

# The American Express guide to emerging cities

Give the family a break from the norm

*Reykjavik, Iceland*



*Rotterdam, Netherlands: From busy port to tranquil countryside*

City breaks are made for families. Lots of excitement packed into a short space of time. The only thing is, when travelling with the children, it's all too tempting to return to the same few places, time after time. But now, with airlines introducing more and more exciting European routes, here are some ideas and top tips to help you take an inspiring break with tradition.

## Here are our emerging favourites:

### 1 REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

Start at Hallgrímskirkja Church for a stunning view of the city's colourful houses. Later, take the children for a swim with a difference, at Laugardalslaug geothermal pools. And if they're into fancy dress, there's always Viking armour to try for size.

### 2 ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Rotterdam has been named as one of the best European cities for families to visit. Maybe it's because there's so much water around, which children will love. Why not explore the city by water cab, and stay a few nights on board the floating hotel SS Rotterdam?

### 3 HELSINKI, FINLAND

We love Helsinki (see Helsinki to Tallinn in our A to B Guide to Family Adventure) because it's one of the most family-friendly cities in Europe. Children see it as one big playground, as they have eight amazing parks to choose from – with some set close to beautiful shorelines.

### 4 WROCLAW, POLAND

Dotted around a maze of islands, Wroclaw is dubbed the 'Venice of Poland'. What's in it for children? Well, lots. For instance, any family stroll around the city turns into a fun treasure hunt, with comical pint-sized statues popping up in the most unexpected places. After that, visits to the zoo and waterpark are just the ticket.

### 5 KOTOR, MONTENEGRO

This ancient city literally emerges out of a 'ria', or submerged river canyon in the Adriatic. Here the theme is tranquility and beauty, and a city which can be explored entirely on foot. Just wait until the children see the views of Kotor Bay, as they climb the cliff steps to the top of the city walls.



*Children will love Kotor Bay*

“ As a family, we love discovering a new place, its history, traditions and people. Recently, we visited Helsinki, and were blown away by the hospitality of the locals.

**James Cracknell**, Amex Travel Ambassador & Olympic Gold Medallist

## OUR TOP TIPS FOR FAMILY TRIPS

Travelling to one of our emerging cities? Check our family travel tips first.

### Before you go

#### Some homework for the kids:

- Encourage them to research the city you're visiting, especially its history and attractions
- Ask them to print maps of the city, or bookmark them on their phones.

#### And some help with the legwork:

- Invest in a baby-carrying backpack (aka a child carrier) so you can use public transport and navigate cobbled streets more easily.

#### Don't forget to pack:

- A small (but powerful) torch so you can walk back to your accommodation safely at night or in dimly lit areas
- A smart phone or tablet, especially to access online forums to help plan family-friendly outings.



Heavenly strolling



Helpful scrolling



With flying comes responsibility

### During the journey

- Give each child their own (manageable) suitcase. It gives them a sense of ownership and means one bag fewer for you to carry
- Pack small water bottles and encourage your children to refill them at water fountains
- Educate (or should that be 'entertain') your family by teaching them local phrases.

### At your destination

- Soon after arrival, book restaurants near popular sights or busy attractions so you have an assured table (don't forget to cancel any you don't need)
- Ask your hotel concierge or B&B owner for tips or advice on family restaurants. You won't find those kinds of insights in the guidebooks.

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