

PREMIUM GUIDE · WORLDWIDE · 6 COUNTRIES

The Half-the-Price Family Trip Planner

Six countries that beat the obvious ones, at half the cost. With named hotels, restaurants, and the family attractions kids actually remember.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Albania
  vs Greek Islands, 50-60% cheaper
- Georgia
  vs Switzerland, 70% cheaper
- Morocco
  vs Mykonos / Santorini, 60% cheaper
- Vietnam
  vs Thailand, 40-50% cheaper
- Bali
  vs Maldives, 70% cheaper
- Colombia
  vs Tuscany, 50% cheaper

driftvistas.com
Trips for real life · For a family of 4

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*All numbers verified the month of publication. Prices are directional and shift with season · verify at the source before booking · updates quarterly · corrections welcome at **hello@driftvistas.com**.*

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Six countries that beat the obvious ones, at half the cost. With named hotels, restaurants, and the family attractions kids actually remember.

A premium guide from Drift Vistas. Launch price: $7 on Gumroad (rises to $12 after the first 50 sales).

Last updated: May 2026 · Numbers are directional estimates from public listings and research, not live quotes. Prices and visa rules shift; verify at the source before booking.

01

What you get in this guide



Photo: SARET SAYON · Pexels

- **Four realistic trip lengths** - the **3-5 day quick week**, the **7-day family week**, the **10-day proper trip**, and the **14-day deep-dive**. The lengths families actually take.
- **Six destinations**, each compared to its famous (expensive) alternative.

- **Named hotels per base town** - family rooms at 4-star and equivalent, with Booking.com search links.
- **Named restaurants per destination** - what to order at each.
- **Top family attractions** with kid-friendliness ratings and approximate ages.
- **Family-of-4 daily budgets by season** for each country.
- **Visa, insurance, and flight booking strategy** for 4 tickets.
- **Scams and safety map** per country, written for travellers with kids.
- **Family-of-4 budget spreadsheet** template.
- **Bonus: the 21-day two-country combo** - for summer holidays when calendars line up.

> *If the free guide gave you a list of ten destinations, this gives you the trip you'd actually take next summer.*

02

Which trip length is right for you?

TRIP	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	TIME OFF NEEDED	BEST FOR
3–5 day quick week	**$2,200 – $4,200**	Long weekend + 1–2 PTO days	The Memorial Day / Thanksgiving / mid-term version
7-day family week	**$3,500 – $6,500**	One school break	The dominant format - fits one passport stamp, one rental car
10-day proper trip	**$4,500 – $8,000**	School break + a few days	The sweet spot - long enough to slow down without 14-day fatigue
14-day deep-dive	**$5,500 – $10,500**	School break + extra PTO	For one country's full variety - coast + mountain + city
21-day two-country combo *(bonus chapter)*	$8,500 – $14,500	Summer holidays	The once-every-few-years big trip; when calendars line up

> **Most families should do the 7-day or 10-day version.** *The 7-day is what fits a real school break. The 10-day is the upgrade that turns a vacation into a trip - and it's only ~30% more money than a week.*

03

The six destinations and their "obvious alternatives"



Photo: Đỗ Xuân Hạnh · Pexels

DRIFT VISTAS PICK	FAMOUS ALTERNATIVE	FAMILY-OF-4 SAVING	BEST MONTHS
Albania	Greek Islands	50–60% cheaper	May–Jun, Sep
Georgia (Caucasus)	Switzerland	70% cheaper	May–Jun, Sep–Oct
Morocco (north)	Mykonos / Santorini	60% cheaper	Mar–May, Oct–Nov
Vietnam (north)	Phuket / Thailand	40–50% cheaper	Oct–Apr
Bali (Ubud / Amed)	Maldives	70% cheaper	May–Sep
Colombia (Salento + Medellín)	Tuscany	50% cheaper	Dec–Mar

Every destination on this list passes three tests:

1. **Roughly half the price** of the famous alternative at the same comfort level - mid-tier 4-star or family-rated equivalent.
2. **Worth the flight** - a trip you'd recommend even at twice the cost.
3. **Doable for a normal family** - not just hardened backpackers with no kids.

04

The 7-day family week - pick one country, go deep



Photo: Anatolii Maks · Pexels

The single most-asked-for trip. One country, one school break, no jet-lag-stacked second flight, no living-out-of-suitcase-week-two fatigue. **Family-of-4 all-in: $3,500 – $6,500** including US East Coast flights.

