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[TRAVEL]



PALM SPRINGS ON A BUDGET

Finally — A Family Vacation That Won't Break the Bank

by Elizabeth Kang

Most family vacations take months of planning and saving, and looking forward to them is part of the fun. But a spontaneous, last-minute trip can be just as exciting as a well-planned vacation, and it can also be affordable, too.

Palm Springs is a wonderful choice for a fun-filled, spontaneous and budget-friendly vacay. If your family finds itself with some free consecutive days this summer, consider vibrant and eclectic Palm Springs for a fun and affordable family vacay. Sure, the off-season summer months are hot, but that means hotel rates a steal, and no expensive plane tickets are needed, because this desert oasis is an easy 7.5-hour drive.

Can't take the heat? Visit in the fall months, when hotel rates are still cheap, but the weather starts to cool. Either way, Palm Springs is a must-see destination that should be on your radar. Pack up some swimsuits and hit the road for one last summer hurrah!

STAY

[Palm Mountain Resort and Spa](#) is our affordable Palm Springs hotel of choice when traveling as a family or group. This peaceful resort has been renovated numerous times, so it's clean and modern, with all the up-to-date amenities you'd expect from a much more expensive hotel.

The refreshing, oversized pool never feels too crowded, the grounds are beautiful and well kept, and the location is ideal for walking to downtown shops and restaurants. Many rooms offer cozy fire pits for nighttime hangouts, and private balcony spaces for outdoor lounging. Rooms can be found for under \$100 a night in the summer and fall months – an absolute steal.

EXPERIENCE

[Palm Springs Aerial Tramway](#) is a must-do while in Palm

Springs, and reservations are recommended. Enjoy sweeping views of the entire valley on this family friendly attraction. Adult tickets are \$28.95, children are \$16.95 (ages 3-10) and under 3 are free.

[The Cabazon Dinosaurs](#) are a longstanding attraction that the dinosaur-obsessed kids in your family will adore, featuring "the worlds largest dinosaurs." These giant dinosaurs have been featured in numerous movies, and are a kitschy cult-classic that makes for great photos. Adults admission is \$13, and children are \$11.

[Palm Springs Air Museum](#) is chock-full of aviation history, artifacts and memorabilia and is a great way to spend a hot afternoon. There is plenty to do and see for both children and adults and is a fun, affordable and educational experience. Adults tickets are \$20, and youth ages 13-17 are \$18. Admission is free on Thursdays, and children 12 and under are free all summer!

SEE

[Coachella Valley Vista Point](#) is a scenic observation point offering breathtaking views of the Coachella Valley, and is open 24-hours-a-day, so sunrise and sunset views are accessible and worth every second of the drive. And the best part? This is a completely free excursion!

[Joshua Tree National Park](#) is just under an hour's drive from Palm Springs, and is a fantastic way to spend a day. This otherworldly park offers giant boulders for climbing and squeezing between, and some short flat hikes that are perfect for small children. The desert landscape is absolutely stunning, so even just driving through the park in the comfort of your air conditioning is worthwhile. Be sure to pack plenty of water and food, as it's not available inside the park. Entrance is \$30 per private vehicle.

EAT

[TRAVEL]



[LUIU California Bistro](#) fits the bill when looking for an affordable family friendly restaurants, with vibrant, colorful decor and an extensive menu. Their all-day happy hour menu saves some dough, and the mile-high cotton candy dessert is a hit with little ones.

[Bill's Pizza](#) is the go-to pizza joint in Palm Springs, and for good reason — generous toppings, chewy crusts, pizza-by-the-slice and affordable prices keep this haunt consistently buzzing with customers.

[Great Shakes](#) serves up ultra-thick, Instagram-Worthy

milkshakes in a multitude of decadent flavors. No trip to Palm Springs is complete without a famous date shake, and this place serves one of the best. Insider tip — split your shake to save calories and money. These shakes are huge, rich, and definitely shareable.

[Lappert's Premium Ice Cream](#) serves Disney's famous Dole Whip soft serve, as well as a variety of juices and smoothies for a refreshing and healthy treat to beat the heat. Their Polynesian-themed decor provides a fun, kid-friendly vibe.