Secluded beaches, rummy cocktails and glowing sunsets whisper romance... but the Caribbean isn’t only for couples! At our favorite island resorts, the entire family gets in on the fair-weather fun. All rates quoted are off-season, summer rates.

**Islands In The Sun**

**The Best Caribbean Beach Resorts**

Predominantly it’s all about the water sports at this resort on Virgin Gorda, where sailors, would-be sailors and their families have flocked since the 1960s. Accessible only by sea (guests fly into Tortola and ferry over), the resort is the final outpost before the open waters of the Atlantic (hence the name), and overlooks the calm waters of North Sound, which provide near-perfect conditions for water-born fun.

Adults and children as young as age 5 can enrol at the accredited on-site sailing and windsurfing school, learn to dive, or take one of more than 100 watercraft (sailboats, windsurfers and kayaks comprise the largest complimentary resort fleet in the world) out for a spin. During designated Kids’ Weeks, an expanded program features regattas and riotous beach Olympics (think Caribbean leg rolling and watermelon rugby).

The 85-room resort has a village-like feel, its marina, restaurants and shops are a magnet for boaters and day-sailors here in the Caribbean’s yachting hub. For landlubbers, there’s a spa, numerous hiking and running trails, a movie theater on the sand, and three white-sand beaches for castle-building and the like. The all-inclusive Admiral’s package, which includes two adjoining rooms, meals and activities, starts at $4,270 for a seven-night stay. beyc.com

**Best Boating**

**Bitter End Yacht Club, British Virgin Islands**

What can’t families do at Atlantis? The mammoth ocean-themed attraction dominates Paradise Island with more than 3,000 rooms in three resorts, 13 pools, 40 restaurants and bars, a 141-acre water park and the Bahamas’ largest casino, all surrounded by a vast waterscape of lagoons, aquamarines and waterfalls.

You’ll probably won’t need to pack much more than swimsuits for your kids, because they’ll likely spend most of their vacation here soaking wet. Little ones go wild at Splashers, where four slides and a bullet that shoots 20 gallons of water are the big draws. Kids taller than four feet – and their intrepid guardians – can brave the Power Tower, where The Abyss slide plunges 50 feet into darkness. On land, the Atlantis Kids’ Adventures club offers 5 to 12-year-olds “entertainment” options (from $45 per session), such as cooking lessons, pottery classes and video games, plus tween and teen nightclubs that keep the party going way past bedtime.

Foodie parents will find their fix at restaurants including Nobu, Bobby Flay’s Mesa Grill and Café Martinique by Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Work off the calories at the rock-climbing center, or indulge in the shopping arcade, where you can spend your casino winnings at Cartier and Versace.

From $240 per room per night; atlantis.com

**Best Water Park**

**Atlantis, The Bahamas**

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Islands In The Sun

Club Med Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Just a 10-minute drive from Punta Cana airport, this resort offers a refreshing departure from the architectural aesthetic of most Dominican Republic all-inclusives. Instead of featureless, multi-story room blocks, Club Med Punta Cana is set up like a village, with 552 rooms in sorbet-colored low-rise buildings spread over palm tree-studded beachfront.

Multi-lingual staff (French, English, Italian) from 19 countries run the impressive kids' program, designed to keep little ones as young as 4 months old entertained. Mini Club Med (for the 4-to-10-year-old set) and the Teen Club offer all the usual water sports and indoor games, plus archery classes and the wildly popular flying trapeze and circus school.

By far the best accommodations are 16 villa-like, water’s-edge suites in the resort’s premium Tiara 5 Trident area, which, at more than 700 square-feet, come with complementary room service and Wi-Fi, espresso machines and mini bars. Tiara guests also enjoy the attentions of a concierge, on-call buggy service for navigating the hotel’s 75 acres and exclusive access to an oceanfront infinity pool and bar where champagne cocktails are served every evening.

A L’Occitane spa debuted here late last year, offering indulgences for children ages 8 and older, including “Toe-tally About Me” pedicures. From $3,475 all-inclusive, two adults and two children. clubmed.com

Beaches, Jamaica and the Turks & Caicos Islands

You can never go wrong with Big Bird, right? The giant canary and all his Sesame Street pals appear at three all-you-can-everything resorts (two in Jamaica, the other on Providenciales), where kids can bake with Cookie Monster, have story time with Elmo and learn about science with Super Grover.

At the Turks & Caicos resort on the white-sand shores of Grace Bay, the new Key West Village features three-story, three- and four-bedroom villas that are ideal for large families, and serviced by butlers who’ll unpack for you, make reservations at any of 16 resort restaurants and even shine your shoes at no extra charge.

The Jamaican resorts, in Negril and Ocho Rios, both have their own water parks, offer Xbox lounges, Scratch DJ Academies and nightclubs for teens, childcare for infants, and kids’ clubs for toddlers through tweens. Rates at the Ocho Rios resort also include greens fees, unlimited golf and transfers to nearby Sandals Golf & Country Club, as well as complimentary clinics for adults and children.

From $276 all-inclusive per person, per night. Kids ages 3 to 16, $120 all-inclusive, per night. beaches.com

The Best Family Vacations USA Today
Islands In The Sun

Four Seasons, Nevis

South of Puerto Rico and west of Antigua, Nevis is one of the region’s less-trafficked islands. The Four Seasons resort here offers rooms overlooking Pinney’s Beach, but families should head for the hills, where 40 villas are perched on the edge of the rainforest. Each offers plenty of space and privacy, combined with the service and amenities of the five-star resort that’s only 10 minutes away via complimentary golf cart.

