SSALI EXPLORERS

THE FAMILY TRAVEL EDITION

Passport to Plane

BABY'S FIRST HOLIDAY SURVIVAL KIT



From the first passport photo to the first airport adventure. A practical, printable planner for UK families.

CHECKLISTS / WORKSHEETS / REAL-LIFE PARENT TIPS

ssaliexplorers.com | @ssaliexplorers

START HERE

Welcome aboard

No glossy perfection required. Just one step at a time, a few useful lists and enough snacks for the journey.

Planning a first holiday with a baby is exciting until the questions begin: passports, flights, cots, transfers, baggage... and how exactly is everyone meant to get out of the front door?

We created this guide to make the process feel manageable. It follows the same order we use when planning a family adventure, with spaces to write your own decisions as you go.

YOUR SEVEN-STEP ROUTE

01 **PASSPORT**
Sort the paperwork before the big bookings.

02 **DESTINATION**
Find a place that works for your actual family.

03 **FLIGHTS**
Compare more than the headline price.

04 **STAY**
Check the sleeping setup and the practical details.

05 **ADMIN**
Insurance, documents and transport.

06 **PACK**
Prepare the essentials without packing the entire house.

07 **GO**
A calmer airport day and a flexible plan.

ONE THING AT A TIME

There is no prize for doing everything at once. Start with the passport, save your research and use this guide as your holiday planning HQ.

THE BIG PICTURE

Your quick-start checklist

One page to keep on the fridge, in the handbag or next to the laptop while you plan.

1 / PASSPORT

- [ ] Check eligibility for a British passport
- [ ] Prepare photo and required documents
- [ ] Submit the application and track it
- [ ] Wait for passport before booking travel

2 / CHOOSE

- [ ] Agree budget and approximate dates
- [ ] Pick three destinations to compare
- [ ] Check weather, transfers and family fit

3 / BOOK

- [ ] Check entry rules for every traveller
- [ ] Compare flights and infant/baggage rules
- [ ] Confirm accommodation sleeping spaces
- [ ] Arrange insurance and transfers

4 / GET READY

- [ ] Make a digital travel folder
- [ ] Prepare a baby hand-luggage list
- [ ] Confirm buggy and car-seat arrangements
- [ ] Review destination health information

5 / DEPART

- [ ] Recheck passports and booking details
- [ ] Charge devices and pack snacks
- [ ] Leave time for the unpredictable bits

KEEP IT CURRENT

Policies and border requirements change. Check official passport, airline and destination information before paying.

01 / THE PAPERWORK

Baby's first passport

The adventure begins with the least glamorous photo shoot in family history.

FOR A FIRST BRITISH CHILD PASSPORT

Apply online through GOV.UK if your child is eligible. You will need a digital photo, supporting documents and a card for payment. Someone with parental responsibility must apply.

PASSPORT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- [ ] Read the official first-child passport guidance
- [ ] Prepare the supporting documents requested in the application
- [ ] Take a compliant baby passport photo
- [ ] Complete and pay for the online application
- [ ] Arrange for someone to confirm the child's identity when asked
- [ ] Send any requested documents and keep track of progress
- [ ] Check all printed details once the passport arrives

THE NEWBORN PHOTO HACK

For children under one, a photo taken from above while baby lies on a plain, light-coloured sheet is allowed. Their eyes do not have to be open, and a supporting hand must not be visible. No toys or dummies in the picture.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

- [ ] PHOTO READY
- [ ] APPLICATION SENT
- [ ] ID CONFIRMED
- [ ] PASSPORT HERE

IMPORTANT

GOV.UK says not to book travel until you have a valid passport. Processing times and fees can change; check online before applying.

02 / FIND YOUR FIT

The destination decider

Your first baby holiday does not need to win an award for ambitious sightseeing.

Think about the kind of holiday you want rather than the most impressive place on the map. A destination that is easy to reach, move around and enjoy can be the biggest win.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO US?

- [ ] Short or direct flights
- [ ] Easy airport transfers
- [ ] Walkable city or resort
- [ ] Food and shops close by
- [ ] Warm weather, not extreme heat
- [ ] Beach time
- [ ] Apartment or family room
- [ ] Low-stress activities for siblings

OUR THREE-DESTINATION SHORTLIST

COMPARE	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
Destination			
Flight/transfer ease			
Family accommodation			
Weather at our dates			
Child-friendly pace			
Cost / value			

OUR RULE: ONE BIG WIN A DAY

For a first trip, one main activity a day plus something easy nearby can beat a packed itinerary. Less pressure, more memories.

