

# List of Websites for Local Fun, Vacations, and Mental Break



The suggestions here are meant to get you started on ideas for fun whether for a day or a week. Over the years, I've perused library sales and picked up travel books with destinations of interest. Some have turned out to be winners.

## Local Walks

- ❖ **Be a tourist in your own town.** Go onto your city or town's website and on the navigation bar, click "Visitors." If the local government hasn't invested in listing local attractions on the website, they may have a link to "conservation" and links to other organizations.
- ❖ **Atlas Obscura** is a website related to all things interesting and odd. Enable location tracking on the site or app and see lists of ideas for "places near me."  
[Atlasobscura.com](https://atlasobscura.com)
- ❖ **All-Trails** is a crowdsourced app where you can find all the trails in an area that interests you. Working with your phone, ensuring you won't get lost if you didn't bring a paper map. Start local and work your way up. [Alltrails.com](https://alltrails.com)

## Outdoors Clubs

- ❖ **The Appalachian Mountain Club** serves states from Georgia to Maine. With chapters from Boston to D.C., they run thousands of activities from backpacking and camping to walking and canoeing led by trained volunteers. Of most interest are the "family outings" and "teen trips" where you can join others in a pre-planned activity. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the website. It's not intuitive but if you search for "family" or "teens" you'll get an idea. [Outdoors.org](https://outdoors.org)
- ❖ **Sierra Club** – more than an advocacy organization, it is also an outing club. You can find kid-specific activities by searching in your area under [Sierraclub.org/events](https://sierraclub.org/events).



## Further Afield

- ❖ **The Automobile Association of America (AAA)**, again, has travel guides and advice online at [AAA.com](http://AAA.com). You can order paper and digital maps and talk to a travel advisor. AAA has travel packages to the most popular vacations such as Disney and cruises. Obviously, this is for the domestic U.S. [AAA.com](http://AAA.com)
- ❖ **Amtrak** has a website for the U.S. passenger rail service. Beyond schedules, it books inclusive trips for train travel. Most kids get excited at the thought of sleeping on a train. I got excited at the thought of being able to visit far-flung national parks without having to do all the driving. [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com)
- ❖ **National Park Service** If you live near any of the 424 national sites and parks, you may find this an easy vacation as well. The National Park Service provides free services from ranger-led walks and programs for families to in-park grand hotels. All parks have accommodations just outside the perimeters. [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)
- ❖ **Volunteer vacations.** Many of the organizations mentioned above organize volunteer trips. However, if you are looking for a time-limited day out with your family one group organizes these in 10 cities. Doing Good Together lists five organizations each month in particular cities where you can join with your children. [DoingGoodTogether.org](http://DoingGoodTogether.org)
- ❖ **Mobile Travel Guides** can be found for any region that interests you, even your hometown. Updates can be found on [mobiltravelguide.com](http://mobiltravelguide.com).
- ❖ **"Roadside America"** is "The Modern Traveler's Guide to the Wild and Wonderful World of America's Tourist Attractions." Probably better online than in print, this is a guide to all the whacky wonders of travel from fainting goats to the Tupperware Awareness Center, these oddities provide entertaining rest stops during long road trips. [Roadsideamerica.com/location/](http://Roadsideamerica.com/location/)



## Travel Books

- ❖ *The Great American Wilderness: Touring America's National Parks*. Ludmer, Larry H., Hunter Pub Incorporated, 2000. This book creates itineraries for you depending on the amount of time you want to spend. Gem of a book.
- ❖ Lonely Planet Guidebooks. The domestic travel series can be helpful. This company has open travel access for all as its mission. The guidebooks include such detail so as to allow budget travel. The website provides updates since travel books are out of date as soon as they are published. [Lonelyplanet.com](https://www.lonelyplanet.com)
- ❖ *Travel Hacks: Any Procedures or Actions That Solve a Problem, Simplify a Task, Reduce Frustration, and Make Your Next Trip As Awesome As Possible*. Bradford, Keith, Simon and Schuster, 2021. Lists upon lists on precheck and planning and traveling here and abroad.
- ❖ *Raising Explorers: The Ultimate Parent's Guide to Traveling With Kids Under Five*. Scholtz, Michaela. n.d. Resources for apps, websites, and products (luggage, medical, electronics, entertainment, audio, swimwear, kids gear, toiletries)
- ❖ *America's Cheapest Family Gets You Right on the Money: Your Guide to Living Better, Spending Less, and Cashing in on Your Dreams*. Economides, Steve and Economides, Annette, Crown Currency, 2007. Chapters on vacation and entertainment.
- ❖ *Traveling Different: Vacation Strategies for Parents of the Anxious, the Inflexible, and the Neurodiverse*. Barclay, Dawn M., Rowman & Littlefield, 2022.