



10 TIPS TO JUMP-START YOUR ROAD TRIP DREAM



Everyone has a travel dream.
For many it is hitting the road for an extended time, either here or abroad,
But many also dream of that great family summer getaway.

But how many people actually get from the dreaming to the doing for that great trip?
Here's a list to inspire you to go live your personal vision of a road trip dream.

❑ BRAINSTORM WHAT YOU WOULD WANT TO DO ON YOUR TRIP

Get everyone in on the act! Consider all the possibilities – they'll be time later to narrow it down. The best ideas usually come from lots of ideas being tossed around. Consider how long you can be gone – really think about it, it may be longer than you initially think. Can you work on the road?

❑ PICK A THEME OR TWO

Once you have identified all the ideas you might enjoy doing, there is a sad reality: you can't do it all. So organize those groups of ideas into a "theme" for your trip. Maybe it is seeing some national parks, or seeing baseball games in major-league stadiums, or working on your photography skills. The ideas are endless depending upon your interests. Be sure to pick some things that each person really wants to do.

❑ RESEARCH YOUR IDEAS

Now the fun begins. To further refine your ideas, get on the Internet and browse, order visitor guides from the locations you plan to travel in, buy some books about your destinations, talk to people who share your passions, subscribe to some online "newsletters." Get excited, get motivated to go and again – get everyone in on the fun.

❑ START "SOCIALIZING" THE TRIP WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

One of the most difficult parts of actually doing a trip of a lifetime is gaining the support of your family and friends. It's not that they really don't want you to have this incredible experience; it is that we are all resistant to change, and your leaving means adjustments in their lives. Start early, talk often, but make sure they know you really are going to do this.

❑ DECIDE ON YOUR MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

More research is in order. What kinds of places do you want to stay? Do you want to move every day or stay in one spot for awhile? How important is it to have lots of your belongings with you? Do you have a suitable vehicle? All of these issues will influence your choice of transportation.

❑ DEVELOP A BUDGET TO MEET YOUR GOALS

Few of us have the luxury of unlimited travel funds, so at some point you've got to figure the costs out. We've developed a cool spreadsheet to help with that.

❑ MAKE LISTS OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO LEAVE ON YOUR TRIP

The longer the trip, the bigger the list. There is so much to think about that it may seem overwhelming. You begin to doubt that you can make it happen. But you can. Just take a deep breath, and work through it step-by-step.

❑ PICK A DATE TO LEAVE AND START WORKING TOWARD IT

This is VERY important. Once you have a real date to leave, everything will begin to fall into place and your trip will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. People will help you; you will have a special theme and trip to plan on. Then, before you know it, you will be on your way.

❑ INCLUDE FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN GETTING READY TO GO

Everyone will want to feel included, and feel that you have taken care of their needs while you are gone. One of the best ways to do that is to let them help you plan it and help find solutions to the issues that arise. Every family has issues to manage, don't be discouraged by them

❑ SAY GOOD-BYE AND HAVE THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE!

The work is done and the date is drawing near. Let your friends throw you a going-away party or two if you are going on an extended trip. Take pictures and exchange e-mail addresses in order to stay in touch. Give them your website or blog address, so they can follow your travels. Wave good-bye and embark on the journey of a lifetime!