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Family Adventures in Sacramento

Families need look no further than Sacramento for a welcoming destination that will please visitors of any age. From cool historical sites to kid-friendly restaurants, the city is packed with family-sized fun. Below are just a few family adventures to try in the Sacramento region; for a complete list, visit Sacramento365.com.

Zoo & Amusement Parks

Ask any local parent for their favorite Sacramento spot for kids and the [Sacramento Zoo](#), [Fairytale Town](#) and [Funderland](#) in the 166-acre William Land Park are always high on the list. The Sacramento Zoo has been remodeled, expanded and now features more than 140 native, endangered or threatened species, in a lush park environment. Across the street, younger children will feel transported into a dream world at Fairytale Town. For 50 years, this unique setting has brought nursery rhymes and fairytales to life with puppet shows, dress-up days, group activities and scaled-down play lands. Visit with Peter Rabbit and friends, meet kings and queens, ride giant slides and enjoy the petting zoo. Or for good old-fashioned amusement park fun, head across the way to [Funderland](#), where kids can ride the mini-sized roller-coasters, tea cups and other thrilling rides.

The Arts

Your budding artists will find no shortage of inspiration in Sacramento. Midtown's energetic [artBEAST](#) is your preschooler's dream come true, featuring drop-in studio space where kids can draw, finger-paint or develop other fun creations to their heart's content. The city's famed [Crocker Art Museum](#) also caters to younger patrons with special art classes for toddlers, preschoolers and more. If the play's the thing, the [California Musical Theater](#) offers national musical productions for kids throughout the year, and downtown's [B Street Theatre](#) also offers many family-friendly shows.

Little Foodies

Travelers of all ages can take a bite out of Sacramento's explosive food scene. Recognized as [America's Farm-to-Fork Capital](#), the region offers a host of fresh and delicious options for every visitor. The region is home to more than 40 farmers markets, including the bustling [Midtown Farmers Market](#) every Saturday and [the downtown Sunday market under the freeway](#) that features a 70,000 square-foot mural. [Empress Tavern](#), arguably one of Sacramento's hottest new restaurants, may look like a spot for adults only, but the in-house team is thrilled to serve younger guests. Empress provides kid-sized portions of the eatery's rotisserie favorites along with yummy house-made desserts. Or try a kid-sized creation from the bar at [Mikuni Sushi](#), one of the region's most well-known Japanese restaurants. Local favorite [Selland's Market and Café](#) in East Sacramento offers veggies fresh from the farm, and its sister Italian spot, [Obo](#), serves up pizzas, pasta and meatballs and more comfort classics. Not far from the Sacramento Zoo, hungry families pack the booths at [Dad's Kitchen](#) for farm-to-fork burgers and

sandwiches. And for a sweet treat, don't miss a slice of cake from 50's-style [Rick's Dessert Diner](#), or a scoop from [Gunther's](#), named one of country's best ice cream shops by Business Insider.

Sports

Junior sports fans will have plenty to cheer for in the Sacramento region. Younger sluggers will enjoy [The Sacramento River Cats](#), the Triple A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants, who have been playing to sold-out crowds at Raley Field for more than 15 seasons. Professional soccer came to Sacramento in 2014 when the [Sacramento Republic FC](#) began playing at Bonney Field (now Papa Murphy's Park), winning the USL Pro Championship in its inaugural season and selling out almost every match. In 2019, the Republic FC was awarded the 29th MLS expansion team after a 5-year journey and are set to start playing in 2022.

If basketball is your thing, join 'the loudest fans in the NBA,' as [Sacramento Kings](#) fans have shown the difference that hometown support can make. The King's play at the LEED Platinum certified [Golden 1 Center](#) in the Downtown Commons (DoCo) area.

