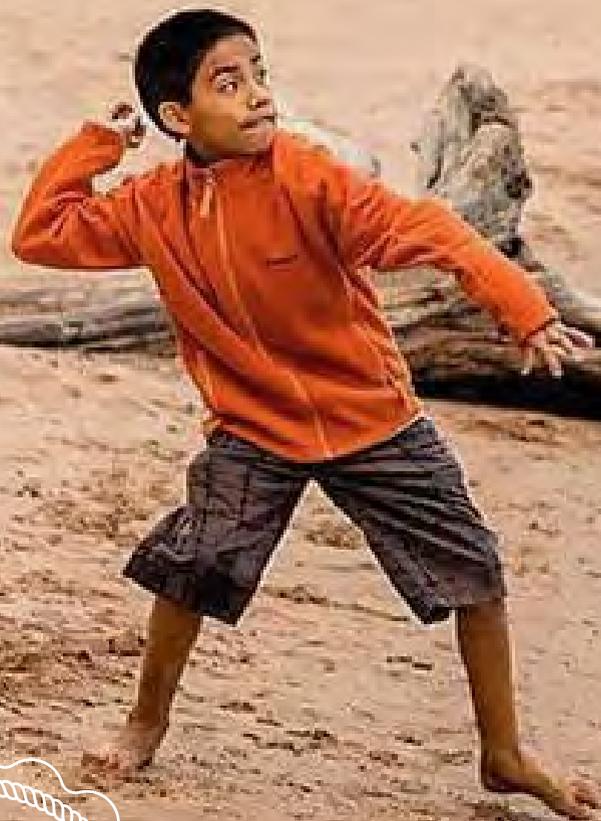


TRAILS MIX

VOLUME ONE ···· ISSUE NO. 3



Hello.

Welcome to Trails Mix, an extra helping of Family Trails goodness. Each quarter, our #FamilyTrails community will receive a digital edition of the Trails Mix bundle packed with ideas and inspiration designed to spark more family adventuring and learning together. We'll also feature highlights from the best of Family Trails – the stories shared by our families around the world.

From recipes to activities to expert interviews, we hope you'll find that Trails Mix encourages your family to get out and get going – wherever the trail may lead you.

Have an idea for an upcoming edition of Trails Mix?
Email us at community@familytrails.com.

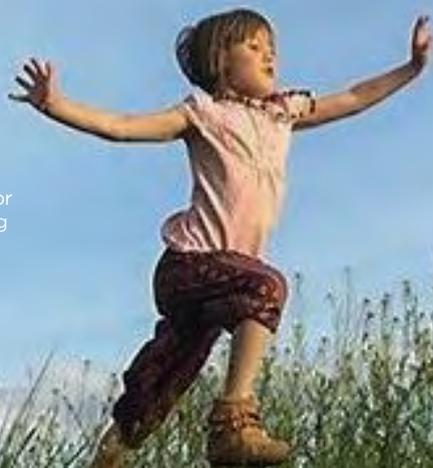
To connect with thousands of other families learning through adventure, join the **#FamilyTrails** conversation on Instagram by following us **@FamilyTrails**.

We'd love to hear from you!

TOYOTA FAMILY TRAILS

TOYOTA FAMILY TRAILS is an adventure brought to life thanks to a partnership between the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) and Toyota. Since 1989, NCFL has helped more than two million families make educational progress. We believe that all parents can help their children succeed in school and in life. The family unit is the one constant across the educational spectrum, but family engagement in education doesn't happen on its own. NCFL pioneered Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time[®], bridging the gap that often exists between school, home, and community.

At Family Trails, we believe your family is the best teacher your child will ever have. Together, we hope to inspire parents and kids to let their imaginations lead them on a daily exploration and adventure through the world around them and the classroom of life.



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STORIES FROM THE TRAIL

Family stories are the heart and soul of Family Trails. Check out these two amazing stories contributed by the Family Trails community and get to know the rest of our contributors by visiting familytrails.com/blog.

