



# TRAVEL BY AIR, SEA OR LAND

When you're busy with small children it can be tempting to put off travelling until they're older. There's so much to pack, and disrupting their routine is a recipe for tantrums, right? Well ... probably. But the fun you'll have could easily outweigh the hassle.

WORDS MARIE KREFT  
 PHOTOGRAPHY ERIC CHUN  
 ART DIRECTION & STYLING JANET KOH  
 & SEOW KAI LUN

## Fly my Pretties

*Go by plane because ...*

-  You can reach faraway destinations swiftly.
-  Night flights allow small people to sleep.
-  Air travel captures children's imaginations.

If you're thinking about booking flights, ask what the airline offers for small passengers: bassinets, car seat restraints, luggage allowance, baby food, bottles and pre-boarding options may all need advance consideration. Will you have your under-twos as 'lap babies', reserve seats for them, or hope there will be empty seats next to you? Your airline may have a policy on this.

Airports are exciting places for tiring out little legs and busy minds, and many have dedicated play areas. Your children may enjoy having their own mini luggage; an added advantage is that you can pack their snacks, toys and wipes inside, keeping them readily accessible. You can buy toddler-friendly rucksacks with detachable reins, ideal for crowded areas such as airport terminals.

It's a good idea to tell your small companions in advance what is expected of them: they'll need to use the toilet before boarding, for example, and won't be able to go again until the seatbelt signs are switched off. You might be surprised at how keen they are to prove themselves. Tame squabbling siblings by drawing up a rota for occupying the 'best seat' (usually by the window).

You can also help keep your baby content by offering your breast, a bottle or pacifier during take-off and landing, relieving pressure on her ears.

Singapore-based 'Daddy Blogger' Kelvin Ang, who writes about his adventures with his three children Ash, Ayd and Ale ([www.cheekiemonkie.net](http://www.cheekiemonkie.net)) thinks the secret to happy family holidays is to relax.

"Kids will pick up on your stress and in turn raise their own anxiety," he says. "Fussing over them will get them over-excited and more prone to acting out. It may be exceedingly tempting to administer that bottle of cough syrup especially on a long journey, but by staying relaxed during the whole trip, kids should stay chill."