California History

Blending education with fun is always a winning combination, and there's no better place to explore both than in [Old Sacramento Waterfront](#). As you enter the 28-acre town of historic buildings constructed in the mid-1800s, you'll step back in time to the California Gold Rush era. Wooden sidewalks, horse-drawn carriages, old-fashioned candy shops, and a Mississippi-style riverboat offer a hands-on introduction to early Golden State history. Children of all ages will love the interactive experiences, such as riding on a steam train, peeking inside a one-room schoolhouse, or dressing in period costumes for an "old-fashioned" family photo. With "Living History" volunteers roaming the town in period costume from the 1850s, Old Sacramento is the perfect setting for a fun and interactive history lesson. Families can even explore [under the streets of Old Sacramento](#) to see what the city looked like before it was raised up to accommodate flood waters in the Old West. Outside of Old Sacramento, the learning continues. At [Sutter's Fort State Historic Park](#), kids will love the chance to make believe they're pioneers stopping at the trading post for supplies.

Museums

Beyond California history, kids can explore a host of museums in the Sacramento region that are anything but typical. [The Sacramento Children's Museum](#) will entertain younger kids with a variety of hands-on play experiences ranging from finger-painting to dress-up. The [Powerhouse Science Center](#) brings out the curiosity in all of us with planetarium shows, an amazing space program called the "Challenger Learning Center," a nature trail, nature discovery room with live animals and geology and fossil exhibits. If your youngster can't get enough of airplanes and cars, they'll love climbing inside real cockpits at the [Aerospace Museum of California](#) or checking out the massive 'garage' at the [California Automobile Museum](#). If you've got a young train-enthusiast in your family, then Sacramento's [California State Railroad Museum](#) should definitely be on your itinerary. The museum is one of the largest train museums in the country, and kids get to climb aboard the trains, listen to re-enactments, learn about how a steam engine works and interact with the incredibly knowledgeable docents. Don't miss the \$1 million toy train collection! And if you're visiting during the holiday season, be sure to get your tickets to ride Sacramento's very own [Polar Express ride](#) from the museum to the "North Pole." You'll also find

this kid-friendly style next door at the [Sacramento History Museum](#), where kids are invited to try their luck at panning for gold.

Events

No one throws a party quite like Sacramento, and the region offers countless events throughout the year that are perfect for the whole family. The summer fun kicks off each July at the [California State Fair](#) where kids can play games in the midway, meet furry friends at the farm or enjoy delicious treats from around the Golden State. During Labor Day Weekend, visitors can celebrate the region's heritage and Gold Rush History in Old Sacramento, when the city is transported back to the Old West for [Gold Rush Days](#), complete with stagecoaches, cowboys and much more. In September, Sacramento's annual month-long Farm-to-Fork Celebration is packed with festivities highlighting all-things food. The biggest event is the [Farm-to-Fork Festival](#), a free street faire spanning the city's Capitol Mall and filled to the brim with restaurants, farms, ranches and much more. The Festival is designed to show visitors of all ages where their food comes from, and give them a taste of it, too! And to end the year, Sacramento will say goodbye to 2016 in style at the annual [New Year's Eve Sky Spectacular](#), an outdoor bash on Sacramento's waterfront that caters to kids with music, games, food and more. The family fun culminates in an incredible fireworks display at 9 p.m.

Outdoor Adventures

Sacramento offers countless new and fun ways to take advantage of beautiful California scenery. Practice bike riding or skating on part of the smooth and safe 32-mile long [American River Parkway](#) or explore [Old Sacramento](#) on tandem and four-some bikes that are big enough for the whole family. Adventurous whitewater rafting trips are only a short distance away and a memorable experience for older kids, and don't forget to cast your fishing pole into the beautiful American River followed by a leisurely float downstream.

Hotels

After an action-packed day in Sacramento, rest your head at one of the region's family-friendly hotels. If you're sight-seeing in Old Sacramento, the [Embassy Suites Hotel](#) is only steps away and offers a fun indoor pool, and the nearby [Holiday Inn](#) offers free breakfast for kids each morning. Or you can sleep aboard California history at the [Delta King Hotel](#), a real river boat docked in the Sacramento River. Downtown, and the [Hyatt Regency](#) boasts a fun outdoor pool across from beautiful Capitol Park.