

# Waterplay, Hiking, And Camping Adventures With A Baby



To successfully include a baby in nature adventures, ensure proper clothing for the weather and go outside for short, frequent periods to provide sensory experiences like feeling grass or listening to birds. Use carriers or strollers for walks, let baby feel and smell leaves and soil, point out animals and sounds, and offer simple experiences like playing in the backyard or on a porch. Safety measures include sun protection, checking for ticks, and avoiding potentially dangerous plants.

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# How to Start Adventuring With a Baby

## 1. Start By Taking Your Baby Outside Early:

Take your baby outside as soon as it's safe to do so, even for just a few minutes in the morning. However, remember that seasonal outdoor naps and daily walks in the fresh air are great for both baby and mom.

## 2. Dress Appropriately:

Dress your baby in layers suitable for the weather, ensuring they are warm enough in cool weather and have light, protective clothing in the sun.

## 3. Keep It Simple:

You don't need elaborate activities; a blanket in the backyard or a short walk is enough for a baby.

### Sensory Experiences

- **Feel Textures:** Let your baby touch soft grass, rough tree bark, leaves, or even soil.
- **Listen to Sounds:** Point out bird sounds, rustling leaves, or the sound of water.
- **Observe Sights:** Look at birds flying overhead, animals, flowers, and the sky.
- **Smell Nature:** Let your baby experience the smells of flowers, honeysuckle, or damp earth.

### Activities

- **Go for Walks:** Take short walks in a park, on nature trails, or around your neighborhood.
- **Relax Outdoors:** Lay a blanket in the grass for tummy time or to simply look up at the sky.
- **Use Your Backyard:** Explore the textures of the grass and dirt, or simply sit on the porch.

- **Play with Water:** Visit a stream or play in puddles, letting your baby splash or feel the water.

## Safety Precautions

### **1. Sun Protection:**

For babies under six months, keep them out of direct sunlight and use lightweight clothing and hats. For older babies, use baby-specific sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.

### **2. Check for Ticks:**

In wooded or grassy areas, check your baby for ticks after being outside, as they can carry diseases.

### **3. Beware of Poisonous Plants:**

Learn to identify dangerous plants like poison ivy and oak in your area.

### **4. Be Aware of Your Surroundings:**

Stay vigilant for other potential hazards, such as insect stings or choking hazards, and never leave your baby unattended.

# 11 Ways to Prep for Adventure With Baby



## Part One:

**Travelling with a new baby can be daunting.** When we first found out we were expecting a baby, we naively declared that we wouldn't let our lives change too much. We're travellers, we're adventurers, we're restless wanderers. You can do all that with a new little babe...right? We realized that yep...you sure can, it's just going to look a whole lot different than you're used to!

Once you can wrap your head around that, travelling as a family and creating memories all over the world could not be more rewarding. While some may argue that your babe may not remember these trips at such a young age, we're firm believers that travel will influence your little one in the best ways and will help shape the bond your family will share for a lifetime. While we don't claim to be experts in any way, there are a few things we learned in the first year of Ollie's life that made exploring with a baby just a little bit easier.



california

# Getting Out

## 1.) Get out there

The first piece of advice we have that we can't repeat enough: **Get out there.** Of course, this may look differently depending on each family, but it was important for us to get outside as soon as we felt comfortable after Ollie's arrival. This might not mean getting out into the forest or up into the mountains right away, but for us, it was a trip to Costco after 7 days. We realized that the more we got used to getting out and about, the easier it became, and the more Ollie got used to being on the go. Packing supplies becomes second nature and packing up the **stroller** and car seat becomes routine. After walks around the neighbourhood parks and to our favourite coffee shops became comfortable, we started venturing out for hikes in Ollie's carrier.

## 2.) Make it easier on yourselves

While you're still getting used to navigating your gear and getting your baby to and from different places, **practice packing your diaper bag, folding up your stroller and putting on your carrier.** Make it easier on yourselves by investing in quality gear that will encourage you and your family to get out as much as possible.

## 3.) Start Travelling before 6 months

We've heard countless times from various health professionals and seasoned parents that travelling between the ages of **one month and six months** is ideal for most families. Why? Your baby typically has very few needs, is likely not eating solids, and is not yet mobile! Take advantage of this time and travel as much as you can.

## Related posts:



Sunshine Coast

## On The Go

### 4.) Choosing accommodation

We choose between hotels or vacation rentals (VRBO, Airbnb, etc.) based on a few factors, as some hotels or resorts can be very accommodating for families.

- Look for accommodations with ample space. It's great to be able to put babe down to sleep for the night in a separate room so you can still enjoy your evening. However, if there's a dark corner, extra bathroom, or even a large walk-in closet, these are all great places to put a travel crib!
- We check for laundry facilities if we're going for a more extended trip (washing machines are amazing and mean that you don't need to pack as many onesies!), and air conditioning if it's a warm

destination. A kitchen is also convenient if you're using bottles or preparing food.

- Make sure your accommodation is stroller accessible! Many vacation rentals are walk-ups, and some international hotels don't have ramps or elevators that strollers will fit in. We've been in elevators in Rome and Paris that even a small travel stroller would have been too big. You won't want to lug everything up several flights of stairs!
- Choose accommodation close to areas you want to explore. You won't want to continually be packing up your family into an Uber or cab to head to various attractions. It's nice to be able to walk!

## 5.) Sleep options

As mentioned, while not required, it's nice to have a separate room for babe to sleep in. Keep things as DARK as possible. Alternatively, it may sound weird, but having baby sleep in a dark, quiet bathroom or large walk-in closet is another option! Some hotels or vacation rentals offer cribs or infant beds, so always check ahead. Otherwise, bring a **travel bed that fits easily into your luggage**, and make sure to have some of the comforts of home. We bring Ollie's sleep sacks, **sound machine**, and **blackout blinds** with us to make bedtime a little easier. That said, we try to encourage him to sleep in different environments.



Kelowna

## 6.) Bathing options

Sink baths, holding a babe in the shower, or in the tub are all great options for bath time. Our personal fave has a family shower – with one person holding babe snug and the other doing the washing. There are also portable travel baths that you can buy if you can afford the travel space, **we especially like the inflatable ones!**

## 7.) Pack wisely

Don't worry about bringing extra diapers or wipes. Save on space in luggage and buy them when you arrive! Instead, focus on bringing enough clothes – you'll run through onesies like you wouldn't believe.

## 8.) RESEARCHING YOUR DESTINATION

Check ahead for safety issues in the city, any health concerns for your babe, and locate the proximity of any local hospitals, clinics, or doctors to your accommodation. Consider the type of walking you'll be doing – are there many hills, uneven roads or cobblestones? Will it be unusually hot or cold? Is it a rainy season? This will help to determine the type of gear you'll need to bring and the mode of transportation once you arrive.



Lisbon

## 9.) Exploring the city

Research **modes of transportation**. Commuting in a new city can be stressful when you're amongst locals! Are there buses, streetcars, trains, or Ubers? We often travel by train, and it's suuuper helpful to find out ahead of time if certain cars are accommodating for luggage and/or strollers. We once found ourselves stuck on a jam-packed car on the London Tube for an hour ride from the airport, and all the locals glared and swore at us under the breath. (Honestly, yeesh! Talk about anxiety-inducing.) Turns out the stroller car was right next to us...ha...whoops!

- Find local malls or department stores with **family bathrooms or change areas**, and take note of their location. It's so great to have somewhere to go for an emergency blow out situations! A mall we went to in Lisbon even had a parents' area with kitchen facilities, feeding areas for older toddlers, and private pods for nursing and changing. Some busy stores also have priority lines for families at check out, so keep an eye out.
- Feed anywhere! Honestly, for us, it was all about somewhere comfortable to sit. In coffee shops, in a park, on the floor at a museum, we've done it all.

## 10.) Invest in quality gear

A **comfy carrier** that lightens the load on your shoulders and back and a light, **easy to fold travel stroller** can make all the difference in the ease of your trip.

## 11.) Set your expectations

We received some great advice from a fellow parent before leaving on our first overseas trip with Ollie. This wise mama told us, "**don't go expecting to be able to do all the things you used to do when you travel. Travelling with a**

**family will be a whole different experience.”** They told us that suddenly we’d find ourselves going back to the hotel early, eating on the go at odd times (and skipping some of the less baby-friendly restaurants we’d typically want to try), and missing out on lots of attractions. If you set your expectations right off that bat that travelling with an infant will look very different, it allows you to really enjoy this new adventure. Travelling for us now is all about the memories we’re building as a family, and it couldn’t be more memorable. **Instead of setting an agenda and stressing out about those bazillion things we want to do and try in every new city, we’ve really slowed down, taken it one day at a time, and enjoyed every second of exploring together. It’s been the most incredible lesson of all!**



Whether wearing baby on a walk outside, strolling through a zoo or garden, picnicking in a park, exploring at the beach, or just smelling flowers in your backyard, there are so many ways to bring baby to nature in a safe way. Though the skills of a young naturalist will come later on, just being in nature will help babies develop in the most healthy ways. Read on to learn more.

We're going to start with the benefits before baby has even arrived. Because, like most things during pregnancy, what you do before baby arrives will have an effect on baby's health. Ideally, expecting moms should expose themselves to as much nature as possible during pregnancy.

For one thing, nature calms us. And a calm mother is a calm baby. Interestingly, studies find that pregnant **mothers** who live in greener areas and close to green spaces give birth to high-weight babies. And don't skimp out on nature during the birth experience! Just looking at **nature images** during labor can have a positive benefit for both mother and baby.

Having a new baby is magical but, let's be honest, a busy time. Of course, taking a baby anywhere requires extra effort. There's bundling baby up to keep him or her warm in colder weather. There's gear for hiking with the baby. And always the necessary belongings in the trusty diaper bag. It often seems easier to just stay indoors. But don't skimp out on nature or "greentime".

**With a myriad of mental, physical, sleep, and sensory benefits, nature should be an essential element in a baby's life.** Nature-inspired sensory experiences can support understanding of nature, how to treat it, and fosters a better love and understanding of the natural world. Not every experience needs to be a set task or activity. Our natural world and the environment offer a number of amazing avenues for exploration!



## Sensory Smorgasbord

We've written previously about the [sensory benefits of nature](#) for children. This is true for babies too. [Sensory play](#) includes any activity that stimulates your young child's senses: touch, smell, taste, movement, balance, sight, and hearing. Research shows that sensory play builds nerve connections in the brain's pathways, which lead to the child's ability to complete more complex learning tasks. Sensory play also supports language development, cognitive growth, fine and gross motor skills, problem-solving skills, and social interaction.

Nature of course is filled with sensory information that babies and children need for their developing brains. When you're outside with your baby, remember all of the senses and let baby look, listen, smell, touch, balance as much as they can. Let them experience a prickly pinecone or soft moss. A crow's caw. A soft breeze. Squishy mud. A fir tree. Warm sunshine. Cold snow. Light rain on their face. Ah, a sensory buffet. Consider adding a [sensory trail or garden](#) to your backyard if you can. The benefits will far outweigh the work!



## The Language of Nature

While giving mini naturalists lessons is a bit early for the baby stage, there is no reason why you shouldn't help foster baby's language development by naming many of the wonderful things he or she sees in nature. Bees, flowers, trees, squirrels— what amazing friends surround baby in nature. Talking to your baby and naming objects in their world helps promote early language development. But familiarity with the natural world also helps to reduce the **fear** many children and adults have of nature. The more we know and understand nature, the less we fear it. So helping your baby develop a comfort level with butterflies, just as they are around Fisher Price's latest gadget, will bring in lifelong benefits.

## Moving with Nature

If you want to help your baby develop their motor skills, doing so in an outdoor environment can help them progress. Children **acquire most of their basic motor skills** before the age of five with much of the progress

made within the first couple of months of life. Time outdoors helps facilitate the development of many of those skills even for babies, who benefit from observing others running around and playing. When outdoor playspaces are given a natural makeover with natural elements such as trees, sand, logs, sticks, stones, bark, and hay, as well as structures such as bridges and platforms, infants and toddlers **show more variety in their movement and physical activities**.



## Immunity Booster

More variety in nature also includes more variety with regard to microbes. Which is excellent for baby's immune system! We now understand that, rather than protecting babies and children from germs, we should encourage healthy exposure. **Microbes in nature boost immune system development**. Rather than keeping baby in a sterile indoor environment, take them outside so they can build stronger immune systems for life.

## Calming Nature

We all appreciate the benefits of sleep for babies. You may have noticed that your baby is a better sleeper after he or she has spent the day outdoors. You're not imagining it. **Research confirms that time in the natural sunlight helps establish good sleep patterns for babies. In the study, babies younger than 13 weeks who slept well at night spent twice as much time in the sunlight than babies who did not, possibly because babies spending time outside established circadian rhythms sooner.**

As baby gets older, keep outdoor activities going! Research shows outdoor activities may be more effective at promoting early child development than indoor activities. **Researchers** who looked at the influence of outdoor activities on the development of one- to three-year-old children attending nursery schools in Italy found that children in the outdoor group showed significantly greater improvement in most of the developmental areas (cognitive, emotional, social, fine motor skills) than children in the traditional education group.

So get baby outside and often. And don't stop. Nature offers benefits for any age.

## How to Deal with Diapers When Adventuring with Babies and Toddlers



If you have plans to go on an adventure with your little one, something you might be wondering is what to do with the inevitable dirty diapers when backpacking with your baby or toddler. I have done many adventure trips with my babies and toddler when in diapers and have found a few ways to make carrying the dirty diapers more manageable.



## **Packing Diapers and Wipes In –How Many Do You Need?**

Of course you need to pack in clean diapers for there to be dirty ones. How many you need to bring is going to depend on the age of your little one. One thing you can do is on the days leading up to your trip is count how many diapers they go through a day. I usually like to pack that many plus a few extra just in case. I pack mine in a large ziplock bag. You want to put them in something waterproof because if a diaper becomes wet, it's useless.

For wipes, I usually just bring a less full pack with me. If you really want to save on weight, you can leave the wipes out to dry before your trip and rehydrate as needed. I don't do this as I find it to be more of a hassle than it's worth.

On longer trips or if you are worried about running out of diapers bring a cloth diaper as a back up.

## Leave Room for the Dirty Diapers

Ten unused diapers take up much less room than ten dirty diapers so make sure to leave some space in your pack for those dirty diapers. What I usually do is leave the lid of my backpacking pack empty and store the dirty diapers in there as needed. You can leave any pocket open that makes sense to you!

## Lightening up the Dirty Diaper Load

Full diapers can add up in weight quickly so here are a couple of ways to lessen that weight:

- **Leave the diapers out to dry.** When we are stopped at camp or taking a long break, I will open up the diapers and leave them out in the sun/wind to dry out. This is a fantastic way to get rid of some of that moisture and weight. Of course you don't want to do this if there is a chance of rain and you don't want to leave the diapers unattended in case some wildlife becomes curious.
- **Bury the Poop.** If there is solid waste in the diaper, you can dig a 6-inch cat hole and drop the poop right inside. (Do NOT bury the diaper itself, even if it's a decomposable one or made of a natural material.) It will lessen the weight a bit as well as the smell. Just be sure you are not in an area where burying your waste is restricted.
- This idea is a little less conventional, but if you have a toddler that is in diapers, you can **have some "no clothes" time at camp**. This is of course if you are in a secluded area, feel comfortable doing this, and it's warm enough. I am assuming this may be easier with boys than girls but that is up to you. This way when they pee, it will not be dirtying a diaper and you don't have to pack it out. If they poop outside the diaper, be sure to dispose of the waste properly.



