



Family Rambling

tips and destinations from
a traveling family

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Contents:

About Family Rambling®
Family Rambling® By the Numbers
Demographics
Content on Family Rambling®
My Newest Project- Ireland With Kids
The Professional Tourist
Other Publications I Contribute To
Press
Who I have Worked With
Skills
Public Speaking
My Travel Arsenal
Languages
Honors
Associations
Degrees
Become a Travel Partner
Paid Advertising and Reviews
Advertising Rates

About Family Rambling

I first began writing about travel with children in early 2005 at a blog called Have Kid Will Travel. By 2009 my site had grown very popular. So popular, in fact, that many other sites were using its name in some form or another. The time had come to regroup, rebrand and rise from the ashes.

In early 2010 Family Rambling was created. Despite the name change my goal remains the same- to share family travel tips and destinations. I share *first hand* experiences about destinations, products and travel tips that work for us.

While Family Rambling does focus on family travel you will also find posts about girls' getaways and romantic retreats- because a happy family begins with happy parents!

My first blog Have Kid Will Travel was recognized by Budget Travel as "one of the 15 top travel blogs" in their November, 2008 issue. <http://familyrambling.com/budget-travel-considers-me-an-expert/uncategorized/>

Family Rambling® has grown in the past few years from a single blog to an online "empire" that includes Ireland with Kids and The Professional Tourist.

Family Rambling by the numbers

- 2nd quarter 2011 unique visitors 5811, with 8983 page views
- Strong SEO accounts for 54% of visitors
- International appeal: stats show readers from UK, Canada, Ireland, South America, Hong Kong and 82 other countries.
- Over 2800 followers on Twitter – and growing daily!
- Google Page Rank : 4

Family Rambling Demographics

Age: 26-35 79%
46.55.1 14%

Gender: Female 93%

Children's ages: 0-5 57%
6.8 7%
9.12 21%
13.18 14%

93% of my readers come for tips on travel with kids.
78% come for destination and product reviews.
78% of my blog readers have explored the website beyond the blog.

Content on Family Rambling

Readers come to Family Rambling in search of vacation ideas, tips for traveling with children and reviews of destinations we have visited. Popular pages include:

- Visiting Dave Ramsey at Financial Peace Plaza in Brentwood, Tennessee:
<http://familyrambling.com/dave-ramsey-financial-peace/usa/>

- JW Marriott Hill Country Resort and Spa, San Antonio, Texas
<http://familyrambling.com/jw-marriott-resort-san-antonio/hotels-and-lodging/>
- A series of posts I did for the St. Louis CVC <http://familyrambling.com/exploring-st-louis/usa/>

A few of my favorite posts are:

- Tips for Truly Experiencing Your Destination <http://familyrambling.com/authentic-travel-tips-ireland/europe/>
- Why You Should Talk to Strangers When You Travel <http://familyrambling.com/london-parliament-travel-tips/europe/>
- 5 New York City Tips for the First Time Visitor <http://familyrambling.com/new-york-city-tips/usa/>

Regardless of whether my subject (be it product, attraction or destination) has been paid for by me, has been discounted or is a promotion; I believe I am truthful about the situation and share all my thoughts-good and bad. An example of one of my reviews when things didn't go so well: <http://familyrambling.com/hyatt-regency-crown-center/usa/midwest/>. I strive to be honest with my readers and fair with the companies I work with.

My Newest Project- Ireland with Kids (a Family Rambling® site)

No land is more filled with magic than Ireland. Even if you're past the age of believing in faeries (though I don't think you should ever stop believing in faeries) the moment your flight lands in Ireland a feeling of possibility washes over you. You just don't know what could be at the top of those castle towers or at the end of the rainbow.

Ireland is a perfect destination for families.

While many tourism guides make much of pub tours and guided bus travel, Ireland has so much to offer families. From faerie tale castles to magnificent English gardens, wide open spaces to the bustle of international cities, breathtaking natural scenery to man made megalithic structures, Ireland opens her arms and welcomes you to explore her ancient sites, traverse her green fields and discover her treasures.

Ireland has become my family's favorite destination: every trip feels like a homecoming. At Ireland with Kids I want to share the beauty of Ireland and the family friendliness that may not be so easy to find in the brochures.

Ireland with Kids launched March 1, 2011 but is already seeing terrific growth. Since launching 3 months ago the site has had nearly 10,000 page views and a bounce rate of under 8%. A very niche site, Ireland with Kids strives to become the first place people visit when searching for information about travel in Ireland with children.

