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TRENDING

Single Parents Need Vacations Too, and More Destinations Want Them to Visit

If you're a single parent looking for family vacation options that don't assume two adults, these cruises and travel agencies — among other destinations — are here to help.



Disney Cruise Line is one of a handful of cruise lines that offer specific programs that cater to single-parent families. Caitie McCabe

When Tanya McNally, a Tampa, Fl. resident who works in human resources, was planning a vacation a few years ago for herself and her two teenage sons, she had recently gotten divorced and felt anxious about the prospect of traveling with them alone.

“I was very aware that we would be going on a family trip in what was not a traditional family setup of two parents,” Ms. McNally said in a recent interview.

Amanda Norcross, the features editor of the online travel magazine [Family Vacation Critic](#), said that the travel industry is paying more attention to single parent family vacations because the number of solo parent households has increased. (According to [2016 statistics](#) from the United States Census Bureau, the percentage of children living in families with two parents decreased from 88 to 69 between 1960 and 2016.)

“The definition of what constitutes a family has changed over the years, and travel brands are seeing an opportunity to cater to this niche market,” Ms. Norcross said.

Here are some options for a single-parent-led family vacation.

Consider a cruise

Ms. McNally and her sons ending up taking a cruise to the Caribbean with [Disney Cruise Line](#) because she had heard that the line went out of its way to accommodate single parent families. For example, single-parent families can choose to dine with others like them and may also be paired for shore excursions, so children have a chance to make new friends, and parents have other adults to interact with. Additionally, all four of Disney's ships have planned activities for solo parents and every sailing offers kids and teen clubs with activities all day that are included in the cost of the cruise.

Ms. McNally and her sons had such a good time on that trip, roughly four years ago, that they've since been on nine more Disney cruises, including one last December to the Bahamas. "The setup on the boats made me and the boys completely relaxed," Ms. McNally said.

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Disney Cruise Line is among the several travel companies that increasingly cater to single parent families by grouping them with others who have a similar family setup and offering them price breaks. Some companies have even introduced specific single-parent itineraries.

The river cruise line [CroisiEurope](#), for example, normally charges single adult travelers a supplement fee that's 30 percent of the total cruise fare (a weeklong all-inclusive trip costs around \$2500). In July and August, however, this fee is waived for single parents on select European cruises when they're traveling with children who are 16 or younger; children on these itineraries also sail for free. In addition, the supplement is waived on the company's Christmas market cruises on the Danube and Rhine River.

Michael DaCosta, CroisiEurope's marketing manager, said that the company introduced these incentives a few years ago in an attempt to broaden its customer base.

“We were seeing a lot of older cruises, but we wanted to reach a wider demographic,” he said. So far, they’ve had success: Mr. DaCosta said that about 575 single parents, along with their children, cruised with the line this past summer.

Find a travel agency that caters to single-parent travel

Dyan McKie, a Melbourne, Australia resident and the brand manager for family adventures at [Intrepid Travel](#), said she and five-year-old her daughter, Beatrice feel out of place when they’re around two-couple families on their frequent travels together.

“Sometimes we want company for dinner or when we’re doing an activity, but I don’t want to force ourselves on anyone,” she said.

Motivated both by her own experiences and the increasing number of single parent families booking trips with her firm, Ms. McKie created [six new tours specifically for solo parent families](#) to Costa Rica, Thailand, Northern India, Egypt, Vietnam and Morocco.

The trips range in length from eight to 15 days, and have a starting price of between \$555 to \$3,185, airfare not included.

And Britain-based [Virgin Holidays](#) started a new single parent trip category last October that includes air-inclusive trips to 10 Caribbean resorts where parents don’t pay a single supplement and children get a discount. The tour operator initiated the change after numerous requests from customers, according to the company’s managing director, Joe Thompson. “Single parents were telling us that they needed affordable vacation options for their kids, and that’s what we’re trying to give them,” he said.

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