

# FREE GUIDE

THIS IS ALL THE  
**VACATIONS**

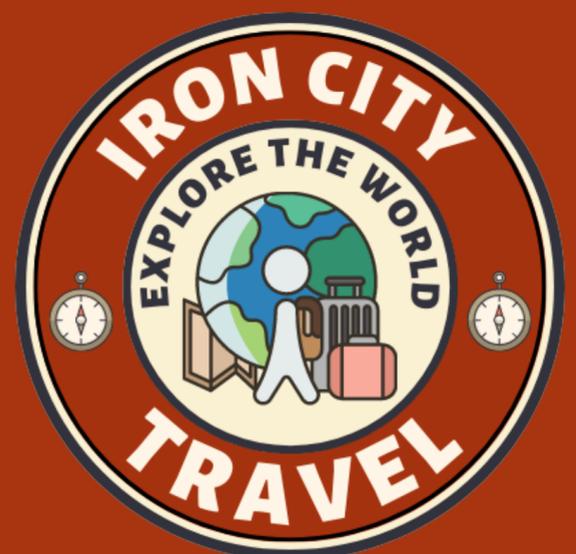


## FAMILY VACATIONS MADE EASY

The Stress-Free Travel  
Playbook

DAN BLOCKER  
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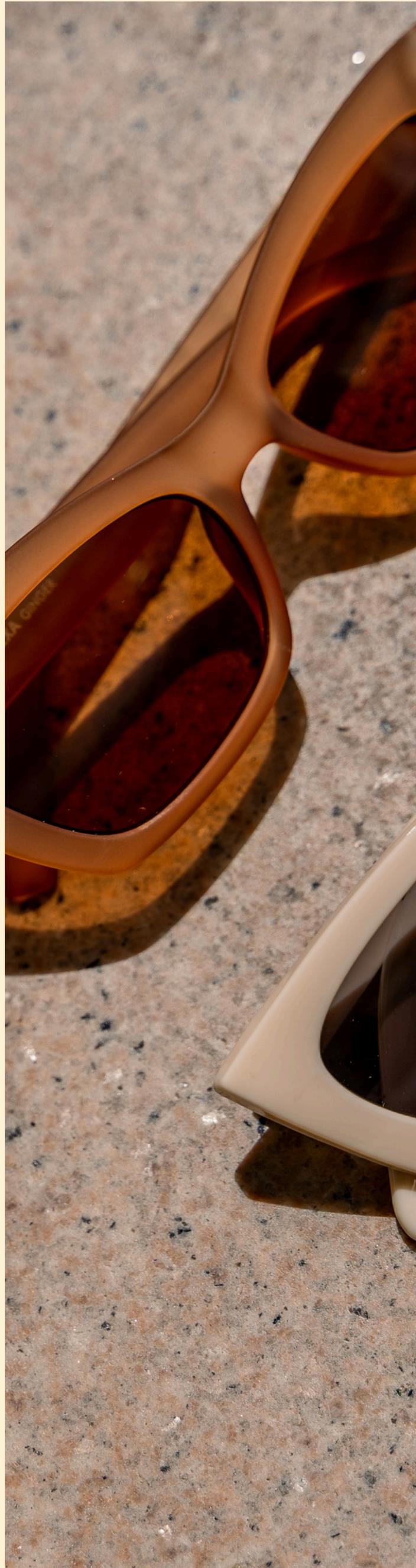
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# HEY, I'M DAN

Founder of Iron City Travel, and I help families like yours skip the planning headache and go straight to the vacation part.

LET'S DO IT!



## CLIENT STORY:

"I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO EVEN CHECK IN..."

"JOSEPH TOOK AN IDEA I HAD AND MADE IT A REALITY. I HAD NO CLUE HOW TO EVEN CHECK INTO THE AIRLINE. BUT HE WAS THERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. WHEN WE ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION, EVERYTHING WAS LAID OUT AND READY — IT WAS PERFECT."

— A HAPPY IRON CITY TRAVEL CLIENT YOU DESERVE THAT LEVEL OF PEACE ON YOUR NEXT TRIP.

# CHAPTER 1



**PICKING THE PERFECT  
VACATION TYPE**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

**DISNEY, CRUISES, OR BEACH?**

# HERE'S HOW TO CHOOSE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CREW

Choosing where to go isn't just about location – it's about what works for your whole family. The perfect trip for a toddler is wildly different from what your teens will enjoy.