PICK	BEST FOR	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	WHY THIS FITS ONE WEEK
Albania (Tirana + Sarandë)	First-time-abroad families	$3,800 – $5,200	Coast + capital + Berat side-trip, short distances
Georgia (Tbilisi + Kazbegi)	Mountain-loving families	$3,500 – $4,800	Capital + one mountain day, no internal flights
Morocco (Marrakech + Atlas)	Culture-curious families	$4,200 – $5,800	One city + one rural break, both rich
Vietnam (Hanoi + Ha Long)	Foodie families	$4,500 – $6,000	Big-city culture + one cruise day, manageable
Bali (Ubud + Sanur)	Beach + culture families	$5,000 – $6,800	Pool villa + soft beach, no logistics stress
Colombia (Medellín + Salento)	Adventurous families	$5,500 – $7,200	City + coffee farm, kids love wax palms

> **First-time abroad with kids?** *Pick* **Albania** *or* **Georgia**. *English is widely understood in tourist zones, distances are short, family-room availability is excellent, and the daily budget runs lowest.*

Sample 7-day Albania family week - $3,800–$5,200 all-in

- **Day 1** - Land Tirana. *Trip'n'Hostel Family Room* or *Hotel Mondial* (€70–110). Walk Skanderbeg Square.
- **Days 2–3** - Drive to **Berat** (Ottoman old town). Stay *Hotel Mangalemi* (€55–80). UNESCO old quarter, castle, dinner of *tave kosi*.
- **Days 4–6** - Drive south to **Sarandë** (3 hr). Stay *Hotel Castello* or *Apartments Mira* (€60–110 sea-view). Beach mornings; Butrint ruins day-trip; Ksamil islets boat trip.
- **Day 7** - Drive back to Tirana airport (5 hr - long but fly out evening). Or fly out of Corfu, 30 min ferry from Sarandë.

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *swimming across to the Ksamil islets - flat water, 5-minute swim, palm trees, picnic on a tiny beach you can walk around in ten minutes.*

Sample 7-day Georgia family week - $3,500–$4,800 all-in

- **Day 1** - Land Tbilisi. Stay *Communal Hotel Sololaki* (rooftop terrace) or *Stamba Hotel* (pool, splurge). Sulfur-bath district walk, dinner at *Shavi Lomi* (courtyard).
- **Day 2** - Tbilisi old town: Mtatsminda funicular up to the amusement park (kids' lifesaver), Narikala Fortress cable car, dumpling-making class at *Pasanauri*.
- **Day 3** - Day-trip to Mtskheta (45 min) - Jvari Monastery overlook + Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. Lunch at a Georgian winery in the valley.
- **Days 4–5** - Drive north to **Kazbegi** (3 hr, scenic mountain road - hire a $80 driver for the day, not a self-drive). Stay *Rooms Hotel Kazbegi*. Hike to Gergeti Trinity Church, eat at *Khinkali House*.
- **Day 6** - Drive back via Ananuri Fortress + Jvari Pass photo stop. Late afternoon in Tbilisi - Botero Square stroll, dinner.
- **Day 7** - Last morning, fly home from Tbilisi (TBS).

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the khinkali-eating lesson at Pasanauri. They learn to hold by the knot, bite a tiny hole, slurp the soup. They demand khinkali at home for months.*

Sample 7-day Morocco family week - $4,200–$5,800 all-in

- **Day 1** - Land Marrakech. Check into *Riad Anyssates* (rooftop pool) or *Riad Yasmine* (book early). Late-afternoon Jemaa el-Fnaa wander, dinner at *Nomad* rooftop.
- **Day 2** - Bahia Palace + Jardin Majorelle morning. Souk wander with the kids (snake-charmer break, sugar-cane juice). Hammam afternoon, dinner at *Le Jardin*.
- **Days 3–4** - Drive to **Imlil** in the Atlas (1.5 hr). Stay *Kasbah du Toubkal*. Mule-ride day with Berber guides to a mountain terrace. Tagine over coals.

- **Day 5** - Drive back to Marrakech. Pool afternoon at the riad. Optional camel walk at sunset (NOT overnight Sahara for under-8s).
- **Day 6** - Day-trip to **Essaouira** (2.5 hr each way - tiring but rewarding) OR a calmer cooking-class day in Marrakech.
- **Day 7** - Final souk shopping, fly home.

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the mule ride in the Atlas. Berber kids walk alongside, lunch on a terrace where someone grills tagine over coals. More memorable than any beach.*

Sample 7-day Bali family week - $5,000–$6,800 all-in

- **Day 1** - Land Denpasar. Drive 90 min to **Ubud**. Check into *Komaneka at Bisma* (infinity pool over valley) or *Adiwana Bisma*. Sunset at the rice terraces, dinner at *Hujan Locale*.
- **Days 2–3** - Ubud: Tegallalang rice terrace walk, Monkey Forest (watch your snacks), Tirta Empul water temple. Cooking class at *Paon Bali* on Day 3 (the kids' favorite activity).
- **Day 4** - Drive to **Sanur** (1.5 hr) via Tegenungan waterfall stop. Check into *Maya Sanur Resort* (big pool, kids' club, calm beach).
- **Days 5–6** - Sanur: sunrise breakfast on the beach, bike rental along the promenade, day-trip option to Nusa Lembongan (boat 30 min).
- **Day 7** - Late checkout, drive 45 min to airport, fly home.

