

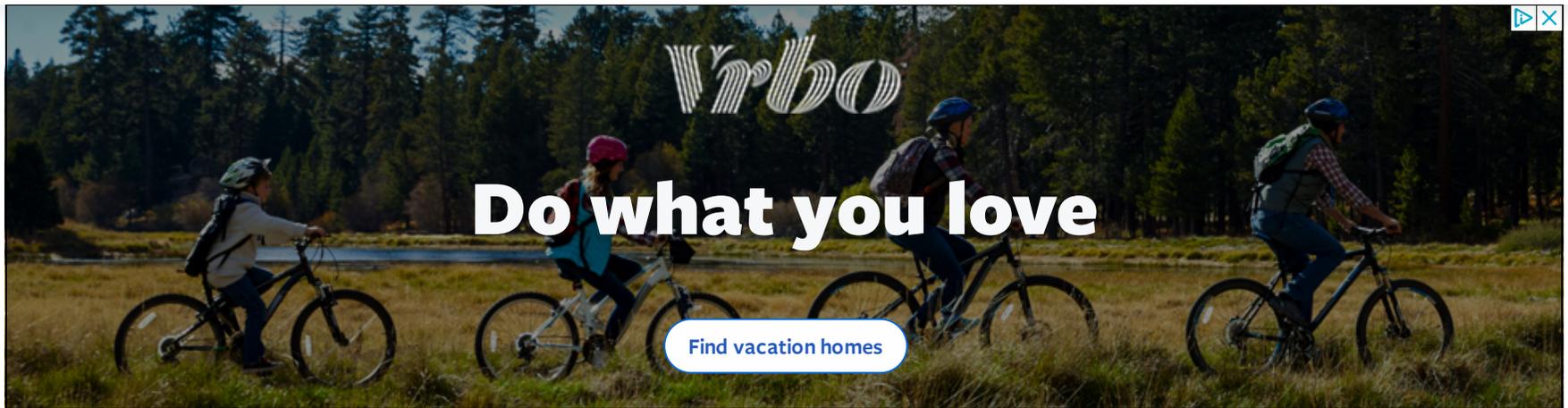


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10 Best International Family Vacations for 2020



BY JUDY KOUTSKY

April 30, 2020



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Destination

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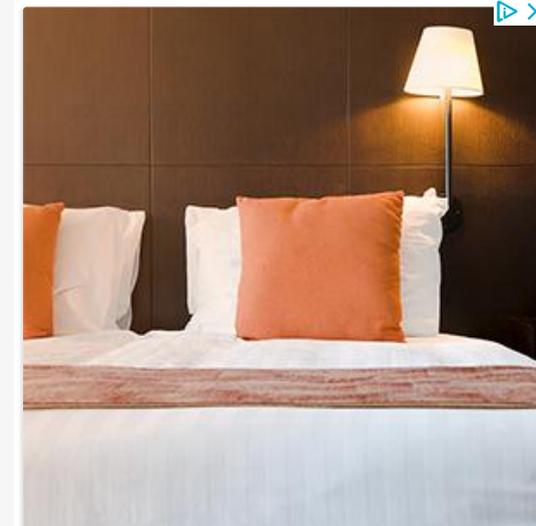


family.

Want to venture somewhere new—perhaps outside of the U.S.—in 2020? We know kids like active adventures like ziplining and kayaking (think Belize), but we also know parents want them to try new foods (like wasabi-infused specialties in Japan). Throw in some great tour leaders (we’re looking at you, Adventures by Disney) and some under-the-radar destinations (like Guyana) and you have tons of vacation options across the globe. These are the [best international family vacations](#) for 2020.

(Looking for some great vacation ideas closer to home? Check out the [10 Best U.S. Family Vacations for 2020](#).)

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1. Belize

Belize's [Lodge at Chaa Creek](#) is a 400-acre eco lodge specializing in adventure, with dozens of different activities offered each day. Be sure to go on a bird

watching tour—this area has some of the best bird watching in the country—or take a tubing excursion deep into the jungle, where you can see plenty of beautiful toucans, the national bird of [Belize](#). Zipline among the trees and see a view of the jungle from above. Naturalist guides will take guests horseback riding, mountain biking and hiking through the dense jungle while travelers take in the diverse flora and fauna of the region. Be sure to take a canoe trip down the Macal River to see birds, howler monkeys and other wildlife.

