

# Amazing Places to Take Your **kids**



**Hundreds of North American Adventures**

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with Family Travel Forum



## THE OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Cypress trees rise up out of the water, dripping Spanish moss from their branches. Water lily-filled lakes and marshlike prairies harbor alligators and turtles that bask on logs and slide into the water at the slightest noise. Wading birds such as herons, sandhill cranes, and egrets hunt for their fish dinners, while frogs croak and trill. The Okefenokee's primitive wetlands harbor hundreds of birds,

mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. It is crisscrossed with more than 100 miles of canoe trails, and visitors can best see its natural wonders by touring on the water.

The refuge has three main entrances, and all offer canoe rentals and boat tours as well as wooden boardwalks and observation platforms. Day-trippers have plenty of paddling options since

a number of the canoe trails are short enough to traverse in an afternoon. Families wishing to spend a night or two can reserve wooden platform tent sites along the canoe trails or book a room near the western entrance of the park.

*One of the residents of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, this alligator appears to be looking for something on which to munch.*





## Boston Children's Museum

A 40-foot-high red-and-white wooden milk bottle marks the entry to the Boston Children's Museum, where hands-on discovery and uninhibited experimentation are found on four floors of fun. The museum's centerpiece is the New Balance Climb, an elaborate two-story sculptural maze of brightly painted towers, colorful tubes, and wobbly walkways that seem to be suspended in the middle of the building.

The Science Playground contains several popular attractions, such as the Raceways, where kids get a lesson in physics by pushing golf balls down an intricate set of wooden tracks. Nearby, kids make gigantic soap bubbles and climb underneath oversize aquariums to observe turtles from a fresh perspective.

There is a Latin-American Supermercado, a life-size

lobster boat children can board, and a Construction Zone where youngsters can dig, tunnel, build, and tear down. At Climbing the Walls, kids learn to tie rock-climbing knots, balance on a narrow ledge like a real rock climber, and climb two 20-foot-high walls. Children ages three to five

have their own climbing wall with a slide to help them down.

Many activities for preschoolers and toddlers are found in PlaySpace, which has a treehouse with hidden pathways and a Messy Sensory Area where toddlers can dig "treasure" out of shaving cream.



*The famous 40-foot-high Hood milk bottle greets visitors to the entrance of the Boston Children's Museum. The building actually houses an ice-cream stand.*



## ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA

**H**ot air balloons of all shapes, sizes, and colors fill the fall sky during Albuquerque's balloon festival, the largest of its kind in the world. You'll see a string of chili peppers, a reclining chair, Chinese pagodas, and Russian dolls as they ascend into the sky.

For the best viewing, choose early morning when the majestic balloons are beginning their ascents. The sonorous hiss of hot air filling the balloons as they are prepared for their skyward journey adds to the excitement. Certain mornings have mass ascensions—a simultaneous launch of all the festival balloons. Later in the day, book your own balloon flight and take your family up into the clear New Mexico sky.

Come back in the evening for the Balloon Glow, when more than 100 balloons are lit in unison and the night sky blazes in a panorama of luminous colored globes. For two nights only, shaped balloons are featured in an event called the Glowdeo.

*Your family will enjoy the dawn-to-dusk activities of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. The daytime sky is dotted with a rainbow of colors, and evening events include fireworks displays. On certain nights, there are dramatic presentations of illuminated balloons.*