Each summer, two of the reptiles that arrive to nest on the resort’s beach are electronically tagged, and kids can track “their” turtles year-round.

For adults, there’s a spa that offers treatments featuring rum and mud from the island’s volcano. And the resort’s course is not only a challenge for golfers but a bonafide attraction for the whole family. At sunset, kids won’t forget the sight of troupes of green vervet monkeys (which outnumber islanders) scampering along the fairways. And neither will you.

From $695; per night, per room. kids younger than age 5 eat free, and a fourth-night-free promotion runs until Dec. 31. Four Seasons, Nevis

Fowl Cay, The Bahamas

Families searching for seclusion will find it – and more – at this private-island resort in the Exumas’ archipelago. Only six one-, two- and three-bedroom cottages (with evocative names such as Sweetwater, Sea Breeze and Starlight) dot the landscape, each spaced far enough apart that you’ll feel as if you have the entire isle to yourself.

Tiny guests learn to sail and ride horses, but the centerpiece of the Kids For All Seasons program is the turtle day camp, which teaches 3- to 9-year-olds about endangered hawksbill and green turtles, and how to protect their beach habitat. Each summer, two of the reptiles that arrive to nest on the resort’s beach are electronically tagged, and kids can track “their” turtles year-round.

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Fowl Cay is pricey but it is also unpretentious, and families will appreciate the casual “make-yourself-at-home” vibe fostered by the staff. Continental breakfast is set up in cottage kitchens so you can fuel up at leisure (and kids needn’t even change out of their pajamas). Lunch and dinner are at Hill House, where there’s a pool, a bar, a grill and an ocean-view terrace. Windsurfing, kiteboarding and water skiing are the main draws, but the resort also offers tennis, snorkeling and sailing.

From about $1,850 per night, per room. Fowl Cay, The Bahamas

Kids can track their electronically tagged turtles year-round.
Islands In The Sun

The island has no airport, and its 22 cottages have no TVs, Wi-Fi, telephones or even room keys. Yet since it opened in the 1960s, generations of families have escaped to this private-island oasis south of Barbados for laid-back getaways that revolve around the Caribbean trifecta of sun, sea and sand.

While there’s no formal children’s program at PSV, there’s plenty for everyone to do on the 115-acre island. Sail, snorkel or fish the archipelago’s gin-clear waters; take a day cruise to the nearby Tobago Cays, where you can swim with turtles; hike up the island’s Marni Hill for sweeping views of neighboring Petit Martinique; have a Balinese massage in the hillside spa; or enjoy movies under the stars, projected onto an inflatable screen set up on the oceanview main lawn. Meals may be taken either in the main pavilion or beach restaurant, but many families choose the convenience of dining (at no extra charge) in the one- and two-bedroom waterfront and cliff’s-edge cottages. Each spacious spread is serviced by a motorcade of beach buggy-driving staff. If you need something, simply place a note in the bamboo mailbox outside and hoist the yellow flag. Want privacy? Fly the red pennant and you’ll not be disturbed.

From $1,100 all-inclusive per night for two adults for a one-bedroom villa. Children younger than age 14, $100 per night all-inclusive. A summer promotion, valid through Aug. 31, offers seven nights for the price of five. petitstvincent.com

This posh chain might not be the first that comes to mind for a family vacay, but the Seven-Mile-Beach resort attracts lots of discerning families each summer. Credit may be due to the annual Cayman Summer Splash promotion, which offers free nights and complimentary activities at many hotels (see caymansplash.ky for current offers). But the Ritz-Carlton holds up its end of the bargain, with a raft of amenities and activities that appeals to young and old guests.

Kids’ activities revolve around the Jean-Michel Cousteau Ambassadors of the Environment program, which introduces environmental sustainability and responsibility through a curriculum of half-day activities, including snorkeling, mangrove tours, cooking and photography. From June through August (for an extra charge), the resort also runs weeklong summer camps, focused either on tennis or the environment.

For adults there’s Silver Rain, an over-the-top La Prairie-branded spa, and Blue, the gastronomic Caribbean outpost of chef Eric Ripert from New York’s Le Bernardin. Play nine holes on the Greg Norman-designed Blue Tip course, or just soak up the sun on one of the resort’s Aqua Loungers, floating “beds” you rent by the half-day that come with private waiter service right to your sea-borne chaise.

From $299 per room, per night. Children younger than age 5 dine free in select restaurants. ritzcarlton.com

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DO
• Make sure everyone has a passport. They’re required for U.S. citizens visiting all Caribbean destinations except Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
• Choose destinations with direct flights if you’re traveling with young children. It can take longer to reach some Caribbean islands than it does to get to Europe.

DON’T
• Forget to pack sunscreen and insect repellent—and lots of it. You’ll likely need more than you think.
• Rely on island stores to have your kids’ favorite snacks, your preferred brand of formula or premium diapers. Even if you can find them, they’ll cost significantly more than at home.
• Underestimate how much sunscreen you’ll need. Heavy island humidity lengthens drying times, so unless you don’t mind shammying into a damp suit, bring at least one for every day of your vacation.