

**Family Living Focus**  
**NANCY STEVENS**  
 Montgomery Co. Extension



**Summertime is Travel Time**  
 This is the time of year that Americans put the kids in the car and take off for that family vacation. It's normal for children to become irritable and uncomfortable while sitting still in a confined area for hours at a time.

Traveling with children can have its challenges, but a little bit of planning can help keep the journey as enjoyable as the destination. For very young passengers, the biggest concern is simply dry pants and a full stomach. Vinyl pads in car seats can become uncomfortable in hot weather so you may want to make or buy a fabric cover. Never try to tend to a crying baby while driving or take the baby out of the car seat while the car is moving.

Older children, from toddlers up through school age, are likely to verbalize their restlessness. Don't expect scenery to keep them occupied, they need more active diversions to keep their attention. On long trips restlessness can be minimized by stopping every two hours. Let the children out to stretch, though they will need close supervision if you stop at service stations or other sites where there are moving cars. If you are in an open area where the children can move around freely, you may want to play a short game of ball or tag to run off their excess energy.

Some families have found that starting out early in the morning, or even late at night allows children to sleep through several hours of the journey. If you start out before breakfast, you may want to give children a small snack of fruit juice or crackers before taking off.

Children are more pleasant

travelers if you stop by 4:00 p.m. After that point, irritability sets in. Taking along food and drinks will cut down on stops and keep children satisfied. A container of ice water is a must. You might want to pack a supply of animal or graham crackers, fresh or dried fruit, pretzels, cookies or other favorites. You can keep the snacks in your possession and ration them out when hunger or boredom set in. Don't forget a wet washcloth or disposable wipes for sticky fingers.

Bring along the child's bed pillow or a familiar blanket so they can nap when they get tired. Let each child pack a bag of his or her favorite things to take along - small items, of course! You might try passing the items out one at a time. Bringing along a surprise package or toy will also help for those moments when you can tell the children have reached their traveling limit.

If you have space, you may want to make a play area in the car by placing a cardboard box on the seat beside the child. Take along a tape recorder with favorite nursery rhymes or songs to keep them occupied. Older children may want to make a talking travel log of the trip. Make sure the children are comfortable. Soft, loose clothing is the best choice and layers make it easier to control temperature preferences. It is wise to keep an extra change of clothes readily available for younger children and have sweaters or jackets nearby in case of changing weather.

For entertainment, the two to seven year-olds will enjoy crayons, paper, and blunt scissors. Small picture books, games, magnifying glasses, and magnets are also good choices. Older children will be occupied with play-

ing cards, travel games like checkers, and crossword puzzles. A new book of mazes, word games or "Mad Libs" will keep their attention. A smooth writing surface can be provided with a clipboard or you may want to supply a magic slate.

There are several traditional travel games that have survived decades of traveling children. These include the alphabet game where children look for letters A through Z on signs. The "I-Spy" game is where one child comes up with one object inside the car and others have to guess what it is. Some children enjoy "20 Questions" where you again select an object and others ask "yes" or "no" questions in order to determine what that object is.

Of course, storytelling and singing are also great ways to pass the time. Whatever activities you decide to try, remember, if pandemonium breaks loose inside the car, let it go until you can pull safely off the highway. Only when you have brought the car to a complete stop should the driver turn his or her attention to the passengers.

No matter how unhappy the children become, never allow them to remove their seatbelts or get out of their cars. If you follow some of these suggestions, your trip should be comfortable, safe and entertaining.

## What Are Key Limes ?

Is "key lime pie" made from a special kind of lime, or is it named that because someone from the Florida Keys made up the recipe?

Key limes are actually a special type of lime that was introduced to the Florida Keys by Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the 16th century. The key lime is smaller than the Tahitian (or Persian) limes you're accustomed to seeing in the grocery store — it's much more round and just 1 to 2 inches in diameter. The skin is thinner and yellow at maturity. Its flesh is also more yellow in color than "regular" limes. And, its distinctive flavor is more acidic.

These days, there's not much key lime production anywhere in the United States. However, India, Egypt, the West Indies and Mexico are all major-producing countries. (The key lime is also known as the Mexican lime, although it originated in southern Asia.) Good luck finding this fruit anywhere outside of Florida, though. Gourmet food stores occasionally offer the fresh fruit. Key lime juice, which aficionados claim must be used

for key lime pie, also can be difficult to find outside of Florida.

Luckily, either type of lime can be used in most recipes. Like other citrus fruits, limes are high in vitamin C, containing nearly 20 grams per fruit.

That's enough to give you 20 percent to 25 percent of the vitamin C you need for a day. But eating the tart fruit whole isn't often done. Rather, its juice is sometimes used as a salt substitute, to enhance the flavor of foods. They can also substitute for lemon juice, but they're more acidic than the yellow fruit — use two-thirds to three-quarters cup of lime juice for each cup of lemon juice in a recipe.

When juicing fresh limes, keep them at room temperature for an hour before squeezing. Then, roll the lime along the counter, applying gentle pressure with the palm of your hand, to get the most juice out of the flesh.

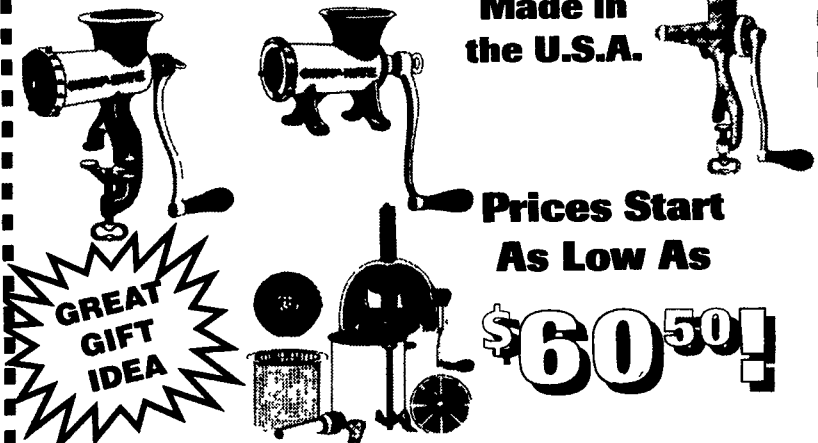
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