And let's be honest: adults deserve fun too.

Here's a breakdown of the three main family vacation styles – and how to know which one is the right fit.

## Disney Vacations: Magic, Mayhem & Mouse Ears

Best for: Families with younger kids, Disney-loving adults, multigenerational groups

### Pros:

- Unmatched experiences: character meet & greets, parades, themed rides
- Incredible resorts with built-in entertainment
- Meal plans, transportation, and Genie+ can make things easier (if you know how to use them right)

### Cons:

- It's not cheap – and planning can be a full-time job
- High crowds, especially during holidays and school breaks
- The amount of walking? Let's just say, pack your sneakers

Pro Tip: First-timer? Let Iron City Travel set it up – from park tickets to Lightning Lane strategies – so you don't burn out before day 2.



## Cruises: One Ship, Endless Options

Best for: All ages – especially great for families with different interests or energy levels

### Pros:

- Kid clubs, water parks, family shows – built-in entertainment
- You unpack once and visit multiple destinations
- All-inclusive meals = no dinner arguments

### Cons:

- Can get pricey with excursions and extras
- Cabins are tight if you don't book the right size
- Seasickness is real (but manageable with tips I'll share later)

Pro Tip: Some cruise lines (like Disney, Royal Caribbean, Carnival) are built for families. I can help you match the right ship and itinerary with your crew's vibe.

# HERE'S HOW TO CHOOSE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CREW

## Beach & Land Trips: Chill Mode Activated

Best for: Families who want flexibility, relaxation, or a slower pace

Pros:

- Great for bonding and downtime
- No rigid schedules – build the vacation around you
- Options for every budget, from road trips to luxury all-inclusives

Cons:

- You have to plan more of the logistics yourself (unless you use a travel agent... wink)
- Too much downtime can bore kids if there's no planned activities

**Pro Tip:** Land trips can be just as magical – one of my favorite client surprises was a 60th birthday beach trip to SoCal that brought the whole family together without stress (more on that in Chapter 4).



## Not Sure What's Best?

You don't have to decide on your own. I help families weigh the options every day – and make the planning actually fun.

💬 Ready to talk through ideas?

I offer free travel consultations. Reach out at

Contact@ironcitytravel.com

[ironcitytravel.com](https://www.ironcitytravel.com)

# CHAPTER 2



**THE DISNEY DEEP DIVE**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

*Planning a Disney Trip  
Without Losing Your  
Sanity (or Your Wallet)*

**There's nothing like that first glimpse of Cinderella's Castle — kids' eyes wide, parents holding back tears (of joy or exhaustion, depending on the stroller situation). But here's the hard truth: Disney is magical... if you plan it right. Otherwise, it can feel like a very expensive cardio session in 90-degree heat surrounded by screaming children.**

**That's where I come in.**

**Whether it's your first visit or your fifth, this chapter will break down exactly how to do Disney smarter, not harder — so you get all the magic, with none of the meltdowns.**



### **Step 1: Disney World vs. Disneyland — Which Is Right for You?**

**Disney World (Florida):**

- **Massive — 4 parks + water parks + dozens of resorts**
- **Great for longer trips (4–7 days)**
- **Best for East Coasters, first-timers, and families who want the full experience**

**Disneyland (California):**

- **More compact — 2 parks right next to each other**
- **Easier for short trips (2–4 days)**
- **Perfect for West Coast families or those combining with SoCal sightseeing**

**Dan's Take: If your kids are small and this is your first rodeo, start with Disney World — but only if you've got time to explore. If you're short on days or doing a multi-stop California trip, Disneyland is a win.**

## **Step 2: Where Should You Stay?**

### **On-Site (Disney Resort Hotels):**

- Free transportation to parks
- Early access to Lightning Lane ride bookings
- Full Disney immersion (and themed everything)

### **Off-Site (Hotels Nearby):**

- Often cheaper
- Larger rooms or suites for bigger families
- Less Disney-themed, but more flexibility

**Dan's Pro Tip: Staying on-site at Disney World gives you perks that are worth the cost, especially during busy seasons. Let me help you compare real-time pricing – you might be surprised how close the rates can be.**



## **Step 3: Understanding Genie+ and Lightning Lane**

(aka: How Not to Spend 3 Hours in Line for Peter Pan)

### **Genie+:**

- Think of it like Disney's paid version of a FastPass
- Lets you skip the regular line for popular rides
- Costs vary by day and park

### **Lightning Lane (Individual):**

- For the most in-demand rides (like Rise of the Resistance)
- Separate fee, even if you have Genie+

It's confusing. I know.