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the pool villa at Komaneka. Days dissolve into rice-field walks, mango juice, and swimming. Bali earns its repeat-visit reputation here.*

05

The 3–5 day quick week - long-weekend international

The version that fits a Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, or mid-term break stretch. One city, one regional escape, fly home. **Family-of-4 all-in: $2,200 – $4,200.**

PICK	BEST FOR	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	THE ROUTE
Morocco (Marrakech only)	First-international-stamp families	$2,500 – $3,800	4 nights riad, day-trip to Atlas
Albania (Tirana + Berat)	Easy-but-different families	$2,200 – $3,200	2 nights Tirana + 2 nights Berat
Georgia (Tbilisi only)	City-break families	$2,400 – $3,400	4 nights Tbilisi + 1 day-trip to Mtskheta
Colombia (Cartagena only)	Beach + colonial families	$3,200 – $4,200	4 nights inside the walls + Rosario boat day

> **Best 3-5 day pick: Marrakech.** *Cheap long-haul, dense culture, the riad pool is the kids' anchor between souks and the Atlas mountain day-trip. Five days in is enough to feel like a real trip.*

06

The 10-day proper trip - the sweet spot

Three more days than the 7-day. Roughly 30% more money. But the second weekend is when you actually relax. **Family-of-4 all-in: $4,500 – $8,000.**

PICK	10-DAY FAMILY ROUTE	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	WHAT THE EXTRA DAYS UNLOCK
Albania	Tirana → Berat → Sarandë → Theth	$4,500 – $6,200	The Albanian Alps day; Ksamil island swim
Georgia	Tbilisi → Kakheti → Kazbegi → Borjomi	$4,800 – $6,800	Wine country + spa town day kids love
Morocco	Marrakech → Atlas → Chefchaouen	$5,200 – $7,500	The blue town + a real Atlas overnight
Vietnam	Hanoi → Ha Long cruise → Hoi An	$5,500 – $8,000	Old-town Hoi An + lantern workshop week
Bali	Ubud → Amed → Sanur	$5,000 – $7,200	Each region for 3-4 days; no rushing
Colombia	Medellín → Salento → Cartagena	$5,800 – $8,200	City + coffee + colonial coast trifecta

> **The 10-day pick if you want one trip that does everything: Morocco.**
>
> *Souks, mountains, blue town, riad pool - four trips' worth of variety in one passport stamp.*

07

The 14-day deep-dive - one country, all of it

Twice the trip, less than twice the cost. For the family that has both school breaks lined up or extra PTO to stack. **Family-of-4 all-in: $5,500 – $10,500.**

PICK	14-DAY FAMILY ROUTE	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	WHAT WEEK TWO UNLOCKS
Albania	Tirana → Berat → Sarandë → Theth	$5,500 – $8,000	The Theth → Valbona hike-or-drive
Morocco	Marrakech → Atlas → Essaouira → Chefchaouen	$6,500 – $9,500	Coast + the blue town + a riad per region
Vietnam	Hanoi → Ha Long → Sa Pa → Hoi An	$7,000 – $10,500	Mountain trek + Hoi An lantern week
Bali	Ubud → Amed → Lovina → Sanur	$6,800 – $10,000	Each region for 3-4 days; no rushing
Colombia	Medellín → Salento → Cartagena → Rosario Islands	$7,500 – $11,000	Three regions + the island boat day kids love

> **Stay in one country for 14 days.** *Don't try to cross borders. The travel days eat the deep-relax that's the whole reason for the long trip.*

08

Each destination in depth

Albania - coast + Ottoman old towns + alpine north

Half the price of: Greek Islands (Santorini, Mykonos, Corfu).

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Off (Nov–Apr)	$140 – $220	Coast sleepy; only Tirana fully open
Shoulder (May, Sep–Oct)	$180 – $280	Best weather, fewest crowds - go now
Peak (Jun–Aug)	$250 – $380	Coast booked, prices up 50%

NAMED HOTELS (FAMILY ROOMS)

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Tirana	Hotel Mondial	€80–120	Family rooms, breakfast, walking distance to centre
Tirana	Rogner Hotel Tirana	€120–160	4-star with pool; kids' lifesaver in summer
Berat	Hotel Mangalemi	€55–80	Restored Ottoman house, family rooms
Sarandë	Hotel Castello Sarandë	€60–110	Sea-view family rooms, walking to beach
Theth	Bujtina Polia	€40–70 (half-board)	Mountain guesthouse, dinner included

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Tirana:** *Era* (modern Albanian, family-friendly portions), *Mullixhiu* (tasting menu - leave the kids at the hotel pool).
- **Berat:** *Antigoni* (rooftop, castle views, kid-friendly), *Onufri* (traditional *tave kosi* - yoghurt-lamb casserole).

