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## DESTINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Family Camps

*Golf, swim, or play tennis — without the guilt*

by Carole Terwilliger Meyers

**THE TRIP:** One of my best-ever getaways was to a family camp. When my second child was 6 months old, I booked a week at the Family Vacation Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Guests stay in private, apartment-style suites on campus that feature cribs, baby supplies, and students trained to watch infants.

I was able to leave my 6-month-old and go play tennis for an hour and not worry that she'd wake up and cry because nobody was paying attention to her. That was absolutely fabulous — it was so *freeing* — because normally you have to be there with babies even when they're napping. Other couples played golf or went swimming — the campus is right on the beach.



Family camps are a fantastic way to socialize and meet other couples who are in the same boat as you. Most have young children and haven't had a real getaway in a while. One thing I liked at Santa Barbara was the relaxed atmosphere at mealtime. My 7-year-old son went nuts because they had box after box of every kind of cereal imaginable all lined up in rows. I really appreciated the casual-messy mindset — if you dropped something on the floor it was no big deal, you could just let the kids be kids.

**COST:** Santa Barbara's Family Vacation Center runs about \$2,500 per family for a one-week stay, including meals, lodging, and childcare for eight hours a day.

**BabyCenter Tip:** A word of warning: At many of the traditional family camps, you have to stay in tents. So ask about accommodations. And some allow shorter stays than a week, which costs down on costs.

#### MORE INFORMATION:

- **Family Vacation Center** at UC Santa Barbara: 805-893-3123. One of the few camps with infant care, the center offers programs for children ages 2 months to 18 years old. All packages are from Saturday to Saturday. It's the only family camp in California on a college campus, with dorm suites, some of which overlook the ocean. Counselors are on hand for "game and splash time."
- **Kids' Camps**, a directory of camps and summer experiences.

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### Carole Terwilliger Meyers

Meyers is the founding publisher of [Carousel Press](#) and the author of 15 books, including *Weekend Adventures in Northern California* and *Miles of Smiles: 101 Great Car Games & Activities*. She has been a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *Parents' Press*. She lives in Berkeley, California, with her husband, and has two grown children.

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