



Alila Anji, China



Panacea Retreat, Thailand



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Mango Bay Resort, Vietnam

Family Vacation



Panacea Retreat, Thailand

Thanks to the warmth of the locals and all the activities on offer, South East Asian travel can be a blast for kids. *Kate Farr* explores some dedicatedly child-friendly destinations



Novotel Bali Bena Resort, Bali



Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort and Spa



Mango Bay Resort, Vietnam



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Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort and Spa

Photos courtesy of Kate Farr



Novotel Bali Benoa Resort, Bali

Whether you're travelling with toddlers or teens, family holidays require their own rulebook to ensure that everyone gets a break to remember... for all the right reasons! Here are five covetable holiday spots that make families a priority.

Bali, Indonesia

A perennial family favourite for good reason, Bali has it all – great weather, beautiful beaches and a rich culture. Up until recently, Benoa was predominantly a cruise ship stopover but these days, the peninsula is a diving and snorkelling hub, as well as a surfing, windsurfing and kite surfing centre for thrill seekers.

The Novotel Bali Benoa Resort's spacious family rooms have separate kids and adults sleeping areas – a major plus for anyone who has ever sat hunched over an iPad in the dark once their kids are tucked up in bed. Older children will love the in-room games console, while little ones are kept busy with the selection of toys and games. The resort's kids' club hosts daily activities from Balinese crafting to cricket, and there are three separate pools, including a shallow pool for tiny tots. The MyKids programme offers free family films, kids'

menus, a welcome toy and free-flow soft drinks.

Phu Quoc, Vietnam

The stunning Vietnamese island of Phu Quoc lies in the Gulf of Thailand, offering an attractive alternative to the usual beach breaks. Access is via a short connecting flight from either Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City, and visitors can expect untouched scenery, picture-perfect sunsets and world-class snorkelling around this protected marine environment.

Eco-friendly Mango Bay Resort specialises in a uniquely Vietnamese brand of barefoot luxury, with just 44 rooms and family bungalows tucked away within lush tropical surroundings. Families are welcomed with open arms here – high chairs and cots are available as standard, while the activity centre offers snorkelling gear, kayaks and bikes to explore the surrounding area. There's even a board game library on hand for a relaxed family night in the villa.

Anji, China

Visiting China with children has never been easier, and Anji, in Zhejiang Province, is a world apart from Middle Kingdom megacity Shanghai, just a short distance away. A region of tea plantations and lush



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Sentosa, Singapore

A crowd-pleasing option that ticks all the boxes for ease, Sentosa is the most family-friendly spot in the already very family-friendly city of Singapore. There are plenty of balmy beaches on which to build sandcastles, however the real attraction here is Resorts World Singapore, home to the Universal Studios theme park, Adventure Cove Waterpark and the SEA Aquarium, where you'll find the world's largest oceanarium. Need more convincing? There are also two casinos, a shopping mall and several fine dining restaurants to cater to your every culinary whim.

With so much to explore, you're going to need a comfortable base, and the colonial-style Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort and Spa has you covered. The roomy family suites offer ample space for everyone to spread out, with a master bedroom and separate living area with comfy sofa bed. There's also an inviting swimming pool to explore, as well as nearby Tanjong Beach and the on-site Villa des Enfants kids' club, which offers a daily roster of children's classes and activities. Once they've burned off some energy, stoke them up again with the kids-only Little

Royals Afternoon Tea – a sweet treat fit for a prince or princess.

Koh Samui, Thailand

Another destination on the 'easy' list is Koh Samui. With direct flights from Hong Kong, this Thai island is known for its laidback vibe, palm-fringed beaches and fun family activities including multiple waterparks, adventure zip-lining and go-karting, to name but a few.

If you're travelling as a group of families, consider splashing out on a once-in-a-lifetime stay at Panacea Retreat, a collection of exclusive-use luxury villas. The largest of the properties, Praana, is fully staffed and sleeps 12, with additional baby cots supplied free of charge.

This spectacular home boasts two infinity pools, a gym, tennis court, cinema room and even its own boxing ring, and offers free yoga, tennis, Muay Thai and cooking lessons, plus a free massage per stay. It also has its own kids' club for your group to enjoy all to themselves, with daily arts-and-craft activities, board games, toys, games consoles, DVDs, table football and billiards to keep everyone entertained while you unwind in the lap of luxury. **D**

bamboo forests (its most famous, Da Zhu Hai, was the backdrop to the blockbuster film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), Anji is China's first designated National Ecological County, dedicated to preserving its pristine natural environment and keeping its fertile farmland free from pollution.

Alila Anji is the perfect retreat from city stress, tucked away within thick bamboo groves. Lakeview villas overlook a spectacular landscape, while families are encouraged to explore their surroundings on the resort's fleet of bikes. If that's all sounding a little... peaceful for your brood, Alila offers packages that include visits to the world's largest Hello Kitty theme park or the vast Happy Vanko Water Kingdom, along with trips to local farms for some rustic foodie fun.

FIND IT

- Alila Anji, www.alilahotels.com/anji
- Mango Bay Resort, mangobayphuquoc.com
- Novotel Bali Benoa Resort, www.novotel.com/Bali
- Panacea Retreat, www.panaceasamui.com
- Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort and Spa, www.sofitel-singapore-sentosa.com

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