

Post Travels: 10 Wild Animals to See on Your Next Vacation

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From swimming with turtles in Hawaii, to riding a camel in Cabo, to howling with wolves in Canada, animal adventures have a knack for bringing out a family's wild side. Whether you make a splash, or stay warm and dry, kids and critters have a way of creating vacation magic. Read on for inspiration on where to take off next. But wherever you go, don't forget your camera.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

1. Snorkel with Turtles in Maui, Hawaii

Spending some quality time with turtles is as easy as dropping your towel on the sand at Ka'anapali Beach and walking right into the water at Maui's Pu'u Keka'a, or Black Rock. Green sea turtles, known as Honu in Hawaiian, are regulars here, making it a favorite snorkeling spot.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

2. Watch Humpback Whales in Maui, Hawaii

December through May, Ka'anapali Beach is also a favorite spot for watching the thousands of humpback whales that spend their winter vacation in the waters surrounding Maui. [Trilogy whale watching](#) catamarans load directly from the beach, and tours last about two hours. Knowledgeable naturalists are on board for every tour and happy to answer questions about the whales and their habitat.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

3. Behold the Birds on Bonaventure Island, Quebec, Canada

More than 200,000 birds have an affection for nesting on the scenic island, but it's the northern gannet colony, totaling more than 100,000, that dominates. Bonaventure Island is a summer destination. Getting there requires a quick ferry ride from Percé and a three-mile (roundtrip) family-friendly hike.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

4. Swim with Manatees in Crystal River, Florida

The Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge is the winter home for what's believed to be North America's largest herd of wild manatees. Less than a 90-minute drive north of Tampa, it's the only place in the United States where visitors are allowed to swim with the so-called sea cows. Actually, it's more like floating than swimming. The less you move, the more likely curious manatees are to come close and say hello.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

5. Watch Beluga Whales in Tadoussac, Quebec, Canada

Beluga whales live year round in the [St. Lawrence Estuary](#). Whale watching boats are plentiful May through October, but since belugas are bright white and tend to move in groups, they also tend to be easy to spot from Tadoussac's easily accessible half-mile walking trail, Pointe-de-l'Islet.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

6. Ride Camels in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

It's just like horseback riding, except you stroll through the sand in the company of a camel. Some of the dozen-plus camels on the [Outback and Camel Safari](#) are rescues. Tequila tasting and tortilla making lessons happen after folks hop down from saddled humps.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

7. Peek at Polar Bears in Churchill, Canada

Home to what's said to be the only polar bear jail in the world, Churchill, Manitoba has a population of 900 to 1,000 polar bears. Fall is typically the best time of year to spot the great white bears. [Frontiers North Adventures](#) organizes family-friendly itineraries that include Tundra Buggy® rides (think a vehicle that's a cross between a school bus and a monster truck) in the Churchill Wildlife Management Area, a stretch of accessible arctic known for its polar bear population.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

8. Hold a Seahorse in Kona, Hawaii

Take a break from the beach to visit [Ocean Rider Seahorse Farm](#). Set on a three-acre oceanfront farm, families can see baby seahorses, pregnant papa seahorses, and get the chance to hold a seahorse, all while learning about conservation and preservation. Tours run Monday through Friday and last about 90 minutes. Reservations are highly recommended.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

9. Howl with Wolves in Girardville, Quebec, Canada

Get cozy in a cabin at [Aventuraid](#), a wildlife observation center in Canada's Quebec province. Fenced enclosures ranging from two-and-a-half to five acres are home to three packs of semi-wild arctic and grey wolves. An overnight stay isn't a must—families can watch the wolves from secure trails—but propping up pillows to watch wolves after dark is worth breaking all the bedtime rules.



(Photo by Dana Rebmann)

10. Admire Monk Seals in Kauai, Hawaii

Just about everyone enjoys stretching out on warm sand for a snooze, [Hawaiian monk seals](#) included. Monk seals haul out onto beaches all around [Kauai](#) to rest. Absolutely stop to admire the endangered mammals if you're lucky enough to cross sandy paths, but keep your distance. If volunteers haven't roped off the area surrounding a seal on the beach, stay at least 150 feet away so they can catch up on their beauty sleep.