

Take Virtual Field Trips

The internet is full of free online tours of places all over the world—and beyond. We've paired fun and educational virtual field trips with real-life activities your child can do at home.

National parks

Peer into the Grand Canyon, catch a glimpse of Old Faithful, and hike trails beneath majestic redwoods and sequoias. You can get 360 views of popular sites in 31 national parks at google.com/earth/ (search “national parks”). Just click on arrows to navigate the sites and learn about landforms, plants, animals, and more.

Younger children: Use index cards to make postcards for parks you “visit.” Draw pictures of sights you saw, and tell what you liked best about each one.

Older children: Pick a national park for your family to visit one day. Write up a plan that includes how long it would take to get there, the cost of transportation, lodging, and meals, and what activities you would do. Create a PowerPoint presentation for your parents.

Art museums

Tour art museums around the world at <https://joyofmuseums.com/?s=virtual+tours> or by searching “virtual art museum tours.” You might see paintings and sculptures at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City or The Art Institute of Chicago, for example. View the works to discover various artists and different styles of art.

Younger children: Create your own masterpieces. Make a hallway gallery of your art and give your parents a tour.

Older children: Try painting in various styles—impressionism like Claude Monet’s paintings or pointillism like Georges Seurat’s work. Or go with a style all your own. Post your creations on social media to share with friends and relatives.

Zoos and aquariums

View webcams to see what the animals are up to these days (type “animal webcams” into a search engine). You can observe koalas at the San Diego Zoo in San Diego, CA, beluga whales at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, GA, and more. <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams> <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/beluga-whale-webcam/>

Younger children: Check out e-books from the library about animals you saw. Now write and illustrate your own book about one or more animals.

Older children: Do research to learn more about the zoo animals’ natural habitats and how zookeepers care for them. Find out about careers that involve working with animals.

Landmarks

Explore geography and culture by visiting famous landmarks and other sites around the world at <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/street-view>. You could walk around the Taj Mahal (India), look down from the top of the Eiffel Tower (France), and gaze up at The Great Pyramid of Giza (Egypt).

Younger children: Build models of the sites, perhaps creating play dough pyramids or a Lego Eiffel Tower.

Older children: Check out related e-books from the library. You might enjoy a novel set in the country where the site is located or a nonfiction book about the landmark’s history.

Mars

Trek across the surface of Mars. At accessmars.withgoogle.com/, you can navigate interactive images from NASA’s Curiosity Rover. Click on the terrain to see parts of the planet the rover explored. There are also icons that provide more information about the geography of Mars and NASA’s mission.

Younger children: Pretend you’re an astronaut, and write a script about your out-of-this-world experience. Put on your one-person play for your family.

Older children: Draw a design for a Mars colony. How will you address human needs, such as food, water, oxygen, and physical activity?