FABULOUS FAM

BY MICH

8 Kid-Friendly Cruise Ships

oday's amenity-filled cruise ships provide the best of both worlds, making adults and children feel at home while providing new thrills and experiences for everyone. With complimentary on-board kids' programs, experienced counselors and age-appropriate activities for young cruisers, parents can enjoy well-deserved adult time while children are off on their own adventures. And, from theme parties to pools, sports and games to shore excursions, opportunities abound for family fun together.

There are dining options to please everyone, from

laid-back pizzerias to elegant restaurants. All of the cruise lines below offer evening baby-sitting services for a fee, so parents can get away for a quiet dinner.

With accommodations, meals and on-board entertainment and many activities included in the fare paid upfront, cruises are a terrific value. A tip: It is common for families to select an ocean-view or balcony cabin for the adults, and an inside cabin across the corridor for the kids.

The following family-friendly ships leave from U.S. ports this summer, and many depart from the same home port year-round.

Freedom of the Seas

Royal Caribbean International
Upon its debut this May, Freedom of the
Seas will be the world's largest cruise ship, at
158,000 tons with a capacity for 3,600 passengers. Royal Caribbean's newest vessel
features six family-focused stateroom categories, topping out at the 14-guest, 1,215square-foot presidential suite — ideal for a
family reunion cruise.

Parents and their little ones ages 6 months to 3 years can experience interactive Aqua Babies and Aqua Tots sessions, developed by Fisher-Price to stimulate young imaginations within a fun and nurturing environment. Adventure Ocean, for ages 3 to 17, is run by college-educated or highly experienced child-care experts. Kids are grouped according to age (3-5, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14 and 15-17), and activities include learning about local customs, science experiments, movie nights, themed parties and sports. Children ages 12 and older have the freedom to come and go from the kids' center as they please, and teens have their own club for late-night dancing.

For parents desiring free time during the evening, group or in-room babysitting is available for a fee. Make great family memories with on-board activities such as ice-skating, karaoke, talent shows and miniature golf. There's even a rock-climbing wall and a surfing simulator on the Freedom of the Seas.

Dining options are abundant, and there are fun kids' menus and casual dinners for children hosted by youth staff. Freedom of See Kid-Friendly, page 34



LY VACATIONS

10 Tropical Resorts For All Ages

ome quality time for the family is long overdue, and you're ready for some fun in the sun. But finding something to suit everyone's tastes can be an overwhelming task.

The following 10 tropical resorts feature abundant amenities to captivate adults and kids alike, and everything you could want in a fun family getaway is conveniently located on site. Each property has kidfriendly amenities and activities, as well as an array of dining options to please the pickiest eaters. Parents can enjoy such grown-up offerings as spa treatments,

golf, scuba diving and romantic candlelight dinners (many resorts offer evening baby-sitting services, usually for an additional fee).

Nine of the resorts are all-inclusive, with accommodations, meals and drinks, taxes and gratuities, entertainment, and many land and water sports covered in a flat rate that you pay upfront. With all-inclusives, you'll know how much you'll be spending for your vacation, making them easy to budget.

Here are our favorite family resorts in the Caribbean, Bahamas, Mexico and Florida.

FDR Pebbles

Runaway Bay, Jamaica

Nestled between peaceful mountains and the Caribbean Sea, the 3.5-star, all-inclusive FDR Pebbles boasts a staff-to-guest ratio of 1-to-1 and upholds environmentally friendly family adventure. Guests stay in well-appointed suites stretched along a 600-foot beach.

Upon arrival, families with small children are assigned a "vacation nanny," freeing parents during the day (with continued service available in the evening at a nominal cost). Children will find hours of fun at the Yellow Bird Kids' Club, full of educational computer games, a library, countless toys, and arts and crafts. Excursions for kids include bicycle trips, shell collecting, boat rides, picnics and adventure tours. Teens have their own club with various activities, designated hours at the family disco, game rooms, overnight camping at a supervised site, beach bonfires and a variety of land and water sports.