03 / FLIGHT RESEARCH

Flights for the whole gang

The cheapest fare is only the starting point. The real comparison is the full family journey.

BEFORE CHOOSING A FLIGHT

- [ ] Compare full prices including infant fares and luggage
- [ ] Check the airline's minimum age and infant travel rules
- [ ] Confirm the buggy, car seat and baby-equipment allowance
- [ ] Review how seating and infant lap/seat options work
- [ ] Check cabin rules for milk, feeds and medicines
- [ ] Compare arrival times, total travel and onward transfer
- [ ] Read changes, cancellations and refund terms

COMPARE YOUR BEST OPTIONS

	FLIGHT A	FLIGHT B	FLIGHT C
Airline / route			
Travel times			
Full family cost			
Baggage / infant rules			

OUR DECISION

A more convenient direct flight can be worth paying extra for. Compare the full price against the real effort, not simply which fare looks nicest on the search page.

ALWAYS VERIFY

Check the actual airline terms before booking. Infant baggage allowances, seating and baby-item policies differ by carrier and fare.

04 / ACCOMMODATION

Family-friendly... really?

A lovely room photo is not quite the same thing as a lovely stay with a baby.

NON-NEGOTIABLES TO CHECK

- [ ] Correct occupancy for the whole family
- [ ] Confirmed cot or suitable baby sleep space
- [ ] Sensible bed layout
- [ ] Fridge / food preparation if needed
- [ ] Lift or step-free buggy access
- [ ] Location close to transport and essentials
- [ ] Safe and practical outdoor / pool space
- [ ] Clear cancellation and extra-charge rules

THE ACCOMMODATION SCORECARD

HOTEL / APARTMENT

SLEEPING SETUP

AREA / LOCATION

KITCHEN / FRIDGE

TOTAL COST INCL. FEES

FROM THE SSALI STAY DIARY

We were Airbnb people until the right family hotel converted us. But a gorgeous room photo cannot tell you where six people will sleep. Ask for the actual bed and cot layout before paying.

05 / TRAVEL ADMIN

The boring-but-vital bits

Future you will be glad you sorted these before the night-before scramble.

PAPERWORK AND PROTECTION

- [ ] Check entry rules, visa/authorisation and passport validity for every traveller
- [ ] Arrange appropriate travel insurance covering baby and the whole trip
- [ ] If applicable, check GHIC/EHIC eligibility and destination use
- [ ] If travelling without everyone who has parental responsibility, check consent requirements
- [ ] Plan transfers and age-appropriate car seats
- [ ] Check healthcare, vaccines and medicine requirements with reliable advice
- [ ] Save emergency contacts and insurance assistance number
- [ ] Back up confirmations securely and keep offline copies

QUICK HEALTH NOTE

A GHIC/EHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance. With a newborn, ask a qualified healthcare professional about destination-specific health considerations and check airline restrictions for very young infants.

OUR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL DETAILS

TRAVEL INSURANCE / POLICY NUMBER

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PHONE

AIRPORT TRANSFER / CAR-SEAT PLAN

CHECK THE SOURCE, NOT A SCREENSHOT

Travel rules change. Check GOV.UK, the airline and official destination guidance before booking and again before departure.

06 / PACK SMARTER

Baby packing, simplified

The aim is to bring what you will use - not enough supplies to open a small shop.

IN THE CABIN

- [ ] Passport and travel documents
- [ ] Nappies, wipes and changing mat
- [ ] At least one spare baby outfit
- [ ] Spare top for the grown-up
- [ ] Milk / feeding equipment / baby food
- [ ] Muslins, bibs and comfort item
- [ ] Age-appropriate medicines
- [ ] Small entertainment for older kids

IN YOUR MAIN BAG

- [ ] Weather-appropriate baby clothes
- [ ] Sleepwear and sleep essentials
- [ ] Nappies or plan to buy locally
- [ ] Baby toiletries and wash items
- [ ] Sun / rain protection as needed
- [ ] Sterilising supplies if required
- [ ] Swim items if relevant
- [ ] First-aid and feeding backups

LARGER ITEMS: CONFIRM THE PLAN

- [ ] Buggy and/or baby carrier
- [ ] Suitable child car seat or arranged transfer seat
- [ ] Travel cot (if not provided by accommodation)
- [ ] Any feeding or sterilising equipment

FIRST 24 HOURS, NOT THE WHOLE HOUSE

Pack one easy-to-reach pouch for the first hour after arrival: nappies, a change of clothes, feeds and a comfort item. Your future self will thank you.

07 / THE BIG TRAVEL DAY

Airport day game plan

The mission: board the plane with the right children, the right bags and most of your patience.