## Containing the Smell

The smell of dirty diapers is not a fun one to be around so here are a few ways to contain the smell of those especially smelly diapers:

- **Bring odor bags.** These are essentially doggy bags that are infused with baking soda to absorb the odor. [You can check them out here.](#) If you only need a couple, give the extras to your friend with a dog!
- **Reuse your dehydrated meals bag** to put the diaper in and seal it shut. I find this to be very effective.
- **Bury the Poop.** I mentioned this already to help lighten the load but it is also great for eliminating the smell. Dig a 6-inch hole and drop it in. Do NOT bury the diaper itself, even if it's a

decomposable one or made of a natural material. And be sure you are not in an area where burying human waste is restricted.



## **Additional Tips On Dealing with Diapers When Adventuring:**

- Be sure to change your kid into a fresh new diaper at the trailhead before starting for one less dirty diaper to carry.
- Have diapers waiting in the car for when you return. This is very helpful in case you run out of diapers on your last day.
- Use a salve on your baby's bum to protect their skin in case you are going longer in between diaper changes. I like [this one](#) because it comes with travel packets.

Hopefully you feel more confident knowing what to do with diapers when backpacking with your little one.

# Hiking with a Baby And Outdoor Baby Gear

Hiking has long been one of our favorite activities, so we were eager to learn how to hike with a baby when we had our first child. We have discovered that hiking with a baby is not only easy and enjoyable, but it's the best way to share our passion for the outdoors with our children.

Whether you are exploring the green spaces around home or traveling with your family internationally, hiking with a baby is a great way to get outside. With a little practice, a little preparation and the right baby hiking gear, you'll be able to explore amazing mountain trails and national parks around the world with your baby.



## Overview:

To hike with a baby, use a comfortable carrier suitable for their age and head control, choose an easy trail with good shade and minimal steep drops, and go during cooler parts of the day, like early morning or evening. Pack essential supplies including snacks, extra clothing, diapers, wipes, and sun protection for both you and the baby. Take frequent breaks, stay

hydrated, and be flexible with your goals to keep the experience enjoyable for everyone.

## **Gear and Preparation**

### **Choose the Right Carrier:**

For newborns and younger infants, a front carrier is best for head support. For older babies who can sit up independently (around 6 months and 15 lbs), a quality [backpack carrier](#) is a comfortable option.

### **Pack Essentials:**

Bring plenty of snacks, water, diapers, wipes, and a first-aid kit. Don't forget extra clothes, hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, and bug repellent for both you and the baby.

### **Check the Weather:**

Always check the forecast and be prepared for changing conditions with extra layers, rain covers, and wind protection.

### **Pack Your Bag the Night Before:**

Reduce stress by having everything ready to go.

## **Choosing Your Hike**

### **Select a Gentle Trail:**

Pick a trail with a manageable distance and terrain, avoiding steep drops, heavy climbs, or rough ground.

### **Go Early:**

Hike in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid the strongest sun and heat, and take advantage of the baby's natural energy before they tire.

### **Consider Shade:**

Look for trails with good tree coverage or plan your hike around the shady spots.

## During the Hike

### **Take Breaks:**

Schedule frequent stops for your baby to stretch their legs and for you to rest and enjoy the surroundings.

### **Stay Hydrated and Fueled:**

Offer snacks and water regularly to both you and the baby to maintain energy levels.

### **Protect from the Sun:**

Use sun hats, sunglasses, and light-colored, breathable clothing to protect your baby from the sun.

### **Be Flexible:**

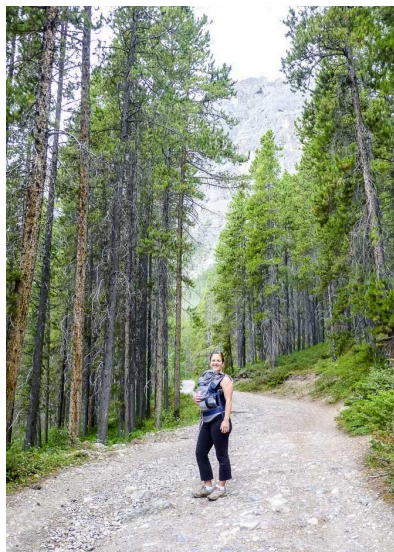
Adjust your plans as needed. The goal is a fun, relaxed experience; if your baby is getting overtired or fussy, it's perfectly fine to shorten the hike or turn back.

### **Involve Your Baby:**

Let them look at the scenery by choosing a carrier where they sit high on your back. Look for treasures like rocks and sticks, and point out trees and flowers to make the journey an adventure.

We took our daughter on her first hike up the [Grassi Lakes hike in Canmore](#) (near Banff National Park in Canada) at around 6–8 weeks old. I'm not going to lie, our first time hiking with our newborn didn't go well.

With our tiny newborn in our Ergo baby carrier, we were so proud to have gotten out on our first hike. We thought we were well prepared to go hiking with our baby, but Mother Nature had other plans.



Even though it was a short, easy hike, we didn't make it to our destination. It started to rain, and as we were hiking with an infant for the first time, it made us feel like the worst parents in the world. It's something that we've just come to accept when hiking with babies and toddlers. Turning back early is never easy, but it's usually the right choice to make for your family.

Despite our challenges learning how to hike with a baby, we persevered and all those struggles early on have paid off in spades. By starting early and bringing our baby hiking, our kids have learned to love outdoor activity and have developed an appreciation for nature.

Our kids are now able to hike long distances (for their ages) and we've even accomplished our first multi-day [hike to the Lost City in Colombia](#) with a 4 and 6 year old. We're here to tell you that learning how to hike with a baby really pays off down the road when your kids are older and more physically capable.

## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS ARTICLE ON HIKING WITH A BABY:

1. Benefits of Hiking with a Baby
2. 13 Tips for Hiking with Baby

3. Essential Baby Hiking Gear Checklist
4. What About Hiking Gear for Mom?
5. More FAQs on Hiking with a Baby

## **BENEFITS OF HIKING WITH A BABY**

What are the benefits of hiking with babies? The biggest benefit is that it gets you out of the house. It's a perfect family activity that anyone can do. Your baby is happy to be snuggled in close to you and you get to experience a small part of your pre-baby life.

Sometimes just the accomplishment of getting out and doing something is what we need as new moms. Hiking with your baby in nature will lift your spirits. It will make you feel like you can still get out and do things. Not to mention the benefits of fresh air for everyone!

In my experience, getting outdoors and hiking with a baby is one of the best things new moms can do for their physical and mental wellbeing.



Finally, hiking with babies is something that you can do anywhere. Even when traveling internationally with a baby, it's a great way to experience the natural beauty of your destination. And it's the one place you don't have to worry about your baby crying!

## 13 TIPS FOR HIKING WITH BABY

Based on our real-life family hiking experiences, here are **our best tips on how to hike with a baby**:

### 1. When Can You Hike with a Baby?

I don't need to tell you that your body has been through A LOT! Give yourself the time to heal before planning your first adventure hiking with your baby.

I know you are anxious to get back out there and do the things you did before having a baby! I felt the same way. I was hiking right up to a couple of weeks before having my first baby. I was just as eager to get back out hiking. It's just too easy to push yourself too hard, too soon, so give yourself the time you deserve to heal.



I had a C-section with both kids, so **we waited until around 6-8 weeks before taking our newborn on any family hikes**. And even then, we started with long walks around our neighborhood followed by easy hikes we were familiar with.

*Love sharing the outdoors with your family? Read our [best tips for camping with a baby](#).*

### 2. Celebrate the Small Wins!

When hiking with an infant, it's very likely you won't get to finish every hike you start. Rather than stress about it, we believe you should celebrate your family accomplishments!

Finishing a hike with an infant is not the goal. Your family got out and enjoyed nature together. There are huge benefits in just starting a family hike, so even if it didn't go well, you likely learned something for the next hike with your baby.

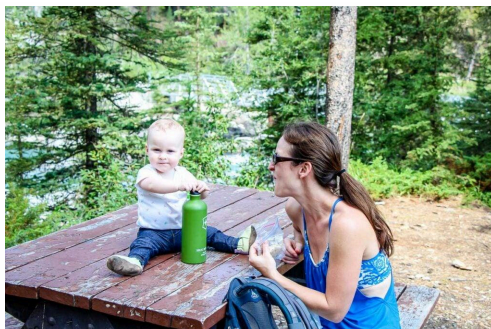
Celebrate all of that!



### **3. Plan Your Family Hikes**

Before having a baby, it was easy to go where the wind took you. Now that you have children, you'll enjoy your day much more if you have a plan. If your baby has a feeding or sleeping schedule, try to plan your baby hiking around that, taking into account the time that it will take you to get to and from the hiking trail.

You'll also have to factor in the time on the hike to stop and feed your baby, diaper changes, etc.



More importantly, have a checklist for hiking with a baby. If you can, get as much ready the night before as possible. **It's just too easy to forget baby essentials or baby hiking gear** when you are trying to get yourself and your little one ready for the hike.

#### **4. Pick the Right Time of Day for Hiking with Your Baby**

If your baby will nap on your family hike, then this is the perfect time to be on the trail. This works especially well for hiking with a newborn, who might be spending a lot of time sleeping.



We always tried to plan our hikes with a baby so that they would be napping on the longest part of the hike. Then we'd stop and feed our baby, do a diaper change and continue on.



If our baby was going through a phase where she wasn't doing well napping in the baby hiking backpack, we might opt for a shorter hike in-between her naps.

## 5. Finding Baby-Friendly Hikes

For your first time hiking with a baby, start with one of your favorite easy hikes you are familiar with. When you have enough experience hiking with an infant and want to find new hiking trails, we recommend you use AllTrails to help find baby-friendly hiking trails.

Find your destination and use the handy filters on AllTrails to set limits on the hike distance, elevation gain etc. You know your family's capabilities best – just make sure your family hike is something you can do with the extra weight.

**Enjoy map downloads and many more premium features with a 7-day free trial of AllTrails+!**



Keep in mind that with all the extra responsibilities that come with hiking with a baby, you will hike at a slower pace than pre-kids. Take this into account when picking the best hike to take your baby on.

If you know the hike, you'll also know if there is a good place to stop and feed your baby on the trail. Depending on the time of year or where you are hiking, you'll always want to make sure you can hike in the shade to provide some relief from the sun. Especially if you aren't using sunscreen on a baby under 6 months old.

**Need some inspiration?** We've got just the thing in this list of [best hikes with toddlers and babies around the globe](#) and this list of [best hikes with a baby or toddler in the USA](#).

## 6. How to Dress Your Baby for Hiking

Keep your baby happy and comfortable while outdoors by dressing your baby in layers. Unlike you, your baby won't be moving, so you'll probably need to put an extra layer of baby clothing on your child.

You can further protect your baby by using a [hiking backpack baby carrier](#) with a good canopy and a [rain cover](#) (this will also help protect them from the wind). A backpack carrier for babies is especially good on a hike where you'll be sweating, as a baby hiking carrier would get your baby sweaty too.



Don't forget to bring your baby an extra set of baby hiking clothes (in case of blowouts), a [sun hat with a wide brim](#), [sunglasses](#) and [warm baby hiking booties](#).

**See all our recommended [baby sunglasses](#) and [best sun hats for babies](#).**

## 7. Finding the Best Hiking Baby Carrier

The age of your baby and the hiking conditions will determine the [best baby carrier for hiking](#). For example, if you are hiking with an infant, you'll want a comfortable front carrying baby carrier. If you'll be hiking in warmer temperatures, opt for a [baby carrier that is breathable](#) with mesh panels.



We loved using our [Ergo Baby Carrier](#) with the infant insert as our infant hiking carrier.

For older babies, you can look into other options like doing a back carry with your favorite baby hiking carrier. This will make it much easier to hike, since you'll be able to see the hiking trail a lot easier.

For babies who are able to sit up independently (typically around 6 months), a [hiking backpack carrier for babies](#) is one of the **best hiking carrier options**. We owned two hiking backpack carriers and used them extensively for hiking and traveling with our kids.

As a bonus, hiking backpack carriers will often have enough compartments to carry snacks, diapers, water and all your baby essentials for hiking. It also keeps you and your baby cooler since you two will not be in direct contact with each other.

## 8. Hiking with a Stroller

If you prefer to **hike with a stroller**, it is possible to find stroller-friendly hiking trails. Though your options may be more limited, with a little research you should be able to find suitable hiking trails for a stroller.



Look for walking trails that are wide and relatively flat. You'll also want an all-terrain stroller like [this one](#) if you aren't going on a paved trail.

## 9. Feeding Baby on the Hiking Trail

Be prepared for feeding your baby on the trail. If you are breastfeeding, it's pretty easy to find a comfortable place to stop to feed your baby before continuing on your hike.



For formula fed babies, pack your formula in a [measured formula dispenser](#), a [travel bottle warmer](#) and some extra water in a thermos to make your bottles on the go. Be prepared to make a few bottles on the go just in case the hike takes longer than anticipated.



For [babies who are starting on solid foods](#), here are some great options for hiking [snacks for babies](#):

- Easy to grasp fruit like cut up blueberries or bananas
- Cooked and cut up vegetables like sweet potato
- Cheerios in a snack cup
- Small pieces of bread without crusts
- [Teething wafers](#) or other [dissolvable snacks](#)
- [Food pouches](#)

## 10. Changing Diapers on the Hiking Trail

A [portable change mat](#) is a must have baby hiking gear because it's almost a guarantee that you'll be changing your baby on the hiking trail. Make sure to bring plenty of wipes (in a protective [baby wipes travel case](#)) and an extra outfit (or two) for those blowouts.

Out of respect for your fellow hikers and local wildlife, you'll need to pack out all your garbage. A [wet bag](#) for your little ones dirty clothes or diapers is perfect for this purpose.



## 11. How to Carry all the Baby Hiking Gear

In addition to your baby, you'll also be carrying all your baby hiking essentials. If you are hiking with someone else, you can share the load by having the other person carry the diapers, wipes, snacks and other essential baby hiking gear in their backpack.

Otherwise, a [hiking backpack carrier](#) with a storage compartment is your best option. They typically even have a spot for a water bladder which helps keep everyone hydrated while outdoors.

If you are front carrying your baby on the hike, you can carry all your hiking essentials in your own backpack.



## 12. Hiking With a Baby in the Rain

Weather can be unpredictable in the great outdoors, so be prepared for the elements. As I mentioned earlier, our first hike with a newborn ended with us being caught unprepared in the rain. If you are hiking with a newborn and need a rain cover, get one of [these rain covers](#) for baby carriers.

Once we started to use a backpack carrier, we bought a rain cover and brought it everywhere with us. The rain cover also worked well for extra wind protection.

## 13. Hiking With a Baby in Winter

Hiking in the winter with a baby is one of the [best outdoor winter activities with a baby](#). All it takes is a little preparation and the proper winter hiking gear. You'll want to make sure to check on your baby often as your baby will be much colder than you as they are not actively moving.

Feeding and diaper changes also get more complicated, as you'll want to keep your baby warm. We recommend picking the mildest of days for winter hiking with a baby.



See our recommendations for [winter gear for babies](#) here.



For hiking with toddlers we've put together two additional posts on [tips for hiking with a toddler](#) and [toddler hiking gear](#).

