

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

## Best Museums for Families

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The key to a great family-friendly museum? Entertaining your children—and yourself. Here are the places that do it best.



Visiting a children's museum can be a conflicting experience. Sure, your kids love it, but unless you're gunning for world's best parent, it's probably not how you want to spend a family vacation.

Instead, we offer up a top list of *family*-friendly museums around the globe, with stimulating exhibits to satisfy all members of your tribe.

Not that there aren't children's museums that are a cut above, like [MoMath](#) NYC (we love your square-wheeled trikes) and [Children's Museum of Indianapolis](#) (all 472,900 square feet of it). But in picking the best museums for families, we're interested in the places that educate, excite, and entertain all ages—from five to 50.

From pickled oddities at the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia to a parade of animals in Paris, it's a museum's ability to capture the imagination that matters most. That could mean explosive chemistry experiments in Chicago or trucks and trains (and bikes and boats) at Glasgow's Riverside Museum, as well as art in situ at a Brazilian botanical garden. Bonus points if you learn something along the way.

This spring break, we can't promise argument-free vacations. But make a plan to visit the best museums for families—it will be an experience everyone can agree on.

### **The California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco**

The exhibits at [Cal Academy of Sciences](#) in Golden Gate Park (one of the [world's most beautiful city parks](#)) could almost be secondary to the Renzo Piano–designed museum's crisp glass walls and breathtaking bubble roof, planted with 1.7 million native plants. But inside, a combined natural history museum, aquarium, and planetarium easily keeps pace. Highlights include a four-story, 90-foot-in-diameter rainforest dome containing birds and butterflies, where you can climb into the treetops, and a glass elevator that transports visitors down into a colorful fish tank. Future visiting exhibitions include "Skulls" (from May 16), which will feature more than 600 specimens and a live colony of flesh-eating beetles.



*Tim Griffith*