

celebrating family

Now is the time to book family's summer vacation



LISA LUCKOW-HEALY

Believe it or not, if you haven't booked your family summer vacation, now is the time to do so.

Many families who frequent the same summer vacation spot year after year make their reservations for the next summer while they are vacationing.

This virtually guarantees their accommodations and gives them an upcoming vacation to look forward to all year.

Summer vacations also mean meeting new friends. Planning a summer getaway to the same resort or campground the same week the following summer means the possibilities of building upon new friendships increase.

It is no secret that the longer you wait to book, the higher the chances of you having to pitch a tent in your own back yard or call your local pizzeria delivery for the closest thing to room service.

If you are fresh out of ideas on summertime travel, here are a few sources to research for thought-starters:

- Local travel agent
- Michigan Travel Information Center, (517) 373-0670
- Michigan campsite reservations, (800) 44-PARKS
- Internet
- Local newspapers
- Cable television travel channel
- Chamber of commerce (call the chamber in the location where you anticipate your travels)

Referrals from friends and relatives. Practically everyone has a different idea of his or her ideal summer family travel destination.

I have fond memories of spending warm summers at a beautiful Canadian resort. Formal sittings in the resort's dining room, elaborate water ski shows and sandy beaches are all stored in my memory banks.

One year, my artistic parents drummed up colorful Indian costumes for my sister and me made from brown paper grocery bags. We had come unprepared for the resort's costume party. Those paper bag costumes took first prize.

Thanks to Mom and Dad's efforts, my childhood vacations built a strong

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foundation of lasting memories from which to draw upon to create similar traditions as a parent for my children.

"Every year my family went to our cottage near West Branch," said Kim Jenkins of Canton. "Now my husband, Jeff, and I take our three children there every summer. We also like to try different seasonal attractions like Sea World."

"My most memorable family vacation was the summer my parents loaded us into a motor home and drove out West for six weeks through several states, including North Dakota, Montana and Washington," said Mark Yearn of Milford.

"I saw mountain goats, ate dinners on my lap and experienced an earthquake. The quality time we spent together was what really made the vacation. Someday I'd like my children to have a similar experience."

Renee Lazoen of Clarkston cherishes her vacation history lesson on East.

"Traveling up and down the East Coast through places like Boston gave me the opportunity to see where part of our country's history was made," Lazoen said. "It will definitely be a wonderful summer trip when my daughters are old enough to appreciate it."

Whether frequenting the same destination or trying something new each year, summer traditions turn into family treasures and lasting impressions over time. It's not too late to plan your summer travels now before your choices are limited.

Lisa Luckow-Healy is a marketing and public relations consultant and the mother of two from West Bloomfield. Her articles frequently appear in Metro Parent magazine and several business trade publications. To leave her a message from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, then her mailbox number, 1903.

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