

# The New York Times

## 8 Hotels Offering More Family-Friendly Options

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American hotels have long appealed to families with children's play areas and special menus, but then suggested accommodations in grand suites or adjoining rooms to handle the clan. Now the hospitality industry is catching up to family demand, as well as to European resorts where triple or quad rooms, often booked by families, are common.

"Today, the amenity war between hotel brands is being fought in the configuration of the guest rooms," said Chekitan Dev, a marketing professor at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

The just-opened [Asbury](#) hotel in Asbury Park, N.J., offers family rooms with tents children can sleep in and bunk rooms accommodating up to eight. Renovated in late 2014, the [Garland](#) hotel in North Hollywood, in Los Angeles, added four family suites with nooks for bunk beds, TVs and DVD players. And the water park chain [Great Wolf Lodge](#) offers a variety of family rooms, from those stocked with Diaper Genies, Pack 'n Plays and swim diapers to bunk beds in wolf-themed dens.

In urban areas, the rise of cheap-chic hostels, such as Freehand in Chicago and Miami or Safestay in Edinburgh and other cities in Britain, present affordable options, including rooms with multiple bunks. Even the [Linq Hotel & Casino](#) in Las Vegas has added 12 rooms with bunk beds, starting at \$69 a night.

Whether your family plans to travel domestically this summer or further afield, the following new and improved hotels and resorts offer more than just shelter. You might find a lion next door, your own horse or s'mores at evening bonfires.

## UNITED STATES



### Summertime

#### Martha's Vineyard, in Massachusetts

Named in homage to the Methodist camp meetings held in the cottage-filled Oak Bluffs area since the early 1800s, the new 95-room [Summertime](#) hotel has revitalized the 19th-century Wesley Hotel. Its bright, playful décor features nostalgic accents like wall-mounted vintage tennis rackets and archery bows, dragonfly-print drapes, platform beds with marine rope for bedposts and child-friendly bunk beds. Porches wrap the hotel, which overlooks the harbor, but for those who want more action, there's Ping-Pong, Twister, movie screenings in the recreation hall and cornhole games on the lawn. The hotel lacks a restaurant, but stocks its Camp Canteen with retro snacks including Cracker Jacks, "penny candy" and Dreamsicles. Rooms from \$149; [summertimehotel.com](http://summertimehotel.com)



## Opal Sands Resort

Clearwater, Fla.

Beach-loving families will find Gulf of Mexico views from all of the 230 rooms at the shorefront [Opal Sands Resort](https://www.opalsands.com), each done in tones of driftwood and sea blue. Chairs and cabanas are available for rent at the beach, where the shallow and often calm water attracts swimmers. There's also a zero-entry pool, which gradually slopes deeper, like a natural beach, and poolside food service. Other restaurants include the Italian Sea-Guini, which has a pasta-making station, and the beachside Sandbar, with live music on weekends. The resort is near the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, home to the stars of the movie "Dolphin Tale" and its sequel, and it is about a 10-minute walk to Pier 60, which stages a nightly sunset festival with street performers, including musicians and jugglers. Rooms from \$269; [opalsands.com](https://www.opalsands.com).



## Harborside Hotel, Spa & Marina

### Bar Harbor, Me.

A convenient base for exploring nearby Acadia National Park or taking a whale-watching or lobstering tour in family friendly Bar Harbor, [Harborside Hotel, Spa & Marina](#) offers country club-style amenities with a casual spirit. Guests have access to the Bar Harbor Club, with an oceanfront swimming pool, tennis courts and a club for children 5 to 12. Among its 193 rooms, five Kids' Suites, which include a separate room with a bunk bed, TV, DVD player and video game console, were recently added to the hotel. Four new Boathouse Suites offer more space, with two bedrooms, a full kitchen and a rooftop patio with a hot tub. Located in town, the resort is within walking distance of shops and restaurants and frequently hosts evening bonfires with s'mores. Rooms from \$239; [theharborsidehotel.com](#).



## Home Ranch

### Clark, Colo.

Offering an all-inclusive vacation with a western accent, dude ranches not only have horseback riding but plenty of wide open space for children to roam. [The Home Ranch](#) near Steamboat Springs in northwestern Colorado assigns each member of the family (age 6 and up) a horse for the week. Rugged activities such as hiking and fly fishing are balanced by resort-like amenities including a heated outdoor pool. Counselors running the children's program offer activities until 9 p.m. daily, and teens have their own program, which might include rock climbing or barrel racing. The ranch recently planted an organic farm, supplying the kitchen with fresh produce and serving as a demonstration garden. Accommodations include lodge rooms and log cabins.