But it can seriously save you hours of waiting and whining.

**Dan's Hack: I build customized park strategies for my clients – what rides to book first, when to schedule meals, how to avoid peak lines – so you spend more time riding and less time refreshing the app in a mild panic.**

## **Step 4: Dining Reservations & Must-Try Meals**

- Book dining reservations early (60 days in advance) – character meals fill up fast
- Consider mobile ordering for quick-service meals
- Fan favorites:
  - ‘Ohana (Polynesian Village Resort)
  - Be Our Guest (Magic Kingdom)
  - Tusker House (Animal Kingdom) – great food, great character interactions.

**Bonus: I can book all your dining reservations for you – no 6:00 a.m. stress required.**



## **Step 5: What About the Kids?**

### **Toddlers:**

- Rider Swap lets adults take turns riding bigger attractions
- Baby Care Centers are clutch (quiet, air-conditioned, stocked with essentials)

### **Older Kids/Teens:**

- Let them help plan part of the trip (you'll get fewer eye rolls)
- Add in thrill rides like Guardians of the Galaxy or Space Mountain

## ***Real Talk: Do You Need a Travel Agent for Disney?***

Let me put it this way: planning Disney is a full-time job... but it doesn't have to be yours.

I help families:

- Pick the best parks for their crew
- Choose the right hotel for their budget
- Navigate Genie+, dining, transportation, and more
- Avoid rookie mistakes (like booking Magic Kingdom on a party night — oof)

Best part? It doesn't cost you extra. Disney pays me, not you.

### **Dan's Disney Packing Tips (That Clients Always Thank Me For)**

- ✓ **Portable fan or cooling towel (don't underestimate Florida humidity)**
- ✓ **Ponchos (because it will rain)**
- ✓ **External phone battery (for the Disney app you'll be on 100 times a day)**
- ✓ **Refillable water bottles**
- ✓ **Comfy shoes — not new ones. Break them in first or suffer.**