Interested in submitting your own family adventure story? Visit familytrails.com/share.

featuring

THE
MAHADEO
FAMILY

THE
TRAN
FAMILY





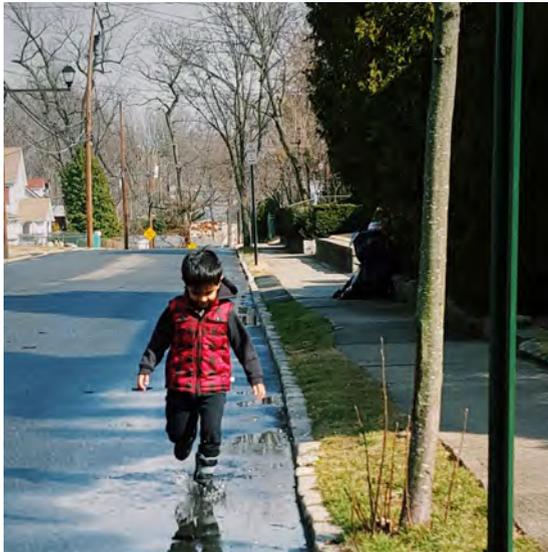
**OUTDOOR
ADVENTURES**
in the **CITY**

as told by VIBHA MAHADEO

We live in the suburbs of Long Island. We may not be surrounded by mountains or national forests, but my boys and I adventure out every day. A lot of our adventures happen in and around our neighborhood.

At ages three and one, they are curious about everything. It's all new to them. A simple walk around our neighborhood leads to question-filled conversations about the environment. As they water the plants in our yard, we speak of the role of earthworms and the importance of helping flowers and vegetables grow. We leave our backyard and walk down the street. We see the roots of an old tree pushing through the sidewalk, seeking out space to grow. This brings so many questions from my three year old as he struggles to understand if the tree is okay and has enough space. We see birds flying around and he follows their flight to see if they are going to their nest.

My boys love splashing in puddles, but recently it was mixed with some oil and this brought up a conversation about taking care of our planet and doing things in a safe manner so that others have the opportunity to enjoy the Earth too. Learning with a three- and one-year-old is easy and fun to do. All it takes is mentioning the things you're observing. This simple act sparks curiosity and, more importantly, care for our environment.



"A lot of our adventures happen in and around our neighborhood."

VIBHA MAHADEO
@vm_photography



FAMILY VACATION *to* ALASKA

as told by BRITTANY TRAN

We did not know what we were getting ourselves into when we booked our Alaska vacation. All we had in mind were mountains, glaciers, and a whole lot of greenery and wildlife. We were definitely in for a trip once we landed in Homer.