## ESSENTIAL BABY HIKING GEAR CHECKLIST

What baby hiking gear do you really need? Your baby really doesn't need all that much, as long as your baby is warm, fed and you can do diaper changes on the go.

To help you prepare for your family hike, here is our **checklist for essential baby hiking gear**:

- [Sunscreen](#)

- [Bug spray](#)
- Snacks
- [Spill proof snack container](#)
- [Rain cover](#)
- [Baby carrier](#) or [hiking backpack carrier](#)
- Anything necessary for feeding (formula, water & bottles plus a [travel bottle warmer](#))
- Extra outfit or two
- [Diaper change mat](#)
- [Diapers & wipes](#)
- [Wide brimmed sun hat](#)
- [Sunglasses](#)
- [Warm hiking booties](#)
- [Warm hat](#) and [mitts](#) for cooler days
- [Wet/dry bag](#)
- [Breastfeeding cover](#)

## WHAT ABOUT HIKING GEAR FOR MOM?

When hiking with babies, plan to bring plenty of snacks for yourself and lots of water. We also recommend using proper hiking boots for extra stability and hiking poles (depending on the hike).

If you are breastfeeding, wear a comfortable [nursing t-shirt](#) or [nursing tank top](#). This [long sleeve hoodie](#) would also be a good layer.

## MORE FAQs ON HIKING WITH A BABY

### Can you go hiking with a baby?

Yes! You absolutely can go hiking with an infant or baby. It will take more preparation and your hikes might be shorter, but this is a great way to get out with your baby.

## **What age can a baby go in a hiking backpack?**

Most age recommendations for a hiking backpack are when your baby is able to sit upright on their own, which is typically around 6 months old.

## **At what age can you take a baby hiking?**

You can start hiking with your baby as soon as you are feeling up for it. Start with short hikes near your house and build up from there. Only you know how long your baby will tolerate being in a baby carrier.

## **How should I dress my baby for hiking?**

It's best to dress your baby in layers that you can adjust while out hiking. Keep in mind that your baby won't be moving, so your baby should be dressed warmer than you. Also protect your baby against the elements like rain, wind and sun.

## **Can I take my 2 month old hiking?**

Yes, you can hike with a newborn as young as 2 months old. Hiking with an infant can be very enjoyable as they are happy to be carried and near you, sleeping on and off during the hike. As mentioned previously, try shorter and easier hikes first to gauge how your baby does.

## **How to travel with a baby hiking backpack?**

If you are planning on hiking while traveling internationally with a baby, get all our tips for [flying with a backpack carrier](#).

## **What is the best baby carrier for hiking?**

The best hiking carrier for a baby is the one that is most comfortable for you and your baby. If your baby is much more content in a soft structured

carrier like an Ergo Baby Carrier or the LILLEBaby Complete Airflow 360° carrier, then use that.

If your baby prefers to sit up and see the world, then a hiking backpack carrier for babies might be better suited. Just make sure your baby meets all the recommended height, weight and milestones before moving to this type of hiking backpack for babies.

# Desert Hiking with Babies

After 25 years as Floridians, I never thought we'd become desert rats, but the moment we arrived in Arizona, we fell in love. When our son was born, our adventures centered around our high desert home meaning he spent a ton of time early on exploring the desert.

Below, I have compiled what we have learned along the way to safely enjoy our hottest, driest adventures with the hopes that it will help others to enjoy the desert as well.



*If you ever have questions or concerns about sun exposure, overheating, your plans to hike, camp, or do whatever else with your child in the desert, please consult with your child's pediatrician.*

1. Babies & Thermoregulation
2. Best Practices
3. What to Bring
  1. Sunscreen
  2. Clothing
  3. Carriers
  4. Shade

## 5. Extras

### 4. Other Desert Weather

1. When It's Actually Cold
2. Flash Floods
3. Wind

### 5. Need Some Desert Inspiration?

## Babies & Thermoregulation

Babies are at a greater risk for heat and sun exposure related conditions. This is caused by a few things: their greater surface area/volume ratio which allows their body temperature to fluctuate more easily, their under developed sweat glands, their thinner skin that produces less melanin, and their [increased risk of SIDS due to overheating](#).

Because of these things, it is imperative that parents and care givers take extra precautions to protect their children while enjoying hot desert climates.



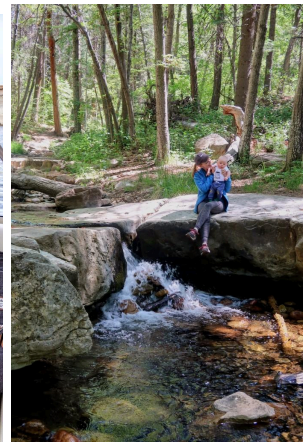
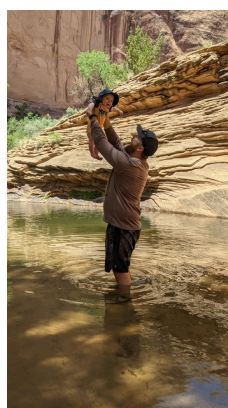


## Best Practices

Ironically, most suggestions for hiking in a hot desert are some form of “avoid doing it:”

- Avoid hiking in the middle of the day, generally between 10am and 4pm.
- Avoid the sun and find as much shade as possible. Find the shadiest hikes if possible and always keep track of the nearest shade to take good breaks.
- Avoid the dryness and stay wet. When it’s dry and hot, your sweat evaporates before it can absorb your body heat to keep you cool, so dipping a towel or shirt in water will do what your sweat wishes it could do.
- Keep your hike short. Obviously, too much sun and too much heat can be dangerous, so don’t be too ambitious with your plans.
- **Know when to call it quits**. While you should definitely be aware of the signs of dehydration, heat exhaustion, sun burn/poisoning, etc., you should also try to call it quits before any of these symptoms present themselves. If it gets hotter faster than you planned, turn around. If you are drinking water faster than expected, turn around. If everyone is grumpy and irritable, turn around. Turn around before there is a problem.

- Go somewhere less hot! Much of the American Southwest is dotted with high elevation mountains/plateaus and great swimming holes. For instance, if you are enjoying Northern Arizona/Southern Utah, you might consider cooler options like:
  - The North or South Rim of the Grand Canyon
  - Bryce Canyon National Park
  - Lake Powell (Glen Canyon National Recreation Area)
  - Slide Rock State Park in Sedona, AZ
  - (see slideshow below for some examples)



Beyond “avoiding the sun” and “avoiding the heat,” the most important consideration is to STAY HYDRATED.

- As a general rule of thumb, plan on a gallon of water per person, per day.
- Replenish your lost electrolytes to avoid Hyponatremia caused by excessive sweating/fluid loss. Drink sports drinks, coconut water, or electrolyte powders added to your water.
- Breast feeding moms are at an increased risk of dehydration, so be sure to drink even more than expected if this is you!
- Just as you need to drink more, so will your baby. Be sure to offer milk/formula to your baby more frequently...and remember, increased breast feeding means increased fluid loss for mommas!
- Generally, babies are to wait until 6 months to consume water, but as always, consult with your child's pediatrician on what's best for your child.

**Finally, you should be prepared to identify and treat symptoms of heat or sun exposure related issues. According to the AADA: "If your baby is fussy, crying excessively or has redness on any exposed skin, take him or her indoors immediately."**



In general, if your child is turning red, is hot to the touch, is lethargic or vomiting, has a fever or elevated heart beat, or if you just suspect

something is off with your child, get them where it is shaded and cool as quickly as possible. Consider a cool cloth or a luke warm bath to cool them down.

See below for a few of [Seattle Children's Hospital](#) notes and recommendations for when things get more serious:

- Call 911 now if your child is hard to wake up, is having seizures, or has a fever over 105°F (40.5°C).
- Call a doctor if your child is acting unusually, has a fever and is less than 12 weeks old, is vomiting from drinking fluids, appear dizzy or sick, has a dry mouth or no tears, or hasn't urinated in 8 hours or the urine is very dark.

## What to Bring

### Sunscreen

According to the [FDA](#) and the [AADA](#), you should wait to use sunscreen on your child until **after 6 months** if possible. However, if shade and appropriate clothing are not available, the AADA also advises to use "a minimal amount of broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30...Sunscreens containing **titanium dioxide or zinc oxide** are less likely to irritate a baby's sensitive skin." If you are unsure how to best protect your infant's skin, please **speak with your child's pediatrician.**



We love [Tubby Todd's mineral sunscreen, sunstick, and chapstick](#) (affiliate link). Our son has sensitive skin that irritates easily and Tubby Todd products have been the best at keeping his rashes under control. The stick is especially great to throw into our hip pouch to easily reapply on the go.

Mineral sunscreen is great because it is effective immediately upon application rather than 15–30 minutes after application of chemical sunscreen...meaning we can apply it and get going right away and not worry about sun exposure.

While chemical sunscreen is water resistant, it's not really needed in the dry air or on a child's mostly sweatless skin.

When applying, don't forget to apply to EVERY little bit of exposed skin. This includes the tops of their hands, face, lips (with SPF chapstick), and even the bit of skin that often peeks through above their socks when their pants ride up.

Finally, according to Nemours Children's health, avoid sunscreens with PABA or oxybenzone. For more information about children's sunscreen, Nemours Children's Health has a a wonderfully [detailed article](#) about effectively protecting young skin from he sun.

## Clothing

Cover as much skin as possible with long sleeves and long pants. These layers should be light colored, light weight, and loose fitting.

Many are familiar with the saying, "Cotton Kills" which is true in many outdoor situations because it retains moisture so well. However, in hot, dry climates, you want your clothing to retain moisture. Moisture conducts heat better meaning it will absorb the heat from your body better. A shirt that wicks away your sweat quickly means the moisture will evaporate before it has a chance to absorb your body heat. The downside to cotton is that it has a UPF rating of about 5 which puts your skin at risk.

Synthetics like polyester are popular among outdoor enthusiasts because it typically has the highest UPF ratings and because they wick away moisture so well. Many parents also love rash guards for their your children because of their UPF ratings and full body coverage. For reasons discussed above, these wicking qualities are great for hot, humid climates, but not necessarily in dry climates.

Finally, what about wool? Isn't wool for winter? We definitely prefer wool in the winter but we also prefer lightweight wool in the summer as well...and here's why: Wool retains about the same amount of moisture as cotton or possibly more. While cotton does retain moisture longer, wool holds moisture longer than polyester. What's neat about wool, though, is that the moisture in it is chemically bonded with the fibers and therefore doesn't feel wet like cotton! Finally, wool typically has a natural UPF rating up to 50! Our son has worn wool for every backpacking trip and nearly every hike.



*In summary: cotton keeps you cool in hot dry climates, most polyesters protect well from the sun, and lightweight wool does both extremely well!*

Our son's favorite wool is from [Iksplor](#) (affiliate link). Not only does it have a UPF rating of 50 and regulate his body temperature well, it's incredibly comfortable and doesn't get stinky! He's worn these layers all over the desert and even abroad on the Tour du Mont Blanc and the W Trek in Chile.

Get a [wide brimmed sun hat](#) with a chin strap to ensure it always stays on their head! We do have [sunglasses](#) and use them from time to time, but we are still practicing with our little one...they are definitely valuable and worth using while walking on highly reflective sand and rocks. If your child walks, get them [shoes](#). Sand gets incredibly hot and can seriously burn the

skin of a barefoot child. We never thought it would happen, but we've become a Croc family. He just looks so stinking cute in 'em and they are perfect for the desert!



### Carriers

If you're using a soft side carrier, look for an [all season carrier](#) that has extra vents or mesh panels. If you're using a [structured carrier](#), find one with a sunshade.



### Shade

Sun Umbrella – We don't use or have a sun umbrella, but many parents online swear by these. Give it a try and maybe you'll become a fan too!

KidCo PeaPod Tent – We've only really used this when sitting on the beach along Lake Powell or the Colorado River or when backpacking.



*A note about the PeaPod and tents in general. During the day, tents easily become ovens. Do not think setting it up quickly will create a cool place to relax in and beat the heat. It just doesn't work that way. Find some other shade that's not enclosed and find the breeze. If your child must be in the tent or PeaPod, open all the flaps and create as much air flow as possible. Possibly also consider a fan. Finally, for the same reasons, do NOT cover a child in a stroller with a blanket to shield them from the sun. Again, this will turn the stroller into an oven and can be very dangerous.*



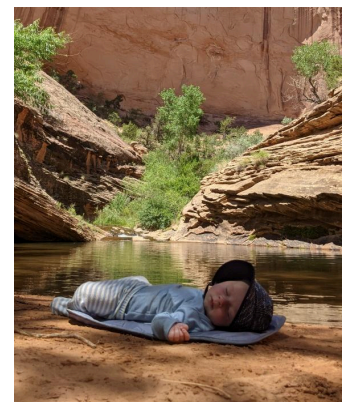
## Extras

Sit Pad, Changing Pad, or Sleeping Pad – Sand is hot and babies need diaper changes. Be sure you have something to cover the ground for your child.

Good Lotion and Aquaphor for afterwards. Your child's skin will dry out and may easily become irritated. Be sure to lotion multiple times a day and use ointment for rashes. Again, we love [Tubby Todd's lotions](#) (affiliate link) for our son.

Cooling Towel's are great to help your child cool off quickly or stay cool if you're hiking in areas with less shade.

Stroller Fan's are great for on the go. We don't carry this when hiking backpacking but always have one handy for the car after a hot hike and in the stroller for more casual stroller friendly hikes.



Garmin InReach Mini – Ever since my parents and in-laws put their own minds at ease by getting us an emergency GPS, we have taken it on every

single adventure. It's just an extra bit of comfort knowing we can get help if need be, especially now with a small child in tow.

## Other Desert Weather

### When It's Actually Cold

3 times to consider when temperatures will drop:

- seasons
- nights
- canyons

Obviously, winter is cold. However, many people forget that the desert isn't always hot. So far, this winter ('22-'23), my home has received maybe 6 or 7 inches of snow. It's not a ton, but it's still shocking to many.



Our desert home this winter

For those spending a night out in the desert, know that sand and dry air do not retain heat well. Because of this, nights can get cool, even in the summer. Be sure to bring a good insulating sleeping pad and a couple layers to wear in the evening.



Finally, slot canyons are often way cooler than their surrounding areas. Because they receive less sunlight throughout the day, they become a bit of an oasis from the sweltering heat just above. Definitely consider bringing an extra light layer or wind breaker for your little one (and yourself) if you plan to play in the canyons!

## **Flash Floods**

If you are entering a canyon, especially a slot canyon, pay close attention to the weather...but not necessarily where you are. Watch for rain up canyon from you. Rain many, many miles away can drain into your canyon and put you in danger of a flash flood. While in the canyon, pay close attention to the closest high grounds or places to exit the canyon. If you are not in a canyon but come upon a wash that is flashing, do not attempt to cross, either by foot or by car. Canyons and washes flash most often during the summer monsoon season, so always pay close attention to the weather, speak to rangers about current risks, and heed any warnings you receive.



## Wind

You don't want your baby breathing in anything extra besides clean air. That being said, when it gets windy in the desert, sand and dust are picked up and tossed about. Besides breathing in these particles, you and your child can easily get sand in your eyes which can be very irritating. Also, during summer when forest fires in places like California are more prevalent, the smoke and ash are oftentimes brought all the way to the desert by the wind. If the air is too polluted by sand, dust, smoke, or ash, consider an indoor activity that day and hope the wind dies down tomorrow.