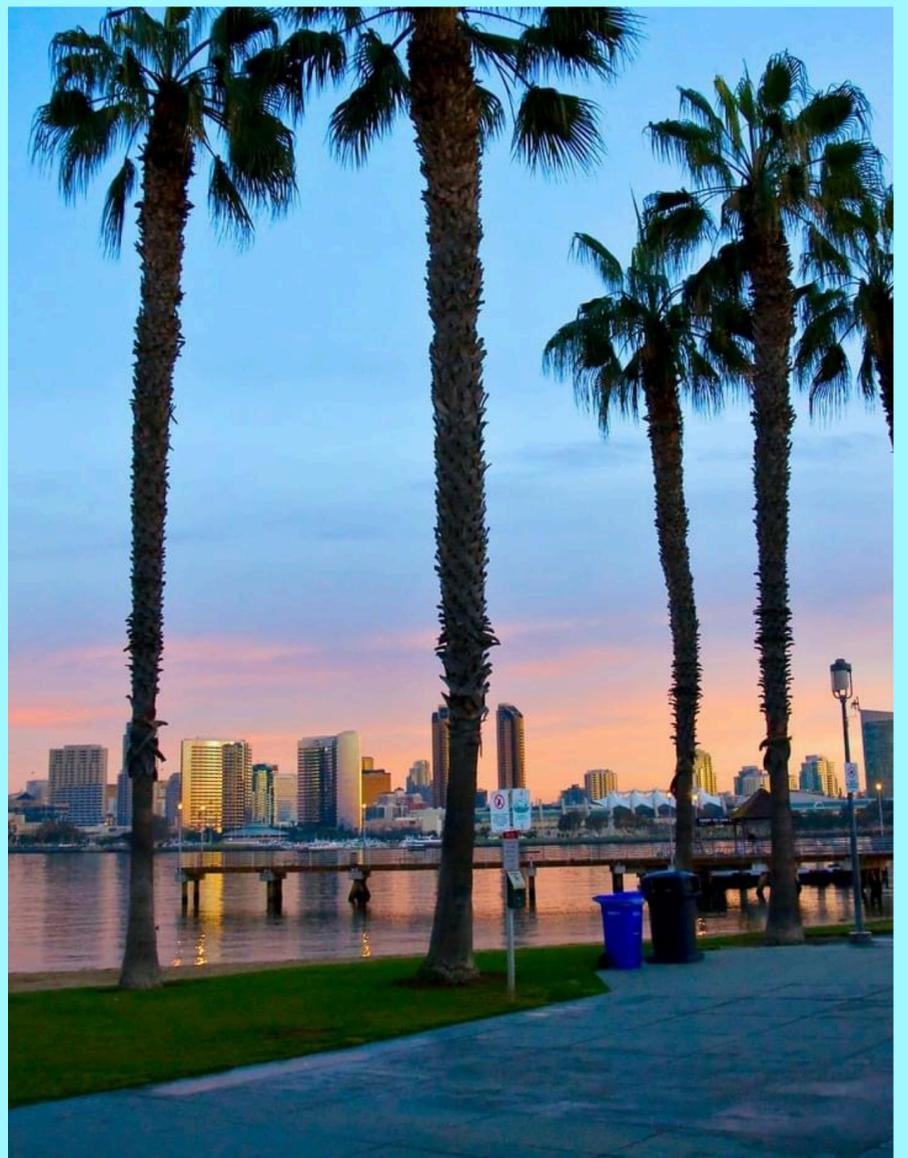


## OCEAN VIEWS & ZERO STRESS

**There's nothing quite like a cruise — endless ocean, onboard fun, and zero logistics to juggle. Whether it's your first sailing or your tenth, cruising with the family gives you the perfect mix of adventure and relaxation. At Iron City Travel, we'll handle the details so all you have to do is pack your swimsuit and show up.**

## LAND THE PERFECT TRIP

**From sun-soaked beaches to bucket-list cities, land vacations give your family room to explore, relax, and reconnect. Whether it's a surprise birthday trip or just a much-needed break, Iron City Travel takes care of the planning — so you can focus on the memories, not the logistics.**



# CHAPTER 3



**CRUISING WITH KIDS**

LET'S  
DO IT

Why Ships Are the Secret  
Family Vacation Hack You  
Didn't Know You Needed

If you've ever dreamed of a vacation where you don't have to cook, clean, plan every hour, or scream "get in the car!" for five straight days – a cruise might be your love language.

Cruises are the ultimate plug-and-play family getaway. You unpack once, float from destination to destination, and everything – food, entertainment, childcare, towel animals – is built right in. And despite what some people think, it's not just for retirees and honeymooners anymore.

Let's walk through what makes cruises the unsung hero of family travel – and how to choose the right one for your crew.



### **Why Cruises Work So Well for Families**

- ✓ *Something for Everyone – Waterslides for the kids, cocktails for you, Broadway-level shows for both*
- ✓ *Unpack Once, Visit Multiple Places – No need to drag luggage to five hotels*
- ✓ *Kid Clubs – Translation: built-in, supervised fun while parents actually relax*
- ✓ *All-Inclusive(ish) – Food, entertainment, lodging, and endless soft serve are baked in*
- ✓ *Controlled Chaos – You're exploring, but the cruise staff handles all the logistics*

Here's the no-fluff breakdown of the family-friendly heavyweights:

### Disney Cruise Line

Top-tier character experiences

Gorgeous ships, Broadway shows, themed dining

Kid clubs that make kids not want to leave

Best for: Younger kids, Disney fans, multigenerational trips

Cons: Pricier than others, but the quality is next-level



### CARNIVAL

AFFORDABLE, FUN-FOCUSED, VERY CASUAL

WATERPARKS, ROPES COURSES, FAMILY COMEDY SHOWS

BEST FOR: BUDGET-CONSCIOUS FAMILIES, HIGH-ENERGY KIDS

CONS: LESS REFINED, MORE PARTY VIBE ON SOME SHIPS



## Royal Caribbean

Giant ships = rock climbing, ice skating, laser tag, even surfing

Strong kids' programs and teen hangouts

Best for: Families with tweens/teens or big age gaps

Cons: Can be overwhelming for first-timers



### DAN'S RULE OF THUMB:

YOUNGER KIDS = DISNEY

ALL AGES ON A BUDGET = CARNIVAL

BIGGER KIDS OR ACTIVITY SEEKERS = ROYAL CARIBBEAN

STILL NOT SURE? I HELP FAMILIES COMPARE SHIPS, ITINERARIES,  
AND PRICING WITH ZERO GUESSWORK.

