



# 100 Places That Can Change Your Child's Life: From Your Backyard to the Ends of the Earth

By Keith Bellows

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Kids who learn to travel will travel to learn. *National Geographic Traveler* Editor Keith Bellows sends you and your children globetrotting for life-changing vacations that will expand their horizons and shape their perspectives. What you *won't* find inside: predictable itineraries and lists of landmarks and events. Instead, you'll get evocative, slice-of-life experiences and age-appropriate ideas that illuminate place and culture.

Each chapter of *100 Places That Can Change Your Child's Life* plumbs the heart of a special place—from the Acropolis to Machu Picchu to the Grand Canyon—all from the perspective of insiders who see destinations through a child's eyes. You'll meet actor and travel writer Andrew McCarthy, who tours the suqs of Marrakech with his seven-year-old son; photographer Annie Griffiths, who shares the miraculous migration to Mexico of the monarch butterflies; Tom Ritchie, who has guided countless children and parents to Antarctica for more than 30 years; the waterman who knows where to see the ponies of Assateague in the true wild; and countless others who are cultural treasures, great storytellers, and keepers of a sense of place.

Packed with ideas to supplement the travel experience—foods, music, films, and carefully curated lists of kid-friendly activities and places to eat and stay—this inspiring book is the perfect trip planner to excite children about culture and the unique magic the world has to offer.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Consider Bellows' suggestions a step up from simply taking a vacation. He says these places could open your child's eyes to the diversity of the world, help them learn what interests them and inform how they navigate it as adults." --**Cnn.com**

"From the treetops of Costa Rica, to the Grand Canyon and Loch Ness, Bellows' book presents each destination through a child's eyes." --**Skylife**

"Not only highlights where to go and what to do with your kids, but also *how* to make the most of the experiences." --**Kidventurous.com**

"If your family likes to travel, learn, and explore new places, this book will be a good resource for dreaming, planning and going." --**Tropic Home and Family blog**

"The writers uncovered walks, trails, destinations and vistas off the beaten paths which, combined with maps and practical advice, make the book the perfect companion for any National Park adventure." --**Family Focus blog**

"The photographs are amazing, the content is fascinating and the text is presented in an interesting format that holds their attention." --**Simply Stacie blog**

"A unique and imaginative approach to travelling with children. Highly Recommended!" -- **Hot Brands Cool Places**

"A well-curated overview of 100 places not to be missed on all six continents and...why visiting them can influence your child's vision of life and the world." --**LivingGreenWithBaby.com**

"We're all kids at heart, so this can go for any of us...A common theme is that these are places where kids can learn and have fun at the same time." --**Fox & Friends**

#### About the Author

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, KEITH BELLOWS has launched 30 magazines, television, and radio properties and has lectured around the world. He is editor-in-chief of *National Geographic Traveler* and project leader of Learning2Go, an innovative program he developed to bring children and parents together around travel as a learning tool. A graduate of Gordonstoun School in Scotland and Dartmouth College, Bellows has appeared regularly on *The Today Show* and *Good Morning America*.

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**Grand Canyon  
Eons in a Rock Sandwich**

For too many kids, seeing the Grand Canyon—277 river miles long, up to 18 miles wide, and a mile deep—is just an hour spent staring out over the abyss, posing for photos, and jostling with other tourists for prime viewing spots without ever dipping a single sneaker below the rim.

Yet, below the rim, says botanist and wilderness skills expert Mike Masek, is precisely where kids need to go to begin to appreciate the Grand Canyon's natural, geologic, and historical wonders.

"The Grand Canyon is not just an object to be seen, it is an experience to relish for a lifetime," Masek explains. "Each child should spend time hiking below the rim. The immensity of the canyon makes people think big. While this is rewarding, the true nature of the canyon comes alive upon closer inspection."

Taking a day hike or participating in a ranger-led hiking program gives kids the chance to safely examine little treasures they would miss from the rim, like the fossils in the rock layers, lizards basking in the sun, and desert wildflowers and wild- life, Masek adds.

"As they are walking down the trail, have the kids stop and look back up to see the work that went into building the trail," he advises. "Point out the transition from one rock layer to the next. Encourage them to think about the different body responses they experience when descending and climbing."

Both Masek and Flagstaff-based wilderness guide and forester Brad Ball suggest taking the South Kaibab Trail to Cedar Ridge, a three-mile round-trip hike that's appropriate for kids, yet still offers a 360-degree view of the inside of a canyon.

"What's unique about this trail is that it follows a ridgeline, while most of the other trails follow fault systems," says Ball. "This creates these classic panoramic views. Plus, it is the right length for kids—they could hike down and back up in about three hours—and it's a maintained trail, so it is moderate by Grand Canyon standards. Below the rim, the Grand Canyon is a pretty rugged place, so you have to keep that in mind when visiting with kids."

The iconic Grand Canyon experience is the overnight mule ride down to the Colorado River; riders must be at least four feet seven inches tall and weigh less than 200 pounds. The ride can be physically taxing, especially in the heat of summer.

