

# Water Parks

# WAYS

Splashing about doesn't have to mean splashing out

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**K**ids can be unpredictable. They can't get enough of something one day, then can't stand it the next. But if there's one constant that can be relied upon to keep everybody happy on holiday, it's splashing about in the sunshine at a fun-filled water park.

Whether hurtling at full speed down daredevil slides or

pootling round the lazy river at a leisurely pace, there are chutes, flumes and slides guaranteed to give everyone a thrill, parents included.

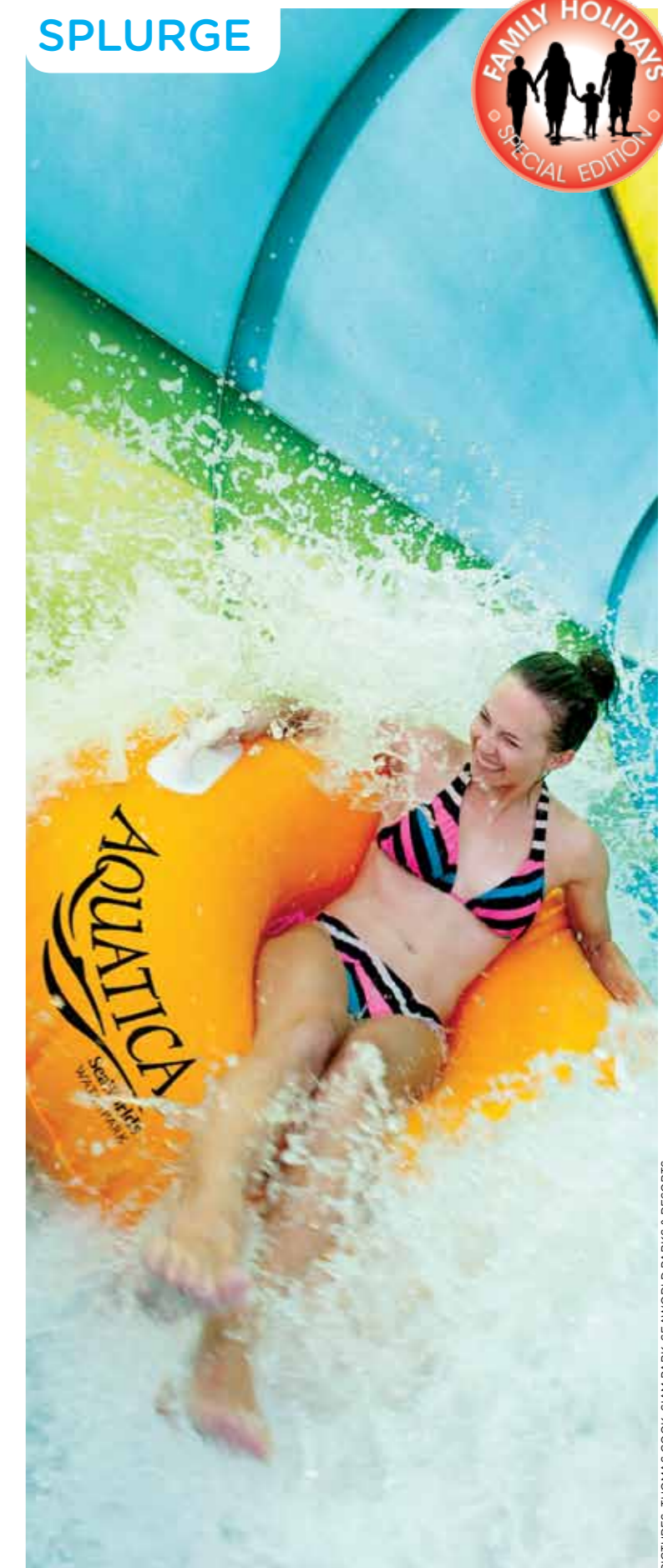
Mum and dad will be just as excited to find out it doesn't have to cost the earth, either. Sure, there are theme parks with all the bells and whistles and a price tag to match, but there are



SAVE



SPEND



SPLURGE



PICTURES: THOMAS COOK; SIAM PARK; SEAWORLD PARKS & RESORTS

Water Parks  
3 WAYS

→ also simpler, local affairs packed full of family charm.

Here, we dip our toes in the water with a few of the best parks to suit any budget.

▶ **SAVE: KEEP IT SIMPLE**

The easiest way to keep costs down is a hotel that includes water park entry in the price, with many resorts boasting facilities on-site, so kids can come and go as often as they like.

First Choice has a choice of 27 SplashWorld hotels across Turkey, the Greek islands, Spain, Bulgaria and the Red Sea, with slides split by age category into Splashers, Sliders and Thrillseekers. The on-site waterpark at Lanzasur Splash Resort in Lanzarote's Playa Blanca, for example, combines white-knuckle rides such as the Black Hole, Hydrotube, Aqua Bowl and multi-lane slides ideal for siblings racing each other, with a gentler wave pool, lazy river and splash zone for little ones.

Thomas Cook's Aquamania hotels are spread across the most popular Mediterranean resorts, and all include



**If there's no water park on site, pick a family-orientated resort and there's sure to be one nearby**

unlimited access to on-site water parks or entry to parks nearby. The Waterparks brochure even highlights which rides – speed slides, tube slides, multi-lane flumes and more – are available in each, so families know exactly what they're in for.

The Med isn't the only place to go for budget-friendly fun, however. Eurocamp site Duinrell in the Netherlands has an on-site water park with more than half a mile of covered slides. With peak-season prices from £105 a night per family, it's an easy way to keep costs down without compromising on the fun.