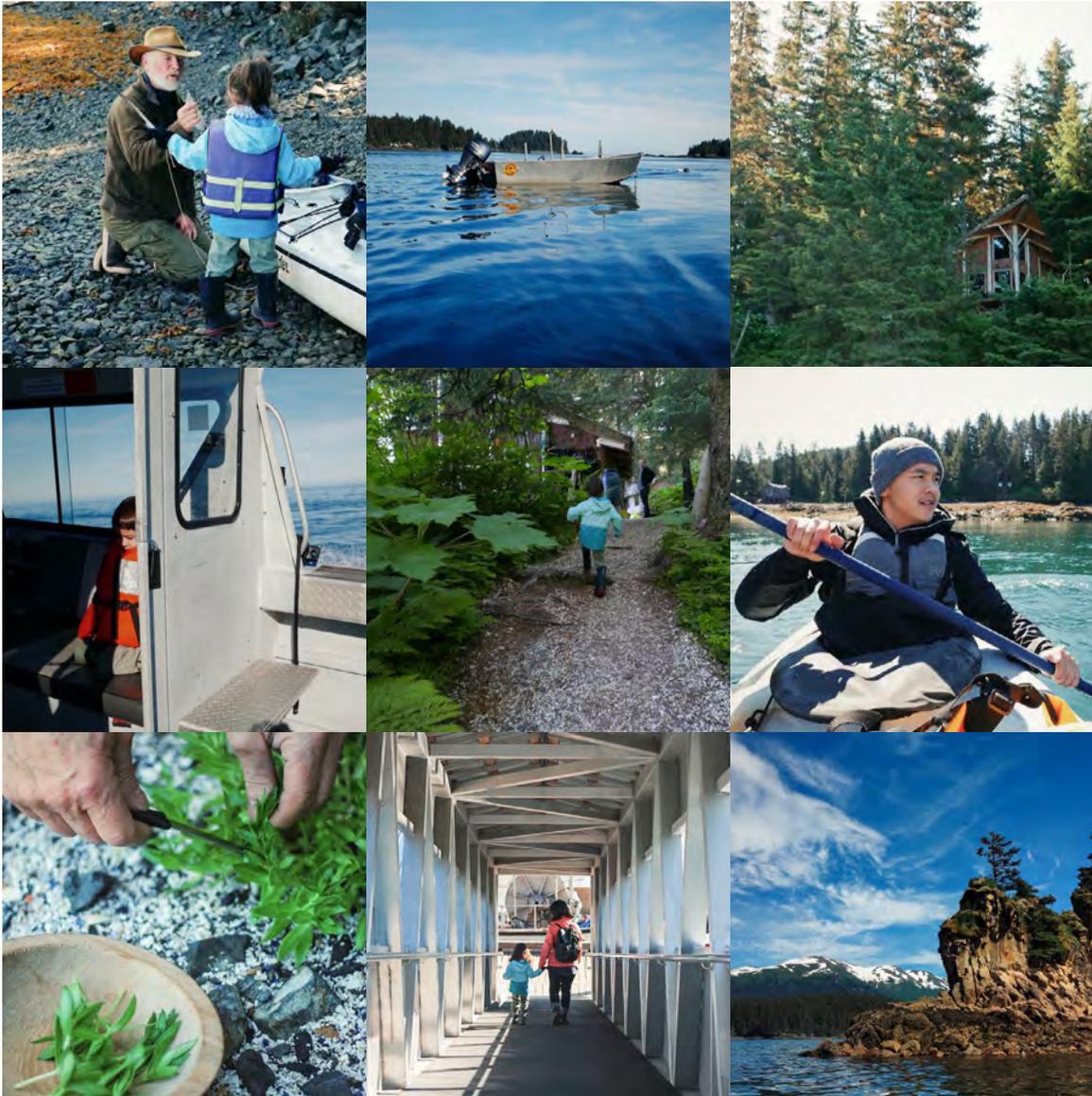
Planning really goes a long way when you have the right gadget and websites aiding your entire trip. (Praise the digital gods!) “Where land ends and sea begins,” lies the very quaint and quiet town of Homer, Alaska, with a population of just a little over 5,000 people. Upon entering, you are greeted with a sign that reads “Halibut Fishing Capital of the World.” There were many world records proudly listed; from ‘longest road into the ocean waters in the world,’ to the largest caught salmon. There is also, of course, a record 482-pound halibut caught in their waters. But to us, it represented much more. This unique little town completely changed our unenlightened perspective of the Alaskan culture.