### YOU'LL USUALLY CHOOSE FROM:

BAHAMAS/CARIBBEAN – BEACH DAYS, SWIMMING WITH  
DOLPHINS, WATER FUN

ALASKA – WILDLIFE, GLACIERS, SCENIC CRUISING (GREAT FOR  
OLDER KIDS AND GRANDPARENTS)

MEXICO & WESTERN CARIBBEAN – CULTURE + BEACH = THE  
SWEET SPOT

EUROPE (IF YOU'RE FEELING FANCY) – OLDER KIDS AND TEENS  
LOVE HISTORY-RICH CITIES

PRO TIP: YOU DON'T NEED A 10-DAY TRIP TO HAVE A BLAST. SOME  
4- AND 5-NIGHT CRUISES HIT GREAT PORTS AND KEEP COSTS  
(AND ATTENTION SPANS) MANAGEABLE.

## WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS ONBOARD?

KIDS' CLUBS: BROKEN DOWN BY AGE, STAFFED BY TRAINED CREW,  
AND (BEST OF ALL) FREE

TEEN LOUNGES: HANGOUTS WITH VIDEO GAMES, PARTIES, ZERO  
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT: DIVE-IN MOVIES, GAME SHOWS, MINI  
GOLF, EVEN ESCAPE ROOMS ON NEWER SHIPS

LET'S JUST SAY... THEY'LL SLEEP HARD. AND SO WILL YOU.

## HIDDEN COSTS (AND HOW I HELP YOU AVOID THEM)

CRUISES INCLUDE A LOT – BUT HERE'S WHAT ISN'T IN THAT BASE  
FARE:

GRATUITIES (USUALLY \$14-\$20 PER PERSON, PER DAY)

EXCURSIONS (ISLAND TOURS, ZIPLINING, DOLPHIN SWIMS)

DRINKS (ALCOHOL AND SODA AREN'T ALWAYS INCLUDED)

SPECIALTY DINING AND INTERNET

BUT DON'T PANIC – I'LL HELP YOU PRICE EVERYTHING UPFRONT,  
SNAG THE BEST PROMOTIONS, AND EVEN PRE-PAY OR PACKAGE  
OPTIONS TO AVOID SURPRISES.

## DAN'S CRUISE PACKING HACKS

PACK A MAGNETIC HOOK FOR EXTRA HANGING SPACE IN TINY  
CABINS

BRING A LANYARD FOR YOUR ROOM KEY CARD (IT BECOMES YOUR  
LIFE)

DON'T FORGET MOTION SICKNESS MEDS – EVEN IF YOU “NEVER  
GET SEASICK”

SWIMSUITS + COVERUPS IN YOUR CARRY-ON (YOUR BAGS MAY  
SHOW UP HOURS LATER)

PRO MOVES FROM A TRAVEL AGENT: (THAT YOU'LL THANK ME FOR)  
PICKING THE RIGHT CABIN (LOCATION MATTERS MORE THAN YOU  
THINK)

MAKING SURE YOUR PASSPORT SITUATION IS SQUARED AWAY  
HELPING YOU UNDERSTAND PORT RULES, CHECK-IN TIMES, WHAT  
NOT TO PACK

WATCHING FOR FARE DROPS, UPGRADES, AND SURPRISE DEALS

# CHAPTER 4



**LAND TRIPS MADE EASY**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

*From Resorts to Road Trips:  
How to Nail a Family Vacation  
Without a Boat or a Castle*

Let's be real: not every family wants to cruise or conquer Cinderella's Castle — and that's okay. Some of the most unforgettable vacations happen on land: road trips, beach weeks, national park getaways, or all-inclusive resorts where you do absolutely nothing but eat and nap like a champion.