As an alternative, Ball suggests taking one of the National Park Service-sponsored North Rim one-hour or half-day mule rides designed specifically for kids age seven and up. In addition to being accessible to children, the trips typically are available on the day of arrival, unlike the overnight treks, which can fill up more than a year in advance.

Grand Canyon naturalist guide Jake Slade says the key to making any Grand Canyon visit memorable for kids is choosing activities that match the child's natural interests.

"The first time I came here I was 12 and I was bored out of my mind," he recalls. "Now I live here, because as an adult I was able to get down into the canyon and explore. So if your child is interested in science and nature, or loves to hike or ride bikes, or maybe is interested in history or Native American culture, there are resources here to facilitate experiential learning in that area."

Before you visit, Slade suggests browsing the Grand Canyon Field Institute (GCFI) programs that will be offered during your stay. The GCFI, a non-profit partner of the national park, supports education, the arts,

research, and other programs for kids age six and up. The single-day “Meet the Canyon” class can be scheduled in advance and customized to fit a family’s specific interests and fitness levels.

Although Slade agrees that the Grand Canyon is best experienced below the rim, he encourages parents also to walk with their kids along the Trail of Time, a paved, interpretative South Rim trail starting just west of the Yavapai Geology Museum in the Grand Canyon Village area. The geologic time line leads backward in one-million-year increments toward the oldest rock in Grand Canyon, 1,840 million-year-old Elves Chasm gneiss.

“We humans are pretty egotistical about time, and a long time to us isn’t a long time for the Grand Canyon,” says Slade. “The time line represents 2,000 million years of Earth history, and is a good visual to give kids a better idea of what one million years really means. When kids understand how old these rocks are and how the canyon was made, it all starts to make sense.”

Because summer at the Grand Canyon typically is hot and crowded, wilderness guide Ball suggests a spring (mid-March to mid-April) or fall (mid-September to late October) visit to give kids a cooler, quieter environment for that life-changing initial encounter.

Although most kids can identify the Grand Canyon in a photo, says Masek, no child can begin to understand the place until he or she visits: “No previous experiences can prepare children for the canyon. It really cannot be compared to anything else. The mind quits working in the usual way, and becomes mesmerized, not so much by the thing that is the canyon, but by the experience.”

## **FAST FACTS**

- Although fossilized reptile footprints are visible on many surfaces throughout the Grand Canyon, no fossilized reptile bones have ever been discovered here.
- The Grand Canyon’s oldest rocks, located at the bottom of its inner gorge, are nearly 1.8 billion years old. That’s more than one-third of the age of the Earth itself.

## **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

### **BOOKS FOR KIDS**

- *A Grand Canyon Journey: Tracing Time in Stone* by Peter Anderson (1997): This overview of the multibillion-year geological history of the canyon begins by profiling rock layers at the canyon’s rim and continues downward to the valley floor. Interspersed is information about the flora, fauna, and early human inhabitants.
- “*Hey Ranger!*” *Kids Ask Questions about Grand Canyon National Park* by Kim Williams Justesen (2007): Both educational and entertaining, this book offers answers to questions children ask rangers at the Grand Canyon every day. Ready-to-color illustrations accompany its text.

### **MUSIC**

- *Hopi Katsina Songs & Six Songs* by Hopi Chanters, produced by Smithsonian Folkways (2010): A collection of songs first recorded by Jesse Walter Fewkes, head of the Bureau of American Ethnology and Archaeology. The tunes were performed at Hopi ceremonial events held during his visits to Hopi reservations.
- *Music of the Grand Canyon* by Nicholas Gunn (1995): Drawing on both New Age and traditional Native American influences, this album’s original compositions feature melodies performed by master flutist Nicholas Gunn, synthesized nature sounds, distant chanting, and tribal rhythms played on electronic percussion.

## **CONNECTIONS**

- Hiking the Grand Canyon, TUA Outdoors: [www.tuaoutdoors.com](http://www.tuaoutdoors.com)

Using this iPhone app, navigate the Grand Canyon's network of hiking trails. With maps, trail descriptions, day hike recommendations, and climate and weather information, it eliminates the need to weigh down your backpack with easy-to-crumble paper brochures.

- Kids Can Travel: [www.kidscantravel.com](http://www.kidscantravel.com)

This website offers suggestions for kid- friendly accommodations, restaurants, and hiking and rafting trips.

- National Geographic Kids Grand Canyon Brainteaser: [www.kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.kids.nationalgeographic.com)

Before your trip, have your kids take the Grand Canyon Brainteaser quiz on this website's geography games page.

- Grand Canyon Association: [www.grandcanyon.org](http://www.grandcanyon.org)

This not-for-profit organization works to support research and educational programs of the national park; its site has an events listing and park news page that are both worth a visit.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Ruth McGrath:**

Book is usually written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can know everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A guide 100 Places That Can Change Your Child's Life: From Your Backyard to the Ends of the Earth will make you to become smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think in which open or reading any book make you bored. It is not make you fun. Why they might be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or acceptable book with you?

#### **Stephen Vancleave:**

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#### **Jerry Ramirez:**

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