Island Life

for Kids

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THE FAMILY VACATION.

It ranks right up there with barbecues and swimming pools as one of America’s favorite summer pastimes. Finding the perfect location, however, is tantamount to creating a memorable trip for both the young and young-at-heart. Hilton Head Island, long known for its fabulous golf, is now a popular destination for beachcombers of all ages. Here are 10 tips for not just surviving — but thriving — on the island with kids:
**TWO WHEELS ARE BETTER THAN FOUR** Make a bike stand one of your first stops. With paved paths traversing much of the island, pedals are the best way to get around. You can choose from a variety of child and adult bikes, and most companies provide baby seats, tot carts, locks and baskets free of charge. Remember to bring your own helmets in case none is available. (As a side note, some bike rental shops also rent cribs, strollers and other baby gear.)

**GET BACK TO NATURE** A trip to the Coastal Discovery Museum allows children to explore the history and wildlife of Hilton Head Island. On-site, visit the biodiversity exhibit, take a GeoSafari, and check out live turtles and snakes. The museum also hosts nearly a dozen short educational trips, including a beach tour and a nature excursion cruise. The island’s largest resort, Sea Pines, offers tours of its 605-acre forest preserve by wagon, hayride, horse, bike or foot.

**CAMPOUT** If your kids are into sports, you’ll want to call ahead to the Island Recreation Center to sign them up for one of several mini-camps offered throughout the summer. From volleyball to basketball to sailing, swimming and soccer, your little athletes are sure to learn some new skills (and you’re sure to enjoy some time alone at the beach, by the pool or on the green!). An eco-tourism company, Outside Hilton Head, offers several summer day kayaking camps for kids that combine environmental education and water fun. Whether on the marshes or out at sea, your young Huck Finn is sure to enjoy seeing Hilton Head with paddles in hand. For older children, overnight camps feature campfires, games and loggerhead turtle studies.

**STAY (OR PLAY) IN STYLE** Hilton Head Island is filled with resorts and hotels that offer a full slate of activities for children. Many of these programs are available to non-guests. Sea Pines’ summer schedule includes tie-dye classes, photo scavenger hunts, bingo, pottery painting, kite making and more. Disney’s Hilton Head Island Resort offers bedtime stories, campfires and Gyotaku, the ancient Japanese art of fish printing. Crowne Plaza Resort’s programs for children run during the morning, afternoon and evening and include arts and crafts, kayaking, sand castle building and theme parties.

**SLIDE INTO SOME FUN** Would the summer ever be complete without a trip to a water park? The Water Fun Park, located at the Comfort Inn, features three giant water slides that will keep kids slippin’ and slidin’ all day long. Wee ones can get an early start in the toddler pool on the miniature frog and pelican slides.

**CURE THE CRABBIES** Pinckney Island, located a half-mile west of Hilton Head, is a hot spot for one of coastal Carolina’s favorite pastimes—crabbing! With a bucket, net and bait, you’ll be on your way to pulling up a feast. Local tackle shops sell supplies for crabbing, as well as for pier fishing. In a saltwater environment, you never know what you might reel in!

**HAVE A GAME PLAN** With more than 40 of the world’s top-rated golf courses, Hilton Head Island is a green dream. Your junior Tiger Woods can begin sharpening his skills at the dozens of mini-golf facilities around town. For example, Adventure Cove Family Fun Center offers two world-class courses, in addition to a giant
indoor playworld, batting cages, bumper cars, Laser Tag and a video arcade. (There are no beds available here, so have a plan to coax your kids out of here at closing time!)

**STOP AND FEED THE ANIMALS** No, you shouldn’t feed the alligators, but you should take your own water babies out to sample some of Hilton Head's culinary delights. After you've mastered the fine art of cracking crabs and peeling shrimp, stop at Coligny Plaza on the beach for Italian ice at Rita’s or sample one of 16 flavors of fudge and hand-pulled taffy at the Island Fudge Shoppe.

**KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR** For some evening fun, grab your giggle box and head to Sea Pines' Harbour Town to join Gregg Russell’s Bubble Gum Club or to Shelter Cove Harbour to see Shannon Tanner live. Both of these popular family entertainers delight crowds with silly songs and stories most nights of the week during the summer.

**TAKE A BREAK** With all of these activities, it may slip your mind that you're staying on an island with 12 miles of beach to explore. If your kids are early risers, head out to see what the night’s waves have washed ashore or watch a sunrise through the magical eyes of a child. Spend lazy afternoons relearning the art of body surfing or sand castle building. And, at the end of the day, enjoy some quiet time with the ones you love best—watching the glorious Atlantic Ocean tuck the sun into bed for the night.

If you are considering a trip to Hilton Head Island, check out the Visitors and Convention Bureau at www.hiltonheadchamber.org/cvb/vcb.html for a virtual tour, or call toll-free 800-523-3373. Upon arrival, stop by the Chamber of Commerce’s Welcome Center, which is located on the right, one mile after crossing the bridge onto the island.