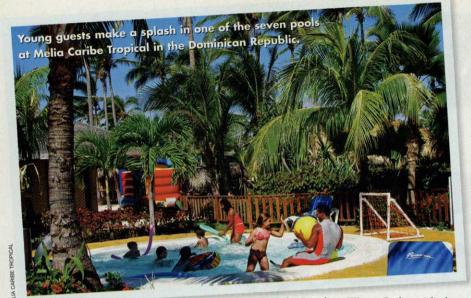
Adults can take advantage of the fitness center, Olympic-size pool and swim-up bar, myriad land and water sports including one of Jamaica's best-rated scuba programs, and nightly dancing and live entertainment at the piano bar. Three restaurants, all by the sea, offer wide-ranging palate-pleasers as well as Jamaican jerk chicken and other local specialties.

Franklyn D. Resort

Runaway Bay, Jamaica

Among tropical gardens and a whitesand beach stands the four-star boutique Franklyn D. Resort, known as FDR. The





sister resort to FDR Pebbles, it features lowrise, Tuscan-style architecture, and every suite has a large balcony or a garden terrace. Upon arrival, families will be assigned a highly trained nanny. With the nanny caring for children during the day (and evenings, for a fee), parents can relax knowing their children are safe and having fun.

For more information on great family-friendly resorts, visit ResortVacationsToGo.com/family.

Children ages 2 to 11 have their own club activities, with arts and crafts, shell hunts on the beach, swimming lessons, talent contests and educational programs that focus on the Caribbean. Teens can take advantage of many supervised daily activities including bicycle tours, beach volleyball, fashion shows and treasure hunts. An extensive game room, computer center, family disco and water sports round out the amenities. One free scuba lesson for beginners or one daily dive for certified divers is included in FDR's all-inclusive rates.

After a full day of activities, visit the piano bar or enjoy a meal at one of three sumptuous seaside restaurants.

Sunset Beach Resort and Spa

Montego Bay, Jamaica

Surrounded by gorgeous white-sand beaches on its own private peninsula, the all-inclusive, 3.5-star Sunset Beach Resort and Spa offers both proximity to bustling Montego Bay and the seclusion of an island retreat. Most of the 430 rooms and suites feature private balconies with views of the Caribbean or the bay.

Kids will find endless fun in the sun at

Pirate's Paradise Water Park, with large waterslides, a lazy river, fort and pirate ship for ages 2 to 12. Kids will also be at home at Club Mongoose, where older children can kick back in a huge Jacuzzi. Teenagers have pool tables, video and arcade games and nonstop reggae music at the Pirate's Cove Teen Center. Parents can hit the gym or tennis courts in the morning, take a Jamaican cooking course or partake in English teatime during the afternoon, and enjoy nightly beach parties, fashion shows and dancing at the Galaxy disco. Numerous nonmotorized water sports are also available.

Once you've worked up an appetite, head to Sunset Beach's restaurants and bars, with choices from buffets to international cuisine, and swim-up bars to English pubs.

Beaches Boscobel Resort and Golf Club

Ocho Rios, Jamaica

The five-star Beaches Boscobel Resort and Golf Club is Jamaica's only all-inclusive resort with golf for kids. Boasting free kids' clinics on the greens, a variety of sports, azure waters, and irresistible sunshine warming the white sands, Beaches Boscobel provides a slice of paradise everywhere you turn.

Accommodations range from spacious mountain-view rooms to luxurious family suites with private patios, panoramic views of the sparkling Caribbean and butler service. Kids can capitalize on colossal waterslides, Sesame Street-themed activities programs, a petting zoo, Xbox game center, teen disco and much more. Parents can rest easy — and indulge in their own quality time — knowing their children are in good hands at the Kid's Kamp, staffed by U.S.-certified, university-trained counselors.

Scuba diving is among the vast array of

water sports included in the "Ultra-All-Inclusive Difference" at Beaches, while fun on land includes free greens fees and transportation to the nearby 18-hole Sandals Golf and Country Club. A swim-up bar and five specialty restaurants, including an elegant adults-only restaurant, round out the enticing options.

Melia Caribe Tropical

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Built on a lush, 500,000-square-meter complex, the five-star Melia Caribe Tropical provides guests with a scenic oasis. This all-inclusive property offers 1,044 junior suites in two-story bungalows, while families seeking more amenities can reside in 144 "royal service" one-bedroom and master suites. High-end golf suites are located along the 27th hole of the adjacent golf course.