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The advertisement features the Charlotte Tilbury logo on the left with a 'SHOP NOW' button. The central part shows two close-up images of eyes with eyebrows: the left one is labeled 'SUPERMODEL BROW AFTER' and the right one 'BEAUTIFUL BEFORE'. To the right, there are images of makeup products and the text: 'NEW! SUPERMODEL BROWS IT'S EASY! FILL + FEATHER + FIX!'.

Next, head to the second largest barrier reef system in the world. [Victoria House Resort & Spa](#), located on Ambergris Caye, features spacious villas, a gourmet restaurant with freshly-caught seafood, two beachfront pools and a dive shop where charter boats can be arranged for exhilarating adventures such as scuba diving in the world-renowned Great Blue Hole or snorkeling in Shark Ray Alley. Then head to [Naia Resort and Spa](#) in Placencia, the southern part of Belize, where the family can go on leisure bike rides or spend the day on kayaks or SUP.

Recommended Belize Hotel: [The Lodge at Chaa Creek](#)

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2. Curtain Bluff Resort in Antigua



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Families looking for [all-inclusive fun](#) on the island of [Antigua](#) should look no further than [Curtain Bluff Resort](#). Located on 20 acres of landscaped land nestled between two sandy beaches, the resort features one of the highest repeat guest ratios in the Caribbean. For families looking to have many options—without having to check the price constantly—this all-inclusive resort is just the ticket. From snorkeling trips to Cades Reef to water-skiing, paddle boarding, kayaking and windsurfing, kids will have plenty to keep them busy. Plus, the outdoor kids' club—with feeding and playing with turtles, colorful paint projects, and coconut arts and crafts—will have the kids begging to go back each day.

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The advertisement banner features the Nike logo on the left, the text "PEGASUS 37 'MANGO'" in large white letters, a side view of a black and orange Nike Pegasus 37 sneaker in the center, and a white button with the text "Shop Nike.com" on the right. A small "X" icon is in the top right corner of the banner.

Recommended Antigua Resort: [Curtain Bluff Resort](#)

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3. Adventures by Disney Iceland

[Adventures by Disney](#) has been leading tours since 2005, and has more than 50 itineraries on six continents, with Iceland being one of their newest (and, rapidly, most popular) tours. The [eight-day Iceland tour](#) includes Reykjavik, Vik, Akureyri, Húsavík, and Lake Mývatn. While those names might not be overly familiar, the attractions in those towns are—namely hiking on a glacier, going to the Blue Lagoon, and visiting geysers and waterfalls. In Grindavík, about an hour by car from Reykjavik, the thermal waters of the Blue Lagoon—as well as the accompanying lava mud masks—are the perfect antidote for jet lag on the first day.

The second day is action-packed, covering the Golden Circle—one of the most popular routes that takes visitors from geysers to craters. Plus, there's plenty to keep everyone active, including riding Icelandic horses; hiking down into Kerio Crater, a volcanic crater that was formed more than 6,500 years ago; and exploring the bubbling hot springs and geysers at Strokkur Geyser.

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My kids are eating me out of house and home

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Other highlights include hiking on the Skaftafell glacier, going behind the waterfalls at Seljalandsfoss (which seems otherworldly), and whale watching (and being mere feet away from them) in Iceland's longest fjord. There's also whitewater rafting in Skagafjorour in the north (a part of Iceland that rarely gets explored), as well as visits to the lava labyrinths in Dimmuborgir.

4. UnCruise Adventures to Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

For families who want a truly unique adventure, consider a visit to [Costa Rica](#) and the [Panama Canal](#) with [UnCruise Adventures](#). Uncruise is so named because it's unlike any other cruise line—it's all about active adventure and interaction in the destination. Each day, families will have the option to hike, snorkel, kayak, SUP and do skiff tours to see monkeys, sloths, iguanas, hummingbirds, toucans, howler monkeys, scarlet macaws, white-faced capuchins and whales.

Families also get to visit San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, before sailing to Curu National Wildlife Refuge, where a hike to Finca de Monos trail will let kids get up close to monkeys and sloths. Next up is the Osa Conservation Area, home to the country's largest national park, Corcovado. Here, there's a good chance to see tree frogs, caimans, anteaters, scarlet macaws, coatis, and 16 different species of hummingbird. In Panama, sail through the islands of Coiba National Park, making a stop at the postcard-perfect Granito de Oro islet for snorkeling, kayaking and relaxing in the sand. Then transfer from ocean to ocean via the world-famous Panama Canal.