- **Sarandë:** *Demi Restaurant* (sea views, grilled fish), *Mare Nostrum* (the slightly fancier sea-view spot).
- **Ksamil:** *Guvat* (fresh fish, by-the-kg pricing - confirm before ordering).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Butrint National Park ruins	⭐⭐⭐⭐	4+	€40 (kids under 8 free)
Ksamil islets swim	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	Free (boat €20 family round-trip)
Berat castle quarter	⭐⭐⭐⭐	6+	€4 entry
Gjirokastër castle	⭐⭐⭐	8+	€8 family
Blue Eye (Syri i Kaltër)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	€1 pp + €5 parking

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the Ksamil islet swim. Flat water, 5-min swim, picnic on a tiny private-feeling beach. Bring snorkels.*

The thing nobody mentions: Albanian roads are slower than the map says - add 30% to drive times. Construction zones near the coast are constant.

Georgia - mountains + wine + family-easy capital

Half the price of: Switzerland or the Italian Alps.

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Off (Jan–Feb, Nov)	$130 – $200	Cheapest; mountains snowy
Shoulder (Mar–Apr, Oct)	$170 – $280	Cool, dry, prices low
Peak (May–Jun, Sep)	$220 – $340	Best mountain weather - go now
High summer (Jul–Aug)	$280 – $460	Tbilisi heat, mountain freshness

NAMED HOTELS

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Tbilisi old town	Communal Hotel Sololaki	$90–140	Family rooms in restored mansion; rooftop terrace
Tbilisi	Stamba Hotel	$180–260	Splurge; rooftop pool kids love
Kazbegi	Rooms Hotel Kazbegi	$140–220	Mountain-view family rooms; the design hotel of the Caucasus
Kazbegi	Kazbegi Guesthouse Mariami	$50–90	Local family-run, half-board option
Sighnaghi (wine country)	Kabadoni Boutique	$80–130	Town-wall views, wine tastings on-site

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Tbilisi:** *Shavi Lomi* (modern Georgian in a courtyard, kids welcome), *Pasanauri* (the khinkali dumpling specialist - kid catnip), *Barbarestan* (1880s recipes, splurge).
- **Kazbegi:** *Khinkali House* on the main square (after the church climb), *Cozy Corner* (homey, family table).
- **Sighnaghi:** *Pheasant's Tears* (winery restaurant, garden seating).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Funicular up Mtatsminda (Tbilisi)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	3+	$12 family + park rides extra
Old Tbilisi sulfur baths (family room)	⭐⭐⭐	6+	$40–60 for 1 hr
Narikala Fortress cable car	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	$4 family
Gergeti Trinity Church drive (Kazbegi)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	$80 4WD driver
Wine farm tastings (Kakheti, with juice for kids)	⭐⭐⭐	5+	$30–50 family
Khinkali-making workshop	⭐⭐⭐⭐	6+	$40 family

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the dumpling-eating instruction at Pasanauri. The waiter shows them how to hold the khinkali by the knot, bite a tiny hole, and slurp the soup inside. They will demand khinkali at home for months.*

The thing nobody mentions: the Tbilisi–Kazbegi mountain road is dramatic AND stressful with kids. Hire a driver for the day ($60–80) rather than self-drive - same total cost as a rental for that day, much less stress.

Morocco (north) - souks + Atlas + the blue town

Half the price of: Santorini, Capri, or any Greek island.

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Off (Jul–Aug interior, Dec–Jan coast)	$150 – $240	Off-peak; some heat or rain
Shoulder (Mar, Oct–Nov)	$200 – $310	Optimal weather everywhere
Peak (Apr–Jun, Sep)	$280 – $450	European holidays + good weather

NAMED HOTELS (RIADS WITH FAMILY ROOMS)

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Marrakech	Riad Anyssates	€100–160	Family suites; rooftop pool; near Bahia Palace
Marrakech	Riad Yasmine	€130–200	Famous pool riad; book early
Atlas (Imlil)	Kasbah du Toubkal	€180–260	Mountain views, family rooms, Berber hospitality
Fes	Riad Fes	€140–220	Near Bab Boujloud (easy in/out with kids)
Chefchaouen	Lina Ryad & Spa	€80–140	Boutique, central, family-friendly
Essaouira	Heure Bleue Palais	€130–220	Pool, family rooms, near medina

