



Come fly with me

Having a baby in tow doesn't mean overseas holiday plans have to be shelved

"At first just getting home from the hospital with our new daughter was a challenge," confessed Martina Freeman, 33, mother of two, "but when my cousin's wedding invitation arrived, we knew we couldn't miss it." Travelling with a three-month-old and a four-year-old to Europe seemed daunting at first, but after speaking to other experienced parents she felt confident they could do it.

"Think carefully about where you are going, ask lots of questions and be prepared," she advises. "After the wedding, we travelled for a month across Europe. Aside from a couple of small dramas, I would not have missed it for the world."

Resorts, beach retreats, cities and cruise ships are

often at the top of parents' lists of easy overseas holidays. As long as they are with parents, most babies don't mind where they go but there are some places and journeys where taking young children is not recommended.

Trekking through the Amazon jungle or dog sledding across Greenland may need to wait. Obviously dangerous, unstable, disaster-struck or war-torn locations are out, as well as countries lacking tourism infrastructure or basic medical facilities, therefore the Ivory Coast in remote Africa is off the itinerary. Most first world countries easily cater for babies and many third world countries love children and bringing babies along will often open doors that would otherwise be closed.

On a visit to Asia, Fran Gardner, 37, mother of a 20-month-old boy was surprised by the constant

invitations to people's homes, friendly service in shops and approaches by locals who warmed instantly to her child. "The attitude to other tourists who did not have children was quite different," she says. "Bringing a baby turned out to be an advantage."

Getting ready

Preparing was the hardest part. With a shake of her head, Fran recalls trying to get Jamie a passport. "Whoever set out the passport photo regulations that include closed mouth, no smile, level head and shoulders and open eyes looking straight at the camera, obviously never had children." It took three trips to the post office and nine photo shoots at her local long-suffering pharmacy to create an acceptable passport picture.

"Eventually, chewing a jelly bean which he had never tasted before, the contorted,

bemused and puzzled face of our son now graces a passport looking more like a grim and wild young convict snapped on his way to incarceration than anyone we know."

Packing

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the smaller the person the more luggage they need. Always pack well ahead of departure, as you will need time to sort and get the things you don't have. If something is left behind, an internationally accepted credit card can cover most things along the way.

So much of what you must take depends on where and for how long you are going, check out the list opposite for what to pack.

It is distressing when your child is sick in a strange place so have a small basic first aid kit with any medications your family may need as well as a thermometer, gel soap, antiseptic ointment, pain/fever relief, bandages, bandaids, insect repellent, sunscreen and small first aid manual. Always check that the

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