

On tour with 'Administer of Rum'

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Name the five largest
U.S. cities by population.
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Chicago Tribune TRAVEL



RJMIGUEL/DREAMSTIME

Trek through the desert in Morocco, where On the Go Tours offers a Kasbahs, Kids & Camels trip. The nine-day/eight-night package starts and ends in Marrakech.

Spring break for 1 and all

A bevy of trips for families, couples or anyone

BY PHIL MARTY
Chicago Tribune

Winter's not done for much of the U.S., but there's hope. And as winter begins to wind down, that means it's time to think about spring break.

For kids, it's a break from school, of course, but it's also a good time for anyone to plan a getaway. Here are some options for travel from now through March:

With kids

■ The kids (and parents) will get exposure to an exotic culture through the Kasbahs, Kids & Camels tour in Morocco from On the Go Tours. The nine-day/eight-night package starts and ends in Marrakech. Among the highlights is a camel trek in the Sahara Desert, with an overnight stay in a Berber camp. There's also a drive over the High Atlas mountains and visits to scenic gorges. Back in Marrakech, explore the famous Djemaa el Fna square, packed with snake charmers, music, entertainers and food. Adult pricing is \$1,469 per person, double occupancy, while kids under 16 are just \$899.

866-377-6147, tinyurl.com/jxc8vpo

■ Down Under Endeavours offers an eight-day package for families to explore New Zealand, starting at \$1,699 per person, double occupancy. Beginning in Auckland, the tour explores the west coast of the North Island before moving on to the South Island and the Southern Alps. Activities include zip-lining, hiking and jet boating, as well as learning about Maori culture. You'll also visit areas used as backgrounds for filming "Lord of the Rings" movie scenes. It's possible to customize the package to change the length, focus, types of activities or accommodations. 888-229-0082, tinyurl.com/hrz4k8p

■ Santa Fe, N.M., is known for its art galleries, restaurants and Native American ties, but for a second year the country's oldest state capital city is focusing on families, with Kids FreeFest! Spring Break 2017. Throughout March and mid-April, kids 12 and under can enjoy free lodging, meals and fun activities. At Ski Santa Fe, for instance, kids ski free on Wednesdays when skiing with two adults. And kids

7-12 can take free flamenco dance classes at Entreflamenco. At the Skateboard School, children get a private lesson with the purchase of a skateboard. Several hotels also have special free activities for kids, such as movie-and-pizza night. tinyurl.com/zgu8x69

No kids

■ Most trips to the Maldives, a tropical country south of India, concentrate on resorts dotting the sandy beaches of this string of atolls in the Indian Ocean. Explore, which specializes in small-group adventure travel, offers a variation on that with a seven-day cruise aboard a dhoni, a traditional sail-powered boat of the Maldives. There's plenty of opportunity to go swimming and snorkeling along the beaches and coral reefs, and you can sample local culture during stops at small fishing villages. Depending on dates, pricing is from \$1,600 per person, double occupancy, though sometimes there are specials. tinyurl.com/jd84hh9

■ For an adults-only party

atmosphere, CheapCaribbean.com offers four-day/three-night packages at Breathless Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa on Mexico's Riviera Maya. This all-inclusive resort has 526 suites with private terraces, nine restaurants and six bars. Free water activities include kayaking, snorkeling, sailing, paddle board classes and water aerobics. Pricing comes with airfare and varies by date, airline and departure city, but can be found for less than \$1,000 a person. You should look carefully at the air options, as cheaper flights may involve one or two stops or afternoon flights, which kills your first day in Cancun. 800-786-0435, tinyurl.com/h23qz4h

Anyone

■ Moab, Utah, right next to Arches National Park, shows up on many lists of locations brimming with outdoor activities, most of which can be enjoyed in early spring when temps are in the 50s and 60s. The Moab Adventure Center has multisport packages, some with lodging, that run from one to four days. You

also can build your own package, choosing from activities like river rafting, climbing and canyoneering, four-wheel-drive safaris, mountain biking and horseback riding. 866-904-1163, www.moabadventurecenter.com

■ Active folks have lots of choices with REI Adventures, the travel arm of the popular outdoor gear store. You can choose by month (we found 37 trips in March), then narrow things down by destination, types of activities, activity level and price. Among the March trips, for example, we found four journeys — all in the U.S. — with 11 departures, each costing less than \$1,000 per person, double occupancy. In the \$1,000 to \$3,000 range, there's hiking in Portugal or the Southwest U.S. and kayaking in Mexico's Baja California. Note that prices quoted are for REI members and nonmembers. A Grand Canyon hiking trip, for instance, is \$1,849 for members or \$2,024 for nonmembers. Given that an REI lifetime membership is only \$20, your decision is easy. 800-622-2236, tinyurl.com/hj7atod

■ Cruising is always an

easy, no-hassle getaway, and it's a good vacation option for families, couples or singles. The Online Vacation Center has deals on Eastern or Western Caribbean cruises aboard Royal Caribbean's Oasis, Allure and Harmony of the Seas, a new ship that's also the world's largest passenger vessel. The seven-night Western cruises cost as low as \$848 per person, double occupancy, for a balcony cabin. For the seven-night Eastern itineraries, balconies are as low as \$998. 800-760-5417, tinyurl.com/gpk95xc

■ Anyone looking for a physical challenge while visiting a bucket-list destination should check out G Adventures' budget-priced seven-day/six-night hike of Peru's Inca Trail, culminating in a visit to Machu Picchu. The trip includes three nights in hotels and three nights camping, and porters accompany trekkers to do the heavy lifting. Minimum age for the trek is 12. Cost is from \$1,249 per person, double occupancy. 888-800-4100, tinyurl.com/jrah5jm

Phil Marty is a freelance writer.



Explore the Maldives, in the Indian Ocean, by cruising on a dhoni, a traditional sail-powered boat, in a seven-day voyage offered by Explore.

EXPLORE

Kids can have a blast at Kennedy space camp

BY LORI RACKL
Chicago Tribune

Looking for a kids camp that's out of this world?

Check out Camp Kennedy Space Center (KSC) near Cape Canaveral, Fla. Camp KSC is running a three-day spring break session April 12-14 for students in second through ninth grade. If those dates don't align with your school calendar, nine weeklong sessions will also be available this summer. Kennedy Space Center is

a fascinating place to visit any time of year, no matter what your age. But the camps offer a chance for kids to get a more immersive experience.

Campers will launch self-made rockets, take part in simulated space shuttle missions and get a taste of astronaut training, among other things. Older students can climb a micro-gravity wall that simulates the surreal effects of moving in zero gravity. Students learn about everything from the history of NASA to

rocket propulsion and design.

Camp is based at the Astronaut Training Experience (ATX) Center near Titusville, Fla., 6 miles west of the main Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

The kids will take part in a graduation ceremony at the Astronaut Encounter Theater at the visitor complex, where they and their families get to meet a veteran NASA astronaut.

The spring program, which costs \$165, lasts from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.

Transportation to and from camp isn't provided.

For parents wanting to stay in a nearby hotel, a good option is Fairfield Inn & Suites Titusville.

Weeklong summer day camps cost \$350 and begin June 5. The last session is July 31 to Aug. 4.

To find out more, visit kennedyspacecenter.com/camps-and-education, or call the visitor complex at 855-433-4210.

lrackl@chicagotribune.com
Twitter @lorirackl



DOMINIC AGOSTINI/KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Campers build rockets for their very own rocket launch during Camp Kennedy Space Center.