There are also some great deals in the Red Sea, as hotels compete to attract customers put off by the dip in confidence around the region. Red Sea Holidays' top

pick is the Sunwing Waterworld Makadi in Hurghada, a resort that remains outside Foreign & Commonwealth Office travel warnings. It combines generously sized rooms and a wealth of dining options with a huge on-site water park that's home to five slides (including a family slide for tots too nervous to go it alone), an aqualoop where the floor drops out from beneath your feet, a wave pool and flow rider for would-be surfers, plus a rain fortress with slides and waterfalls. A week's all-inclusive in May would set a family of four back £1,645, including flights.

▶ **SPEND: ADDED EXTRAS**

Even if there's no water park on site, pick a family-orientated resort and there's bound to be one nearby. Siam Park in Tenerife is the best-selling water park ticket by quite a distance for Do Something Different, with Thai-themed architecture offering a backdrop for 30 waterslides, including a near-vertical drop in the Tower of Power and the 240m-long Singha, which opened last summer.

Monarch recommends packaging this up with a stay at the Dream Villa Tagoro in Costa

**RIGHT:** Costa Caribe at PortAventura

**BELOW:** Sunwing Waterworld Makadi



Adeje, where a week's all-inclusive starts at £389, including a shuttle bus to the park and free entry.

Back on the mainland, Salou's ever-popular PortAventura theme park is well placed for most Costa Dorada resorts. Its Costa Caribe aquatic park brings together the highest freefall slide in Europe and a huge six-lane racer slide with a lagoon and pirate ship for younger children, not forgetting the Caribbean-themed pool for adults to cool off in. Attraction World has day tickets from £21 for adults and £19 for under-10s.

Across the pond, Orlando is an obvious choice for any entertainment-hungry family, but it's not the only place to find

excitement in Florida. Less than an hour up the coast, Daytona Beach is garnering a reputation for its family product, including a water park with tickets from just £20 – a far cry from the cost of some Orlando attractions.

Funway Holidays' senior marketing executive, Rebecca Evans, says: "Daytona Lagoon is outstanding value for money, and although it's one of the smaller water parks in Florida, it's fun packed, with fast dropping, racing and twisting slides. There's also a giant wave pool and lazy river, plus an exciting four-lane racer slide, so you need a full day to do everything there."



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## → SPLURGE: SPLASH OUT

If having fun is a higher priority than saving pennies, families will no doubt prefer Orlando's big three theme parks. Tickets don't come cheap, but with so many attractions squeezed into each park, they provide serious bang for your buck.

Aquatica is the splash-focused option among SeaWorld's trio of parks, with everything from high-speed slides to sandy beaches the size of the Wembley pitch. Adrenaline junkies can get their high on Ihu's Breakaway Falls, where the floor falls away sending riders into a 24ft-per-second drop down a spiral slide, but there's a family raft ride and splash park for those who like a gentler pace. Entry is included in the Discovery Cove Ultimate Package and three-park ticket, both of which now come with free parking.

Over at Walt Disney World, water babies can take their pick from the ski-themed Blizzard Beach, featuring bobsled rides down Mount Gushmore and a 55mph plunge down the Summit Plummet, and the tropical Typhoon Lagoon, a saltwater snorkelling pool where kids can come face-to-face with butterfly fish, grouper and even bonnethead sharks.

Meanwhile, Wet 'n Wild Orlando



**If having fun is a higher priority than saving, families will prefer Orlando's big three parks**


not only offers thrills and spills on the four-lane Aqua Drag Racer and swirling coaster The Storm, but also fun for little ones on the six-storey castle at Blastaway Beach. And the

selection is set to grow even further with Universal Orlando Resort adding Volcano Bay water park next year, to the south of Cabana Bay Beach Resort.

Dubai is also expanding its theme park repertoire with the construction of Legoland Dubai – which will include a water park with a Build-A-Raft River and Imagination Station – though the opening date is yet to be confirmed.

In the meantime, kids have plenty to be getting on with in Wild Wadi Waterpark or Aquaventure at Atlantis The Palm. At Wild Wadi, 13 of the 30 rides are connected, so riders don't even need to get out of the water to move from one thrill to the next, and with entry free to guests at Jumeirah hotels, it's a great selling point for those properties.

Likewise, Aquaventure entry is included with stays at Atlantis or sister brand One&Only, making it even more worthwhile to splash out on these luxury properties. As well as rides and slides, the 17-hectare park features a Shark Safari, a walk along the bottom of Shark Lagoon and cownose ray feeding.

There's a similar variety on offer at Atlantis Paradise Island in the Bahamas. Emily Underhill, Travel 2's assistant product manager for the Caribbean, says: "This resort is home to the Caribbean's largest water park, which has nine family pools, an extra three fun pools for children, and a range of slides including high-speed tube slides and some that are submerged in the aquarium. The hotel also offers a huge variety of children's activities, including swimming with dolphins, marine animal trainer experiences, remote-controlled car racing and a teenagers' nightclub." 



**First Choice** offers a week's all-inclusive at Lanzasur Splash Resort from £413, based on a family of four sharing, with flights from Gatwick on May 3 and transfers. [firstchoice.co.uk](http://firstchoice.co.uk)

**Do Something Different** can book day tickets for Siam Park, Tenerife, from £26 for adults and £17 for three to 11-year-olds. [dosomethingdifferent.com](http://dosomethingdifferent.com)

**A Walt Disney World Orlando** 14-day Ultimate Ticket – currently the same price as a seven-day ticket – costs £299 for adults and £279 for three to nine-year-olds, offering access to all six Disney parks. [disneytravelagents.co.uk](http://disneytravelagents.co.uk)



**ABOVE:** Wild Wadi Waterpark

**RIGHT:** Atlantis Paradise Island