## Getting Outside With a Baby in Summer



You might remember when I detailed what it's like [getting outside with a baby in winter](#) several months ago. Now, my son is older, heavier, more awake, and his needs are growing. Thanks to balmy forecasts, we're getting out more often and for longer periods.



I still pack his fleece bunting (which he still fits, yay for ordering multiple sizes too big). Kiddo's mitts and knit booties jostled for prominent space with the sunhat and sunscreen in my pack for a long time this year.



Even though spring officially beat Old Man Winter at his chilly games, we still pack a toque. Plus, we've added a rain suit to the mix. It works well in cutting those whipping winds and shedding the abundance of cold precipitation Alberta enjoyed this spring and early summer. At the end of June, after a hiking through hot sun and rain showers the day before, we woke up to slushy snow outside the tent.

Despite the late spring, the highways into nearby Kananaskis Country are open, and the trails are finally clear of snow. The adventure potential is boundless, even

when weighed down by a squirmy 20-plus pounds.

My son is still a good sport on the trail. He alternates between practicing stringing vowels and consonants together, snoozing as we stride through waving wildflowers and grinning up at my nostrils (sans drip thanks to the warm air).

As I tote him up the mountain, my heavy breathing gives him the giggles, and I get a good view of his fresh upper teeth as he tips his head back. I'd laugh, too, if I wasn't fighting for the air his little body pressed up against my chest is squeezing out.

The Ergobaby carrier we use has worked well so far. It's comfortable for him and he sleeps like, well, a baby in it. However, when hiking solo, I always wear a pack for snacks, first aid, bear spray and extra layers. With the carrier hip belt and shoulder straps sitting underneath my pack straps and belt, the weight is not properly distributed and ends up riding on my shoulders.



Attempting to avoid shelling out for a backpack carrier right now, we recently purchased a carrier called the Trail Magik. Light, packable and durable, it clips to my pack itself, which, once attached and baby is in, can be adjusted for proper and more comfortable load distribution. It will be perfect for when my son learns to walk and can toddle parts of the trails himself between carry breaks.



That's on the next visible ridge, because he is growing and growing up fast. He weaned himself in the spring, so a cup he can sip from must be always accessible and full. I pack Cheerios, raisins or bits of fruit, and puree pouches or cereal, no matter how short the hike is. He's convinced he's always hungry and loves food. Wild strawberries are no exception.

The warm weather is ideal for getting out with a little human. At the lake, summit or during breaks he can crawl unimpeded. The world is a big, interesting place for an 11-month-old to explore, and he's doing his fair share of experiencing it. He chews on leaves, makes mud in his mouth, nibbles rocks and uses anything he can find to stand up. Birds, butterflies, squirrels and bees get his attention, and he now looks where I point.

It's less stressful knowing diaper changes won't turn into hypothermia. He's more comfortable in the carrier with less layers, and his hands are free for thumb access when he gets sleepy.

Concerns about heat and sunburn replace those about frostbite, but if I had to choose one, the warmer weather lets us get out on bigger adventures more often, so I'd take sweat over chilly ears.



So far, his little North Face sunhat, a cap with an ear and neck cover, has been invaluable. We slather him in sunscreen before heading off if skin will be exposed and frequently offer him his water cup. There are SPF/UPF base layers for kids available (such as those from Iksplor or First Peak) that would help keep his fair skin safe from the sun, but we have yet to purchase those.

Mosquitoes and horseflies accompany warm weather, but between keeping a good eye on any exposed skin and helpful breezes typical of the Rockies, they haven't been an issue yet.

Our backpacking and camping adventures are more frequent that the backcountry is warm and accessible as well. Even though we try to only take what's necessary on these trips, backpacking with a baby is not a

minimalistic venture. Our packs end up loaded down. His meals, snacks, sleeping arrangement, diapers, wipes and extra layers add weight and bulk little by little.



A luxury item I do sneak along is a small, light toy or two, hidden in my hip belt pocket. Usually there are enough rocks and twigs to keep him occupied and happy on the trek, but once inside the tent, a toy helps distract him from crawling over our hound dog while he works out his wiggles. Poor Blue will risk those little gripping hands to not have to spend the night out in the company of a thousand mosquitoes, but his mournful stares as he presses himself against the side of the tent ask, “why are we still bringing this kid with us?”

Why indeed?



Well, the baby seems to love hanging out (literally) with us for hours, cuddling and chatting as we hike, absorbing all the new sights and sounds.

We love the quality and quantity time gulping fresh air as a family.

And just because it's hotter, heavier and a little harder, we can't (and won't) quit now.

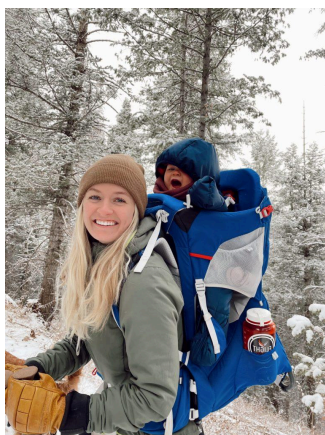
## ***Winter Hiking Safety with Your Baby***



*A common concern for parents is whether or not their babies can be outside when it is literally freezing. Well I'm here to tell you that if you*

*prepare and follow some important rules of thumb, then yes! You can absolutely go hiking with your baby in the winter.*

*Now, I am not a doctor, medical professional, or a hypothermia expert. So make sure to use some common sense and ask your doctor if you have any concerns about your child being out in very cold weather. Always trust your mama gut and don't feel bad for asking questions!*



### *Wear the Proper Layers for Winter Hiking*

*The number one most important thing to do to keep your baby safe and happy on winter hikes is to dress them in the proper layers. I go over this in-depth in my post*

### ***How to Dress Your Baby for Winter Hikes.***

*Make sure to dress them like you would if you were sitting out in the cold, plus an extra layer.*

- *A base layer, mid layer, and weatherproof layer are the key layers to have.*
- *Don't use cotton materials. Cotton holds onto moisture, won't dry, and can lead to hypothermia.*

- *Do not forget a head covering. Babies' heads are a large portion of their body and they can lose a lot of heat from there.*
- *Check on Your Baby*
- *Throughout your hike, check on them to make sure they are warm enough. It's also important to note that you should make sure they aren't so warm that they are sweating. If they cool down, you don't want them to be wet as this can lead to hypothermia.*
- *The best way to check their temperature is by feeling their chest or the top of their back. It should feel warm, not cold or hot and sweaty. Check their feet and hands as well. It's okay if they are cool, but again, you don't want them to be really cold or white.*



- *Learn to Recognize Danger Signs*
- *Hypothermia*
- *Hypothermia is a very real danger when going into the backcountry and it's something that you should be aware of. There are a few key indicators of hypothermia you want*

*to look out for. (I will include the ones that are most helpful when trying to recognize it in a baby)*

- *Shivering*
- *Being very tired and hard to wake up*
- *Bright red, cold skin*
- *If you do notice these signs, take action right away. If you are close to your car, head for it immediately. Make sure to take off any wet clothing. Nurse them if you are able to, as warm fluids will help raise their temperature.*
- *Frostbite–Frostbite is another thing you want to look out for. This most commonly affects the extremities, like the fingers, nose, ears and toes. If you see these areas turning white, do what you can to warm them right away. Hand warmers can be helpful, or just putting the cold areas on your own warm skin will help as well.*



- *Use Trekking Poles*

- *Since you might be carrying a heavier load than you are used to, your balance might be a little off when hiking. And with the trails being more slippery or icy, you definitely want to protect that precious cargo. I love to hike with trekking poles in the winter, especially when I am carrying my baby. They give me that extra stability and help me power up the trail while carrying the extra weight.*
- *Be Over Prepared when Winter Hiking*
- *When hiking in the winter with your baby, hypothermia and frostbite are real concerns. However, They are concerns you can prepare for and prevent.*
- *Bring extra layers and keep them in your car.*
- *Check the weather before hitting the trail.*
- *And the most important piece of advice- Tell someone (or more!) where you will be going and how long you expect to be gone.*
- *I always like to have extra fleece jammies in the car. Not only is it nice in case I forgot to bring them in the first place, it's a warm layer I can change my baby into if he were to get wet for some reason. Extra socks are another great layer to bring with you on your hike. They don't add much weight, but are a lifesaver if their first pair of socks get wet.*
- *If you know what the weather is going to be like, you are setting yourself up for a successful hike. The weather can always be a little unpredictable in the backcountry, so make sure to bring a few things that will help you if it*

*decides to rain or snow on you. I always have our Osprey Poco pack rain cover with us on the trail. Not only does it protect against rain and snow, but also cold winds. It is one of my favorite pieces of gear.*

- *Don't let fear stop you from hiking in the winter with your baby. You've done your research, so now it's time to follow these tips and get out there!*

*If you like this post about Hiking Safely with Your Baby in the Winter, check out these posts:*

- [\*How to Dress my Toddler for a Freezing Winter Hike\*](#)
- [\*What My Kids Wear for Winter Hikes\*](#)
- [\*How to Start Winter Hiking for Beginners\*](#)

# Family Hiking and Camping In The Mountains with a Baby

## How to Have a Fun Trip to the Mountains with Baby



### **How to Have a Fun Trip to the Mountains with Baby**

So, you are going to the mountains with your baby and are wondering how it will be possible to have a fun family vacation with such a young child especially if you are exclusively breastfeeding.

Well, I am here to tell you that it is possible and remember, just because you are a parent, does not mean you are not allowed to be adventurous and have fun in the mountains with your family.

My boyfriend and I just came back from our first family vacation to the Eastern Sierras with our 4-month-old daughter and I am here to give you some encouragement and tips from our experience.

## Hiking with your Baby



First, let us talk about hiking in the mountains with your baby; yes, I did it and so can you.

All you need is a diaper bag, baby carrier, baby sunglasses, baby hat, your baby in a long-sleeved onesie to protect their skin, and confidence.

In your diaper bag, be sure to bring all your baby essentials: changing pad, diapers, wipes, Aquaphor, muslin swaddle, burp cloths, and extra clothes for you and baby just in case of spit-up or a blowout.

You will need more items if you are bottle-feeding your baby.

There are many baby carriers out there that make hiking both possible and fun with your baby, but at our daughter's young age and small size, we found the **Boba Wrap** to be the best carrier for her to feel comfortable in as well as be protected from the sun.

We were able to complete a 2-mile hike to the waterfalls at Twin Lakes and our daughter was even able to take multiple naps in the Boba Wrap on the way up and down from the falls!

## **Fishing, Picnic, Eye Spy, Stargazing, & Board Games with your Baby**



Other than hiking, there are plenty of other fun experiences to share with your baby in the mountains even if they are too little to participate in them with you just yet.

Bring your baby along when you go fishing and show them what fish you catch.

Have a picnic and enjoy some tummy time on the side of the lake or stream together while you both enjoy the beautiful scenery around you.

Talk to your baby and let them know what you are doing and point out any animals you see in the forest.

I was able to interact with some deer and ducks with my daughter and she seemed to enjoy it.

Take your baby outside with you to stargaze at night together.

Do not forget a trip to the mountains in a cabin is not a trip without playing some good old-fashioned family games.

**Talk to your baby while you play your favorite board game with your loved ones, so they feel included.**

## **Water Sports with Your Baby**



Do not forget about all the water sports you can do while in the mountains. You may not be comfortable with your baby on that paddleboard, kayak, or boat with you just yet, but it is being done. It is a matter of doing what you are comfortable with and staying in your comfort zone.

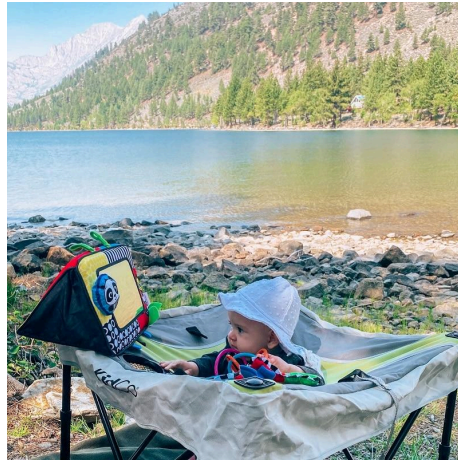
According to the U.S. Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety, babies should weigh at least 18 lbs. and be able to comfortably wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) to be on a boat. However wearing a baby on a boat is recommended with one of [Our Favorite Water Friendly Baby Carriers](#), can be used in and out of water.

I would recommend having your partner, parents, and/or siblings come along with you to help take care of baby, that way you can switch off and take turns doing these activities.

When I went paddleboarding at the lake, I changed my baby girl's diaper, made sure she was comfortable weather wise (see if she needed pants or a jacket when it was colder), and breastfed her.

**That way, once I was done feeding her, I would have at least a good hour to be out on the water knowing that she was a comfortable happy baby while my boyfriend and sister watched over her.**

## **#1 Travel Must-Have for Baby**



One item that made our experience even more enjoyable was bringing our [KidCo GoPod](#).

This is such a neat portable activity seat for your baby to use while traveling. It sets up and folds up just as quickly and easily as a camping chair.

You can attach a variety of toys to the loops on the seat for your baby's entertainment and learning development.

We love that our daughter can sit up in it making it easier for us to interact and play with her at a different level without having to worry about her falling over.

Our baby girl is on the smaller size and at 4 months old she is unable to reach the floor so we put a pillow or baby blanket underneath her so she can practice using her legs and push from her feet.

We loved being able to use this to help entertain our daughter while in the BIG OUTDOORS because it gave her a different perspective and experience.

Just make sure not to keep your baby in the KidCo GoPod for longer than 15-minute intervals because it can be harmful to their hips and joints if overused over time.

## Conclusion

As you can see, you can still enjoy many adventurous activities in the mountains even when traveling with your baby. Not every experience needs to be a set task or activity. Babies take in bits and fragments of sensory information from wherever they are. Our natural world and the environment offer a number of amazing avenues for enjoyment and exploration!

## *Exploring Nature with Baby*



Trust me, you want to maximize fun for your baby and for yourself! Why go into this experience blindly, or by spending countless hours researching when you can take it from someone who has done this numerous times with and without baby.

I got choo, boo .. I got you.

Here is the way we plan our trips with babies and toddlers.

**Ten simple steps for preparing natural experiences  
on land and in water, coming right up!**



Our JEEP hauling a cute Trillium trailer

## 1. Choose your destination

**\*\*\*Deserts can be brutal and dangerous if its your first time out.**

However, my daughters first time in a desert was the first time that she was really into the natural [flowers while we explored](#) rather than the wildlife.