The Baby Club for children ages 4 months to 4 years and the Kids Club for ages 5 to 12 provide games, sports, crafts and excursions with a Flintstones theme. Baby-sitting services are available for an extra cost. Teenagers can play arcade and video games, while those looking for more action can explore the resort's eight tennis courts, seven pools or the white sands and crystal waters of Bavaro Beach. Sauna and gym facilities, some greens fees for golfers and nonmotorized water sports are included, though spa treatments, golf carts and equipment, and snorkeling and diving come at additional charges.

Adult diversions include a casino, nine bars and two live shows every night. Guests of all ages can sample cuisines from around the world at 11 restaurants.

Beaches Turks and Caicos Resort and Spa

Providenciales, Turks and Caicos

Set along 12 miles of impeccable seashore, the 5.5-star Beaches Turks and Caicos Resort and Spa blends Caribbean charm with Old World elegance. Exquisite formal gardens, Parisian-style architecture and sidewalk bistros grace the French Village, where accommodations range from rooms overlooking the pool to three-bedroom suites with ocean views. Guests in penthouse suites have vistas of the grounds, pools and ocean from wraparound balconies and enjoy exclusive butler service.

Little ones at this all-inclusive resort will be well taken care of by U.S.-certified, university-trained experts. Pirate's Island offers kids a huge waterslide, kids-only pool with a swim-up soda bar, jungle-themed video game room, 1950s-style diner, teen disco, movie theater and more.

Parents can take advantage of the included scuba diving in one of the world's best diving destinations or choose from numerous other water and land sports. Nighttime brings even more options, as Beaches boasts 10 restaurants, six bars, late-night seafood and martini specials, and an open-air amphitheater for entertainment under the stars.

Crown Paradise Club Puerto Vallarta

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

The four-star Crown Paradise Club Resort and Spa sits upon a sun-drenched beach and faces sparkling Banderas Bay. The all-inclusive, four-star property has 31 family rooms with mountain views, private balconies and special kids' areas.

Child-care professionals entertain infants and toddlers with games, exercises and workshops at Baby Paradise, an included service day and evening. At Kids Paradise, activities include arts and crafts, sports, dancing, treasure hunts and sand castle-building contests. For kids up to age 12, the Aquapark features a pirate ship and a castle with nine waterslides. Teens can explore a variety of land and nonmotorized water sports.

For more information on great family-friendly resorts, visit ResortVacationsToGo.com/family.

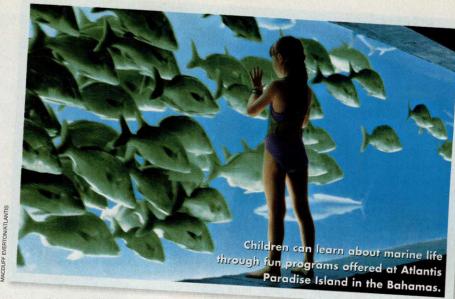
Parents can indulge in sunset libations at the Club Caribe Jacuzzi and Bar, catch a different stage show every night at Club Nitro, and for an extra cost, be pampered at the spa. The resort boasts five bars, while three fine dining restaurants, an international buffet and a beachside snack bar satisfy a variety of cravings.

Moon Palace Golf and Spa Resort

Cancun, Mexico

Situated between deep green foliage and dazzling white sands, the five-star Moon Palace Golf and Spa Resort typifies tropical paradise. Most of the resort's 2,103 rooms feature ocean views, and all boast private balconies, marble bathrooms and double Jacuzzis. Golf suites provide views of the Jack Nicklaus signature course.

Families can go back and forth between the tranquil beach and two sprawling lagoon-style pools, with Jacuzzis, swim-up bars and children's areas. Vacationers ages 4



to 12 will have a blast at the on-site kids club, with preplanned activities such as creating piñatas, making cookies and playing pool games and various sports. Full fitness centers, nonmotorized water sports, a disco, lounge and nightly shows or theme parties are among the amenities at this all-inclusive resort. For an additional cost, indulge in spa treatments or enjoy a round of golf. Moon Palace guests can savor some of Mexico's best cuisine and decadent drinks at 12 restaurants and nine bars.