In July, 2011, I was interviewed by popular Ireland travel blog Irish Fireside about traveling in Ireland with kids: <http://www.irishfireside.com/podcasts/119irishfiresidewithkids.mp3>

The Professional Tourist (a Family Rambling® site)

The Professional Tourist is where I share my thoughts on social media with tourism agencies and CVBs who want to know how today's travelers are connecting with businesses.

My presentation **S.T.U.F.F Tourists Like** is being turned into an ebook for free download and I am available for educational seminars and speaking engagements.

Other Publications I Contribute To

In addition to Family Rambling I contribute to other publications. You can find articles from me at :

- UpTake Attractions [bio](#)
- Reviewer and writer for Ciao Bambino: [Glendine Country House, Wexford, Ireland;](#)
[Things to Do in San Antonio Texas with Kids](#)
- Cozi.com [30 Days of Cozi](#)
- Raveable.com [bio](#)
- We Just Got Back: [Land of the Free: 5 Freebies in Kansas City](#)
- Des Moines Register: [Watching a Castle Rise in the Ozarks](#)

Press

Family Rambling recommended by O.A.R.S as one of [Five Websites to Help You Plan an Unforgettable Family Vacation](#)

~ My favorite line from their review: “She's from Iowa so you just know she's going to be honest in her advice and reviews.”

Tours4Fun has an [online “crush” on Family Rambling](#)

[Budget Travel: Blogger on Board](#) (printed in November 2008 issue, page 36)

Local Coverage:

Des Moines Register: [You Should Get to Know November 3, 2009](#)

Des Moines Register, Des Moines Moms Like Me May 2010
[Setting Aside “ME” Time](#)

Expert Quotes:

Disney Family Travel, Traveling Solo with Kids
<http://family.go.com/travel/article-828422-traveling-solo-with-kids-t/#>

Disney Family Travel, Traveling With a Potty-Training Toddler
<http://family.go.com/travel/article-828405-traveling-with-a-potty-training-toddler-t/#>

Who I Have Worked With

Laurel O'Connor, Account Executive, Weber Shandwick, Omni Hotels

loconnor@webershandwick.com 469-375-0265

~ I have worked closely with Laurel for the past year. In early 2011 Omni Hotels became an official Travel Partner of Family Rambling®.

Deb Brown, DebWorks, Public Speaker

deb@debworks.com

Jody has collaborated with me on a couple of projects relative to travel and tourism and her insights and knowledge is above excellent. I consider her one of my best sources when it comes to local travel.

I recommend Jody Halsted and suggest you attend her conference, buy her travel journal and use her blogging services.”

Carol Schiller, Social Media Director, Cozi.com
carol@cozi.com

“Working with Jody has been a winning experience for Cozi from start to finish. She consistently overdelivers, whether it's planning a conference, collaborating on promotions or executing on various social media platforms such as blogging, Facebook, and Twitter. If you're a business trying to navigate the online world, you won't find a more helpful partner than Jody Halsted.”

~ I wrote a four part series for Cozi.com's "[30 Days of Cozi](#)" feature

Claire Celsi, Owner/Principal, The Public Relations Project
Claire.Celsi@gmail.com 515-554-6754

“Jody is an impressive person, standing out as a very unique individual in a sea of sameness. She constantly looks for ways to educate herself and while she's at it, pulls other people up the education ladder with her. Jody is a very positive influence on the tourism industry in Iowa and has a great sense the latest trends.”

Sarah Biles, Director of Community Relations, Union Station Kansas City, Inc.
office 816.460.2252 sbiles@unionstation.org

“Glad to hear you had such a good time! The post is great!”

~ In response my coverage of the Narnia Exhibit at Union Station.

<http://familyrambling.com/exploring-narnia-at-union-station-in-kansas-city/usa/>

Lorie Eigenrauch, Weber Shandwick
office 314.552.6783 Leigenrauch@webershandwick.com

“I had a great experience with Jody while working with her on behalf of one of my tourism clients. She's gracious, enthusiastic, easy going and was very easy to work with as we planned a client-sponsored weekend adventure for her family. She also shared her experiences online in a way that was engaging, transparent and honest, which my client and I really appreciated.”