Rates from \$6,920 for two people for seven nights, the minimum stay in the summer; [homeranch.com](http://homeranch.com).



## Suttle Lodge & Boathouse

Sisters, Ore.

The Portland-based hospitality group the Mighty Union, the creative and management company behind Ace Hotel Portland, is reviving a rustic resort in the Deschutes National Forest of central Oregon with a strong sense of play and an affinity for good food. [Suttle Lodge & Boathouse](http://thesuttlelodge.com) is to open in late June on Suttle Lake, with 11 lodge rooms, six two-story lakefront cabins and eight budget cabins with a shared bathhouse on 15.5 acres. The chef Joshua McFadden of Ava Gene's restaurant in Portland will oversee the food, including the locavore Boathouse restaurant. A 3.6-mile hiking trail rings the lake, and guests can take to the water via canoe, kayak or paddleboard. Expect naturalist talks and tours, and stargazing with an astronomer. Rooms from \$125; [thesuttlelodge.com](http://thesuttlelodge.com).

## ABROAD



## Château St. Pierre de Serjac

### Languedoc Region, in France

Thoughts of a family vacation don't usually bring a French wine estate to mind. But the [Château St. Pierre de Serjac](#) in the Languedoc region, fresh from a two-year, \$31 million renovation, caters to families with a heated pool, loaner bikes and, in July and August, a kids' club and supervised children's dinners. The 19th-century chateau, on 200 acres with vineyards and orchards, houses eight guest rooms. Several outbuildings, including the stables and barns, have been repurposed to host 36 apartments with two to four bedrooms or stand-alone homes with private pools. The larger accommodations include full kitchens, but the property also offers a restaurant and bar. Rooms from 295 euros (about \$325); [serjac.com](#).



## Gir Lion Lodge

### London

Many zoos offer occasional camp-outs to sleep near the animals. But this summer the ZSL London Zoo is introducing [Gir Lion Lodge](#), nine cottages available for overnight stays near the habitat of the Asiatic lions of the Gir Forest of India. Residency comes with two meals — dinner and breakfast — and guided walks in the zoo, including tours at sunset, at night by flashlight and in the morning before the zoo opens. The colorful cabins sleep four. Overnights are available six nights each week from May 25 through December, and will run from February through December in 2017. Children must be 5 or older. Rates start at 378 pounds for two (about \$550), with each additional child £50; [zsl.org](#).



## Hilton at Resorts World Bimini

### Bimini Island, Bahamas

On the slim, seven-mile-long island of North Bimini, about 50 miles south of Miami, the main modes of transportation are golf cart and bike. Explore it from the new 305-room [Hilton at Resorts World Bimini](#), opening this month, with three pools, including a lazy river and a rooftop pool, and six restaurants. Beachcombing, snorkeling and diving are the real attractions, and the resort also offers kayaking, paddleboarding and a kids' club. Families can tour the Bimini Sharklab, a biological research station, to view juvenile lemon and nurse sharks. For now, travelers reach the island via floatplane or regular commercial air, though ferry travel is expected this summer. Rooms from \$229; [rwbimini.com](#).



JW Marriott Los Cabos

Beach Resort & Spa

San Jose del Cabo, Mexico

Opened last winter, the 299-room [JW Marriott Los Cabos Beach Resort & Spa](https://www.jwmarriottloscabos.com) channels a vast, contemporary beach house, with lots of outdoor living space, including furnished balconies off the rooms. Among 10 swimming pools, two are earmarked for families and another for children. Nayaa Club offers activities for children and teenagers ranging from treasure hunts to Spanish lessons, Zumba classes and tennis games. Restaurants include Mexican and seafood-focused grill options. A 45-room hotel-within-the-hotel, Griffin Club, includes a game room, movie theater, private beach and pool. The resort is on the quieter end of Los Cabos and near the town of San Jose, where local families frequently gather in the town square in the evenings. Rooms from \$460; [jwmarriottloscabos.com](https://www.jwmarriottloscabos.com).