Atlantis Paradise Island

Nassau, Bahamas

With 34 acres, 11 lagoons and some 50,000 sea creatures comprising more than 250 species, the five-star Atlantis Paradise Island is home to the world's largest openair marine habitat. The singular waterscape and bountiful amenities make Atlantis a unique resort.

Guests can choose from a variety of accommodations, but the centrally located Coral Towers are recommended for families. In-room baby-sitting is available throughout the resort. The Atlantis Kids Club offers games, Bahamian arts and crafts, and even microscopes to study marine life. Hourly sessions to full-day experiences are available on Discovery Kids Adventures, where young guests can decode hieroglyphs, feed fish and swim in protected lagoons. For preteens and teenagers, Club Rush offers video games, movies and dancing.

Atlantis guests can arrange a helicopter tour of Paradise Island, dive into youth scuba and snorkeling programs, or tee off at the Ocean Club Golf Course. There are also multiple pools, a spa, pottery studio, library and shopping venues. On-site entertainment includes a comedy club, theater,

nightclub and the expansive Atlantis Casino. Dining is no less varied, with an array of gourmet, casual and buffet restaurants, as well as bars and lounges. Atlantis is not allinclusive, but travelers with children can take advantage of family-value meal pricing or flat-rate dining plans.

Club Med Sandpiper Palm Beach, Florida

The three-star Sandpiper is Club Med's only all-inclusive U.S. village open year-round. Rooms and suites offer views of lush gardens or the St. Lucie River. Children's programs feature safe, educational sports and leisure activities tailored to specific age groups. Baby Club Med (4 to 23 months) and Petit Club Med (2 to 3 years) come at an additional charge and provide engaging activities in stimulating environments. Mini Club Med (4 to 10 years) and Junior Club Med (11 to 17 years) are included and offer activities such as sports, games, science programs, arts and crafts, multilingual singalongs and dancing.

Parents can laze away the afternoon in sparkling pools. For an additional cost, hit the links or embark upon a deep-sea fishing expedition. Cultural and adventure tours explore nearby Palm Beach, Miami, Disney World and the mangrove stands of the St. Lucie River. The resort's restaurants and bars span the spectrum of dining, including unique lunch options from "wellness," "exotic," "energy" and "indulgence" menus.

Information: For more information on these and other terrific family-friendly resorts, call Vacations To Go, (800) 680-2858, or visit www.ResortVacationsToGo. com/family.

Kid-Friendly

Continued from page 28

the Seas will sail weeklong Caribbean itineraries from Miami year-round.

Caribbean Princess

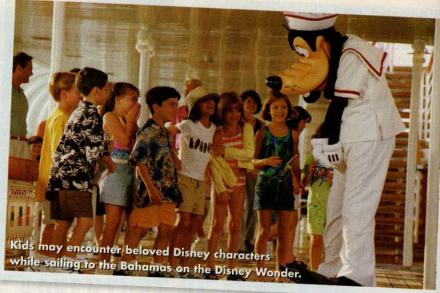
Princess Cruises

On the 3,100-passenger Caribbean Princess, family suites sleep up to eight people and comprise two bedrooms connected by a large living room that leads to a balcony. The line's kids' programs group children according to age and feature arts and crafts, dance and birthday parties, scavenger hunts and talent shows. Children can also participate in "edu-tainment" programs, which can range from the enthralling (whale-watching) to the exciting (building and racing toy sailboats) to the delightfully icky (dissecting a squid).

Teen centers feature video and board games, movies, karaoke and more, while activities can include pizza or hot tub parties, sports competitions, late-night movies, DI workshops and hip-hop dance classes. The youth and teen centers are complimentary and staffed by trained counselors. A supervised, complimentary lunch service is also available. Group baby-sitting is offered for an additional charge.

> To learn more about family cruising, visit VacationsToGo.com/family.

Families can gather around one of the ship's pools for "Movies Under the Stars," projected on a 300-square-foot screen. Other on-board highlights include a ninehole putting course and golf simulator,



duty-free shopping, art exhibits and four pools, including one swim-against-the-current pool.

The Caribbean Princess departs on seven-day Caribbean cruises from Fort Lauderdale, FL, year-round.