But here's the trap: land trips can look easier to plan... until you're knee-deep in Google tabs, hotel reviews, and TripAdvisor rabbit holes.

This chapter is your cheat code to easy, enjoyable land-based family travel — and how to actually pull it off without overpaying or losing your mind.

BEFORE YOU CAN PICK THE PLACE, GET CLEAR ON YOUR FAMILY'S TRAVEL STYLE:

 BEACH BUM – SAND, SUN, ZERO PLANS

 EXPLORER – HIKING, NATURE, UNPLUGGED VIBES

 CITY CREW – MUSEUMS, FOOD, SHOPPING, BIG ENERGY

 RELAXATION MODE – SPA, BOOKS, MINIMAL CHILD CHAOS

 ALL-INCLUSIVE LOVERS – COCKTAILS + CHILDCARE = YES PLEASE

DAN'S TIP: DON'T PICK A DESTINATION THAT FITS YOUR PINTEREST BOARD — PICK ONE THAT FITS YOUR FAMILY'S ENERGY RIGHT NOW. TODDLERS AND 14-HOUR HIKES DON'T MIX.

## **ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS: WHY THEY'RE THE MVP OF EASY**

ALL-INCLUSIVES ARE THE UNDERDOG OF FAMILY TRAVEL — ESPECIALLY IN MEXICO AND THE CARIBBEAN.

WHY THEY WORK:

✅ FOOD, DRINKS, AND ACTIVITIES ARE BUILT IN

✅ TONS OF KID-FRIENDLY RESORTS WITH SPLASH ZONES AND KIDS' CLUBS

✅ PARENTS CAN ACTUALLY RELAX WITHOUT CONSTANTLY REACHING FOR THEIR WALLET

 GREAT FOR:

FAMILIES WHO WANT SUN WITHOUT STRESS

MULTIGENERATIONAL TRAVEL (GRANDPARENTS, TOO!)

BEACH + POOL KIDS

DAN'S PICK: RESORTS IN RIVIERA MAYA, PUNTA CANA, OR MONTEGO BAY OFFER A LOT OF BANG FOR YOUR BUCK — AND I'LL HELP YOU COMPARE OPTIONS BASED ON YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS.

## **Road Trips: When Done Right, They Can Be Epic**

Listen, I'm not saying you should throw your family in a van and drive 14 hours with nothing but Goldfish crackers and "Are we there yet?" threats.

But short, smart road trips can be budget-friendly, flexible, and fun.

Top road trip tips:

Plan no more than 4–6 hours drive time per day

Schedule real stops – not just gas stations

Pack activity bags for each kid (and one for yourself)

Book hotels in advance – winging it doesn't work with kids

Favorite Southern USA Land Trip Ideas:

Great Smoky Mountains (hiking + cabins)

San Antonio (history + food + kid-friendly riverwalk)

Destin or Gulf Shores (beaches without passports)

Savannah or Charleston (beautiful, walkable, and charming)



## **Resorts That Feel Like a Vacation (Not Just a Hotel)**

*A good resort makes a huge difference. Look for:  
Family suites or connecting rooms  
Pools with slides or splash zones  
On-site restaurants (bonus if it has breakfast included)  
Close access to attractions or outdoor fun*

### **Client Spotlight:**

*“I didn’t even know where to begin, but Joseph helped me pull off the perfect surprise trip for my husband’s 60th birthday. We ended up at a gorgeous resort in Southern California. I changed the dates like six times and he still made it work – when we arrived, it was perfect. I didn’t have to do anything. He had it all laid out.”*

*That’s the beauty of having someone else handle the details.*



### **Domestic**

-  U.S. Land Trips
-  No passports required
-  Often better value
-  Easier logistics
-  Built-in culture/adventure

***Dan’s Take: If you’ve got time and passports, international resorts can give you that “true escape” feel. But U.S. trips still rock – especially with my help finding the right place for your budget and family size.***

## **Why Use a Travel Agent for a Land Trip?**

*Because the internet is lying to you.*

*That “5-star” hotel with 2,000 glowing reviews? Might actually be across from a construction site.*

Here’s what I do:

Vet hotels & resorts with real-time research

Find kid-friendly, parent-approved activities

Save you time and stress by planning it all – start to finish

Give you a human lifeline in case anything goes sideways mid-trip

### *Dan’s Packing Essentials for Land Trips*

- ✓ *Reusable water bottles & snack bags*
- ✓ *First-aid kit (yes, even for a beach trip)*
- ✓ *Chargers, headphones, and entertainment for the ride*
- ✓ *Layers – because hotel AC doesn’t care about your beach dreams*
- ✓ *Printed itinerary + confirmations (tech fails happen)*

*Let’s Make That Trip Actually Worth Taking*

✉ [Contact@ironcitytravel.com](mailto:Contact@ironcitytravel.com)

🌐 [ironcitytravel.com](http://ironcitytravel.com)

📱 [@ironcitytravel](#) on Facebook, Instagram & TikTok

*Whether it’s a surprise birthday, a weekend beach escape, or your first time out of the country – I’ve got you covered.*

# CHAPTER 5



**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

LET'S  
DO IT

Travel Insurance, Budgets &  
Other Things You Probably  
Ignore (But shouldn't)

*“Because Nothing Kills a Vacation Faster Than an Empty Wallet or a Lost Passport”*

*Look, I know. When you’re dreaming about Mickey hugs or Caribbean sunsets, nobody’s excited to talk about cancellation policies or trip protection. But you know what isn’t fun?*

*Canceling your \$6,000 vacation two days before departure because your kid spiked a fever*

*Getting stuck in a foreign country without coverage*

*Finding out your budget didn’t include “those extra fees” and you’re now \$1,200 over*

*That’s why this chapter exists: to keep your money safe, your expectations real, and your vacation smooth.*

Travel Insurance: Do You Really Need It?

Short answer: Yes. Longer answer: Seriously, Yes.

Even if you’ve never needed it before, travel insurance protects against the things you can’t plan for:

Trip cancellations or delays

Lost luggage (with your kid’s favorite stuffed animal inside 😞)

Medical emergencies (especially abroad)

Weather events

Cruise disruptions (mechanical issues, port changes)

Pro tip: Most U.S. health insurance doesn’t cover international travel.

And Disney or cruise lines? They're not refunding your money because little Timmy got the flu.

**What I do for you:**

**I can help you pick the right level of coverage — not just tack on a random policy. Need “cancel for any reason” coverage? Want to insure just the flights? You don’t have to guess. I’ve got you.**

## *Budgeting Without Killing the Fun*

*Let's talk money without making you cry. Family trips usually fall in the \$3,000–\$8,000 range depending on length, destination, and bougie level.*

<u>Category</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Flights	20–30%	Book early or use points if possible
Lodging	30–40%	Varies widely by destination
Food & Drinks	10–20%	All-inclusives can reduce this
Activities/Excursions	10–15%	Character meals, tours, excursions
Travel Insurance	2–5%	Worth every penny
Extras (tips, transport, souvenirs)	5–10%	Build it in now to avoid surprises

### *Dan's Real Talk Rule:*

*Budget what you can actually spend, not what TikTok says you should.*

### *Hidden Costs Most Families Miss*

*Booking travel on your own? Watch out for these sneaky budget busters:*

*Checked bag fees*

*Resort fees (especially in U.S. cities)*

*Park tickets not included in hotel stays*

*Shuttle/transportation costs*

*Tips/gratuities – especially on cruises*

*When you book with me: I flag all of this ahead of time and build a budget that's honest, not just "starting from \$99/person" marketing fluff.*

## **Payment Plans: Stretching the Fun, Not the Credit**

*One of the best parts of working with a travel agent? You don't have to pay everything up front.*

*Most vacations can be reserved with a deposit (sometimes as low as \$200–\$300), with final payments due 30–90 days before departure.*

*That gives you time to:*

*Plan your wardrobe*

*Break up costs into bite-size pieces*

*Get excited instead of stressed*

*Reminder: Booking early means better prices and payment flexibility.*

### *Dan's "Boring but Brilliant" Travel Tips*

*Keep digital and printed copies of all travel docs (passports, confirmations, insurance)*

*Let your bank know you're traveling, especially internationally*

*Download airline & cruise apps before you go (saves time + sanity)*

*Always pack a backup credit card (and don't keep it in the same place as your main one)*