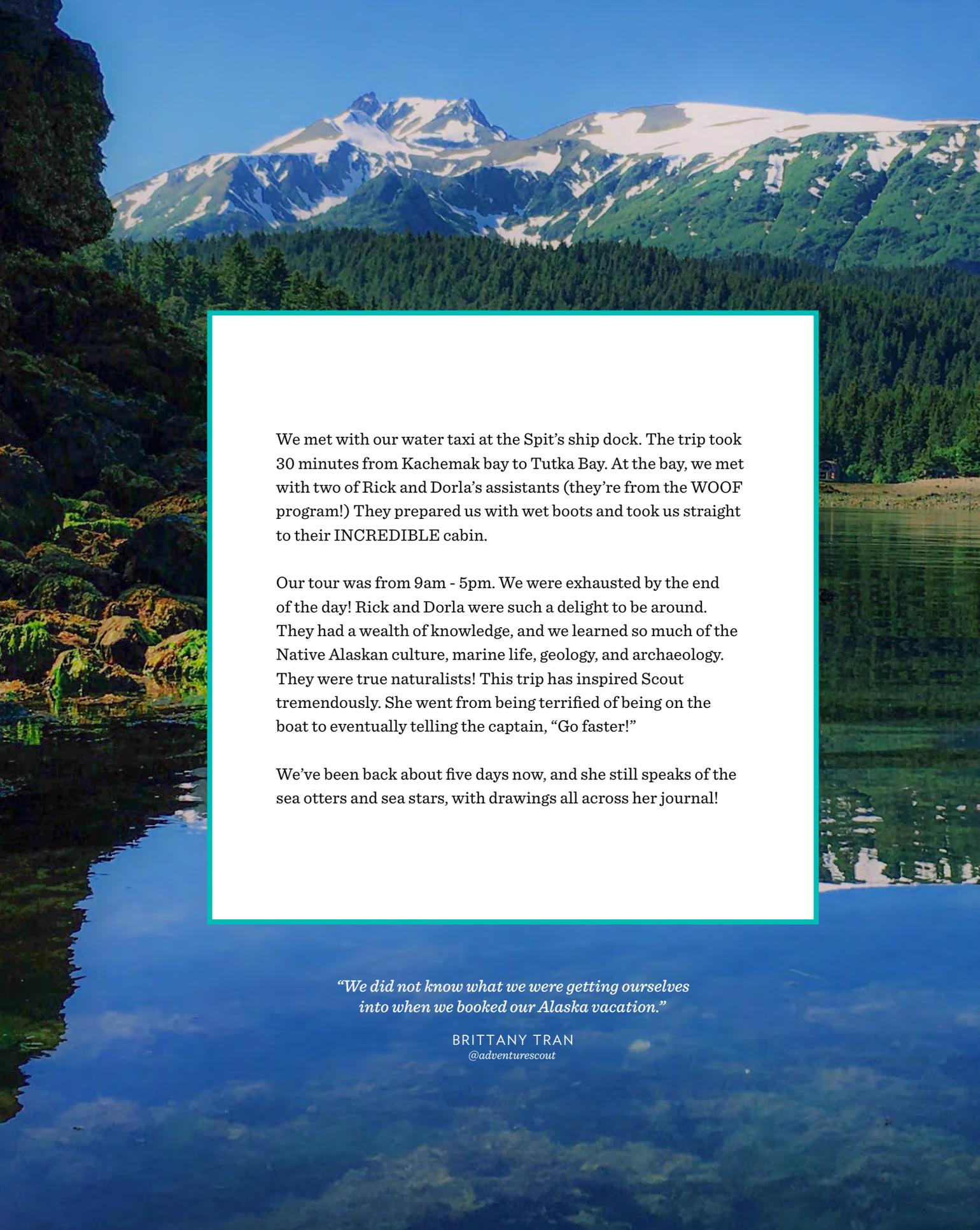
It started with the best tour we’d ever been on - the Seaside Adventure tour on Tutka Bay. We drove from Girdwood and arrived at Homer around 8:30pm, with the sun sitting

just above the sea. The sky was lit a glorious shade of blue. We were hungry, so we drove straight to the Spit and set our appetite on seafood. Upon reaching the city of Homer, the Spit was an additional 20 minutes out. There were ship docks, beaches, campgrounds, restaurants, gift shops, and bars all down both sides of the road. There were tiny little homes converted into restaurants and old, abandoned ships left astray, along with tons (I mean TONS!) of campers everywhere.

We ate dinner, then went to check out our bed and breakfast. We attempted to sleep while there was still daylight in order to prepare ourselves for an early rise the next morning.

The tour was so unique for us because it was like an interactive seaside classroom. We came across the business online, which is run by Rick and Dorla Harness. “Seaside will turn the bay into an interactive classroom, covering everything from archaeology and geology to cultural and natural history on your full-day paddle. These long-time Alaskans share where secret treasures lie, what it’s like to live on the bay, and how to make a meal from wild ingredients.”