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Marrakech:** *Nomad* (rooftop, modern Moroccan, kid-friendly), *Café des Épices* (medina lunch), *Le Jardin* (oasis in the souks).
- **Fes:** *The Ruined Garden* (relaxed, garden seating), *Café Clock* (kefta sandwiches kids love, plus storytelling nights).
- **Chefchaouen:** *Casa Hassan* (terrace, tagines), *Bab Ssour* (small, fresh, daily catch).
- **Essaouira:** *Triskala Café* (vegetarian-friendly), the **fish grills at the harbour** (point at your fish, they grill it - kids love this).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Jardin Majorelle + YSL Museum (Marrakech)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	€30 family
Atlas day-trip with mule ride (Imlil)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	4+	€80–120 family
Camel walk at sunset (NOT overnight Sahara)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	4+	€40 family
Bahia Palace + Saadian tombs	⭐⭐⭐	6+	€20 family
Chefchaouen blue medina wandering	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	Free
Boat to Mogador island (Essaouira)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	€25 family
Cooking class at the *souk*	⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	€60 family

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the mule ride in the Atlas. Berber kids walk alongside, the trail switchbacks past villages, lunch is on a terrace where someone grills tagine over coals. They'll talk about it more than any beach.*

The thing nobody mentions: in Fes you WILL get lost in the medina the first day. Hire a guide for that morning ($25–40 for the family) - saves enormous stress with kids. Don't agree to "just see the workshop"; that's a 90-minute carpet sales pitch.

Vietnam (north) - Hanoi + Ha Long + the mountains

Half the price of: Thailand (Phuket area) at peak.

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Peak (Oct–Apr)	$200 – $360	Best weather; busiest
Shoulder (May–Sep, watch typhoons)	$140 – $260	Hotter, occasional storms

NAMED HOTELS

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Hanoi Old Quarter	La Siesta Premium Hang Be	$90–140	Family rooms, rooftop pool, perfect location
Hanoi	Sofitel Metropole	$220–340	Splurge - historic; family connecting rooms
Ha Long Bay overnight cruise	Indochina Sails Premium Cruise	$560–1,120 family all-in	Cabins, all meals, kayaks
Sa Pa	Topas Ecolodge	$200–280	Mountain bungalows; family rooms
Hoi An	La Siesta Resort Hoi An	$130–200	Pool villa option for families

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Hanoi:** *Bun Cha Huong Lien* (Obama's bowl), *Cha Ca Thang Long* (the turmeric fish specialist - kids weirdly love it), *Madam Hien* (set menu, fancier).
- **Hoi An:** *Morning Glory* (cooking class + restaurant), *Cargo Club* (riverside, mixed menu kids can navigate), *Bale Well* (the *banh mi* of the trip).
- **Sa Pa:** *Sapa O'Chau* (homestay-style, ethnic mountain dishes).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Water puppets show (Hanoi)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	3+	$30 family
Ha Long Bay overnight cruise	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	6+	$560–1,120
Hoi An lantern-making class	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	$40 family
Basket boat ride (Hoi An)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	$30 family
Sa Pa rice terrace half-day walk	⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	$40 family + guide
Cooking class at Morning Glory (Hoi An)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	$80 family

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *sleeping on the Ha Long Bay junk. The kayaking before sunset, the squid-fishing off the back of the boat after dinner, the karst islands at dawn from the deck. Worth the splurge.*

> **Book Vietnam tours:** ☆ *Klook covers Ha Long cruises, Hoi An cooking classes, Sa Pa treks, and the Hanoi water-puppet show. Usually 10-20% cheaper than booking direct.*

The thing nobody mentions: Hanoi traffic is a sport. Hold kids' hands; cross slowly and predictably; the bikes flow around you. The street-crossing technique is muscle memory by day three.

Bali – Ubud + Amed + Sanur (skip the south coast)

Half the price of: Maldives at any tier.

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Off (Nov–Mar)	$180 – $280	Wet season; afternoon storms
Shoulder (Apr, Oct)	$220 – $340	Quieter than peak, mostly dry
Peak (May–Sep)	$280 – $450	Dry season; busiest

NAMED HOTELS (FAMILY VILLAS)

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Ubud	Komaneka at Bisma	$200–320	Family villas, infinity pool over valley
Ubud	Adiwana Bisma	$130–220	Mid-range with pool villas
Amed	Ananta Villa Amed	$80–140	Beachfront family villa
Amed	Apa Kabar Villas	$90–150	Beachfront, pool, kid-friendly
Sanur	Maya Sanur Resort & Spa	$150–260	Big pool, kids' club, calm beach

> **Avoid as your family base:** *Kuta (rough), Canggu (busy, scooter-heavy), Seminyak (40% more expensive than Ubud, same vibe). The Bali in the photos lives in* **Ubud, Amed, and Sanur**.