### *What If Something Goes Wrong?*

*That's why I'm here. When you book with Iron City Travel, you don't have to call a 1-800 number and scream into the void. You call me.*

*Flight delays? I help rebook.*

*Hotel issues? I'm on the phone.*

*Need to cancel? I work through it with you.*

*Emergency? I've got your back.*

*You don't just get a trip – you get a safety net.*

*Ready to Plan Smarter, Not Harder?*

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*Let's build a vacation that's fun and financially smart. You relax. I'll handle the fine print.*

# CHAPTER 6



**PACKING, PLANNING**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

Because the Airport Is Not the  
Place to Discover You Forgot  
the Kids' Shoes

You've booked the trip. The countdown is on. But before the magic starts, there's the final boss battle: getting everyone packed, prepped, and out the door without full-blown chaos.

This chapter is your pre-departure playbook – full of pro tips, packing hacks, and reminders that will save your sanity (and your socks).

## 2 Weeks Before Travel: Prep, Don't Panic

Check passports (for international travel, make sure they're valid for 6 months after your return date)

Confirm flight/resort/cruise times & check for last-minute changes

Book airport parking or schedule ride shares

Make a packing list (see below – I got you)

Let your credit card/bank know you're traveling

Download all travel apps: airline, resort, cruise line, etc.

Dan's Tip: If you wait until the night before to check on your kid's headphones or your husband's swimsuit, you will cry. Don't do it.

## Packing Lists: One for the Grown-Ups, One for the Kids

### Family Essentials:

Travel documents (passports, IDs, confirmations)

Insurance info

Prescription meds + basic first-aid kit

Charging cords & power banks

Sunscreen, bug spray, lip balm

Swimsuits, hats, sandals

Backup outfits (for spills, accidents, or airport luggage fails)

Entertainment for transit (tablets, books, games, snacks)

Noise-canceling headphones (thank me later)

### Toddler Must-Haves:

Diapers, wipes, changing pad

Sippy cups + snacks

Favorite stuffed animal or blanket

Lightweight stroller or carrier

White noise app or machine

### Big Kid Lifesavers:

Pre-downloaded movies or games

Activity books

Headphones with volume limits

Swimsuit + goggles

Travel pillow

## *Airport Day Game Plan*

Arrive 2–3 hours before departure (especially for busy airports or international travel)

Keep snacks + water accessible

Check carry-on policies ahead of time (sizes, liquids, etc.)

Bring gum or lollipops for takeoff/landing pressure relief

Use tracking devices (AirTags, Tile) in checked bags or backpacks

Dan's Golden Rule: Dress comfy, pack light, and assume nothing will go exactly as planned (because it won't – but that's okay).

### Staying Sane While Traveling With Kids

Set realistic expectations (not every moment will be magical)

Have a “meltdown plan” – for kids and adults

Don't overschedule: downtime is key

Let kids pick one “must do” for the trip – it gives them ownership and reduces whining

Bribery is acceptable in moderation. Use snack currency wisely.

### ***Final Checklist: The Night Before***

- ✓ Documents printed + in carry-on
  - ✓ Devices charged
- ✓ Outfits for travel day laid out
  - ✓ Luggage tagged + weighed
  - ✓ Snacks + activities ready
  - ✓ Alarm(s) set

Bonus: Go to bed early. You're about to have an amazing time.

# CHAPTER 7



**FINAL THOUGHTS**

**LET'S  
DO IT**

Because Good Memories Don't  
Just Happen — They're  
Planned

If you made it this far, congrats – you're already way ahead of the average vacationer who just Googles “best family trips” and prays. Planning a family vacation shouldn't feel like a part-time job, and it definitely shouldn't leave you stressed, broke, or googling “cheap flights out of here” after Day 2.

Here's what you've learned:

Where to go (based on your vibe and budget)

How to book smarter (without getting scammed or overwhelmed)

The tools to pack, prep, and travel like a pro

Why working with Iron City Travel takes the guesswork out of it all

Whether you're dreaming of Disney, cruising the Caribbean, or chilling on a beach somewhere warm with a cold drink and no screaming children (just yours) – I've got you.

### *Your Travel Agent Isn't a Luxury – It's a Shortcut to Sanity*

When you book with Iron City Travel, you don't just get someone who clicks buttons on a computer. You get:

Custom recommendations for your family's needs

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