



PHOTOS: CURT WOODHALL

Carlsbad's long stretches of open beach are the perfect playground for toddlers to search for buried treasure, shells and building sand castles.

CALIFORNIA

San Diego a toddler's playground

MHAIRRI WOODHALL
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

My two-year old daughter already has a case of wanderlust.

She talks about hotels, planes and restaurants non-stop. I think it was San Diego that sealed the deal for travel.

Powder sand beaches, ocean-front resorts, wildlife parks and a land filled with Lego. If toddlers ruled the world, this would be our reality. With so many children's activities available, we divided our time between Coronado Island in the south and Carlsbad in the north.

Coronado is a sun-kissed visual feast. Quaint storefronts and colourful historic homes, with perfectly manicured gardens reflect a host of architectural styles, including Craftsman, Spanish Colonial and Italian Renaissance Revival.

While the island's picture-perfect beauty may have been lost on my daughter, the iconic Hotel Del Coronado made quite

the impression. The expansive Victorian style beachfront property looks like a seaside castle, and our suite — the Octopus — reflected this whimsical theme.

It's a kid's fairy-tale room, with ocean-inspired decor and a toy chest filled with games, puzzles and books.

Daddy and daughter combed the beach so that mama could hit The Del spa.

After my 80-minute Shell Coronado Facial and Goddess of the Sea body wrap, I barely made it out of the spa's infinity pool.

Just a short drive from Coronado, in downtown San Diego, is Balboa Park. Although it's home to the San Diego Zoo, we focused on the smaller attractions like the Miniature Railroad, historic carousel and Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theatre.

On our second night, we booked a babysitter through the hotel concierge and strolled along Orange Avenue to Chez Loma for dinner. Like many of the businesses in Coronado, the bistro is in a perfectly restored historical home.

From the name, I was expecting traditional French cuisine; however Chef Alejandro Martinez infuses the menu with a Mexican flair.

I went with our waiter's recommendation, the Ceviche 'Verde' with rockfish, tomatillo sauce and avocado. To date it's the best ceviche I've had.

From Coronado, we drove 45 minutes north to the Four Seasons Aviara in Carlsbad. The property is a residence club made up of villas with fully equipped kitchens and laundry facilities — ideal for families. As we were there for just three nights, I booked the bed and breakfast rate.

In-room dining is a lifesaver with small children and ordering breakfast to the room was a big hit. By Day 2, our daughter was asking when her pancakes would be arriving.

The highlight of her stay, however, was our in-suite Private Chef Dinner — a fantastic interactive dining experience for the whole family.

Next we went to California



Larger-than-life toys are on display for kids of all ages at Legoland California.

Legoland, only a 15-minute drive from the Four Seasons.

Our favourite activities were the Swabbles Deck splash park at Pirate Shores and the Duplo Village Playtown playground.

Anticipating our daughter's appreciation for anything water related, we brought a bathing suit, towel, change of clothes and lots of water, snacks and sunscreen.

The San Diego Zoo Safari Park is another home run for toddlers. In addition to gorillas, lion cubs, giraffes and other wildlife, there are two interactive water parks, a playground and a petting zoo.

We took the 25-minute Africa Tram ride, which is about the maximum amount of time a two-year-old will sit.

A stash of leftover pancakes from breakfast helped. Kids two and under are free and all money spent at the park supports wildlife conservation.

Nothing wears out a toddler like a day at the beach.

So on the morning of our flight home, we grabbed chairs, towels and toys from Aviara's concierge and hit the beach in Carlsbad.

Scouring for seashells and buried treasure, building sand-castles and running through the surf was just enough activity to produce a peaceful sleep on the plane ride home.

For more destination information, visit arrivalstravel.com

FLIGHT CENTRE™

The Airfare Experts

TRAVEL BLOG

Not just any resort can throw around terms like 'barefoot elegance' and 'luxury-included' and get away with it, let alone perfect the concepts, but then again, a Sandals resort is anything but 'any resort.' Sandals lives and breathes its taglines and it shows. Sandals is an institution, with an unheard-of high repeat customer base while recruiting new Sandals 'lifers' weekly. Simply put, those who know go and keep right on going.

To read more visit:
flightcentre.ca/inspire_me

Sample Vacation

Jamaica

Luxury Beach Escape
Flights + 7 Nights 5-Star

\$2945

from

INCLUDES accom at a luxury all-inclusive adults only 5-star resort located on the island's legendary Seven-Mile Beach. Spend sun-kissed days in one of their three pools, explore the ocean with unlimited scuba, waterskiing and snorkelling. Enjoy delicious meal options from seven restaurants, four of them directly on the beach offering stunning sunset views. Take in moonlit nights dancing on the beach, lounge at an exotic firepit or grab a drink at one of the five different bars serving top shelf drinks. **BONUS** receive up to 5000⁰ bonus Aeroplan Miles included. **ADD** Dunn's River Falls climb from \$119. **ADD** sunset catamaran cruise from \$109.