### **My advice –Choose a park with a ranger to:**

Talk about the areas to avoid in the park

Popular nature explorations for family

Viewable desert flowers and wildlife

How to handle waste and trash

Handling a medical emergency (Record phone numbers)

Handling a injured animal

Handling protocols for unwanted or dangerous animals



***We Chose Joshua Tree-Where to Camp in Joshua Tree?***

***Why, Jumbo Rocks of Course!!!***

*There's so many public, private and free places to camp in Joshua Tree. One of my favorite spots is **Jumbo Rocks**. The boulder landscape here is gorgeous. It's kid-friendly with so many places to explore. Hike to **Skull Rock** (1 mile round trip) or just explore the many rock formations around your site.*

*There's vault toilets, fire pits, fire rings, grills and picnic tables. There's even a small amphitheater at the Jumbo Rocks campground. Various ranger programs are held there which are great for the kids.*



*Daddy feeding a yummy oatmeal breakfast for baby*

## **2. Go exploring!**

*You can't fully enjoy the magic of Joshua Tree without a hike. If you're hiking with a baby or toddler, I highly recommend a baby carrier. This way your baby is safe from wobbling into cactus or cholla trees. Pictured here is **my favorite hiking baby carrier**. This thing is a must for outdoor families who love to explore hours on foot. I also love the **Tula baby carrier**. It's my every day use option, and they have the cutest prints!*

*We had planned to do a longer hike, but the desert winds were quite strong. If you're looking for a short but beautiful hike, you gotta visit the Cholla Cactus Garden. It was about a 20-minute drive from our campsite at Jumbo Rocks.*



*Exploring the Chola Cactus Garden*

### **3. Bring a Tripod**

It's hard enough to get a family photos using your arm for a selfie! Heck, it's hard enough to get your kid to look at the camera (and I'm not even asking for a smile). One of the best things we invested in for all of our travels is **this nifty tripod**. Super easy to use and ultra compact. We had originally purchased it for **our backpacking trip to Havasupai Falls**, prior to having Victoria, but now we take it on all of our family camping trips and travels.

Our other favorite travel tripod is the **JOBY GorillaPod**. This thing is great for attaching to trees, signs, rocks — you name it.



*EVERYONE in the camping photo*

### **4. Bring Instruments and Make Music**

My daughter loves music. She also loves making music. Yes, **we are a musical family** with lots of talented musical friends, but even if you don't know how to play an instrument, nothing beats strumming a few chords or beating some drums around a campfire. It's one of our favorite sensory activities for Victoria.



## **5. Self-Care Yo' Self with a Foot Stool aka Toddler Activity Table**

Do you know the magic of a foot stool while camping? I had originally purchased **this lightweight camping foot stool** for our backpacking trip to Havasupai Falls. I was hiking with a torn meniscus and needed an option to elevate my feet. Even my husband used it to relieve his sore feet. Now, I never hit a campground without it. Mostly because it's a wonderful self-care amenity after hiking all day and running after a toddler, but also because my daughter loves to use it as a play table.



## 6. Trailer Camping (Optional)

While we absolutely love tent camping, **especially in our new tent** (that I can actually stand up in), we also like to trailer camp, especially in the desert. The Joshua Tree desert can get very windy. I've seen numerous tents blow away that were not properly staked for winds. The desert can also get very cold at night. This time around we opted for trailer camping. We rented a Trillium trailer that kept us warm at night thanks to its built-in heater. We usually use this heater when we tent camp. The winds got crazy strong the following night. We were thankful to have had a trailer. It makes sleeping easier. **The last time we tent camped in the desert**, our toddler woke up every hour due to the wild desert winds.



## 7. Create a Safe Play Area for Kids

Whenever we go camping, we always bring **this super lightweight and compact pop up playground**. It has a mini tent, crawl tunnel and ball pit. Our daughter and her buddy loved it. We also bring plenty of sand toys for digging. Victoria thinks she is an archeologist whenever there is dirt or sand nearby. If you have little ones that don't walk just yet or are learning, you should definitely **bring a pack and play** or a **portable play-yard**. This allows for mom and dad to crack a cold brew or glass of wine and sit in a **cozy camping chair** while the kids play.



## 8. Smoothie Pouches

Can't tell you how many times fruit and veggie smoothie packs have saved us. They **saved us in Italy** countless times, and they came in handy on our camping trip. They are a quick and easy snack for baby while hiking or on the road. This is our go-to smoothie squeeze pouch, but our daughter also loves these ones which tend to be a bit more hearty.



## 9. Layers, Boots, Layers

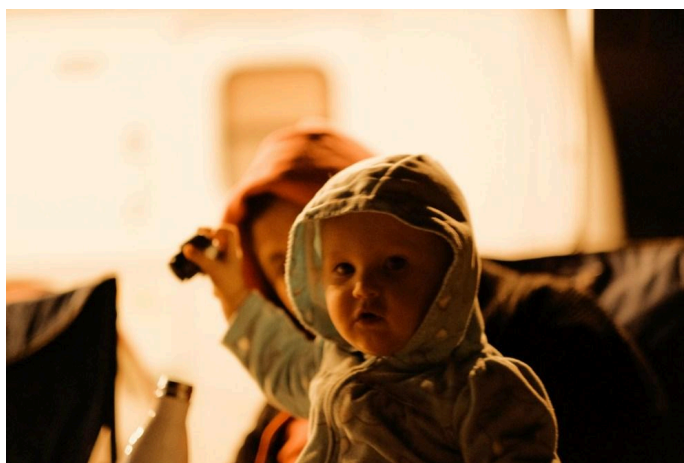
Desert camping calls for boots and plenty of clothing layers. Not just for you, but for your baby too! You don't want to get those pesky sand pebbles in your shoes, nor do you want them in your baby's shoes. We always rock our boots when in Joshua Tree.

These are my go-to boots for camping. They're comfy and stylish. I also have a pair of these for cold, wet weather. My husband swears by his oldest pair of Red Wings and for baby we had her in these. But these rain boots also do a great job of keeping sand and pebbles out.



*As for clothing layers. I always wear jeans or work out legging and pair them with a tank top, followed by a button up long sleeve, hoodie, and jean jacket. You'll add or peel these layers as the chaotic desert weather changes.*

*Baby layers! During the day Victoria wore a long sleeve onesie with a zip fleece hoodie and matching fleece pants. And we can't forget the sunhat! Be sure to have a beanie for your baby in the evening. She loved this one. Once the sun set, we had Victoria in a long sleeve shirt and pants (these ones are perfect) with a fleece onesie over them. We also had her rain coat over all of it at one point when it got really cold. One thing we did not have and I wish we did, was mittens! Her little hands were so cold! We now have these.*



## 10. Take Time for Yourself

*This is YOUR trip too. If you want to have a successful camping trip with your baby, I urge you to take time for yourself. Have your partner watch the baby and go for a solo walk through the many magical rock formations. Find your perfect spot and read a book or meditate. Whatever you do, just be with YOU!*



*I'm free (even for just a few minutes) #MomLife*

### **Music Festival Camping with Baby!**

*When using a stroller in the desert, it's crucial to choose an "all-terrain" stroller with large, durable wheels designed for uneven surfaces, a large sun canopy to protect your baby from intense UV rays, and breathable fabrics to combat heat; features like a good ventilation system and a reclining seat are also important for your child's comfort in the desert environment.*



- **Check the terrain:** *Be mindful of the specific desert terrain you'll be navigating and choose a stroller suitable for that condition.*

**Note:** *Desert animals are very different than other species in other habitats. They have developed special adaptations to help them survive in the hot and dry conditions of the desert. We wanted to be explore the different types of plant and animals that live here and some of the really cool features they have.*

# Camping with a Baby –

## Incredible Tricks and Tips

I feel like there are three categories of people: those who love camping, those who tolerate camping, and those who would rather shove a flaming hot s'more stick in their eyeball than voluntarily camp.

I'm a life-long lover of camping and I'm am trying to pass this love onto my three kids, even if camping with small children means I'm always yelling, "Don't put that in your mouth!" My guess is that if you're considering camping with a baby then maybe you already like doing it and, like me, you want to make it part of your family's summer traditions. Yeah!

The first time I camped with a baby I was a very nervous Nelly, but it really wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. Camping is kind of a pain in the ass and so is having a baby, so I didn't really feel like it was that big of a deal, in the end. For the sake of this post, let's assume you're going car camping with your babe. That is, you're packing up the car with supplies and driving up to your tent site. So what do you need to bring? What should you avoid? Pull up a folding chair, my friend. You've come to the right campfire.

## General Packing for Camping with a Baby

Pack all the typical stuff you need for baby, but bring double. No, I'm not kidding. Bring extra diapers, wipes, food, and changes of clothes. I am constantly amazed by how quickly my kids get dirty and/or wet when we camp. And their appetites are voracious! (All that fresh air, right? It has the same effect on appetite for beer. I digress...)

Your baby's life while camping will look remarkably similar to her life at home:

play, sleep, and eat. So all you have to do is figure out a way to make all these things happen while in the great outdoors.

## Here's a detailed list of what you can bring camping with a Baby

You don't have to bring it all – I just wanted to get stuff on your radar.



*Christine McDonald*

## Play

Right off the bat, when you pull up to your campsite you're going to want to unload and set up your tent and get everything unpacked. And then you will immediately realize there is nowhere to put your baby down because you're in the forest and the ground is covered in rocks and sticks oh fuck, why am I here. Your baby needs a safe place to chill.



*protection from the skeeters*

Throwing your baby into a carrier is a great option, though I'm not sure how easily you'll be able to set up a tent while front-carrying. If your baby is tiny you can just plop baby in his bucket car seat and put him wherever. Or, set up your Pack N' Play and put an elastic sheet or [mosquito net](#) over the top to prevent bugs and leaves from getting into it.

Another great option that I tried when my son was crawling/pulling to stand but not yet walking was a [baby yard](#) on top of a tarp. I chucked a bunch of toys in there and he actually really enjoyed it! My husband called it "baby open-air prison" but hey, at least it provided one safe spot where I could let him crawl around without worrying he'd shove a rock in his mouth.



When I asked people on Facebook for advice, one mom suggested putting your crawling baby in an inflatable baby pool at the campsite with interlocking foam mat squares under the bottom to make it cushy. (The pool can double as a bathtub, too.)

Another reader put her son's [booster high chair seat](#) into a collapsible wagon and pulled him around the campsite in that. Another suggestion was to bring a small separate tent, fill it with toys, and treat it as the "playroom".



*Courtesy of Colleen Niedzwiecki*

## Sleep

OK, so you're gonna need a tent. In my opinion, the bigger the better. Before we had kids my husband and I cozied up in a two-person tent. So romantic! Well, those days are gone and my family of 5 currently sleeps in a 10-person tent.

I like to be able to stand up in my tent so I can change my clothes easily and I like to be able to have everyone's beds and duffel bags in the tent with us, as well as enough space to set up a diaper changing area, so that ends up being a lot of square footage. Having a huge tent also leaves plenty of space for baby's pack n' play next to your air mattress.

Note: Keep in mind that air mattresses are not considered safe by the [AAP](#) because they pose a suffocation risk from your baby rolling into an underinflated fold, or slipping between the mattress and something else (tent, another mattress, a bag of clothes, etc.) so shoot for a safer scenario if possible. Here's a helpful post called [Safe Sleep for Babies: Good, Better, Best](#) that gives you some ideas.

One of my all time favorite tricks is taking a [portable sound machine](#). It downs out noisy neighbors and adds a familiar sound from home.



*Courtesy of Stephanie Becker*

If you have a tiny, non-mobile baby and you don't feel like lugging a huge pack n' play on your trip, you can get a handy [collapsible travel bassinet](#). (I used one of these on a camping trip with my 2 month-old and found it great for easily scooping baby up for nighttime feedings.)

Obviously, you can't regulate the temperature in your tent so come prepared with baby's warm PJs and socks, even for summer nights. If you know it's gonna be really chilly you can get one of these [baby deedee sleep nest](#) sleeping bag sleep sacks. They are toasty warm and safe to sleep in.



## Eating

If your baby is still on an all-liquid diet then your packing needs in this department are pretty straightforward: bring your boobs and/or bring a lot of formula and clean water. When I say 'a lot' I mean bring more than your baby typically eats so if something happens you have plenty of extra.



*Courtesy of Kirby Haslam*

**Cleaning bottles becomes a bit tricky in the woods.** Check ahead of time if your campground has bathrooms with running water – many campground bathrooms have a special outdoor sink designated just for washing dishes. You can bring your own wash bin, soap, and sponge to wash out your bottles and then even boil them on your camp stove to sterilize if that's your thang. Another option is to use disposable drop-ins while camping, but you'll still need to clean the nipples.

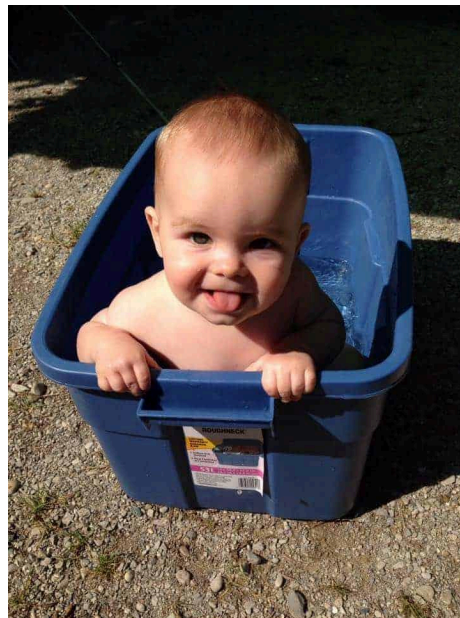


If baby is sitting up and eating solids, I suggest bringing a vinyl tablecloth and a [high chair seat thing](#) that clamps onto your campsite's picnic table, bring a travel high chair [like this one](#) or use a [go pod activity seat](#).



*Courtesy of Kelly Russell*

Also, bring a [camp chair](#) that is comfortable for feedings. You don't want to be stuck sitting bolt upright at the picnic table when it's time to relax and feed baby.



*Courtesy of Lindsay McCarty*

## Other Stuff for Camping with a Baby

- Your baby carrier for hikes. I've used and loved my [Kelty backpack](#) for years. ([Check the price on Amazon as well.](#))

- Pack some of your gear in a big, plastic Rubbermaid bin and then use it as a makeshift baby tub (campground frequently only have showers in their bathroom facilities)
- A few readers suggested [Carhartt overalls](#) because the knees can take a beating for babies crawling around over rough ground. It's also easy to layer them on over another outfit and then peel them off again.
- [Rain pants](#) came highly recommended for keeping kiddos dry.
- [Bug spray](#) and [sunscreen](#) (you can check out our post on [sun safety](#) too.)

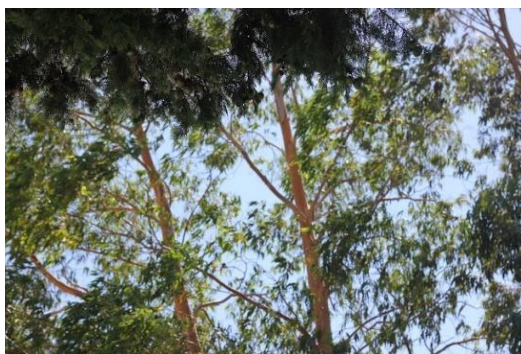
Really, I promise, camping can be so super fun! Even if your baby is up at 5 am, crawling around and eating sticks off the campground road. Ahem.



## Have you taken babies camping?

What did you find helpful? Let us know in the comments!

[DOWNLOAD THE CAMPING WITH A BABY CHECKLIST](#)



# CAMPING WITH A BABY



## CHECKLIST

PREGNANTCHICKEN.COM



### CLOTHES

- ☐ onesies
- ☐ socks & shoes
- ☐ sleepers
- ☐ hats
- ☐ pants & shirts
- ☐ hoodie or jacket
- ☐ bathing suit
- ☐ sunglasses



### FEEDING

- ☐ bottles
- ☐ bottle warmer
- ☐ pacifiers
- ☐ formula
- ☐ burp cloths
- ☐ highchair
- ☐ snacks



### DIAPERING

- ☐ diapers
- ☐ swim diapers
- ☐ wipes
- ☐ diaper cream
- ☐ wet bags



### GEAR

- ☐ portable play-yard
- ☐ baby carrier/wrap
- ☐ bouncer
- ☐ blanket
- ☐ mosquito net
- ☐ toys & books



### SLEEP

- ☐ bassinet
- ☐ fitted sheets
- ☐ waterproof pad
- ☐ Receiving blankets
- ☐ sleep sack
- ☐ noise machine



### BATH

- ☐ tub or bin
- ☐ wash cloths
- ☐ towel
- ☐ shampoo



### CARE & FIRST AID

- ☐ sunscreen
- ☐ bugspray
- ☐ benadryl
- ☐ infant Tylenol

# How to Take Your Baby on a River Trip

Taking a tiny human floating seems intimidating, but it doesn't have to be.