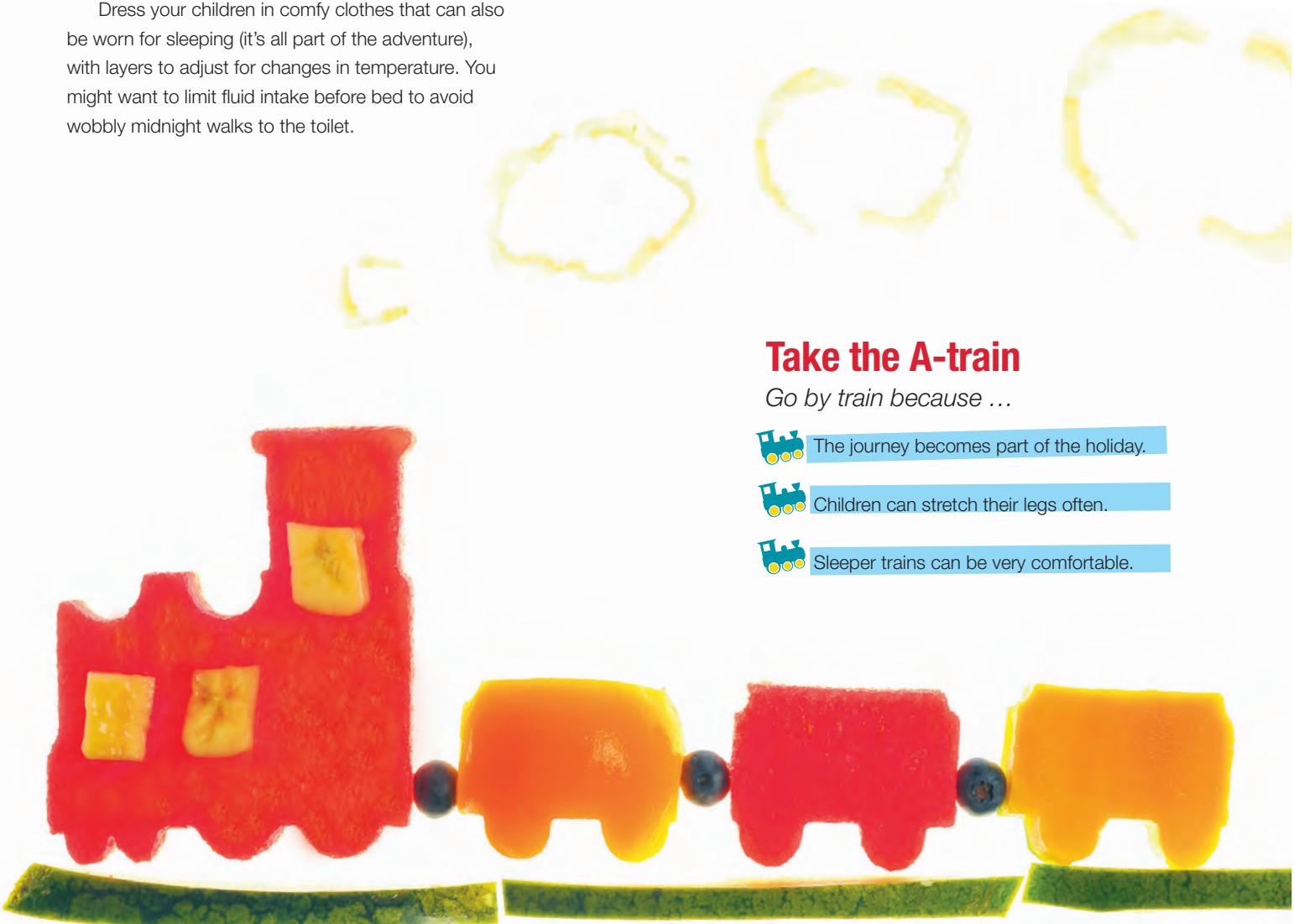
FRUITS: CUT WITH LUNCH PUNCH VRRRRMM! SET

Rather than being a mere mode of transport, a sleeper train could turn out to be the highlight of your children's holiday. It's exciting to watch the world hurtling past the windows, to roam up and down the carriages, and then to 'camp' overnight in a cosy cabin. Unlike flying you don't have to check in at the station hours in advance and, because most stations are located in the middle of cities, you arrive right in the bustle of your destination.

When you book, check that the cabin configuration suits your family and, if one or more of you will have to sleep separately, ask about locks and security. Although you'll be keeping your luggage nearby, it's good to pack hand luggage as you would for a flight, so you can access toiletries, favourite toys and other essentials easily.

Dress your children in comfy clothes that can also be worn for sleeping (it's all part of the adventure), with layers to adjust for changes in temperature. You might want to limit fluid intake before bed to avoid wobbly midnight walks to the toilet.

**It's exciting to watch the world hurtling past the windows, to roam up and down the carriages, and then to 'camp' overnight in a cosy cabin**



## Take the A-train

*Go by train because ...*

 The journey becomes part of the holiday.

 Children can stretch their legs often.

 Sleeper trains can be very comfortable.

Kelvin says his family's favourite kind of vacation is a road trip up to Malaysia.

"We love the fact that we can take our time to explore the various child-centric places that Malaysia has to offer, from the theme parks in Genting Highlands and LEGOLAND, to the goat farm stay in Johor and even the fantastic food spread in Malacca!"

If you're hiring a car, check the car seats are age-appropriate, and legal for the country in which you're driving. Other ways to keep your pint-sized passengers safe and comfortable are with removable sunshades, lightweight blankets and layered clothing, plenty of water and healthy snacks.

A long car journey with little ones is all about preserving sanity: yours and theirs. Paper, crayons, colouring books, quizzes and puzzles, story CDs, games consoles or DVD players ... pack whatever you need to keep everyone amused (and don't forget earphones). It's a good idea to put your kids' bags on top of yours as they're more likely to want (or "neeeeeed") items out of them than you are. Baby wipes, packs of tissues and plastic bags for rubbish may come in handy. Old towels can be invaluable for mopping up spills, or for sitting on if the seats get too hot.

You may wish to travel through the night so your kids can sleep, but obviously don't drive when you're tired. A Frisbee, ball or bubbles make for great distractions and energy-burners in between spells of travelling. If your older children can tell the time, ask them to count down to each rest stop.