Disney Wonder

Disney Cruise Line

The Disney Wonder combines the pleasures of cruising with the magic of Disneythemed adventures. From a nursery with "Little Mermaid" decor for children ages 3 months to 3 years, to a family club resembling a television soundstage, Disney boasts diversions to captivate all ages.

Nearly three quarters of the staterooms on this 2,500-passenger vessel have ocean views, and for large family gatherings, the royal suite with a private veranda sleeps seven. Children's programs feature unique activities linked to favorite Disney stories and characters, including arts and crafts, games and contests, science experiments, and karaoke for ages 3 to 12. Preteens can check out private listening rooms with state-of-the-art equipment, animation programs and flat-screen computers loaded with family-rated software.

Ages 13 to 17 have a teens-only lounge designed as a part dorm room, part loft apartment with music, movies, Internet and video games. Dance parties, trivia contests, animation lessons and fitness classes are among the entertaining options. Teens can also learn about the art of film-making - and even make their own movies.

The family club is the site of cabaret shows, dancing and games. Three pools provide fun in the sun: one for young kids who love to splash, one for families and one just for adults who want to relax in a serene setting with whirlpool spas and a poolside bar. An array of on-deck sports plus video and arcade games are among amenities. Guests enjoy a variety of distinctive indoor restaurants, as well as casual on-deck dining and 24-hour room service. Group baby-sitting is available for a fee.

The Disney Wonder sails on three- and four-day Bahamas cruises from Port Canaveral, FL.

Westerdam

Holland America Line

Carrying 1,848 passengers, the Westerdam is part of Holland America's Vista-class fleet. Children have a blast at Club HAL, where age-appropriate activities are supervised by full-time program directors with degrees in education or related fields. Kids ages 5 to 7 can enjoy arts and crafts, bingo, ice cream and pizza parties, ship tours and





storytelling, while ages 8 to 12 can partake in miniature golf, on-deck sports and games, scavenger hunts and theme parties. Club HAL is open during the day, with an after-hours program at a nominal fee. For parents who want to check out the spa, casino or the Crow's Nest nightclub and observation lounge, baby-sitting is also available at an extra cost.

Holland America's variety of kidfriendly food includes hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches and tacos. There are formal restaurants and casual buffets, and six lounges, bars and nightclubs. Pools, a fitness center, library, deck games and cooking classes round out the onboard amenities.

The Westerdam sails from Seattle to Alaska on seven-day cruises in summer, then moves to Fort Lauderdale for seven-day Caribbean itineraries in fall and winter.

Carnival Conquest

Camival Cruise Lines

The 2,974-passenger Carnival Conquest welcomes families with an extensive supervised children's program for cruisers ages 2 to 17. Among Camp Carnival's age-appropriate activities for toddlers 2 to 5 are finger painting, sing-alongs and memory games, while ages 6 to 8 participate arts and crafts, talent shows, T-shirt painting and more. Preteens ages 9 to 11 have dance classes, parties, scavenger hunts and swimming under the stars. Ages 12 to 14 can enjoy games and sports tournaments, karaoke and designated evening hours at the shipboard dance club. Carnival's Club O2 is a haven for teens 15 to 17, with theme and pool parties, outdoor sports, board and card

games and teens-only lounges.

Kids ages 6 and up are privy to PlayStation 2 and IMac time, while Carnival's "ExerSeas" and "EduCruise" provide fitness and educational programs for a wide range of ages. Stroller rentals and evening babysitting services are available for a fee.

Children have their own menus with kid-friendly fare in the ship's restaurants. On most nights, there are supervised children's-only dinners in the casual Lido restaurant, as well as lunches on port days when parents are ashore.

The Carnival Conquest sails seven-day Caribbean cruises from Galveston, TX, year-round.

Norwegian Dawn

Norwegian Cruise Line

Norwegian Cruise Line embraces the "freestyle cruising" concept, which emphasizes freedom and flexibility on board all its ships. While on the 2,224-passenger Norwegian Dawn, guests can eat when and with whom they want, because there is no assigned seating. The dinner dress code is always "resort casual," so families can enjoy an easygoing, informal getaway.

