

# Planning Family Reunion Vacations

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Each year we plan a vacation with our extended family. Occasionally, we travel to visit family members. During these trips, we integrate visiting historical sites while visiting family members. For example, we took our daughter to the various Smithsonian Museums when visiting family in Washington DC. When visiting my family in Massachusetts, I took my younger cousin to the Salem Witch Museum after we had read various articles about this museum at the library. Our adventure was rich as we had read about what we would see and then we selected activities that would expand the research we had conducted at the library.

Some family reunions include family camping trips. At these events, we each take charge of certain meals and share our camping survival skills with our extended family. We recently introduced our family to a hobo stew that includes a mixture of ground beef patties topped with carrots, onions, assorted vegetables, seasoned with spices, and tightly wrapped in

aluminum foil. The foiled packets are placed over hot coals in a campfire until fully cooked. Another family member prepared a fry pan casserole of vegetables and meat. Our nephew prepared an elaborate barbecue of ribs and chicken. Our grandkids are excited to meet their cousins and enjoy sharing activities such as swimming, hiking, playing in creeks, and running with a family dog.

Some of us provide art and crafts projects for the children that include beading, drawing, coloring, and constructing nature mobiles. The children are invited to participate in a family karaoke at night and share ghost stories while eating toasted s'mores around a campfire before bed time.

Our family agrees that these trips are more interesting and stimulating with our extended family. As we travel to these outings, we stop at funky and fun tourist points of interest and participate in local activities that capture the area's nature and history. We keep journals of our travels and collect postcards of memorable outings.

When planning for these trips, we must make reservations months or even a year before the event to ensure that we have enough campsites, cabins, or motel rooms to accommodate the needs of our growing family.

Happy camping!

Mary Ann

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