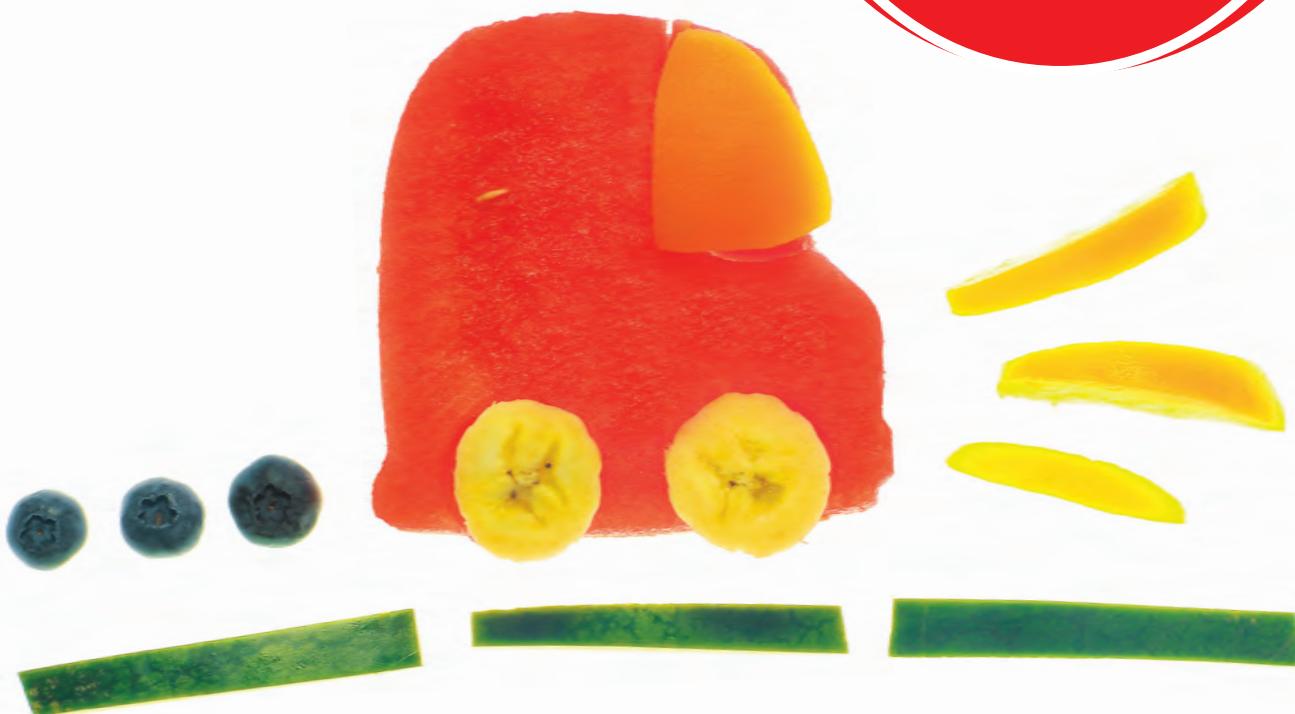
A final tip to avoid sulks: wake sleeping beauties gently as you approach your destination, allowing them to surface slowly.

## Just Drive

Go by car because

-  You're free to set off, and stop, when you want.
-  You can take as much luggage as your car will hold.
-  You won't disturb other travellers.

**If you're hiring a car, check the car seats are age-appropriate, and legal for the country in which you're driving**





## Take A Cruise

Go by ship because



There is entertainment on board for all generations.



Someone else takes care of the catering and cleaning.



Many cruise liners offer childcare, giving you a break.

A floating holiday isn't the best idea if you have a child with motion sickness. Although most people find their sea legs eventually, you might not want to take the risk. With cruises it's also important to think about air transfers – if they are necessary, will they fit in with your family's schedule?

Many cruises are geared up to children, with playrooms, cinemas and waterparks. You can check out Royal Caribbean International's cruise ship Legend of the Seas, which offers departures from Singapore (6305 0033), and is renowned for fun activities for young guests. Kids and teens from three to 17 are invited to join their complimentary fun and educational

Adventure Ocean activities specially tailored to fit separate age groups, such as story time, themed parties, face painting, backstage tours, talent shows, scavenger hunts and many more.

Don't forget to ask about childcare, stateroom configurations, cots, guardrails, shore excursions, dress codes for dinner ... even whether babies in nappies are allowed in the pools (some cruise companies say no to this). Bigger cabins such as the Royal Caribbean suites (Junior suites and above) have bathtubs otherwise you could bring an inflatable one for your baby, small enough to fit in a shower cubicle.

Also consider seasickness remedies, and budgeting for snacks, drinks and

tips. While food will be readily available on board, shore excursions may need extra planning to avoid plummeting blood sugar levels and grumpy kids (and parents).

Thanks to early mornings, later nights and sea air, tots may tire more quickly than usual. Set aside downtime in your room, maybe before dinner, for napping, reading or quiet games. If your little one has only recently given up her pushchair don't dismiss the idea of bringing it. **m**

### A TIP FOR ALL TRIPS

Give your children their own cheap camera. When you get home, it will be magical to relive your holiday through their eyes.