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Ubud:** *Locavore To Go* (deli + market lunches), *Hujan Locale* (modern Indonesian, family-portion sharing), *Bebek Tepi Sawah* (duck specialist - kids in awe).
- **Amed:** *Sails Restaurant* (beachfront, fresh fish), *Warung Enak* (small, local, cheap).
- **Sanur:** *Three Monkeys Sanur* (riverside, mixed menu kids can navigate), *Bonsai Cafe Sanur* (Japanese garden setting).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Tegallalang rice terraces walk	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	4+	$20 family entry
Monkey Forest, Ubud (watch your snacks)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	$40 family
Tirta Empul water temple	⭐⭐⭐	7+	$20 family
Bali Bird Park	⭐⭐⭐⭐	3+	$80 family
Snorkelling Japanese wreck (Amed)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	$60 family with guide
Sanur sunrise + breakfast on the beach	⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	Free
Cooking class at Paon Bali (Ubud)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	$130 family

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *their own pool villa in Ubud, after a morning at Tegallalang. Days dissolve into rice-field walks, mango juice, swimming. Bali earns its repeat-visit reputation here.*

> **Book Bali tours:** *Klook covers Ubud cooking classes, Mount Batur sunrise hikes, Tegallalang swing tickets, and Amed snorkel tours. Usually 10-20% cheaper than GetYourGuide for Bali.*

The thing nobody mentions: the south coast (Kuta especially) is overdeveloped tourist sprawl. Stay east (Amed) or central (Ubud). Twenty minutes east of Ubud, Bali is still beautiful.

Colombia - Salento + Medellín + Cartagena

Half the price of: Tuscany.

SEASON	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY	WHY
Off (May, Sep–Oct)	$200 – $300	Rainier; cheapest
Shoulder (Apr, Nov)	$240 – $360	Mix of rain + sun
Peak (Dec–Mar, Jul–Aug)	$320 – $480	Drier, US holiday demand

NAMED HOTELS

BASE	HOTEL	PRICE/NIGHT	WHY
Medellín (El Poblado)	The Charlee Hotel	$120–200	Rooftop pool, family suites, safe neighbourhood
Medellín	Diez Hotel Categoria Colombia	$90–150	Pool, family rooms, El Poblado
Salento	Hotel El Mirador del Cocora	$80–120	Wax palm valley views, family rooms
Salento	La Serrana Hostel & Spa	$70–110	Family privates, hillside views
Cartagena (old town)	Casa San Agustin	$260–380	Splurge - inside walls, pool, family-room option
Cartagena	Bantú Hotel	$130–220	Mid-range inside walls, pool

NAMED RESTAURANTS

- **Medellín:** *Carmen* (modern Colombian, splurge), *Mondongo's* (the local soup specialty kids try), *Hatoviejo* (traditional set lunch).
- **Salento:** *Brunch de Salento* (American-style, foreigner-friendly menu kids navigate easily), *Casa de la Empanada* (counter-service, $10 lunch for the family).
- **Cartagena:** *La Cevichería* (Bourdain's spot - fresh ceviche), *Carmen Cartagena* (sister to Medellín's), *Espíritu Santo* (set-menu local - under €15 for a meal).

TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

ATTRACTION	KID RATING	AGES	COST (FAMILY OF 4)
Cocora Valley wax palm hike (Salento)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	5+	$40 family (incl. jeep)
Coffee farm tour (Salento, e.g. Finca El Ocaso)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	6+	$50 family
Comuna 13 walking tour (Medellín)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	10+	$80 family
Cartagena old town carriage ride	⭐⭐⭐⭐	All	$30
Castillo San Felipe fort	⭐⭐⭐	8+	$40 family
Rosario Islands day-trip (boat from Cartagena)	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐	6+	$200–280 family
Botero Square + Antioquia Museum (Medellín)	⭐⭐⭐⭐	7+	$30 family

> **Kids' won't-want-to-leave moment:** *the Cocora Valley jeep ride. They get to stand in the back of a Willys jeep on the way out to the trail. The wax palms are 60m tall and look like Dr Seuss illustrations. Bring binoculars for hummingbirds.*

The thing nobody mentions: altitude. Bogotá is 2,640m; Salento is 1,900m. Take day one slow with kids. Most flights into Colombia land in Bogotá; consider routing straight to Medellín (1,500m) and adding Bogotá at the end of the trip if at all.

09

Flight stack - booking 4 tickets



Photo: Jahra Tasfia Reza · Pexels

The numbers below are **per family of 4** for a US East Coast departure. West Coast subtract 10–15% on Pacific routes, add 10% on European routes.

