

# Icon Adventures



## Blog Spot



## Travelling With 'Tweens and Teens

I am lucky enough to live in a town where I am spoilt for choice in relation to schooling options for my kids. It's a regional town, which is considered to be an educational centre.

We have more private schools than state ones. I'm certainly not here to pass judgement on the hotly debated subject of which is best, all I'm saying is, what we have chosen suits us, and that is to use the state school system and use the money which could have been spent on private schooling on travel instead. And by doing a bit of travelling with my kids, now aged 13 & 16, I have come up with a few tips learned from experience, mistakes and good fortune. Here they are (in no particular order):

### Involve kids in the planning stage - to a certain extent.

This will depend on your child; if you've got a child who likes routine this could be a double-edged sword. If you're going somewhere new and you know they will really enjoy it, but are reticent, it's perhaps not worth the heart ache of getting them too involved in planning, as their negativity may put you off going anywhere new. On the other hand if your child is a bit anxious, getting them involved with planning gives them the opportunity to discuss the details, talk about the what-ifs and do their own research. You know your child better than anyone, choose the option which will work for them.

All my kids are ever interested in knowing is where we're going and when, and that's pretty much all they're worried about!



### Suzanne

Mother, traveller, business owner, friend & home renovator.



### Archie (16yrs)

Student, K-Mart employee, travelled to UK, France, Ethiopia, India, Japan, China, NZ & India.



### Liberty (13yrs)

Student, pianist, creative writer, waitress, traveller & BFF to many.

**The right suitcase – seems obvious, but**

**is it?** I’m all for giving kids a bit of responsibility and everyone having their own suitcase or backpack is part of that. Don’t be the parent who struggles with the huge 78cm (28”) case weighing a tonne, because you think it will be easier to keep everything together – wrong! Three issues; firstly you’ll have to lug it places where the wheels aren’t going to help, secondly you’re also never going to be able to find anything in there, in a hurry, and lastly it creates the ‘it’s not fare’ attitude if one is perceived to have more luggage space than the other. So if everyone has their own case/pack everyone has a responsibility, they can only bring what they are capable of carrying (obviously this is for older children), plus, if they go on a holiday spending spree, THEY have to carry their purchases home!



**Travel document wallets – just brilliant!**

These little suckers are handy when you are travelling alone but they are invaluable when travelling in a family group.

One adult is responsible for this wallet, which holds your passports, itineraries, tickets, money, credit cards etc. So on arrival anywhere you’ll know immediately who has the documents you need, for checking-in at airports, hotels, immigration, and you’re not having to look through different bags to find the passports in one pocket, the tickets in another, your customs card elsewhere, your hotel address in your phone and the bus tickets in your diary.



**Limit screen time – you don’t have to ban it altogether!**

Today kids are pretty much locked-in when it comes to electronic screens, but try and limit them. I know the tendency is to look at a screen when they’re in a car or bus or train, but when travelling, the view from the car or bus window is one they have never seen before it might be worth encouraging them to look out the window rather than in the screen.

Just this morning on the school run I saw two girls walking to school both side-by-side along the path. Just 30 metres behind them were two more girls, same age, same direction, same uniform, one was obviously telling a story as her hands were waving around as she spoke, her face full of life and joy while her walking companion

**OUR SRI LANKA ADVENTURE**

Our next adventure in April 2017 will be to Sri Lanka. [Itinerary.](#)

Sri Lanka, formally known as Ceylon, is often referred to as the ‘Pearl of the Indian Ocean’. On this tour we will do such things as climb to the top of rock fortresses, ride jeeps into the jungle in search of wild elephants, hike through green and rugged mountain ranges, cycle round ancient forts and sites, pick tea leaves straight off the bush, take a train ride which weaves through tunnels and mountain sides with the most spectacular scenery, go in search of the sacred tooth of Buddha, and finally relax by the pool without a care in the world!



was throwing her head back laughing with her legs bent as she struggled to walk straight as she was laughing so hard. Let your kids be the ones engaged with those around them as they travel. That's all I'm suggesting.

**Do kid-centric stuff - they'll be glad you did.** It doesn't matter where you go, there'll be stuff that interests the kids but not, so much, you and that's okay, but hey, just do it, life is short. Or at least watch them do it, with a fixed smile on your face! But get balance, this is a family holiday, that means adult/s and child/ren, the holiday is not just about making the kids happy which leads me to my next point.



**Do adult stuff too - in small doses.**



If your thing is shopping, they can go shopping too, it won't hurt them, especially if there's a small reward in it for them! Or, if your thing is hiking, take them too, but if it's not their thing don't take them for an 8 hour, 20km walk, remember everything is do-able in small doses, that way you avoid the rolling eyes and indignation next time you suggest a walk. If your thing is photography, try not to get the perfect shot. Every. Single. Time.

**Be positive and flexible - you, most likely, will be travelling with some sort of itinerary, but don't let it be set in concrete.**

Things can and will go wrong; illness, change in weather conditions, missed transport to name but a few, but don't let it define the holiday, go with the flow, something will work out, and very often for the better, especially if you have a positive attitude (tip, alcohol can sometimes help with this one, or ice-cream or chocolate or prayer depends on who you are!)

**Have their own money - they can waste their money, not yours, on 'stuff'!**

When you go shopping, let them wander around themselves (within reason), teach them the rules of bartering (have an agreed price in your head on what you're are prepared to pay for an item you'd like to purchase, and if the seller has agreed to that price, you must pay up), I've yet to watch a kid who doesn't love this form of shopping, I guess it gives them power, even though, the chances are, they may be being ripped off by the seller, but everyone's a winner! Every time they see something delicious to eat or a must-have trinket catches their eye, teach them to budget; they want it - they buy it with their own money, it's amazing how quickly they become more choosey as to what they really want.



And lastly, the one I think for me, is a lifesaver.



**Travel with other families** - for the sanity of all concerned. We all love the idea of taking our beautiful kids on that holiday of a lifetime, we have visions of happily smiling family selfies with a backdrop of some amazing place, or sharing a wonderful meal together in an exotic restaurant, or relaxing around an open fire, all relaxed and at peace with each other. P'ah, yeah right, now back to the real world! However, if you go with another family or families I've found you have twice the fun, everyone's got their own peers, adults can have adult conversations and kids can have their own ones, and most people behave better with others around (adults and children alike!). Children are certainly more adventurous with friends around them, within the boundary of parents who are never far away. And parents are more relaxed as it's more of a village mentality, as you all become one big family for the duration of the holiday.

**The best part is, coming home exhausted with stories to tell, memories to keep and friendships to last a lifetime!**



*Thank-you*

to the families who have travelled with us before, we had such fun, and for allowing me to use your photos!



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**BE ADVENTUROUS**