We met with our water taxi at the Spit's ship dock. The trip took 30 minutes from Kachemak bay to Tutka Bay. At the bay, we met with two of Rick and Dorla's assistants (they're from the WOOF program!) They prepared us with wet boots and took us straight to their INCREDIBLE cabin.

Our tour was from 9am - 5pm. We were exhausted by the end of the day! Rick and Dorla were such a delight to be around. They had a wealth of knowledge, and we learned so much of the Native Alaskan culture, marine life, geology, and archaeology. They were true naturalists! This trip has inspired Scout tremendously. She went from being terrified of being on the boat to eventually telling the captain, "Go faster!"

We've been back about five days now, and she still speaks of the sea otters and sea stars, with drawings all across her journal!

"We did not know what we were getting ourselves into when we booked our Alaska vacation."

BRITTANY TRAN
@adventurescout

EXPLORE FURTHER

EXTENDED LEARNING *with* THE MAHADEO FAMILY

- 1. You don't have to go big or go far to have a family adventure.** Take a family walk around your community and take time to look for things you might usually overlook. Playing "I spy" can help you see the sights through each other's eyes!
- 2. What did you notice when you explored with your family?**
Use #FamilyTrails to share your story or picture.
- 3. Check out a fun way to explore nature with your family** at Wonderopolis.org with Wonder #1516: How Many Birds Can You Identify?

EXTENDED LEARNING *with* THE TRAN FAMILY

- 1. Create a family adventure journal** and record your experiences wherever your trails lead! Take turns writing and drawing about what you do with your family.
- 2. Which adventure did you add to your journal this week?**
Share a photo or story of your family adventure with #FamilyTrails.
- 3. Explore Wonder #380: Where is America's Biggest Icebox?** with your family at Wonderopolis.org.



MORE TRAILS & STORIES >



MORE TRAILS & STORIES >





**SEAWEED
DISCOVERY**
The Moreno Family



**SURPRISE SAND DUNES
IN NEW YORK CITY**
The Buhr Family



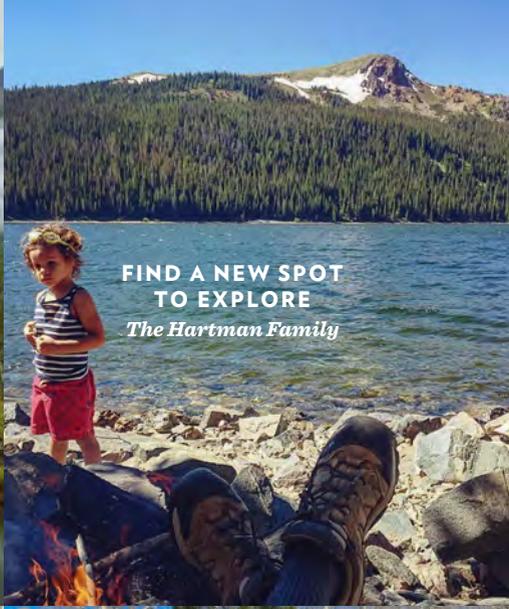
**PARKS &
METROPARKS**
The White Family



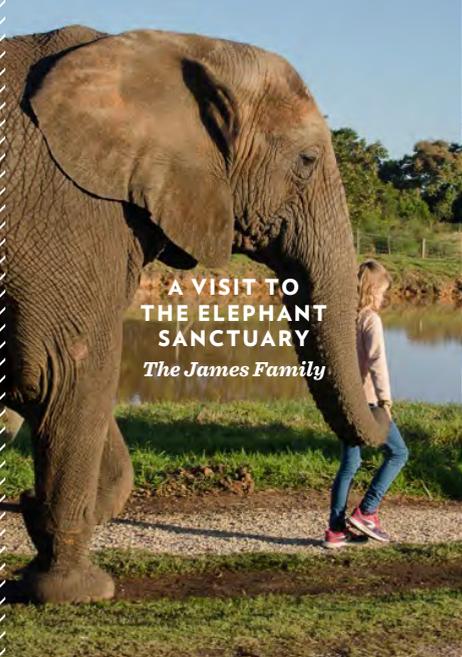
**STARVED ROCK
STATE PARK**
The Saffle Family