Every March, when we're sick of winter but too impatient to wait for spring, my husband and I drive to the desert to go paddling. The rivers of the Colorado Plateau run muddy with snowmelt, and the sun feels like heaven. Weather on these trips is variable—we've been snowed, rained, and hailed on—but the quiet canyons and starry nights are worth the gamble.

This year, though, there was an even bigger variable: our daughter Josephine, who was 11 months old and had never been in a boat of any kind. How would she react to spending hours each day in a canoe or raft? Would she sleep when nighttime temperatures dropped into the thirties? And was it foolhardy to take her so deep into the wilderness that you couldn't easily hike out?

Still, as the snow continued to fly at our home in Colorado, I couldn't stop daydreaming of a 45-mile stretch of calm water that flows through Utah's Labyrinth Canyon. I'd been reading Alan Kesselheim's book *Let Them Paddle*,

about canoeing with his children, and the fact that he'd taken an eight-month-old on a month-long expedition down the Yellowstone River made my idea seem tame. For additional inspiration, I reread a few chapters from Mardy Murie's classic memoir *Two in the Far North*, in which she takes her six-month-old on a four-month Arctic river trip in the 1920s, long before GoreTex and disposable diapers. Clearly, I rationalized, humans have been taking babies down rivers for millennia.

Despite those two books, there's relatively little information about how to pull off a multi-day river trip with a little one. Apart from a few tips I gleaned from Murie and Kesselheim, we were mostly winging it. As I made lists and packed meals and stuffed clothes into drybags, I was slightly terrified that the minute we were stuck in the bottom of a canyon with a wailing baby, we'd regret leaving the house.

There were indeed a few times when we were stuck in the bottom of a canyon with a wailing baby. But I never once regretted it. Here's how we pulled it off.

## **Buy a Good PFD**

One of the smartest things I did when pregnant was to use my baby shower to convince friends and family to buy me fancy outdoor baby gear, including this bomber [PFD from Level Six](#). This one is comfortable, doesn't ride up, and will fit for several years. I also made my daughter wear it around the house for a couple weeks so that she was used to it before we got on the water.

## Choose Your Destination and Boat Wisely



First, your destination: You want water with easy rapids (Class I) or none at all, in an environment where you're already comfortable with backcountry travel. Then, choose your craft. [Kayaks](#) are not practical with a baby. Rafts can haul lots of gear and people but are slow, heavy, and often have standing water on the floor, which means no dry place for an infant to hang out other than in your arms. Canoes, on the other hand, are practically made for babies. The gunwales are the perfect height for a standing baby to hold onto, the hull stays mostly dry and offers a solid surface for playing or napping on, and they're easy enough for one person to paddle if the other needs to hold or feed the kiddo.

## Learn to Paddle A Canoe

Any sport that requires two people to operate a single machine—like tandem bicycling or canoeing—is a fight waiting to happen if you don't know what you're doing. Before you push off with a baby on board, get on a local lake or

river and practice paddling with your partner. Master [the J-stroke, reverse stroke, and pry and draw](#), or consider taking an introductory course from an organization like the [American Canoe Association](#). Once you get into the backcountry, there will be plenty of things to stress over; your J-stroke doesn't have to be one of them.

## Give Yourself Extra Time

We spent five days covering just 45 miles (it's a two- or three-night trip for adults). That allowed for a layover day if the weather turned and gave us shorter days on the water, spread out over more time. It was tempting to try to do the trip in as few nights as possible to simplify the logistics, but I'm glad we didn't. It took a few days to get into the groove of loading the boat each morning, paddling all day with the baby, and setting up camp in the evening, and we wouldn't have wanted to be getting off the river just as we were hitting our stride.

## Pack a Day Bag

When you push off from shore, most of your gear will be hard to access, crammed into drybags and tied to the boat. Make sure you have the essentials in one easy-to-access spot. For us, this meant a 30-liter SealLine Baja drybag that I stashed under my seat, packed with a warm hat and jacket, sunscreen, snacks, diapers, wipes, and a blanket.

## Ditch the Cotton Onesies

Sometimes when I dress my infant in her synthetic Patagonia base layers I feel ultra snooty, even though I got them used from the company's [Worn Wear](#) site. On this trip, though, they proved ten thousand times better than cotton onesies: breathable but warm, quick drying, and so durable that Josephine wore them every day on sand and mud and abrasive rocks with no discernible effect.

## Take a Rescue Beacon

[Emergency beacons](#)—like a [SPOT Satellite Messenger](#) or [Garmin InReach](#)—let you to call for help from remote areas with no cell coverage. They're also not cheap. The Garmin costs \$400, and the SPOT is \$150 plus an annual or monthly subscriptions. But if I was ever in a sticky backcountry situation with an infant, I'd kick myself if I hadn't invested in technology to activate a rescue with the push of a button.

## Bring an Old Sleeping Pad or Car Seat

I had no faith whatsoever that Jo would nap in the canoe; she's a fussy sleeper who struggles to drift off. But something about the quiet and the rocking motion lulled her right to sleep. I laid her on an old half-inflated Thermarest in the bow, draped a lightweight blanket over the gunwales for sun protection, and paddled in total bliss while she dozed.

For younger babies, we heard of parents who brought a car seat, put an umbrella over it, and let the baby snooze or hang out there while the parents paddled. If you go this route, make sure *not* to strap your child into the car seat. That way, if you accidentally flip the boat, your baby isn't buckled to a heavy object that will sink.

## Rock the Boat

The best advice we got was to bring a plastic bucket and fill it with rocks every morning. Apparently every baby on earth gets a kick out of throwing stones into the water from a canoe, keeping them distracted so you can paddle. On shore, too, they made the best play things. I brought a couple toys just in case, but Jo was way more interested in the local geology.

Without hesitation, I can say that our springtime journey through Labyrinth Canyon was the best river trip of my life. Not because of the water or the scenery, which were both plenty nice, but because I got to watch Jo discover

the joy of traveling by canoe, tossing rocks overboard and watching the world go by.

# Sensory Rich Water Play

**Plan a stress-free first wild water day with your baby using these simple tips for packing, play, and safety. Keep it sweet, safe and full of summer joy.**

The summer time brings lots of fun opportunities to get outdoors with your little one. One of the best places to head to is your local beach or lake, but as a new parent it can be overwhelming! Follow these easy tips and advice to make sure you are prepared and ready for anything your baby's first beach day could throw at you. Also, download our free packing list to make sure you never miss an item when preparing for your first (or next) wild water day!

## 1. Timing Is Everything

Plan your visit around your baby's natural rhythm. Early morning or late afternoon are usually the best times to hit the beach with an infant. You'll avoid the harshest sun (noon to 4:00), the biggest crowds and the highest temperatures, plus your baby may be more rested and relaxed.

## 2. Shade Is Non-Negotiable



Babies under 6 months shouldn't be directly exposed to the sun, and even older babies need sun protection. Bring a pop-up tent, umbrella or a beach canopy for safe, cool shade. Look for options with built-in UV protection and good airflow.

**Tip:** It's also important to make sure your baby is shielded from the sun on all sides, not just from above, as the sand reflects UV rays.

### 3. Dress for Success

Lightweight, breathable clothing that covers your baby's skin is key. A wide-brimmed hat and baby sunglasses with an adjustable strap are helpful for extra protection. If your baby is over 6 months, apply baby-safe mineral sunscreen to exposed skin about 30 minutes before sun exposure.

**Tip:** If you know your toddler is going in the water, dress them in brightly coloured swimsuits so it's easier to spot them. Keep in mind that blue and green colours tend to look invisible in the water. This is also a great safety tip to practice in a pool!

### 4. Pack Smart, Pack Light

When you're heading to the beach with a baby, it's tempting to bring everything, but a streamlined bag makes for a smoother day. Focus on the must-haves: diapers and wipes, a sun hat, baby-safe sunscreen (for 6 months and up), a change of clothes, a lightweight blanket/towels, a couple of simple toys and plenty of snacks or bottles. A small cooler for drinks and a wet/dry bag for sandy clothes can also come in handy. Keeping it simple means you'll spend less time digging through bags and more time enjoying the moment. Check out our free downloadable packing list so you'll never forget a thing!

## 5. Keep Sand Out of Everything

Sand is fun, until it gets in eyes, mouths, diapers and snacks. Bring a large towel or mat for a sand-free space. Baby powder is a surprisingly great trick for getting sticky sand off little hands and feet.

## 6. Water Play: Know the Limits

Babies can enjoy gentle water play near the shore, but always keep a firm grip and stay close. A small inflatable pool or even a shallow bucket of ocean water under the shade can let your baby splash safely without strong waves or crowded water.

**Tip:** It's recommended to wait until your child is at least 6 months old before letting them into salt water.

## 7. Don't Expect a Full-Day Adventure

Keep expectations low for your first trip. An hour or two may be just enough for your baby to take it all in without getting overstimulated or overtired. Short and sweet is better than sunburned and cranky.

## 8. Capture the Moment

Your baby's first wild water day is a special milestone. Snap a few candid photos, but remember to put the phone down and soak up the moment too. These memories will stay with you far longer than the perfect Instagram shot.

## Keep It Simple, Keep It Safe, Keep It Sweet

With a little prep and realistic expectations, your baby's first waterplay day can be full of simple joys, soft sand, salty air, and the wonder in your baby's eyes as they explore something brand new. So grab your day bag, take a deep breath and enjoy the adventure. You've got this!

# Fun On The Shoreline

This post is all about turning a visit to your local stream into a sensory experience for the kids. Creeks and streams are full of amazing opportunities for kids to get immersed (literally!) in nature. Playing in or near a stream is not only a learning experience about the natural world around them, but it's also a chance for kids to get wet, muddy and have a lot of fun! We've already covered all the amazing [benefits of letting your kids play in the creek](#). Today, we have Brooke Selb from [wreckingroutine.com](http://wreckingroutine.com) sharing the benefits of streamside sensory play and how her family enjoys their local creeks and streams.



## Trading the hikes for a stream

With two kids under the age of three, our days of hiking double-digit trails on a Saturday morning are no longer realistic. While our kids do pretty well on the trail, we are capping out around three miles. In fact, during our [spring break staycation](#), we hiked two miles in mildly windy weather and both kids cried the entire time! Not the relaxing hike we envisioned.

However, both my kids (Zoey and William) absolutely adore sensory bins of any kind (think rice, beans, dried pasta, and shaving cream). They also love being outdoors (just like their mom and dad). So, we combined those two things into something fun and took the arduous hikes out of our routine.



## Streamside sensory play

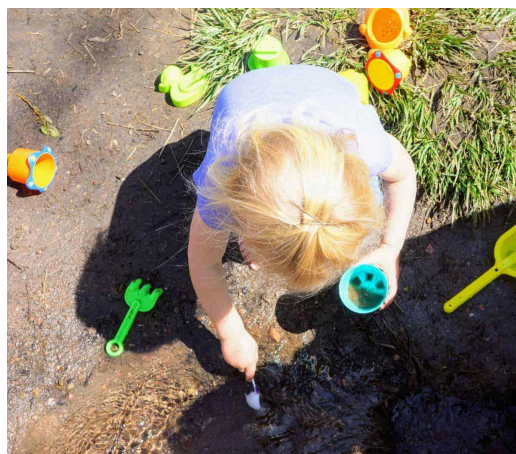
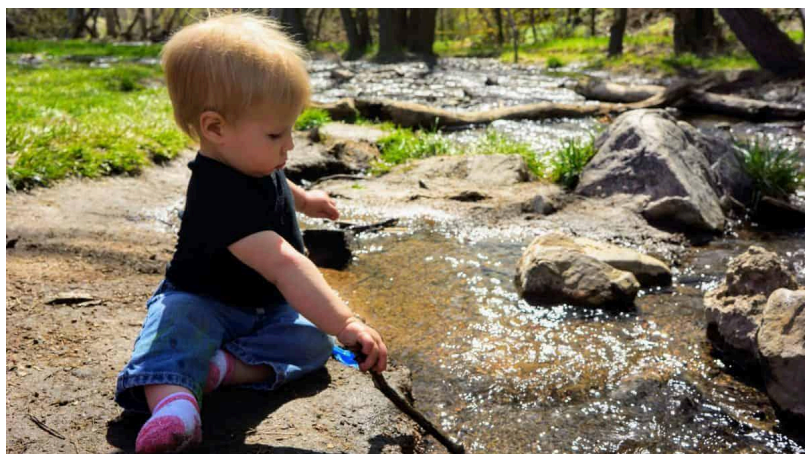
Streamside sensory play is the perfect activity to get us all outdoors. We get to discover more about our surroundings, learn about local nature, and get messy. When I first realized how much Zoey loved this type of play, we ended up venturing out to our nearby streams [at least once a week](#). Now that the weather is warming up, we are back to it! Our girl could not be happier to share her love of outdoors and water with her younger brother.



## How to choose a good spot

I have found a few spots near our house in Colorado that are perfect for streamside sensory play. Some things that I look for in a good location are:

- A flat and level area next to the stream. This prevents the kids from having to reach down into the water from slanted ground, which can lead to falls. We also look for flat areas so we can put out a blanket for William to sit on or as a place to rest and have a snack.
- Location with a variety of textures. We like areas where the kids can get wet and muddy, with rocks or trees nearby. Gathering rocks and sticks to use in the water is all part of the fun!
- Slow running water. I like the water to have a little movement. Not only does it help keep the bugs away, but it ensures that the water is not stagnant or smelly. Although, do not choose a spot with too much movement because when the toys inevitably slip out of wet hands, you want to be able to snag them before they get downstream too quickly.
- Shallow water. The kids love getting in the water as much as possible, so shallow water helps me ensure they're safe.



## How to play streamside

This is the best part...there are no rules! Just let them at it! Zoey is good at digging, scooping, and dumping. There is no end to what you can do waterside: putting pebbles in buckets, making mud pies, building sand castles, splashing in

the water with her animal figurines, chasing/catching minnows, and changing colors of dry rocks once they get wet.

Getting wet is a must in the hot months and playing in a stream is a great way to cool off and immerse yourself in nature. Playing in the stream allows all your senses to be stimulated. From the smell of the surrounding woods, to the cool touch of the water and the sound of the babbling stream. I let Zoey take off her shoes and socks and squish her toes around in the mud. She giggles the whole time!



## What to bring to the stream

Another good thing about playing in the stream is that you don't need any fancy gear or equipment. Mainly, all you need is your imagination and a sense of adventure! However, there are a few things I'd recommend you bring along for your streamside outing:

- **A change of clothes.** The most fun part of streamside sensory play is that the kids can get as wet, muddy, and generally messy as they want. While I try to time trips to the stream with bath night, a change of clothes will at least get you home with dry, happy children.
- **A hat.** While some of the streams might be shady, often times the best spots for sensory play are in the open. Protect those little heads from that bright sun with a hat and/or sunscreen.