~ I worked with Lorie on the St. Louis series. <http://familyrambling.com/exploring-st-louis/usa/>

Skills

Wordpress (both publishing and design) HTML Online Publishing
Twitter Facebook Digital Photography
Blogging Travel Writing Family Travel
Public Speaking in the areas of Blogging, Family Travel, Travel Trends, and Social Media

Public Speaking

November 2009: I_Blog Conference, Perry, Iowa

“Priorities and Scheduling or How to be OK About Not Being Perfect”

November 2010: I_Blog Conference, Perry, Iowa

“Destination Midwest” and co-speaker “Monetizing Your Blog”

January 2011: BlissDom Conference, Nashville, TN

Travel “Tribe” Leader and Mentor

May 5, 2011: Eastern Iowa Tourism Joint Committee Meeting

Travel Trends: “S.T.U.F.F. Tourists Like”

May 9, 2011: #140Conference, Des Moines

“Let Social Media be Your Guide”

May 26, 2011: PRSA (Public Relations Society of America), Des Moines

Panel presentation about social media, working with bloggers and how a blogger can develop a national following

My Travel Arsenal

In addition to my Acer tablet I travel with these items:
Global Smart Phone- for sharing photos and travel tidbits on the go
Digital Camera (currently a Canon Powershot SX10is)
HD Video Camera (currently a Kodak Zi8)

Languages

English Irish Gaelic (learning)

Honors

Best Local Blog: Parents Choice Awards, 2009
Austin-Lehman Adventure's Top 125 Best Travel Blog Semi-Finalists, 2011

Associations

Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX) Social Media Club Des Moines (SMCDSM)
International Travelers Network Travel Bloggers Network
Women of Worth (WoW)

Degrees

It was only recently that I learned what I wanted to be when I grew up. I have been involved with Social Media and Blogging since 2004; before Social Media became a catch phrase.

I do have a degree from Southwestern Community College in the field of Cosmetology. This has aided me in my career of travel blogging as I am a great communicator, am able to listen more than talk and can multi-task without appearing distracted.

I strive to learn, and to share my knowledge. I love the world of blogging and social media because it is continually evolving, constantly changing and always exciting!

Become a Travel Partner

Family Rambling is currently accepting Travel Partners. To learn more about travel partnerships email jody@familyrambling.com and put the word "Partner" in the subject line.

One year no-compete placement on [Our Travel Partners](#) page, complete with image banner (see: <http://familyrambling.com/family-rambling-partners/become-travel-partner/>)

- Sidebar advertising
- Addition to Great Travel Links page
- Articles about their product and sponsorship of Family Rambling
- Posts with updates and special offers during the year (you send the info and let me know preferred posting dates.

Rates for Travel Sponsors are \$400 per quarter or \$1300 annually.

Paid Advertising and Reviews

Sidebar advertising is sparingly offered on Family Rambling and Ireland with Kids. If you believe you have a product that would be a benefit to myself and my readers and would be interested in partnering with me please contact jody@familyrambling.com.

Solicited “guest posts” about a specific product or destination are considered advertising and are billed accordingly. Please contact jody@familyrambling.com if your destination or product would like to guest post. All posts are linked to the Family Rambling Facebook page and are also mentioned on Twitter a minimum of 3 times.

If you are interested in a review of your product please follow the guidelines listed below and contact jody@familyrambling.com.

- Product reviews will be done only if a sample is provided. The sample can be returned; postage paid by the company.
- My reviews are honest. I list likes and dislikes. If a review is negative I will send a copy of the review to the sponsor before publishing. The sponsor can then choose if they would like to a) run the review, b) not run the review, or c) make changes to the item and have it reviewed again.
- I review all accepted products. If a product is sent without prior notice I do not guarantee it will be reviewed.
- There is no cost to have a product reviewed. If you would like to add a giveaway to your review rates are \$50 for a one week entry period and \$100 for a two week entry period.

2011 Advertising Rates

Family Rambling

- Travel Resources Sidebar Link (appears on every page)
 - 1 month: \$40
 - 3 months: \$108 (10% savings)
 - 6 months: \$211 (12% savings)
 - 12 months: \$408 (15% savings)
- Great Travel Links Page (listed under appropriate heading with optimized keywords)
 - 1 month: \$15
 - 3 months: \$40 (10% savings)
 - 6 months: \$79 (12% savings)
 - 1 year: \$153 (15% savings)

Ireland with Kids

- Home Page Ad (1 ad featured at a time) + Blog Sidebar
 - 1 month: \$30
 - 3 months: \$81 (10% savings)
 - 6 months: \$158 (12% savings)
 - 1 year: \$306 (15% savings)
- Blog Sidebar Ad
 - 1 month: \$20
 - 3 months: \$54 (10% savings)
 - 6 months: \$105 (12% savings)
 - 1 year: \$204 (15% savings)

Advertising is not currently accepted on The Professional Tourist