1

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

At home

- [ ] Passports and boarding details accessible
- [ ] Phone and power bank charged
- [ ] Baby fed/changed when practical

2

AT THE AIRPORT

Check-in and security

- [ ] Allow extra time for queues and baby needs
- [ ] Keep cabin essentials easy to find
- [ ] Follow current airport security instructions

3

BEFORE BOARDING

One last reset

- [ ] Find changing facilities and fill water where available
- [ ] Arrange snacks, bottles and comfort items
- [ ] Split tasks between adults if travelling together

4

ON ARRIVAL

Get everyone moving

- [ ] Locate baggage / buggy collection
- [ ] Confirm your onward transfer and car seats
- [ ] Unpack the first-24-hours pouch first

PARENT PERMISSION SLIP

If something goes off-plan, that is not the end of the holiday. The aim is progress, not a perfect airport performance.

THE FINAL STRETCH

Your departure countdown

Print this page and tick it off. The less you have to remember, the better.

ONE WEEK TO GO

- [ ] Check every passport and entry requirement
- [ ] Reconfirm flights and accommodation
- [ ] Check luggage and infant allowances
- [ ] Review transfer / car-seat arrangements
- [ ] Check weather and required clothing
- [ ] Buy any missing essentials

48 HOURS TO GO

- [ ] Complete airline check-in when available
- [ ] Save documents and boarding details offline
- [ ] Pack hand luggage and baby change kit
- [ ] Charge devices and power banks
- [ ] Confirm how you are getting to the airport
- [ ] Check for disruption or schedule changes

ON THE DAY

- [ ] Passports, tickets and wallets
- [ ] Phones / chargers
- [ ] Snacks for the big kids
- [ ] Baby essentials and feeds
- [ ] Spare outfit / wipes
- [ ] Deep breath taken

LAST WORD BEFORE TAKE-OFF

Forget perfection. If everyone has a passport, a safe way to travel and something to eat, we are already doing pretty well.

YOUR PLANNING PAGE

Let's make it official

Use this sheet for the trip you are actually planning - even if the destination is still a question mark.

DESTINATION AND TRIP STYLE

POTENTIAL TRAVEL DATES / NUMBER OF NIGHTS

AIRLINE AND PREFERRED FLIGHT TIMES

ACCOMMODATION SHORTLIST

AIRPORT TRANSFER / CAR SEAT NOTES

WHAT DO WE WANT MOST FROM THIS TRIP?

- ☐ Rest
- ☐ Warm weather
- ☐ Easy flights
- ☐ Sightseeing
- ☐ Family activities
- ☐ A slower pace

THE BUDGET REALITY CHECK

Flights	£ _____
Accommodation	£ _____
Insurance	£ _____
Transfers / car hire	£ _____
Food + activities	£ _____
Contingency / extras	£ _____

Our non-negotiable for this trip: _____

A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

One big win is enough

Baby's first holiday is not an Olympic sport. It is a collection of firsts, memories and discoveries.

A trip can be wonderful without being perfect.

There may be delays. Someone might cry. A supposedly quick breakfast may take the best part of an hour. You may find yourself negotiating snacks with a toddler while holding a baby.

None of that cancels out the adventure. Choose one thing you really want to enjoy each day, leave space for pauses and let the smaller moments count.

OUR LITTLE TRAVEL PROMISES

- [ ] We will plan enough, but leave room to change our minds
- [ ] We will not measure the holiday by how much we fit in
- [ ] We will celebrate the wins, even if they are tiny
- [ ] We will remember why we wanted to explore together

A NOTE FROM THE SSALI CREW

The point isn't flawless travel. It's making family adventures feel possible - one passport, one journey and one good memory at a time.

SSALI
ON TOUR

The best part starts after the checklist.

Passport photos, family-sized bookings and approximately 900 snack requests.
Now comes the good part: making the memories.

THE SSALI RULE

One big win a day. The rest is a bonus.

STILL GOT THE TRAVEL BUG?

Come along for the honest reviews, the planning wins and the little disasters that become the best stories later.

THE BLOG

Real-world family stay reviews, days out and destinations worth the effort.

ssaliexplorers.com

THE FRIDAY SERIES

Booked It, Here's How: follow the family-of-six holiday planning journey.

@ssaliexplorers

FROM OUR GANG TO YOURS

It won't all go to plan. It rarely does. But that's never stopped us from exploring.
Want a hand with your own family escape? Say hello at @ssaliexplorers.

General UK-family planning guide, reviewed October 2026. Passport, airline, health and entry rules may change; always verify current official requirements before making travel arrangements.