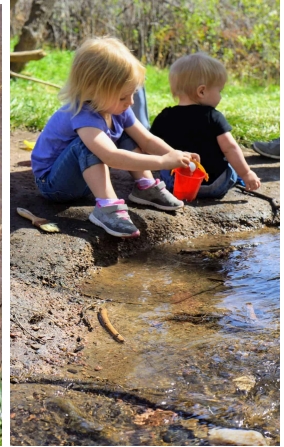
- **A sand toy set.** Buckets, shovels, rakes, spoons, cups, toothbrushes all make excellent streamside toys. Essentially, anything that allows them to dig in the mud and scoop water. I've even brought a paintbrush along to make mud pictures on the concrete or rocky areas.



- **Animal figurines.** We bought a cheap pack of little farm animals from the dollar store and Zoey adores playing with them in the stream. She builds muddy hole homes for them, dips them in the water to clean them, and hides them in the grass or under little rocks. They certainly add an extra element of fun.
- **A towel.** Be prepared for muddy feet and wet hands! It is also nice to be able to dry off hands before the all-important snack break.
- **Blocks**—Blocks can go anywhere and babies love to have something familiar to play with when playing in a new environment.



- **Snacks.** This should be a given because if we are being real, we never leave the house for any activity without a [cache of snacks](#). There's something about fresh air seems to make the kids extra hungry.



## Let them play

The essential part of streamside sensory play is to really let the kids discover with all of their senses (except maybe taste, because...mud). They will get wet, muddy, and just overall dirty. Let them do it! They're making memories! I promise they will talk about that time they were allowed to get as muddy as they wanted for years to come.

## Being Fascinated with Fun at the Lake or Pond

My kids are fascinated with nature because I am fascinated with nature. Even things that may seem mundane to me at this point in my life will probably be new and exciting for kids. That is why I practice child-focused exploration and make sure to get excited about whatever they want to explore and discover. When I get really into the activity, it acts as the match to spark curiosity and adventure in my kids. So, get pumped! Yes, even if you don't feel it. If you want your kids to have this connection to nature you must demonstrate it yourself.

That being said, I need to give parents a tip. Playing in the lake, kids will get wet and [most likely dirty](#). Be prepared with towels and either wear [waterproof clothes](#) or bring a change. [Water shoes](#) are also recommended if you don't know the lake. [Our Favorite Water Friendly Baby Carriers](#) can be used in and out of water.



## Taking Baby to the Lake Tips

There are few things better than going to the lake on a nice sunny day. In most cases, you don't have to deal with the traffic at the beach and there's usually a lot more shade provided by trees planted in the grass. The lake is a great place to make memories that will last a lifetime and you don't have to wait until your baby is older. As long as you take the necessary precautions, taking baby to the lake is something you can do throughout the year. However, depending on where you live in the world, you'll probably want to wait until the summer months. The lake is a lot more enjoyable when the sun is shining.

Whether you have found a lake while on vacation or there's one in your city, you might as well take time to enjoy the beauty of nature. Below are tips for taking baby to the lake that will make the experience fun and safe.

### 1. Avoid Peak Sun Exposure

Going to the lake is obviously something that you'll want to do during daylight hours. As with many other outdoor activities, it's best to engage in them when the sun is shining and the birds are singing. When taking your baby to the lake, **you'll want to avoid peak sun exposure, which is during the timeframe**

**of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** This is when the UV rays of the sun is at it's peak. If you don't want to go before 10 a.m., you can certainly have a great time after 4 p.m., especially during daylight savings time when the sun sets later in the day. It also happens to be a great time of day to take family pictures.

## **2. Find a Location with Shade**

When taking baby to the lake, one of the first things you'll want to do when you arrive is to find a location where there is plenty of shade. Since it's a lake, there are likely to be a number of trees in the area. The shade of a tree is a great way to combat exposure to UV rays. While you can certainly take other precautions, this is an added bonus. Shade can also keep everyone a lot cooler. There's no doubt about the fact that sometimes it's just too hot outside to feel comfortable. When you find shade, your outdoor experience will be a lot more enjoyable.

## **3. Be Sure to Cover Up**

A priority when taking baby to the lake is being sure to cover up. A baby's skin must be protected from the sun and one of the best ways to do this is by choosing articles of clothing that are lightweight, yet still protect the skin. While there are some days when it's too hot to wear a lot of clothing, it's still a good idea to wear lightweight clothes for sun protection. The good news is that there are a lot of fashion choices for babies that can help with covering up. In addition to lightweight clothes, you can use little bonnets and hats to protect your babies face. You'll be able to take adorable pictures because babies look so cute in hats.

## **4. Bring Baby Sunglasses**

Studies have shown that a baby's eyes do not have the ability to block UV rays to the degree that adult eyes can. Fortunately, there are baby sunglasses on the market that you can buy for your trip to the lake. Most people use baby sunglasses because they look so cute. While they are likely to be a topic of conversation, baby sunglasses are also functional and a great form of protection when taking baby to the lake.

## **5. Provide Plenty of Water**

If you're like most people, you probably drink plenty of water throughout the day. If so, it's not just a habit, it's a necessity. The same applies when taking baby to the lake. Just like you need to drink water to ensure you're hydrated, your baby needs water too. When you're at the lake, it's a good idea to ensure everyone there drinks water to stay hydrated. If you're still breastfeeding, that can help to keep your baby hydrated, but that doesn't mean there isn't still a need for water. To make it easy to stay hydrated, try drinking water every hour. In addition to preventing dehydration, you'll feel better, especially if you bring cold water and keep it in the cooler during your trip to the lake.

## **6. Choose a Lightweight Baby Carrier**



There are all kinds of baby carriers on the market. Some are bulky and sturdy, while others are more lightweight, but still effective. When taking baby to the lake, you'll need a lightweight carrier that's breathable and circulates air effectively. This is for the comfort of you and the baby, especially during the summer months. If you decide to take your baby to the lake during the spring or when it's not as hot outdoors, you can use a standard carrier. Don't forget to choose one that's also ergonomic.

## **7. Don't Forget the Sunscreen**

Without a doubt, one of the most important things you'll need to remember when taking baby to the lake is the sunscreen. Sometimes it's easy to think that only adults need sunscreen, but that is definitely not the case. It's generally recommended that you choose an SPF that's a minimum of 30 to protect your baby's skin. Adults often spend time in the sun because they want to get a good suntan. Your baby obviously doesn't need a suntan, so you'll want to take every precaution to keep your baby's skin protected.

## **8. Be Flexible**

When planning time for taking baby to the lake, you'll want to schedule the trip, but maintain flexibility. This is because anything can happen with the weather, even during warm months. While it might seem like a good day, bad weather can make a trip to the lake a disaster. You might as well avoid as many difficulties as possible by monitoring the weather to ensure it's the best time to go. If there's a chance of rain, you should plan your trip for another day. You'll also need to be flexible about the activities at the lake because you don't want to do anything that could put your baby in harm's way. Time at the lake should be an enjoyable and relaxing experience with your baby and other family members.

## **9. Pack a Blanket**

While taking baby to the lake can be a lot of fun, you have to be prepared to make your time there comfortable. By packing a blanket, you can create a comfortable space where you can lay your baby down for a few minutes or let your baby crawl around without getting on the grass. While there's nothing wrong with your baby spending time on the grass, the blanket is better because you won't have to worry about as many pests, like ants. A blanket is also great because you can have a picnic on it. Just don't forget to fill the picnic basket with all of your favorite summer fruit.

## **10. Prepare For An Emergency**

An emergency can occur when taking baby to the lake, so make sure you're prepared. Just like anywhere else you decide to go, it's a good idea to pack supplies for emergencies. This might include ice, bandages, disinfectant wipes, and anything else that you would typically find in a first aid kit for children. You might also want to include medication if you plan to be away for a long period of time. It's possible to spend hours at the lake if you take plenty of food with you.

## **11. Bring a Few Toys**

Since your time at the lake is probably for the purpose of having a good time, one thing you'll want to bring is a few toys. Most babies will enjoy playing with a toy regardless of the location. You can choose to bring the toys that you know your baby will enjoy. In fact, you can also bring books so that you can spend time reading to your baby at the lake.

## **12. Choose Swim Diapers**

Although taking baby to the lake might not involve going into the water, there's a chance that you might decide to do so. If that happens, you should make sure your baby is wearing swim diapers. The last thing you'll want to do is use regular diapers because your baby can end up being uncomfortable. If you know for sure that you can't go into the lake water due to issues with possible contamination, there's another option. You can bring a baby pool instead. A baby pool can be great because it doesn't require a lot of water and your baby can enjoy time outdoors in water on a beautiful day. You can fill up the pool at the lake or bring water since a true baby pool is very small.

**These are all ways that you can maximize the enjoyment of your time at the lake with your baby.**



Lakes are a fascinating place, an ecosystem in their own right. They sustain entire life cycles of plants and animals in their own space. In the summer they hum with life, providing a vibrant atmosphere to explore. From the birds and insects filling the air with song to the fish flashing by in the water and the bullfrogs calling just out of reach, they are a child's paradise of discoveries.



Exploring lakes with kids is also timelessly interesting, entertaining, and relaxing. Most children can find an endless number of interesting occupations at a lake. I can never believe how long my kids will spend just tossing rocks or sticks into the water. And I'm amazed at how beneficial that simple activity is: building strength and developing motor skills, making them aware of cause and effect, and introducing them to basic physics (gravity and displacement, for instance). Today, we will look at just a few ways you can experience a lake with your children, weaving education and development together with delightful play.



### A note on lake safety

Before we get started, I'd like to mention some safety guidelines. Any time water is involved, we have to be extra conscious of our children's safety. Water is such a fun thing that few children understand its danger. And unlike swimming beaches, lakes often have slippery mud or grassy banks that can drop abruptly into deep water. Teaching children to swim is the number-one prevention to drowning accidents, but even that isn't a guarantee of safety.

**Never leave children unattended near any water, especially a deep body of water like a lake.**



Be safe together!

If you are comfortable allowing your children to wade in the water, make sure you have carefully checked out the wading area yourself for dangers like slippery mud and sharp drop-offs. And even if you have instructed your children to stay out of the lake, we should be aware that accidents happen and a child can slip and fall into the water in an instant. Stay close and focused on your children, adventuring and playing together. Exploring lakes with kids should be fun and safe.



### Teaching nature skills

To start off exploring a lake with kids, simply walk around the lake or the area that you will be in. Talk before you start about how everyone needs to use their “nature skills” to explore the lake area. These skills include walking quietly, speaking quietly, and trying not to disturb the wildlife around you. We always have to work on sharing our discoveries quietly—the first child to yell they saw a goose will probably scare off the whole flock! This is also a good time to teach children how to study nature without disturbing it, to observe but not take, and to show respect for the natural environment surrounding them by being careful where they step and what they touch.



### Sensory exploration

Exploring a lake with kids provides a great sensory experience. It's easy to get started by asking questions involving the senses. *What do you see?* It's like an amazing game of "I Spy." *Do you see those wildflowers on the far bank? Can you spot that turtle out sunning on a log? How many frogs can you count? Oh, no, one just ducked underwater!*



### Hearing and Smelling

Observing the natural atmosphere of the lake moves quickly to hearing. *Do you hear the birds singing? The bullfrogs calling? The wind whispering through the tall grass? The buzzing of the insects?* And then there is always

smelling—and if the lake you are visiting has the smell of stagnant water, your children are sure to notice it! But you can also smell wildflowers and a fresh breeze. Honeysuckle and freshly cut grass. I love how much my children will get into talking about all the details they notice.



### Unforgettable sensory experiences

When exploring lakes with kids, there are countless ways to experience the natural world. How many things can you find to touch? From the smooth leaves and raspy blossom of the cattails, to the silky water and slippery plants in the lake, to the slimy skin of a frog and the soft whisper of a dropped bird feather, there are a multitude of things to feel around a lake. (Of course, unless you have the owner's permission to pick things, make sure you give careful instruction about not picking any plants or disturbing the environment. Leave it unspoiled for everyone to enjoy!) Touching lake creatures might stretch the sensory comfort zones of some kids, but if you have the opportunity to let your children touch a frog or a fish, it will be a sensory experience they won't forget!

### Resources

We have found that nature guides and handbooks are valuable resources for learning about aqua life. Teaching older kids to look up different plants and wildlife that they see helps them learn on a deeper level. Once they have looked up a bird or a flower in their guide book, they are much less likely to forget its name or characteristics! Plus, we can learn together all the things I

don't know (which are many!). We use some of the classic field guides, like [Kauffman Field Guide to Birds of North America](#).

There are also some great resources available for less than \$10, like these illustrated nature guides. The entire Take-Along Guides series is geared toward helping children learn about nature in an easy-to-find, graspable format. I can't recommend them enough if you are serious about helping your children learn about wildlife and plants for themselves.



### Hands-on Adventures for Exploration

Getting wet and dirty is part of learning about the lake environment, too. If my children are within reaching-distance of water—any water—they are sure to get wet! It doesn't matter the temperature or what they're wearing. If we are going near water, I just plan on them getting soaked.

## Let Your Baby Explore!!!

When you take baby to the lake or a river, you have to let them explore everything in nature. While the water should be the central focal point and goal of the adventure, there are many opportunities to familiarize your baby with nature before you get there.

Letting baby feel pinecones, acorns, tree bark, leaves, and smooth river rocks are all part of the experience. Since babies are not cognizant about what they are feeling and unable to articulate it into words or ideas, they function at a more sensory level.

The fragrant smell of cedar firewood, the hickory of a barbeque, and the fragrance of flowers can all be a treat to your baby's senses. And they will also enjoy the sounds of the rushing waters, the birds chirping, and other critters.

So, if the lake you are visiting is wading accessible, wear some water-appropriate clothes and footwear. Bring some buckets, a net, a magnifying glass, and explore a lake with kids up close if they have older babies!

### What do you need to pack for a successful family day trip to the lake?

Here are the essentials, with a few tips for where to buy them (or download the printable below).



1. Swimsuits & rash guards
2. Dry change of clothes
3. Towels
4. Sunscreen
5. Sunglasses
6. Hats
7. Coast-guard certified life jackets (we like the [Puddle Jumper](#) for swimming but a [traditional toddler life jacket with a head up float feature](#) may be safer for boating)
8. Swim goggles or masks
9. Floats, inner tubes, & noodles
10. Sand toys
11. Snacks & food
12. Camera
13. Swim diapers (for babies & toddlers)
14. Bug spray
15. Drinks (especially bottled water)
16. Cooler & ice
17. Paper towels
18. Wipes
19. Trash bags
20. First aid kit
21. Ziploc bags (put dry items in them to protect against splashes!)
22. Swiss army knife
23. Flip flops and/or water shoes

24. Flashlight & batteries (this [floating waterproof flashlight](#) is an inexpensive choice)
25. Fishing supplies & license
26. Cell phone waterproof sleeve (we swear by [this one for our iPhones](#), even while taking photos underwater!)
27. Cooking utensils or supplies if needed (plates, serving spoons, knife, cutting board, grill and related supplies like matches, charcoal/propane, tongs, aluminum foil)

# Breezy Baby Beach Ideas You'll Love!



Cover image credit: NadyaEugene/Shutterstock.com

An adventure with a baby can involve a lot of planning, but the effort can be well worth the pleasure of a new experience. Think of it this way — once you get to the seashore, you'll be able to relax (which parents of babies rarely get to do), introduce your baby to new things, and have some fun together as well.

