

The art of traveling with your little ones.



Helping you dream it, plan it and enjoy it!

www.thesingsingsuitcase.com



about ME

Hey there, I'm Melissa! I'm so glad you found your way to this e-book! My love of travel all started on my very first voyage to Paris with my French class in 8th grade. Since then, I've been bitten by the travel bug and have been on a mission to explore as much of the world as possible. My bucket list is a mile long, but I've been super lucky to check off some incredible destinations like Hawaii, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, and the Dominican Republic.

Now that I've got two little adventurers in tow, we're making a family pact to keep on exploring together. We want our family to be raised by travel and I'm here to help you do the same. We follow the same principles that I'm sharing with you here and we're making our dreams a reality. I'm passionate about helping families pursue their travel dreams, especially with kids in tow.

Be sure to check out our website at thesingingsuitcase.com and be sure to follow us on Instagram and Facebook. In addition to offering valuable resources for traveling kids, we are a full-service, concierge travel agency specializing in planning memorable and seamless trips for families. We'd love to talk to you about making your travel dreams a reality!


Melissa 

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01 mindset matters

I only read one book in preparation for our first baby. Bringing Up Bebe by Pamela Druckerman. I just happen to pick this one first from my lengthy first-time mom reading list. After I finished, I decided it was enough. I was good. I loved it. The most memorable advice was around sleeping (which was my biggest fear in having kids, I really like sleep!). Druckerman said that if you *think* your baby can and will sleep, they will. If you don't, they probably won't.

Our mindset matters. Our kids *can* rise to the occasion if we believe that they will! That's been our #1 philosophy in traveling with toddlers. Eloise was 9 months old when we took her on her first trip to Disneyland. Even though it's a short 2 hour flight from PDX, I was still nervous. I had to believe that she was capable of sleeping in a hotel crib, flexing with nap time and thriving outside our usual routine at home. Was the trip perfect? No, absolutely not. BUT she did it and spent more time smiling than crying and we all had a memorable first trip.

Keeping my mindset in check before we even leave home is often a challenge, but I have to believe that the girls are capable of handling the trip. Since that first Disney trip, we've worked our way up to cross-country flights with 2 under 2 and almost two weeks away from home. The hardest moments are when I forget and get flustered and hands down the best times are when I'm calm and remember that we're in this together and enjoy the experience with my family.

Ponder This...

What is my biggest fear when it comes to taking my littles on a trip?

What are three beliefs I could try out that would give me a better mindset about traveling with my littles?

What does a successful trip look like for our family?



02 *start in your comfort zone*

There are so many quotes floating around about how growth only happens outside your comfort zone. I worked at a summer camp for years and I've quoted most of them! But, today, I'm suggesting the opposite. At least in the beginning of your journey to raise traveling kiddos. Start in your comfort zone.

We have a small tent trailer that we use for summer camping adventures. I insist that our first trip out each season is to the State Park that is literally 7 miles from our house for one night. In fact, when we got the trailer and the girls were tiny, that's the only park I would go to. I knew that if no one slept or the water didn't work that we could be home in 20 minutes, even at 3am. This made me feel confident in our decision to go out and try. This summer, we're taking our longest trip, 189 miles away and 7 nights! But it's taken me THREE years to agree to a trip this big.

Give your positive mindset a fighting chance and start in your comfort zone. This will help you believe that your trip will be a success. Maybe a day trip that's a one hour drive away feels comfortable to you and perhaps even that's too far! That's ok! I recommend our Dreaming Worksheet to find a great place to start while holding out your bigger dreams as the destinations to aspire to!

Ponder This...

What is your travel comfort zone? Do you already know?

How does your comfort zone impact your mindset? Are they connected?

Start a list of destinations that are within your comfort zone.



03 let's talk expectations

Behind the smiling photos and good memories of any trip will always be a list of things that go wrong. The diaper blowout on the plane, the sick kid, a night without sleep, delayed flights, lost luggage...you don't need me to list them. You've probably had nightmares about them all. No trip is ever perfect. Even without kids. There is always something that doesn't go quite as planned. I think those who really love to travel actually see those moments as some of the most memorable experiences.

It's in these moments, when things don't go as expected, that our kids catch what's most important in life from us. Can we flex and adapt to changing circumstances to make the best of moments that are challenging, uncomfortable or upsetting? Can we show them how to handle disappointment when things don't go as we planned or imagined? I believe so many of these lessons in life are caught and not taught. And they're the most valuable ones!

Travel teaches kids (and us too, let's be honest) how to be flexible, adaptable, resourceful, creative, patient and adventurous. Try leaving high expectations at home and looking at travel as an opportunity for your family to grow as individuals and as a team. This will happen in the stressful moments and the fun ones too. Be prepared and ready for anything, that's half the fun of traveling!

Ponder This...

Who is the most adaptable person you know? What do you admire about them?

How adaptable are you from 0-10? What's made you this way?

What's something you'd like your Littles to catch from you while traveling?



04 *resist the naysayers*

(and it may be you!)

- The kids won't remember, so why bother?
- It's too expensive to travel!
- It's not safe to travel with kids!
- Who has time to plan a trip?
- I don't want to go somewhere that's only for kids
- The kids are too young, we'll just wait until they're older
- It's too much work to leave home, so let's just stay where it's easier!
- (Insert your own list here)

Obstacles are part of anything we do in life! You're probably reading this because you actually want to travel and you want to expose your kids to the bigger world around them. I've got an answer to all the objections, but I've worked through them and we've made the decision that it is worth the time, expense, energy and effort to make travel part of our kids growing up experience. It won't always be easy! The other day, my 4 year old shared that she loves her friend Anna because her family travels too and they get to share stories of their trips with each other. They were also discussing Paris and how excited they are to see the Eiffel Tower. Not typical preschool conversation I suspect, but I LOVE it! It's exactly what we dreamed of for our kids!

Ponder This...

Who is the strongest nay-sayer in your life about travel?

What is the strongest negative message you have heard that goes against your travel dreams?

List out the negative messages, write a positive one to counter them all, make those your new message!



Eloise had a Paris themed 5th birthday!

05 Tips for Toddler Travel

1. **Playgrounds & Ice Cream** - For my kids, no matter where we go, we can turn any day around with a good playground and some ice cream. Good news, you can find both in almost any destination!
2. **Practice Makes Perfect** - It took us a few trips to figure out our hotel routine. Now everyone knows how we live together in a hotel room and it's super easy, but it took a few tries to get it right!
3. **Find Your Go-To Things** - We have family favorites that make traveling so much easier. From carseats to airplane snacks, we have key items that we never leave home without. Check out our Amazon Store (we may receive a small commission if you purchase from this link).
4. **Pick ONE Big Activity Each Day** - We usually ask what everyone wants to do in a day while traveling and try hard to make it happen, but we always only pick one major activity. Anything else puts the pressure on us all and it's often too much.

We believe it is possible for you to dream, plan and enjoy great trips with your young family. And we believe it's a great thing for kids to be raised by travel. We're here to be your cheerleaders to make your travel dreams come true!

For more Traveling Tips be sure to follow us at The Singing Suitcase on Instagram and Facebook.

Ponder This...

What tip stands out the most to you? Why?

Who can you ask for help in planning if that's overwhelming?

Reach out for help with your next steps because it's hard work to plan a trip. We're here to help!

