

Are We There Yet?

"Get Out of the House"

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One of my life's goals is to travel the world with my kids, who are currently four and seven years old. There is so much we can learn when we travel - whether by ourselves as adults, or by traveling with our families. I can't think of a better way for my kids to learn about the world than to take them - everywhere.

I made a little dent in my goal to travel with my boys when I took them to France last March. I packed up my mom and my kids, and the four of us flew off to visit family and friends. I've managed to maintain very close ties with some friends I made in college, and it was wonderful to see our families all together in a part of the world that was new to my children. Then another dent was made last June when I drove an RV across the country with my best friend, her two-year-old triplets, my two boys, and her dog. (I'd tell you more about that here, but I'm saving that for my book!)

While the traveling is exciting, it's also expensive. With skyrocketing air fares and unsteady gas prices, I started to think about more low cost alternatives to long-distance travel. That's when it hit me: I don't have to go all that far away to share new experiences with my kids. Simply going beyond my doorstep with my boys can provide ample opportunity for learning and relationship-building that will make for wonderful memories down the road. So what do I do when we're not all on the road together? We go outside! It's that simple. It was this revelation that drove me to write a two-page guide for parents called: "50 Outdoor Activities for Busy Families."

A few weeks ago, the weather was overcast, wet, and cool. When I asked my kids what they wanted to do, they replied in unison, "I don't know!" So I grabbed my guide, which is posted where I can see it, and started reading a list of different ideas to them. In a matter of minutes, we were outside blowing bubbles, then played some ball, and before I knew it, we were outside for an hour-and-a-half, making up new games and having a great time.

So maybe it will be Tuscany next year - maybe the British isles - or maybe just our own backyard. One way or another there are plenty of low to no-cost ways to share unforgettable time with our kids. It just takes a little imagination.

Rebecca P. Cohen is a gardening coach and a mom who believes that time outside transforms our lives for the better. After 15 years in Corporate America, she founded Rebecca Plants LLC to develop simple gardening and outdoor lifestyle products that inspire families to spend more time outside together. To print your free copy of *50 Outdoor Activities for Busy Families*, visit <http://www.rebeccaplants.com>.