

4 of the best... *Kid-friendly* retreats

The new breed of family-fun retreats range from environmental escapes to lush bush retreats and calm seaside spots. Have a breather while the kids are taken care of...



BEST FOR... year-round fun **Zilwa Attitude, Mauritius**

If you're in need of a relaxed family-friendly holiday, look no further than the magnificent Zilwa Attitude resort in Mauritius. This island paradise boasts a brilliant position right on the beach and it's a dream destination for families with young children – you'll struggle to get to all it has to offer in only a few days.

With the warm waters of the Indian Ocean lapping at the sands just outside your doorstep, you won't have to roll far out of bed to be immersed in the beauty, heat, warm waters and

culture of the island. Discover a varied coastline that guarantees excitement, fun and fond family memories.

Wander onto the beach and dive right in for some pedal boating, kayaking, snorkelling and windsurfing. Send the kids off on a daily treasure hunt with Zilwa's very own resident pirate, where they can hunt and explore while you lazily sip a cocktail at the beach bar.

The food at Zilwa is both decadent and diverse. There's something to please every palate at the resort's

six restaurants – from the casual café fare at the beach bar to the multi-cultural buffets at the main restaurant. Bury your feet in the sand as you enjoy lunch at Lor Disab, or choose from the other themed restaurants offering local flavours, Creole specialities, and Chinese, Asian and Indonesian fare. Siaw is a must for its wok offerings, and Saté for a romantic Indonesian experience.

In the evenings you'll get caught up in the excitement of the cultural evenings filled with entertainment – you'll have to tear yourself away for a good night's rest before another gorgeous day of fuss-free activities. With its soft white sands, relaxing spa, turquoise waters and pure island vibe, Zilwa is hard to leave behind.

HOT TIP For a true island experience, hop on a boat to sail to Zilwa's private island, Grand Zil, where you'll have a true Robinson Crusoe experience. Enjoy a beach braai, rum cocktails and a day spent on the sun loungers amidst the palm trees. It's a sensational seaside experience.

COST The Holiday Factory is offering *Essentials* readers an exclusive reader offer. From R15 850 per person sharing, including return flights from Johannesburg to Mauritius, airport taxes, return resort transfers, seven nights' accommodation at Zilwa Attitude in a Superior room, including breakfast and dinner daily.

This exclusive reader offer is valid from 1 November – 30 November 2014. Subject to currency fluctuations, availability and The Holiday Factory Standard Terms and Conditions. Please quote 'Essentials Reader Offer' when enquiring. Booking conditions apply. Contact The Holiday Factory on 011 233 2300 or visit holidayfactory.co.za.

BEST FOR... a kid's-only holiday Sugar Bay, KwaZulu-Natal

If you want the kids to make the most of their holidays but can't get away from work when they're off school, consider sending them on a summer camp. They'll have fun in the sun in a nurturing environment, where everything is taken care of.

Sugar Bay, in the quiet coastal village of Zinkwazi, offers week-long camps for kids every school holiday. This safe spot is tucked amidst the rolling sugar cane fields on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal. It has easy access to Zinkwazi lagoon and endless beaches, where most of the water and beach sports take place. With more than 100 activities on offer and a different theme for each holiday week, the kids will enjoy a fun, jam-packed schedule every day.

Camp staff offer 24-hour supervision, plus there's one member of staff for every three kids, so you know your kids will receive personal attention and will be well looked after. Sugar Bay caters for kids and teens

between seven and 17 years old. The most popular activities include surfing, body boarding, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, paintball, skateboarding, BMXing and climbing and ropes. They can also try their hand at dance and drama, or creative crafts such as beadwork and even surfboard making! The camp staff will also entertain the kids with exciting evening programmes, which include fashion shows, movie nights, fire shows and karaoke. They'll love their trip and you'll enjoy a well-deserved break!

HOT TIP Send the kids to the holiday camp for Shaka Zulu week, from 5 to 12 October.

COST Camps start from R5 399 for a seven-day camp. This includes three meals a day plus two snacks, all activities and accommodation. Visit sugarbay.co.za or contact holidays@sugarbay.co.za for more.



BEST FOR... nature lovers Rocktail Beach Camp, Maputaland

Just a 20-minute walk from the beach, set among the dense dune forests of the Maputaland Coastal Forest, Rocktail Beach Camp is a haven for families who want to have a safe beach escape far from the crowds. There's plenty of exploring to do in the forest, where kids will learn about the wildlife and nature around them on guided walks.

Enjoy a quiet stroll while the kids take part in some of the arts and crafts activities, geared towards teaching them about local culture and customs. They'll even have the chance to try their hand at pizza making!

If you just want to relax, kick back on the veranda at Rocktail. There is a raised viewing deck, wine cellar, large pool, curio shop and children's playroom. Not to be missed are snorkelling and turtle drives to witness the turtles coming ashore to lay eggs between October and March. The diverse environment

guarantees many fun-filled days spent exploring.

HOT TIP Wilderness Safari guides will keep the kids busy with walks along the beach and through the forest trail. They'll learn about the plant life, bird life and wildlife in the area. While they're busy, take the time to go snorkelling in the tropical waters of Lala Nek, to see magical tidal life in the bay.

COST Prices start from R1 625 per person per night, including all meals and two scheduled daily activities. Children receive a 65% discount during off-peak season and a 35% discount during peak season. To get even better rates, join the Wilderness Safaris Residents Programme for discounts of up to 50% on last-minute safaris. Visit wilderness-residents.co.za or email enquiry@wilderness.co.za for more.



BEST FOR... active families Gooderson's Drakensberg Gardens, Southern Drakensberg

This vast family resort in the heart of the scenic Southern Drakensberg is a great option for families who like to keep busy outdoors. From hiking, horse riding, mountain biking and canoeing, to trout fishing, swimming and golfing, there's something to keep the most energetic entertained.

The less active can watch the sun go down while sipping wine or enjoying a round of golf. Kids will be hard-pressed to get to every activity on offer. From rock painting at the river and pony rides, to the mini farm, putt-putt and tennis, there's plenty on offer – all within the resort.

HOT TIP Take the golf clubs! The 18-hole course is challenging, but fair.

COST Choose from a variety of three-star accommodation, in the hotel or in self-catering units. Rates start from R796 per person, including breakfast. For more info visit goodersonleisure.co.za or call 031 337 4222.