**ADVENTURING
AS THE KEY
TO CONFIDENCE**
The Murdock Family



**FIND A NEW SPOT
TO EXPLORE**
The Hartman Family



**A VISIT TO
THE ELEPHANT
SANCTUARY**
The James Family



**PICNIC BY
THE RIVER**
The Quinn Family



**BACKPACKING
AT LOST CREEK**
The Rickards Family

TOYOTA
FAMILY
TRAILS

Social Challenges

JUNE

JULY

AUG.

SEPT.

OCT.

NOV.

A person is holding a camera in a forest setting. The background is a blurred forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a bokeh effect. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a red bag is visible in the foreground.

Each month we're issuing a new inspiration challenge to the Family Trails community.

The monthly challenge may come in the form of a visual prompt, question, or activity, and will always be designed to spark family exploration, adventure, and learning.

We'll collect the best of the best to share via social, on [FamilyTrails.com](https://www.familytrails.com), and in Trails Mix. To participate, look for the monthly challenge prompt on Instagram. Maybe you'll see your family adventures in an upcoming issue of Trails Mix!

Check out some of the highlights from our last few months >

**CHALLENGE
NO.1**

JUNE



With summer just ahead,
we are turning our heads upwards
to bask in the sun.

Whether climbing to new heights,
watching the clouds float against
the blue, or taking in the sunset
together, this month we challenge
you to capture the Sky.



PHOTO AT LEFT: [@theycallme_mom](#)
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: [@ehermesen](#), [@emmmhontz](#), [@resplendentlife](#)

CHALLENGE
NO.2

JULY

Make
-A-
Splash





Summer is heating up, so it's time to cool down and make a splash! From the sink to the sea, this month we're challenging #FamilyTrails users to capture the joy and movement of water in action. Grab your little ones and get creative – it's time for the July social challenge.

PHOTO AT LEFT: @s.j.coleman
CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: @mahoganywaymama, @juju_candidshots, @meganrharmon

CHALLENGE
NO.3

AUGUST

Local
Treasures





This is a chance to show the community what you love MOST about the place you call home. There are countless experiences available right in our backyards – get creative and share them with #FT_LocalTreasures!



PHOTO AT LEFT: [@justbethwithaj](#)
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: [@thestreamlinedlife](#), [@nadie_comoyoo](#), [@theycallme_mom](#)

TRAILS MIX RECIPE #3

CRAVING

more

FAMILY TIME

on the TRAIL?



This snack pairs perfectly with cool autumn nights spent warming up around the campfire. Grab a stick, pull up the nearest log, and meet a treat that will have everybody asking for s'more.



Classic Marshmallow,
Hersheys &
Salted Waffle Pretzel
submitted by
@brookefield



Classic Marshmallow,
Kit Kat &
Graham Cracker
submitted by
@jessieolean



Classic Marshmallow,
Hersheys &
Chocolate Chip Cookie
submitted by
@meg_nlo



Classic Marshmallow,
Reese's Peanut Butter
Cup & Graham Cracker
submitted by
@emmhontz



Classic Marshmallow,
Hersheys & Keebler
Fudge Stripe Cookie
submitted by
@the.carter.crew



Classic Marshmallow,
Caramel Ghirardelli
Square & Graham Cracker
submitted by
@heyletsadventure



Classic Marshmallow,
Hersheys &
Oreo Cookie
submitted by
@outdoorswithoils



GUEST TRAIL GUIDES AHEAD

Attention Hikers:

You are about to embark on a journey that will impact your family activities for generations to come.

Proceed with extreme excitement.