Long-haul (round-trip, family of 4)

DESTINATION	BEST BOOK-AHEAD	FAMILY-OF-4 RT	BOOKING TRICK
Tirana, Albania	6–10 weeks	$2,400 – $4,000	Compare TIA, Podgorica TGD, Corfu CFU (drive in)
Tbilisi, Georgia	8–12 weeks	$2,800 – $4,400	Often cheapest via Istanbul, Doha, Vienna
Marrakech, Morocco	6–10 weeks	$2,200 – $3,800	RAM direct from JFK; cheaper via Madrid/Lisbon
Hanoi, Vietnam	12–14 weeks	$3,400 – $5,400	Qatar or Cathay; price-watch by 2 weeks
Denpasar, Bali	12 weeks	$3,800 – $6,000	Singapore Airlines or Cathay; cheapest via SIN/HKG
Medellín or Bogotá, Colombia	6–10 weeks	$1,800 – $3,000	Avianca direct often cheapest

> **Master rule for one trip:** *book* **14 weeks out** *for Asian destinations,* **8 weeks out** *for European/South American. Use Skyscanner "whole month" view to find the $200 cheaper day.*

For the 21-day combo (bonus chapter), you'll add one inter-country flight ($200–600 family). Book the long-haul first; the inter-country can wait until 4–6 weeks out.

10

Visa table - fees per person × 4



Photo: Ekaterina Belinskaya · Pexels

COUNTRY	VISA-ON-ARRIVAL OR E-VISA?	COST PER PERSON	FAMILY OF 4	LENGTH
Albania	Visa-free	$0	$0	90 days
Georgia	Visa-free	$0	$0	365 days
Morocco	Visa-free	$0	$0	90 days
Vietnam	E-visa (apply 5–7 days ahead)	$25	$100	30–90 days
Indonesia (Bali)	Visa-on-arrival or e-VOA	$35	$140	30 days, extendable
Colombia	Visa-free	$0	$0	90 days

> **Passport rule:** *every family member needs 6+ months validity past your return date AND two blank facing pages.* **For kids' passports:** *US passports for under-16s are valid only 5 years (vs 10 for adults) - check expiration against your trip dates.*

11

Travel insurance for a family of 4



Photo: Siarhei Nester · Pexels

Single-trip policies (cheaper for one trip; not flexible):

- 7-day trip: $90–180 family
- 14-day trip: $140–280 family
- 21-day trip: $200–400 family
- Companies: Allianz, Travel Guard, IMG

Nomad-style (renewable, for longer trips):

- SafetyWing Nomad Family - covers two adults + up to two kids for ~$160–$260/month total

Recommendation:

- 7–14 days: Allianz or IMG single-trip
- 21+ days or multi-country: SafetyWing Nomad Family

12

⚠ Scams + safety map per country (with kids)



Photo: Ehsan Haque · Pexels

Albania

- **Aggressive parking touts.** Pay only when you leave; don't pre-pay.
- **The "free coffee + trip"** offer at the airport. Polite no.
- **Beach umbrella overcharging.** Confirm price BEFORE you sit down.

Georgia

- **Marshrutka (shared van) drivers** occasionally overcharge tourists. Confirm price before boarding.
- **Taxi street hails.** Use Bolt (the app) instead. Insist if a hotel "calls a taxi" - Bolt is cheaper.

Morocco

- **Fes medina "guide" scam.** A stranger offers to lead you "as a friend," then demands payment. Decline politely. Hire a guide via your riad if you want one.
- **Carpet shops.** Never agree to "just see the workshop." You're committing to a 90-minute sales pitch.
- **Spice / argan oil markups.** Tourist medinas charge 5–10× supermarket prices.
- **Taxi meter refusals.** Insist on the meter (*compteur, s'il vous plaît*) or agree price up-front.

Vietnam

- **Cyclo and motorbike-taxi overcharging** in Hanoi. Use Grab.
- **"Free" tour to a silk shop or pearl factory.** Commission scam disguised as friendship.
- **Restaurant menu switching.** Confirm prices before ordering, especially seafood-by-weight.

Bali

- **Scooter rental damage scams.** Photograph every panel before leaving the lot.
- **ATM skimming.** Use ATMs INSIDE banks during business hours only.
- **Temple sarong rental gouging.** Most temples include sarongs free with entry.

Colombia

- **Phone snatching in Medellín and Bogotá.** Cross-body bag, not backpack. *"No dar papaya"* - don't make yourself an easy target.
- **Cartagena old town** is very safe day and night. Outside neighbourhoods at night: not without local guidance.
- **Taxi from airports** - official ranks or Uber/InDriver only.