## Our Overview of Successful Visit to the Beach

For a visit to the beach with a baby, plan on setting up a shaded, sand-free play area with a baby pool or beach tent, then provide simple beach toys like buckets and shovels for tactile exploration. Pack essentials like a sun hat, sunglasses, swim diapers, baby-friendly sunscreen (for babies over 6 months), and plenty of snacks.



## Create a Safe & Comfortable Play Zone

### **Shade:**

A baby beach tent, sun umbrella, or canopy is crucial to protect a baby's sensitive skin from the sun.

### **Play Area:**

For babies who are crawling or putting things in their mouths, set up a small inflatable baby pool and fill it with a small amount of water. This creates a cool, contained play space.

### **Sand-Free Zone:**

Play in a baby pool to enjoy water without the waves

Use a large beach blanket and weight down edges

Be cognizant of hot sand

[This video](#) demonstrates how to set up a sand-free play area for a baby using a fitted sheet:



YouTube · Jun 3, 2023

## Toys & Sensory Play

- **Simple is Best:** Babies will love exploring sand, shells, and seaweed, but a bucket and shovel are simple, effective beach toys.
- **Waterproof Toys:** Bath toys, watering cans, and other small cars and trucks are great options for babies at the beach.
- **Mesh Bag for Toys:** Use a mesh bag to carry beach toys; the sand will fall out as you walk.

## Essentials to Pack

- **Sun Protection:** Babies under six months should be kept out of the sun; for babies over six months, use baby-friendly sunscreen.
- **Baby Beach Tent or Umbrella:** A must-have for creating shade.
- **Baby Pool:** An inflatable pool for a contained play space.
- **Swim Diapers:** Essential for keeping the water clean.
- **Beach Blanket or Towels:** For drying off and sitting on.
- **Snacks & Water:** Keep your baby hydrated and fed.
- **Sun Hat & Sunglasses:** To protect their eyes and head.
- **Baby Carrier:** Handy for carrying a fussy baby or creating a soothing nap space.

## Safety Tips

- **Supervise:** Always supervise your baby closely, especially when they are near the water, no matter how shallow it is.

- **Baby-Friendly Beach:** Choose a beach with calm, clean water close by.



Image credit: phBodrova/Shutterstock.com

Whether you plan to travel to an exotic beach overseas or go to a local beach, here are some of the things you need to be prepared for ahead of a beach vacation with your baby and tips on what to pack too!

*Expert tip: Looking for [fun vacation ideas for families with a baby](#)? You're in just the right place! We've got some cool [vacation ideas for families with kids](#) too.*

## Things to bring with you:

### 1. Baby sunscreen

Sunscreen is a must when heading to the beach with children as this can help prevent sunburn and sun damage. This is even more necessary with babies because their skin is extra sensitive and needs to be protected.

You'll have plenty of options to choose from where SPF is concerned, including brands that offer sunscreen just for babies.



Image credit: Antonio Gravante/Shutterstock.com

## 2. Swim diapers

Swim diapers are highly recommended for the beach when spending the day there with your baby. Ahead of your beach day, you'll have the options of disposable swim diapers or reusable ones, and at the end of the day, that decision is entirely up to you. Regardless of which option you go with, pack a few more than you think you're going to need, you just might be glad you did later.

*Good to know: It is generally recommended that parents wait until their baby is at least 2 months old before taking them swimming in the ocean, a lake, or pool.*

## 3. Diaper bags

Diaper bags are one of those things parents can't do without when going out with a baby. As diaper changes will absolutely be necessary, these will come in handy during a beach day. Diaper bags can even be useful for storing small items, wet swimsuits, or things you need to throw away as you make your way from the beach to home or back to your resort.



Image credit: haveseen/Shutterstock.com

#### **4. Baby sun hat**

There are many adorable options of baby sun hats that you can choose from for your baby's day at the beach. The purpose of a sun hat will be to protect your baby's skin from the sun, especially sensitive areas like their nose and cheeks. When selecting baby sun hats, generally, the wider the better as the best options not only protect a baby's face but their ears and neck as well.

#### **5. Cover-up / rashguard**

Cover-ups and rash guards come in handy on the beach to protect your baby's skin from the sun. This can serve as added protection to sunscreen

since, even when it's carefully applied, some spots can be missed. In addition to keeping your baby's skin safe, cover-ups and rash guards can help keep sand off your baby's skin as well.



Image credit: riekephotos/Shutterstock.com

## **6. Water/baby milk or formula**

Water, baby milk, or formula are some of the things you won't want to leave behind on a beach day with your baby. You'll need to ensure you have a well-thought-out supply to keep your baby adequately fed and hydrated as you and your family enjoy a day on the beach together. Bring plenty of water as being on the beach can build up a thirst. Water can come in handy if you run out of milk for your baby, and for other members of the family as well.

## **7. Cooler bag**

A cooler bag is a beach vacation must, and parents will know this all too well. If you'll be going to the beach with a baby, you can use your beach

cooler bag to store essentials like baby milk and water, both of which will need to be kept cool. The cooler bag will help you store these items and keep them at the right temperature until you need to use them.



Image credit: Max Davidich/Shutterstock.com

## **8. Baby shade tent**

A baby shade tent will come in handy on beaches where there isn't much shade. These can also be useful when you need to do diaper changes, or even lay your baby down for a nap. Most parents find this item to be beneficial and generally easy to set up, particularly with a pop-up-style tent. Most baby beach tents have UV protection built in, but this is something you'll want to double-check before making a purchase.

## **9. Baby beach toys**

Bringing baby beach toys to the beach is a great idea to keep your baby entertained. From beach buckets that you can fill with a small amount of water for splashing to sand molds and animal toys, your baby will be kept

well occupied as they get used to the beach environment. For babies, waterproof bath toys can also be a great option as these can easily be washed off afterward. Take a look at our top picks of toddler toys for a beach vacation, some of which babies will love as well.



Image credit: LeManna/Shutterstock.com

## **10. Portable bassinet or wagon**

A portable baby bassinet will be one of those things you'll be supremely happy you brought along, especially if you'll be going to the beach with your baby for the first time. This item comes in handy if you want to lay baby down in the shade for a bit, and also for nap time. Your baby will be safe and sound in their portable bassinet, and you'll be able to place it easily into a beach tent or under an umbrella where you can keep a close eye on your precious little one.



## **11. Spray bottle**

A spray bottle is a simple item you can bring along to the beach to help cool your baby down as you spend some time outdoors. All you'll need to do is fill your spray bottle with cool water and spritz when necessary. You can use it for baby and for yourself as well, and you can even store it in your beach cooler, so the water stays chilled.

## **12. Baby beach chair**

Let your baby get in on the beachside relaxation with their own baby beach chair. This option is perfect for babies that are old enough to sit up, and it will be a great way to let your baby enjoy the beach views and atmosphere while keeping them from crawling away. An alternative to a baby beach chair can be a bath chair which can be easy to wash the sand from when it's time to go.



Image credit: Fatbear88/Shutterstock.com

### 13. Baby float

A baby float works great in calm, shallow waters under the supervision of parents or guardians on the beach. With your baby beach float, you can treat your baby to a new experience in the water as you paddle along, allowing them to be a bit more independent while still being close to you. There are lots of options for baby floats including some that come with a cover to protect the baby from the sun and from small splashes while they're in the ocean. This one is From [Amazon](#)



#### 14. Beach or sand shoes

The sand on the beach can be extra hot, and not great for sensitive baby feet. Sand can be scratchy as well if it gets between little toes. It is best to keep your baby's feet well protected. Beach or sand shoes can be a great option for this, even if your baby isn't a walker yet. These will help keep your baby's feet sand-free, especially if they want to crawl or sit in the sand.



Image credit: Nilanka Sampath/Shutterstock.com

## 15. Infant sunglasses

Your baby can rock some cool sunglasses on the beach that'll not only protect their eyes from strong sunlight but also allow them to make a fun fashion statement too. As it can be difficult to keep infant sunglasses in place, you can get options with a strap, so they don't fall off while your baby is moving around on the sand or splashing about near the water.

## 16. Beach blankets or towels

You definitely won't want to forget beach blankets or towels when heading to the beach with your kids, and definitely not if you're bringing along a baby. Blankets come in handy to lay out on the beach to keep your baby off the hot sand, and you'll need towels to dry off just in case you decide to go with the baby for a dip. You'll be able to use blankets or towels under tents or umbrellas at the beach as well, which can help keep your baby cool and as sand free as possible.



Image credit: NadyaEugene/Shutterstock.com

*Good to know: Waterproof beach blankets are a great option for the beach as these can easily be kept dry.*

## **17. Waterproof carrier or wrap**

A waterproof carrier wrap might just become your favorite baby beach item after a single use. This item is perfect for taking a baby for a quick dip in the ocean, or for a stroll along the seashore as they drift off to sleep. With a waterproof beach carrier, you'll be able to keep your precious baby close without having to lug along a baby carrier seat, or even a stroller.

[Our Favorite Water Friendly Baby Carriers](#) can be used in and out of water.

## **18. Beach-friendly stroller or wagon**

Sometimes strollers are necessary for the beach, but it is important to note that not all strollers are created equal. Ahead of a beach encounter, take some time to do some research and invest in a beach stroller that can help make it easier to navigate the sands with your little one. When looking for a beach stroller, you'll want to make sure it has sun protection, proper ventilation, and good maneuverability. You'll also want to be sure it is appropriate for your child's age.



Image credit: Viktor Birkus/Shutterstock.com

## 19. Baby beach bag

A baby beach bag is a must everywhere you go, but it'll be extra important to have a fully stocked one for a day out on the beach. It is even worth having a separate baby beach bag for the beach so you don't get your everyday diaper bag wet or sandy. Invest in a large baby beach bag (or a regular bag) with compartments or pockets as this will give you plenty of room for all the essentials, and even to store wet items.

*Expert tip: Thinking about traveling to the Caribbean with your family? [Ocho Rios, Jamaica's all-inclusive resorts](#) are great for families looking to enjoy amazing beach days, great service, and quality inclusions.*

## 20. Don't forget your own things

When heading out to the beach with your baby, your mind will likely be preoccupied with making sure you have everything your little one could possibly need. Don't forget to pack things for yourself as well, like sunscreen, sunglasses, a swimsuit, towels, lip balm, and whatever you'll

need to be comfortable out at the seashore.



Image credit: aprilante/Shutterstock.com

## Hacks and tips

### 21. Set a sunscreen timer

You might not even have considered this one, but it is worth having a timer to help you remember when it's time to reapply sunscreen. Your sunscreen bottle will tell you how often you'll need to reapply, and you can set the timer accordingly. A simple timer on a phone or watch will do, and it'll work wonders in helping keep you and your baby safe from the sun.

### 22. Keep your water spray bottle in the cooler too

A spray bottle with cool water is worth bringing along to the beach too. You can store this in a beach cooler amid your stash of milk and water and use it to help keep you and your baby cool.

*Expert tip: Considering heading on a family vacation to Jamaica? There are lots of [things to do in Jamaica with kids](#), including visiting the most popular [Negril resorts](#) some of which have their own waterparks.*

### **23. Pre-freeze snacks – or grab some popsicles**

Popsicles are always a hit on the beach as are snacks that are pre-frozen for babies. Ahead of your beach day, you can freeze some pouches of baby food so that by the time you get to the beach, your baby will have something cool and slushy to munch on. If you're staying at a resort and are not able to freeze baby food pouches and the like, consider getting some popsicles, which can be a great way to keep your baby hydrated.

### **24. Remove sand with baby powder or cornstarch**

Baby powder or cornstarch is useful for much more than you might think. Out on the beach, you might be able to use these to clean your baby's sandy feet and even your own, which can be a lot easier than using towels or making multiple trips back to the ocean with a bucket. These products soak up the water from the sand making it easy to brush the sand off, which you'll definitely appreciate during a family beach day.

### **25. Plan your timing around the temperature**

It is important to plan the timing of your beach day carefully when going with a baby. If you go too early in the afternoon, you might find yourself out on the beach at a time when the sun is at its hottest. **Earlier in the day or late afternoon can work best when going to the beach with your baby, as the sun tends to be a little milder then. Consider also planning your beach day around nap and feeding times, which can help make things run more smoothly overall.**

### **26. Pack ahead – you don't want to overload yourself**

If you're planning a beach day with family, don't wait until the last minute to pack. Doing so can lead to you scrambling around to find things on the day and even packing things you don't need. Get around this by preparing

a packing list in advance and using it to get things in order in the days leading up to your outing. A packing list can help ensure that you don't overpack as well.

## **27. Use the beach as a sensory play experience**

The beach is the perfect place for some sensory play if you'll be spending the day there with your baby. Things like the sand, shells, rocks, and all the other textures and colors that can be found on the beach will be a source of fascination for your baby. Be sure to pay careful attention to whatever your baby is playing with by making sure shells aren't too sharp and rocks aren't small enough to be a choking hazard.

*Expert tip: Place some sand in a bucket and let your baby feel the sand when it is wet versus when it is dry. This can be a great sensory experience.*

## **28. Choose a beach with shallow water**

Beach selection can help shape your day on the beach with your baby. While parents will need to supervise babies and kids at all times no matter which beach they choose, it makes sense to choose a family-friendly beach with calm, shallow water that can help parents feel more at ease. Beaches with shallow water will make it easy for you to take your baby for that first dip in the swallows, even if it's just their toes!

*Expert tip: Planning a beach vacation in Jamaica? Here are some of the [best beaches in Jamaica](#) that you can explore with your family.*

## **29. Relax! It'll keep your baby relaxed too**

The most important thing to remember when spending a beach day with your family is to relax. Everyone, baby included, is at the beach to have a good time, and that should be the ultimate focus. Plus, when you're calm and cool, chances are your little one will be too.

*Expert tip: Just about ready to head out on your vacation? Have a look at our [family vacation checklist](#) to be super sure you have all you need!*

## **The best baby beach ideas for an amazing beach day**

Now that you have the best tips on beach gear and other baby beach ideas, you're well set to hit the beach with your little one. Whether you decide to go to a local beach or travel to the Caribbean where you can experience [all-inclusive vacations](#) at family-friendly beach resorts, you'll definitely be headed into your beach experience with baby stress-free!

# **More Adventures With Babies**

## **[Tips for Boating With Babies + Baby Boating Accessories](#)**

### **[PRO TIP: Introducing your baby to SUP \(Stand-up Paddleboarding\)](#)**

### **[How I Got My Kids Out Flatwater Kayaking As Babies](#)**

**[Our Favorite Water Friendly Baby Carriers](#)** can be used in and out of water.



### **[Fishing with a Baby in Tow - FrostyFly](#)**

### **[Introducing Infant to Pool](#)**

**[Canoeing with Babies – The Basics](#)**

**[Sailing With Baby](#)**

**[Climbing \(and Bouldering\) with Babies and Toddlers](#)**

**[Hiking with a Baby – Baby Can Travel](#)**

**[Biking with Baby](#)**

**[Backpacking With Baby](#)**

**[Dealing With Diapers During an Adventure](#)**

**[Road Trips with Baby](#)**



**[Snowshoeing With Baby](#)**

**[Cross Country Skiing with Baby](#)**

**[How To Ski with Babies and Toddlers](#)**

**[Outdoor Nature Play with Baby -up to 2](#)**

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