The Captain's
Red Label Fares
with more inclusions than any other airfare.

Flight Centre's
Exclusive Airfares include:

- ✓ \$100* land credit per person with GOGO Worldwide Vacations to spend on hotels, tours, car rentals and more!
- ✓ Price drop protection*
- ✓ Plaza Premium Lounge pass*
- ✓ Flights on world-class carrier, Cathay Pacific

Bangkok

\$1345

from

Travel Nov 20 - Dec 5

Bali

Travel Feb 10 - Feb 24

from \$1365

Hanoi

Travel Nov 14 - Nov 28

from \$1385

Tokyo

Travel Jan 13 - Jan 27

from \$1525

All-inclusive Packages

Varadero

6 Nights 4-Star

\$815

from

UPGRADE to 5-star accom from \$1015.

Riviera Nayarit

7 Nights 4-Star

from \$819

UPGRADE to 4.5-star accom from \$1109.

Punta Cana

7 Nights 4-Star

from \$1195

UPGRADE to 5-star accom from \$1375.

Bahamas

7 Nights 5-Star

from \$1249

UPGRADE to an oceanview room from \$1339.

Riviera Maya

6 Nights 4-Star

from \$1455

UPGRADE to 5-star accom from \$1465.

Cruise Vacation

LA & Pacific Coastal

Flight + 3 Nights 4-Star +

7-Night Cruise

\$1799

from

INCLUDES flight, 4-star West Hollywood accom and cruise sailing Los Angeles to Vancouver visiting Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Astoria and Victoria in an oceanview stateroom. **BONUS** \$50⁰ onboard credit included. **UPGRADE** to 5-star accom and balcony stateroom from \$2149.

Canada & USA Vacations

Palm Springs

Flights + 4 Nights 5-Star

\$775

from

INCLUDES 5-star accom at a luxury resort at the foothills of the majestic San Jacinto Mountains. **BONUS** shuttle to golf course, golf bag storage, bicycles and internet included. **ADD** 4-day car rental with unlimited mileage from \$129.

Ucluelet Storm Watching, November

Long Weekend Special, 3 Nights

from \$315^{pp}

INCLUDES accom at an oceanfront resort on Vancouver Island featuring dramatic views of the ocean.

New York Flights + 3 Nights

from \$845

INCLUDES 4-star Manhattan accom in Soho. **ADD** Broadway theatre tickets to Chicago from \$145.

Christmas Event Vacation

Austria, Germany & Switzerland

Holiday Special, Flights + 9-Day Tour

\$2999

from

INCLUDES flights into Vienna, return from Zurich and 9-day escorted tour visiting multiple Christmas markets, see the landmarks in Vienna, drive along the scenic Danube Valley to Salzburg, admire the Marienplatz in Munich and explore the charm of the Old Town Square in Innsbruck.

flightcentre.ca
More great deals online!

Visit us in store.
170 stores across Canada.

1 866 967 5364
950 Airfare Experts across Canada.

LOWEST AIRFARE GUARANTEE

We will beat any airfare quote or you fly free!

Conditions apply. Ex: Vancouver. All advertised prices include taxes & fees. Air only prices are per person for return travel unless otherwise stated. Package, cruise, tour, rail & hotel prices are per person, based on double occupancy for total length of stay unless otherwise stated. All-inclusive vacations include air, pp=per person. Prices are for select departure dates and are accurate and subject to availability at advertising deadline, errors and omissions excepted, and subject to change. Taxes & fees include transportation related fees, GST/HST and fuel supplements and are approximate and subject to change. *Price is per person for quad occupancy (2 adults & 2 kids ages 2-17) for total length of stay unless otherwise stated. **Conditions apply. For full terms and conditions please speak with a Flight Centre Travel Consultant or visit flightcentre.ca/flight/red-label-fares. *Receive up to 5000 bonus Aeroplan Miles included is valid on new bookings only. Not applicable on bookings made at flightcentre.ca. Offer is valid for participating Sandals resort booked with Air Canada Vacations. To qualify for this promotion, you must be an Aeroplan Member. Not combinable with any other offers, discounts or promotions unless otherwise specified. Offer may be withdrawn at anytime without notice. Additional restrictions may apply, speak with your Flight Centre consultant. Offer expires November 30, 2014. Limit one (1) onboard credit per stateroom for all cabin categories on exact itinerary advertised, offer can be withdrawn or changed at anytime. †We will beat any written quoted airfare by \$1 and give you a \$20 voucher for future travel. ‡Fly Free offer applies only where all "Lowest Airfare Guarantee" criteria are met but Flight Centre does not beat quoted price. Additional important conditions apply. For full terms and conditions visit flightcentre.ca/lowestairfareguarantee-flyfree. BC REG: #HO2790