> **General family safety:** *keep one fully-charged backup phone with all itinerary screenshots, hotel addresses, and emergency contacts. Photocopy passports, store separately from originals.*

13

The "next four" – destinations that almost made the list



Photo: Fabnel LDN · Pexels

Swap in if you've already done one of the six, or want a different vibe:

COUNTRY	WHEN TO SWAP IN	FAMILY-OF-4 DAILY
Laos	Instead of Vietnam (slower vibe)	$130 – $320
Romania	Instead of Albania (mountains + painted monasteries)	$180 – $420
Sri Lanka south	Instead of Bali (different season Dec–Mar)	$150 – $380
Ecuador	Instead of Colombia (Galapagos add-on possible)	$200 – $450

14

Family-of-4 budget spreadsheet structure



Photo: Nataliya Vaitkevich · Pexels

Copy this structure into a Google Sheet before your trip:

Tab 1 - Flights

- Columns: Leg, Family-of-4 target $, Booking deadline, Actual booked $, Confirmation

Tab 2 - Daily ledger

- Columns: Date, Country, Hotel $, Food $, Transport $, Activities $, Other $, Notes
- Log daily, not weekly. Memory is unreliable after day 3.

Tab 3 - Visa, insurance, fixed costs

Tab 4 - Forecast vs actual

- `SUMIFS(daily_ledger, country) → forecast daily × days`
- Compare actuals weekly; reforecast if trending over

> **The trick:** *log every transaction the same day. We've shifted thousands of dollars mid-trip by spotting overspends on day 4 instead of at the airport home.*

A formatted template downloads with your Gumroad purchase. Email hello@driftvistas.com if you don't receive the spreadsheet link.

15

Packing for a family of 4



Photo: Gatsby Yang · Pexels

The trick is **one rolling carry-on per person + one shared family duffel checked.** Constraining bag count constrains the explosion.

Each person carries

- 5–7 days of clothing (laundry every 5 days; every hotel has it)
- One pair of decent walking shoes + one pair of sandals
- A light fleece (mornings in mountains)
- A rain shell
- Swimwear + quick-dry towel
- Their own water bottle - Lifestraw or Grayl filter bottle for outside the EU

One shared family bag

- Small medical kit (paracetamol, ibuprofen, antihistamine, Imodium, rehydration sachets, kid-appropriate dosing, prescription meds in original packaging)
- Universal adapters (Type C/F + Type G for UK)
- Foldable cool bag for picnic lunches (saves $30/day for the family)
- Photocopies of all passports
- Cash float in USD: $400–600 in fresh post-2013 bills
- Printed itinerary with hotel addresses (for kids' and grandparents' reference)

Leave home

- "Just in case" anything. You can buy it locally, almost always cheaper.
- Streaming-only entertainment without downloads. Long flights kill kids' patience without offline content.

16

Bonus chapter - the 21-day two-country combo



Photo: Zakaria HANIF · Pexels

For the family that has summer holidays + a few PTO days stacked, the 21-day combo pairs two destinations by region. **One long-haul flight, two countries, three weeks.** Family-of-4 all-in: **$8,500 – $14,500.**

This is a real trip - but for most families it happens once every few years, when calendars line up. If that's you, here are the pairings that actually work:

COMBO	FAMILY-OF-4 ALL-IN	WHY THIS PAIRING WORKS
Albania + Greece (Corfu/Meteora)	$9,500 – $13,500	One Adriatic flight; Albania saves the budget, Greece adds the famous
Georgia + Armenia	$8,500 – $13,500	One Caucasus flight covers both - the cheapest combo on this page
Morocco + Andalucía (Spain)	$10,500 – $14,500	Ferry from Tangier; sneaks a European country in
Vietnam + Cambodia (Angkor)	$11,000 – $15,500	Single Asia long-haul; Angkor Wat is the kids' highlight
Bali + Sri Lanka south coast	$10,500 – $15,000	Two beach cultures at very different price points
Colombia + Ecuador	$11,500 – $16,500	Long-haul once; two countries, ten days each

How to structure a 21-day combo

1. **Spend 12-13 days in the primary destination** (the one you flew long-haul for).
2. **6-7 days in the secondary** - long enough to feel different, short enough to not feel like a second trip.
3. **1-2 buffer days** for the inter-country travel day and recovery.

> **Best-value 21-day combo for first-time-long-trip families: Georgia + Armenia.** *One inter-country flight (90 min, $200 family), low daily costs, mountains and monasteries. Kids old enough to walk handle the trip well.*

> **The 21-day reality check:** *the second country always feels rushed. If you're torn between 14 days deep in one country and 21 days across two - pick the 14-day. It's the more relaxing trip in practice.*

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Resources

- **Family-friendly stays:** Booking.com - filter by "family rooms"
- **Cheap multi-leg flights:** Skyscanner - use "Whole month" view
- **Family travel insurance:** SafetyWing Nomad Family - 2 adults + 2 kids on one policy
- **Rental cars (where needed):** DiscoverCars - cross-border friendly in EU
- **Tours and tickets (Europe + worldwide):** GetYourGuide - kids' tickets typically discounted
- **Tours and tickets (Asia - Vietnam, Bali, Cambodia, Thailand):** Klook - usually 10-20% cheaper than GYG for Asia, larger inventory
- **Updates to this guide:** driftvistas.com/guides/family-budget-travel

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