



Travel Guide: Tips and Tricks!

It's taken you a few weeks to get your baby into a good schedule and sleeping well. Now that you've put in the time, effort, and energy to make this big change in your family's life, that trip you have planned for next month is starting to stress you out!

If you're like most parents, your biggest fear is that a trip is going to derail all the progress you and your baby have made and cause you to start this process all over again. Sometimes the mere thought of it frightens parents so much that they cancel all trips and just vow to stay home until the child leaves for college. That is how important your baby's new sleeping regime has become to everyone.

The **good news** is that you do not have to cancel all travel plans and confine yourself to the house for the rest of your child's life! It is possible to have children who travel really well, if you keep a few things in mind:

1. **The biggest mistake parents make is that they over-schedule themselves.** They try to pack in all the fun and adventure they might normally have had back in their "child-free" days, forgetting an important fact: They have a child now.
2. **An occasional car nap or slightly later bedtime probably isn't going to do too much harm,** but if your baby spends a couple of days taking car seat naps here and there and having late bedtimes, they may become so overtired that by the time bedtime rolls around on day two, they have a complete meltdown and seem to "forget" all the sleep skills and just cry the house down.
3. If that happens, you might start to get very nervous because
 - (a) your baby, who has been happily chatting to sleep for weeks, is now crying again.
 - (b) your mother-in-law is standing outside the door repeatedly asking you if you're sure the baby is okay. You may start to give into this pressure and bend your expectations for your baby's sleep. It's easy to see how you could revert back to your own familiar ways in no time if you gave into this pressure and fear.
4. **It's very normal for babies and toddlers to test the boundaries around sleep when they are somewhere new.** Just because the rule is the rule at home, that does not



necessarily mean the rule is the same at Grandma's house. This may mean that your baby cries for some time at bedtime or has a night waking or two. The best way to handle it is to not do too much different than you would if the regression happened at home. You can go in every five minutes or so to offer a bit of reassurance, but other than that, don't bend your rules. If you hang on tight to your consistency, within the first night or two, your child will be used to the new environment and will be sleeping well again.

5. **Make sure you bring your child's sleeping toy and/or blanket!**
6. Another big mistake parents make is to bed share with their baby or toddler while traveling. **Bed sharing is a big no-no!** Even if it's only for a few nights, if your baby decides this is the new preferred location, you could find yourself starting all over again when you get home. Most hotels have a crib you can use or rent, or take your pack and play along and use that as a crib.
7. **If your child is eight months or older**, my advice is to try to make some sort of a private space for your baby to sleep. This could be the bathroom (if it's big enough) or the closet. Anywhere that you can build some sort of a partition between you and your baby, so that if they have a wake up in the middle of the night they are not so excited to see their two favorite people that they end up wide awake thinking it's play time!

Of course, getting an extra bedroom for your child is great if that's an option for you.

Time changes and jet lag

When it comes to surviving the plane ride, the best piece of advice I ever got about traveling with kids is just to **ACCEPT** the fact that you're traveling with kids! So plan ahead and bring as many things that you can think of to keep your baby occupied and comfortable. If you have to resort to "old ways" to get your child to settle down, then do so. **Just know that as soon as you land, its back to the plan!**

Well-rested children handle jet lag much better than sleep-deprived adults. If your baby has had a great schedule leading up to the trip, they should slide into the new time zone without too much trouble. It is best to adjust to the new time zone as quickly as you can. If you really feel like your baby needs an extra nap to catch up a bit, try to limit it to 45 minutes.



Try not to let him or her nap too close to bedtime.

If it's a choice between a strangely timed dinnertime nap or an earlier bedtime, I suggest you go with the slightly earlier bedtime.

Sunlight is a useful tool in helping both you and your baby adjust to the new time zone, since light is the most powerful time cue our bodies have.

Try to plan meals and socializing around the new time zone as well, and get an hour or two of fresh air in the early afternoon.

Make sure you do just the opposite when evening rolls around. Use the blackout blinds, and keep light to a minimum a couple of hours before you want your baby to go to bed. This will help stimulate melatonin production, making him sleepier.

**In spite of their best efforts, many parents find themselves reverting back to old, familiar sleep props with their children when they travel. If you find that it's all fallen apart in just a week or two, the good news is that it's just as easy to get back on track within a week or two, too!

So as soon as you get home, start your plan over, **speeding it up by two nights at each step – and hold tight to the memory that **your child is capable of doing this!** They just need a push in the right direction from you!

For any other questions, visit our website www.TheSleepNest.com or call 800-431-2029.

Safe travels!

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