At Family Trails, we believe all families can learn and grow together through exploration and adventure. In this spirit, in each edition of Trails Mix you'll find feature pieces spotlighting a diverse range of adventurers from around the country, blazing their own trail.

featuring

JULIANA
CALORY

DARCEL
WHITE



A man in a light blue shirt and khaki shorts is walking away from the camera on a rustic wooden log bridge. A young child in a white shirt and orange shorts is sitting on his shoulders. The bridge is made of large, weathered logs and is set in a lush, green forest with tall trees and dense undergrowth. The background shows a misty or overcast sky and distant hills.

**MY
HAPPIEST
PLACE**
on
EARTH

as told by JULIANA CALORY

Our National Parks are the true amusement parks, and Acadia is my happiest place on Earth.

Hi there! I am Juliana and I am a mother of two energetic young boys, ages seven and three. My husband and I recently took the boys and their teenage cousin camping in Maine.

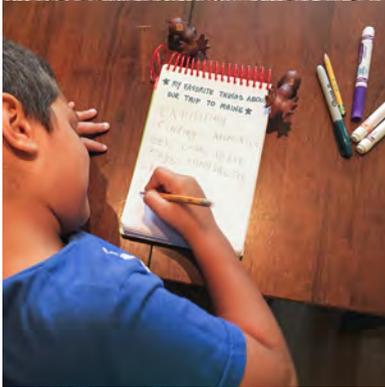
I am not talented enough to convey in words (or even pictures) how beautiful Mount Desert Island is. Acadia National Park is such a spectacular place. We had so many adventures there that I don't even know what to highlight. I am amazed by the fresh air, beautiful sunsets, abundance of hiking and biking trails, the beautiful beaches, lakes, and mountains. I must say that one of the most memorable moments for me was when we were exploring during low tide and, after finding big crabs, we realized that there were lobsters trapped there, too. My husband and I were as excited about this as the kids.

(Okay, I confess. We were way more excited about the lobsters than the kids.)



*“It is very special to explore nature with my children,
and to appreciate the beautiful world we live in.”*

JULIANA CALORY
@juju_candidshots





➤ We are very lucky to have the natural wonders of our country accessible to all of us through our National Parks. It is very special to explore nature with my children, and to appreciate the beautiful world we live in.

I asked my son what he would tell people about our trip to Acadia.
Here is what he would like to share (in his own words):

Hi! My name is Enzo. I am seven years old and I love animals.

Maine is a fun place for a vacation. Kids can explore everywhere and find lots of animals. It is fun for the whole family. I loved finding the creatures, because I like animals. I found frogs, flying squirrels, a dead eel, giant crabs, and lobsters.

We stayed at an awesome cabin in a campground with an awesome sea view at the bottom of the hill. I went fishing on a deck. I wish our tent was on the deck. I went fishing on a quarry, too. You can catch large-mouthed bass, small-mouthed bass, perch, and sunfish there. We went to a lake to fish, too. I love fishing.

Camping is an awesome place to make s'mores. My dad lets me help set the fire, which is really fun. The food in Maine was really good. I ate lobsters, clam chowder, and a harbor bar – it is two chocolate chip cookies covered in chocolate with vanilla ice cream in the middle. I also tried lobster ice cream, but I didn't like it that much. I would eat if I had to, but I picked Oreo mint ice cream.

We went fishing, hiking, biking, swimming, and found animals.

My favorite thing was everything.

Then, on the last day, our cabin blew up! JUST KIDDING!





THE BEST
of
WHERE
WE ARE

as told by DARCEL WHITE



I'm a single mother. I'm also a homeschooling mother. I don't make a lot of money at the moment, and some days I question if I'm doing enough – if I am enough.

We may never own a big house, visit a major theme park, or take family vacations every year, but I decided a long time ago that those things are not at the top of my priority list. Making the best of where we are now and enjoying what we have is important to me. I'm thankful we live in an area with a substantial amount of parks and trails for us to explore. We're currently working our way through those closest to us, but this fall I am hoping to take a day trip to a park about two hours from us.

My children have a goal to convince me to take them camping...in a tent. I'm trying to negotiate camping in a cabin for starters.

A few weeks ago, we added to our list of favorite trails: Charleston Falls Preserve. Unfortunately the falls were more of a trickle on the day we went, but we still had a great time.

