


Dude Ranch Summer Vacation Destinations for Families

 parentmap.com/article/dude-ranch-family-vacation-ideas



courtesy Paws Up Montana

If you're looking for a way to enjoy the outdoors with your kids without forgoing the creature comforts of a traditional vacation stay, booking a family vacation at a dude ranch might strike the right balance for your family. You won't have to worry about keeping your kids entertained — these spots have activity calendars full of cattle drives, archery tournaments, fly-fishing clinics and so much more. Plus, they're great for multigenerational trips, as everyone from kids to grandparents will find activities to enjoy and places where they can relax together.

With accommodations that range from cozy cabins to upscale glamping tents with your own glamping butler, these dude ranches will have you catching up on your sleep every night and ready to tackle the next day head-on. Best of all, you don't have to cook hot dogs over the campfire; these upscale destinations have gourmet dining and chuckwagon dinners.

Bull Hill Guest Ranch, Kettle Falls, Washington

Northeastern Washington is where you'll find this working cattle ranch that offers cabins and glamping tents for families looking to live out their ranch-hand dreams. Spend your day on an authentic cattle drive, or go for a dip in the private lake when the temps kick up. Stocked with

rainbow trout, the lake is also where families can test their fly-fishing skills, a popular activity for ranch guests. Gather at the Cookhouse for daily meals, games and other merriment. When the sun sets, head to the campfire and share tales from the day's adventures.

Daily rates include lodging, meals, beverages (including wine, beer and spirits) and ranch activities. There's a reduced rate for kids ages 5–12, and kids 4 and younger stay for free.

Western Pleasure Guest Ranch, Sandpoint, Idaho

Head to the panhandle of northern Idaho to stay at this stunning property that's a favorite of horse lovers. Horseback riding is the main activity here, and kids ages 8–18 can take advantage of the horsemanship program, in which they start with horse husbandry skills on Monday and end with a Thursday-evening horse show, complete with trophies and ribbons. Summer visitors stay in lodge rooms or log cabins, and all stays include meals that focus on locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. This property also offers adults-only weeks, available for couples looking for a kid-free experience.



Photo: courtesy Western Pleasure Guest Ranch

Paws Up Montana, Greenough, Montana

Get ready to be impressed by this massive ranch just outside of Missoula. With 37,000 acres to explore, your family will be busy with archery, horseback riding and nature hikes from the moment you arrive. Spend your day rafting or fly-fishing with expert guides on the Blackfoot River, or book an ATV ride to the nearby ghost town to learn a bit about the area's history.

The on-site gourmet dining options make this property stand out — from the chuck-wagon dinner, complete with axe-throwing and live music, to the casual barbecue-focused outdoor dining spot, which serves up thirst-quenching huckleberry lemonades to go along with your brisket and triple-cheddar mac and cheese. Lodging options include luxury homes that sleep the entire extended family as well as upscale glamping tents with real beds, heat, air conditioning and camping butlers ready to bring you coffee in the morning or whisk your laundry off to be washed.

Darwin Ranch, Jackson, Wyoming

You know you're in for a treat at this dude ranch run by a mother-son duo who know what parents truly want when traveling with kids. With only nine accommodations to choose from, you'll get an experience tailored to your family. Guests come together for communal family-style meals prepared with farm-to-table ingredients, including meat (mostly) sourced from Ishawooa Mesa Ranch, its sister ranch in Cody, Wyoming.

During the weeklong, all-inclusive stays offered from the end of June through the end of September, guests can pick and choose from a range of activities suitable for outdoor enthusiasts of all backgrounds and experience levels. From guided horseback riding and fly-fishing to floating down the creek and sauna sessions, travelers from far and wide visit the ranch to enjoy a slow ranch experience.



Photo: courtesy Darwin Ranch

Greenhorn Ranch, Quincy, California

California's Lost Sierra is where you'll find Greenhorn Ranch, a cozy property with family-friendly cabins, lodge rooms and an Airstream to choose from. Everything centers around the Chuckhouse, where upscale ranch cuisine is served throughout your stay. Book a trail ride for your family and then spend the afternoon splashing in the swimming pool, or trying out archery or skeet shooting.

Kids can borrow a fishing pole to try their luck casting a line in the stocked pond, or book a fishing guide to get out and explore one of the nearby rivers. Time slows down at Greenhorn Ranch in the best way possible.

Flathead Lake Lodge, Bigfork, Montana

Flathead Lake Lodge is an all-inclusive ranch, and because families come for weeklong stays, it feels more like a summer camp. The property is known for its robust range of activities, including a kids camp that's grouped by age to ensure everyone maximizes their fun quotients. Activities include guided horseback trail rides, mountain biking and hiking, as well as water sports, such as sailing. After-dinner crafts bring guests of all ages together, and

you'll find everyone from parents to little ones trying out the slip 'n' slide at the lake. Lodging, meals, adult beverages, activities and entertainment are all included in the weekly rate. Lodges, cabins and suites are available to accommodate families or groups of all sizes.



Photo: courtesy Flathead Lake Lodge

Brush Creek Ranch, Saratoga, Wyoming

Step into ranch life at Brush Creek Ranch, where families can enjoy classic dude ranch activities. Practice horseback riding skills on cattle drives, or learn the art of barrel racing with the help of a skilled ranch wrangler. Archery, fly-fishing, paintball, mountain biking and so much more can be found here; the ranch programming offers an abundance of activities that guests of all ages will enjoy. There's even a special program for little wranglers ages 4–9.

If you want to dive deeper into ranch living, consider a stay at [The Farm at Brush Creek Ranch](#), where guests can gain hands-on experience with sustainable farming and learn from expert bakers, distillers and greenhouse growers. Parents looking to relax while the kids are busy enjoying the activities can add on some spa treatments.

Red Horse Mountain Ranch, Harrison, Idaho

If you want to unplug while the kids are entertained and busy all day, this is the spot. Parents can find plenty of opportunities for pampering at Red Horse Mountain Ranch, from massages and yoga classes to wine dinners. Horseback riding dominates the activity offerings, and each guest is paired with a horse for the duration of their stay. You'll have the opportunity to ride at least twice a day, but there's plenty to do beyond that: zip-lining, hiking, kayaking, fishing and mountain biking are just a few options. Most guests stay in cabins here, but there's also a house that can sleep as many as 11 people, perfect for multigenerational groups.

More family vacation ideas for summer travel:

- [Sunny Santa Fe: An Easy Destination for Families in Any Season](#)
- [Great Getaways: 17 Family-Friendly Pacific Northwest Lodges](#)
- [5 Rustic Retreats for Washington Family Getaways](#)
- [Incredible Spots Where Seattle Families Can Try Yurt Camping](#)
- [San Juan Islands Family Kayaking: PNW Bucket-List Adventure](#)