The Norwegian Dawn's family suites and connecting staterooms are ideal for parents and kids traveling together. For a large family group, consider the Garden Villa, comprised of a living room, dining room and three separate bedrooms within its 5,750 square feet. It accommodates six guests and also has room for two rollaway beds and three cribs.

The complimentary Kid's Crew program offers energetic activities supervised by trained counselors. For ages 2 to 5, there are arts and crafts, pizza-making sessions and treasure hunts. Activities for ages 6 to 9 include games, painting and storytelling. Ages 10 to 17 have board games, video games, sports and more, with pool parties and a teen disco for the older set. The "Teen Passport Program" includes nonalcoholic drink tickets at a surcharge and teen parties with DJs and pizza. Teens can come and go freely, while children 12 and under must be picked up from the kids' center by a parent.

To learn more about family cruising, visit VacationsToGo.com/family.

For a fee, group babysitting is available from day to night on port days and in the evenings on sea days. Ten restaurants, 24hour room service, a spa, casino and original art collections round out the amenities.

Norwegian Dawn embarks on seven-See Kid-Friendly, page 93



Kid-Friendly

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day cruises to the Bahamas and Bermuda in summer, then moves to weeklong Canada-New England cruises in fall and 10- and 11-day Caribbean cruises in winter. All depart from New York City.

Mariner of the Seas

Royal Caribbean International

The 3,114-passenger Mariner of the Seas is part of Royal Caribbean's Voyager-class fleet, with one of the highest public space-per-guest ratios in the cruise market. Four family suites can accommodate up to eight guests. These staterooms feature two bedrooms with twin beds that convert to queen-size beds (one room features third and fourth Pullman beds), two baths, a living area with double sofa bed, private balcony and concierge service.

Royal Caribbean provides well-coordinated kids' programs, starting with the interactive play-group sessions of Aqua Babies and Aqua Tots. These programs reinforce early learning and are designed for parents and their little ones ages 6 months to 3 years.

hoto Credit: Palm Island Resort

Ages 3 to 5 participate in games, art and science; ages 6 to 8 have parties and make kites, masks and gummy candies, among other diversions; and ages 9 to 11 take backstage tours and play various games and sports. Ages 12 to 14 have a special teen lounge and join in games, sports, parties and contests, as do ages 15 to 17, who can also visit the teens-only nightclub Fuel. Group and in-room baby-sitting is available for a fee.

Innovative recreational opportunities on board include an ice-skating rink, rockclimbing wall and nine-hole miniature golf course. Additional highlights are extensive shopping venues and dining options that range from the health-conscious to the sinfully indulgent.

Mariner of the Seas sails from Port Canaveral on seven-day Caribbean cruises vear-round.

Carnival Pride

Camival Cruise Lines

Aboard the Carnival Pride, 80 percent of the staterooms have ocean views, and 80 percent of those boast private balconies. The 2,124-passenger ship has comprehensive dining options including a special kids'

menu, pools, sports and an extensive children's program.

Parents of younger children are provided with beepers for immediate contact if necessary. Staffed by experienced child-care professionals, Camp Carnival offers ageappropriate activities for children ages 2 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 14 and 15 to 17. Activities range from arts and crafts, talent shows and finger painting for younger children to PlayStation 2 time, scavenger hunts and dance classes for preteens.

> To learn more about family cruising, visit VacationsToGo.com/family.

Teens can take part in a variety of games and sports tournaments, karaoke and special teen-only hangouts. Tailored specifically to older teens, Club O2 is staffed by activities directors who act as hosts, entertainers and DIs. There also are late-night diversions such as movies and dance parties.

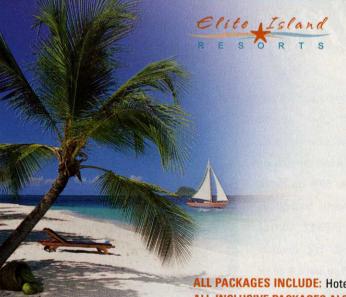
Carnival Pride sails seven-day Mexico cruises from Long Beach, CA, year-round.

Information: For more information on these and other family-friendly ships, contact Vacations To Go, (800) 338-4962, or visit www.VacationsToGo.com/family.

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