5. Australia's Outback

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The Outback of Australia, located in the Northern Territory, is famous for its Red Center desert landscape. Home to the iconic sandstone monolith Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock), the red-rock domes of Kata Tjuta and the sculpted cliffs of Kings Canyon in Watarrka National Park, this area offers plenty of adventure activities for families—including camel safaris into the desert and canyon hikes where kangaroos can be spotted.

For your home base, Sails in the Desert Hotel is ideal in terms of location and activities it offers. Kids can learn about the aboriginal people by taking part in the resort's cooking class, where they'll be taught about the native foods and seasonings—and how certain plants, fruits and grains are used in traditional cooking methods.

In Kings Canyon, there are amazing hikes including the Kings Canyon rim walk. [Kings Canyon Resort](#) is a true family resort and a good place to stay. In Alice Springs, be sure to visit the Kangaroo Sanctuary. You'll get a chance to get up close to these beautiful creatures and learn all about their habitat. The 188-acre wildlife sanctuary was opened in 2011 for rescued baby and adult kangaroos. It's a great way to end your [bucket-list family trip](#).

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Recommended Australian Outback Resort: [Sails in the Desert Hotel](#)

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6. Guyana

For families interested in eco-tourism and adventure activities, Guyana is a great place to visit. It was recently named one of the top ecotourism

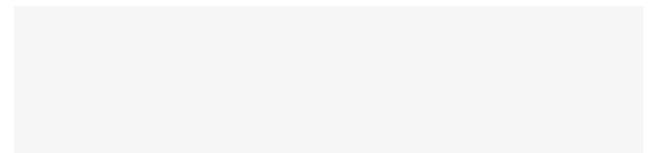
destinations in the world by travel industry insiders, which isn't surprising for those familiar with this under-the-radar country. Reachable via non-stop flights from New York, Miami and other U.S. hubs, this small nation is located in the northern part of South America, bordering Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname. Guyana is the only country in South America whose official language is English.

Direct flights and the absence of a language barrier aside, what really attracts people to this country are its truly unique nature and wildlife offerings. The country is often referred to by travelers as the "Land of the Giants" since people come here to see the giant river otters, giant South American turtles, giant anteaters, jaguars (considered the largest in South America), the Harpy eagle (the largest eagle on this continent and one of the world's most powerful birds of prey), and the giant Victoria Amazonica water lily (Guyana's national flower and the world's largest lily). Here, the hyperbole lives up to the hype.

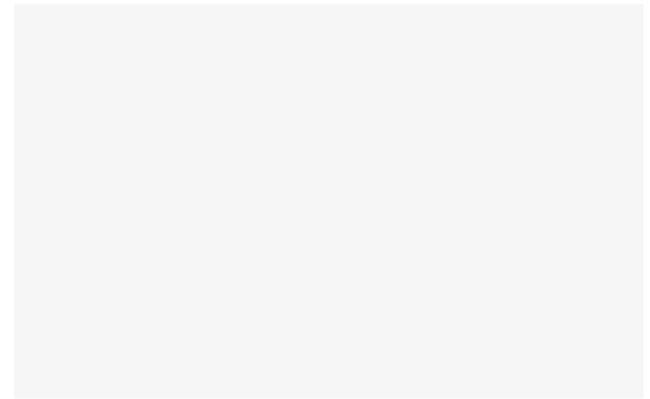
Be sure to visit the Rupununi region—where savannah, mountains and rainforests meet. This area is home to many endangered and protected species. We also recommend a stay at Karanambu ranch, where you'll get to see the giant otter rehab project, which helps rehabilitate injured and orphaned otters and re-introduce them to the wild. Spend some time with the otters during the day before partaking in the caiman project once night falls. The giant black caiman is the one of largest freshwater crocodiles on the planet, and the Caiman House has been conducting research on these amazing creatures for more than 10 years. They take guests out in the dry season to catch the caimans and record data—you'll witness them weighing, measuring and then tagging the caimans before releasing them back into the water.

Recommended Hotel: [Karanambu Lodge](#)

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7. G Adventures Japan Family Journey

Hot on the heels of hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2019, Japan has no plans to slow down in 2020, as it'll be hosting the Summer Olympics. Want to go? Consider a trip with [G Adventures](#), which recently teamed up with National Geographic to launch family-specific itineraries. G Adventures' travelers to the 'Land of the Rising Sun' have been steadily increasing, with an additional 23 percent growth in the past year.