The kids were so excited, running then stopping to ask me what was next. I laughed and told them to keep walking so we could find out.

This place is gorgeous!

We spent the majority of our time in the gorge. We saw a snake and lots of spider webs, but the highlight was this caterpillar still in its chrysalis. I thought it was a leaf until I got closer, poked it, and it moved!

Samuel insisted we try to put it back in a tree.

Kids only get one childhood, and I want to make sure mine enjoy it. In the last year it has become part of our rhythm, and we're making great memories! I try to hike a trail at least every other week. I love trails where I don't have to watch my kids like a hawk, as it's more enjoyable for everyone. They can wander away from me to explore, and I like watching and listening to them talk and share with each other the things they've found, or making up stories about the secret missions they're pretending to be on.





"Making the best of where we are now and enjoying what we have is important to me."

DARCEL WHITE
@mahoganywaymama

I hope my children one day look back on these hikes and remember all the fun we had listening to the birds, spotting and watching wild rabbits, coming up with our own names for wild flowers, and watching a waterfall.

One of the things I like to do with my kids at the end of our adventures is ask what they're favorite part was. Here are their favorite parts with photos they took and drawings they made...

Ava (9 yrs): "When we were jumping across the rocks, and you don't have to add this, but I thought it was funny when you screamed and said the dragonfly was trying to attack you! I also liked the cave, the snake, and chrysalis."

Nakiah (11 yrs): "Um, lets see. My favorite part was the bridge because we saw a snake, a tiny waterfall, and a caterpillar. It was hot and we were sweaty, and when we walked all the way around in a big circle."

Samuel (6 yrs): "Mine was the cave, caterpillar, bridge with the little snake, climbing the trees, and jumping across the rocks!"

After putting this post together and reading back over it, I think what we have and where we are now is pretty amazing.

ORGANIZE YOUR ADVENTURE:

READY TO HIT THE TRAIL?

Let's get the conversation rolling! Wherever your bucket list leads, these tidbits will inspire great family conversations and memory making along the way.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Where is the best place to visit in your state?</p> | <p>What is the best time of year to visit your state?</p> | <p>What is the best time of year to visit your state?</p> | <p>What is the best time of year to visit your state?</p> | <p>What is the best time of year to visit your state?</p> | <p>What is the best time of year to visit your state?</p> |
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No bucket? No problem. Check out this tutorial for folding your own paper bucket! www.familytrails.com/bucket



BUCKET LIST

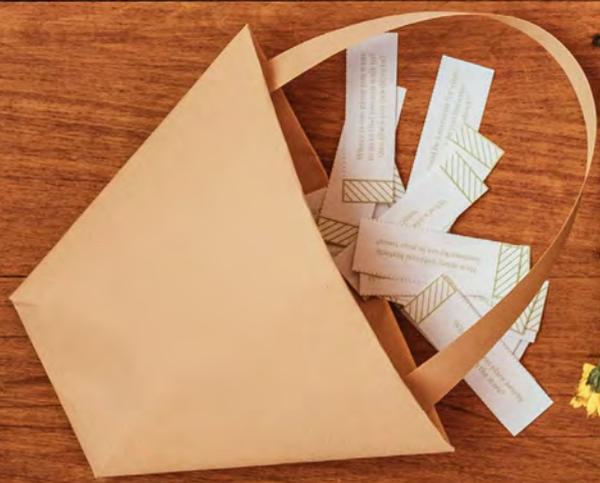
FOR FAMILY ADVENTURE

Goals are great – especially when it comes to family adventures. Whether you dream of visiting every national park or setting aside one day a week for local exploring, gather your family to chat about the adventures you want to tackle together and list here.

| Little Ideas | Big Ideas |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>pick wildflowers museum cultural center</p> | <p>antelope canyon</p> |



Share your Bucket List for Family Adventures with #FamilyTrails



DOWNLOAD YOUR BUCKET LIST NOW >

“I knew when I met you an adventure was going to happen.”

- A.A. MILNE

#FAMILYTRAILS

