum**. www.nationalcathedral.org; www.nasm.si.edu; www.americanhistory.si.edu; www.spymuseum.org

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can we claim that four of the last six Presidents have made their homes here.

10 Travel Through Time in Williamsburg

Your kids can see every key player in Southern society of the 1700s, and they can act the part.

History at **Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia**, means playing dress up. This is truly interactive entertainment. In the Costume Rental Center, girls get graceful dresses, and boys receive hunting shirts, rucksacks, and imitation rifles (\$19.95 a day per outfit). The outfits make history come alive for kids, which means that instead of a groan, you'll get a smile. www.colonialwilliamsburg.com

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can kids best experience American life—from a time before there was an America.

11 Get Girlie

We Southerners pride ourselves on fine hairdos. Little girls expect the same for their dolls. Bring yours when visiting **American Girl** in Alpharetta, Georgia, but make the experience even better with the Deluxe American Girl package at the Alpharetta Marriott Hotel. That way, your weekend doesn't have to stop with lunch in the store's bistro. When you get back to your room, your daughter and her doll get a doll bed, cookies and milk (for the dolls too, of course), and pink bedding. The doll will sleep well in her personalized American Girl robe—and so will *your* little doll after a day like this.

www.americangirl.com;

www.marriott.com

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you go to a salon and request "pageant hair" for your doll.

12 Learn About Civil Rights

Add your name to the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Wall of Tolerance" in Montgomery, Alabama, at the **Civil Rights Memorial Center**. Explore exhibits about the Civil Rights Movement on a one-hour guided tour. It'll teach your kid about the dreams that started in the South and what it takes to leave a mark on history. www.splcenter.org/crm/crmc.jsp

ONLY IN THE SOUTH...can you visit the Maya Lin-designed Civil Rights Memorial. ●

The Age-Appropriate Travel Guide

At what age should you take your kids to New Orleans? Or Disney World? Here are our recommendations.

Ages 3-5: *New Orleans streetcar, Blue Angels, River Walk*

Ages 6-8: *Walt Disney World Resort, Rock City, Colonial Williamsburg, American Girl*

Ages 9-12: *Horseback riding, Sun Studios and Graceland, D.C.'s museums*

Ages 13-15: *Blue crabs, Civil Rights Memorial Center*