Its 11-day [Japan Family Journey](#) starts in Tokyo, where families explore the dazzling uniqueness of this bustling city before heading to Kyoto and the mountain city of Nagano. Activities for families include practicing sumo wrestling and samurai swordplay and sampling a variety of wasabi-infused culinary delights (don't worry, there are plenty of options, even for the pickiest eaters). This intimate experience means there won't be more than 20 people in a group, and activity levels are appropriate for kids.

8. Tanzania

Africa for kids? Yes! Travel agents and African specialists agree that a safari can be the ultimate family vacation and no place does it better than Tanzania. The [Elewana Collection](#) camps and lodges have been designed to offer the whole family a comprehensive safari experience with an inspiring and educational slant. Each property offers specific activities geared toward families.

Of course, game drives are the big draw for all ages while on safari, but guides also love imparting knowledge and a love of Africa in the younger set, encouraging them to become the next custodians of this fragile area of the planet. Activities include village and school visits (where your kids can interact with the local children), conservation programs (chatting with anti-poaching teams to learn more about conservation), and learning about the traditional food and culture of the Tanzanian community.

At each camp, there's also specific activities geared toward kids. In Elewana Manor at Ngorongoro, kids can go biking, go on farm visits to see local African animals and tour a coffee plantation to see how this valuable export is made. At [Serengeti Pioneer Camp](#), kids can play safari bingo—going on game drives and walking safaris and crossing off the animals they see for a prize. At [Serengeti Migration Camp](#), kids will learn traditions of the local people by making masks and [jewelry](#).

Recommended Hotel: [Elewana Manor at Ngorongoro](#)

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9. Norway

If the movie [Frozen](#) hasn't already inspired your kids to visit Arendelle (which is based on the real Arendal in Norway), then the sequel definitely will. But

beyond [Frozen-inspired adventures](#), there are plenty of other kid-friendly destinations in Norway, such as the town of Hallingdal, which is located between Oslo and Bergen in Eastern Norway and has become a top location for family holidays. Here, the kids will love the Bjørneparken (“the bear park”), where families can get close (in a safe way, of course!) to bears, elk, lynx and even crocodiles. The nearby nature park at Langedrag allows kids the opportunity to see wolves, lynx and moose, and feed reindeer. Plus, nearby playgrounds and activities include a zipline and a brand-new water park for children.

Want an unusual place to play? Head to Gardnos meteorite park where a geologist will show you a real meteorite crater and talk about the rocks and nature that make up the area. Do you have little kids? Go to the town of the area around Lillehammer, less than two hours by train from Oslo Airport. At the Lilleputthammer miniature town in Hafjell, activities have been designed for children between 1 and 8 years old. Think small buildings perfect for the little ones to dress up in [costumes](#), take part in arts and crafts activities, climb small towers and ride a miniature roller coaster and Ferris wheel. The little cars are also made for the junior set to cruise around.

Recommended Hotel: [Scandic Hafjell](#)

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10. Fiji

[Fiji](#) is a great beach destination for families. At the [InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa](#), kids can take part in the Planet Trekkers Kids Club, which has

pitch and putt, beach football, cricket, volleyball sessions and [beach games](#). The [Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa](#) has the Niu Beach Club for kids, which has lots of fun choices including a wet and wild splash area, an artist in residence with whom kids can tap tap into their creative side, and a climbing wall and trampoline area on the beach. [Shangri-la Fijian Resort & Spa](#) has a large floating water park and a “Kids Eat Free” program (for kids under age 12), as well as kayaks, paddleboards and a variety of water sports for the whole family to enjoy.

Bonus: It just became easier for families to get to Fiji. [Fiji Airways](#), Fiji’s national airline, has two new Airbus A350 XWB aircraft. If you’re lucky enough to fly business class, that means fully lie-flat beds. But even if you’re flying economy, the seats are ranked among some of the most comfortable long-haul economy class seats available. Plus, the kids will love the seemingly endless entertainment options, fast Wi-Fi and the Fijian hospitality, with some of the friendlies flight attendants in the sky.

Recommended Fiji Resort: [InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa](#)

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Judy Koutsky is an award-winning writer and editor and her work has appeared in more than 30 publications including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Redbook, Parents, WebMD, Prevention and Scholastic. Her article topics include health, parenting, lifestyle, psychology and travel. She also works on custom

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