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All in the Family

Thinking about taking several generations on the same trip? These companies can help.

By GLENN RUFFENACH

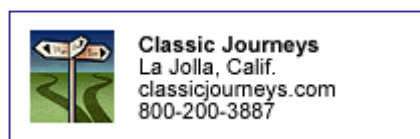
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After Nena Griffith lost her husband in 2005, the Atlanta homemaker wanted her family with her for Christmas and New Year's. But rather than stay home, Mrs. Griffith decided to try something, she recalls, to help everyone "move ahead."

She arranged for a family vacation -- the first to include all her children and grandchildren. The youngest in the group of 18 was 9 years old; Mrs. Griffith was 73. "We hadn't done a trip like this -- where everyone was together," Mrs. Griffith says. But the resulting journey -- a trip to Africa, where the family took part in a safari -- "worked beautifully," she says. "We're a close family, but that experience really helped us bond." This summer, she adds, everyone plans to gather again, this time for a trip out West.

Travel companies and industry surveys indicate that so-called intergenerational travel is more popular than ever. A survey published last month by Orbitz, the online travel company, found that trips with "extended family" are the top choice for group travel. (Traveling with friends was No. 2.) Often such trips are driven by grandparents, who "have done a lot of traveling on their own and now want to bring the kids and grandkids," says Edward Piegza, president of Classic Journeys, a travel company in La Jolla, Calif.

If you're thinking about assembling three generations -- or more -- for a jaunt, here's a look at several travel companies that include family tours among their specialties:



WHAT: Started with "cultural walking adventures" in 1995, says Mr. Piegza, president and founder. Such tours, which mix "easy walking" in small groups with exposure to local culture and history in 60-plus regions world-wide, remain "the basis for everything we do," he adds. Also specializes in culinary tours.

FAMILY TRAVEL: Family tours now account for about 20% to 25% of the company's business. "Our clients want custom trips that address the interests and needs of a multigenerational family," Mr. Piegza says.

SAMPLE TRIPS: Costa Rica is among the company's most popular destinations for families. Two guides lead participants in a variety of activities: hiking on a volcano to watch lava flows, river rafting, touring a coffee plantation, rain-forest walks, kayaking and river cruises, among others.

A walking trip in Tuscany in Italy illustrates what the company provides -- and what families today are looking for -- in intergenerational tours, Mr. Piegza says: pizza-making lessons and gelato tastings for children at one point during the day, while parents and grandparents are visiting a vineyard or learning about Renaissance architecture.

TIME AND MONEY: Typical tour is seven days and six nights. Trips outside the U.S. run about \$3,500 for each adult; domestic trips cost about \$2,500. Discounts are available for children.



WHAT: Specializes in cycling and multisport vacations (including hiking, sea kayaking and rafting) in the Western U.S. and Canada, as well as Hawaii and New Zealand. Offers regularly scheduled tours and custom trips. Started in 1984.

"Our first tours were in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington, and in the Columbia Gorge, which divides Oregon from Washington," says Julie Ubben, assistant marketing manager. "These are still bread-and-butter regions for us today."

FAMILY TRAVEL: The company has seen a steady increase in family trips, particularly in "inn-to-inn tours," Ms. Ubben says. Such vacations, in contrast to camping trips, lend themselves to the intergenerational market, she says. Grandparents "are more likely to come along when a real bed and private bath are part of the scenario."

SAMPLE TRIPS: A family bicycling and camping trip to the San Juan Islands includes a stay at a private campground with hot showers and a covered fireplace. Meals, Ms. Ubben says, involve both "kid food" (like macaroni and cheese) and "grownup food" (such as fresh salmon with dill sauce). The bicycle routes are "flat and easy," and the trip includes a whale-watching cruise.

Custom family tours have included exploring the Big Island of Hawaii (with biking, hiking, snorkeling), and biking tours of California's redwoods region.

TIME AND MONEY: The average trip is five days. Costs range from \$1,400 to \$1,800 a person, with discounts for children based on ages. Custom trips are more expensive.



WHAT: Specializes in hiking vacations and walking tours. Started in 1979 with trips in New England. Today, offers scheduled tours and private trips world-wide. Added Nepal last year and adding China this year. Also developing itineraries for

India, Vietnam and Laos.

FAMILY TRAVEL: "Our biggest business is private trips, and they're usually multigenerational," says Jamen Yeaton-Masi, director of operations. "Often, grandparents contact us, and they're bringing their children and grandchildren."

Of course, having several generations involved in a hiking or walking tour means adapting daily distances to each person's abilities. "Actually, grandparents and the 8- and 9-year-olds might be at the same level," Ms. Yeaton-Masi says.

SAMPLE TRIPS: "Yellowstone Wonders" involves six days of hiking through parts of Yellowstone National Park in Montana and Wyoming. Most days cover three to six miles over "easy to moderate terrain." Activities also include horseback riding, kayaking and whitewater rafting. Nights are spent in park lodges and a guest ranch.

A seven-day tour of the Big Island in Hawaii covers three to six miles a day, with stops at black-sand beaches, archaeological sites, Volcanoes National Park, botanical gardens and rain forests.

TIME AND MONEY: Domestic trips average six days; overseas trips, seven to eight days. The Yellowstone trip, for instance, costs \$2,498 for adults and \$1,598 for a child sharing a room with two adults.



WHAT: Started in 1969 by George Wendt, a former middle-school science teacher. Specializes in rafting and sea-kayaking trips on more than 35 rivers and coastlines in the Western U.S. and Alaska, as well as Canada, Latin

America and Fiji. Private tours are available.

FAMILY TRAVEL: In the past several years, the number of intergenerational bookings and family reunions "has increased dramatically," says Steve Markle, marketing and partnerships director. "Many grandparents are relatively young [and] healthy and have been adventure travelers for many years."

SAMPLE TRIPS: One of the company's most popular family trips, Mr. Markle says, takes place on the Rogue River in Oregon, which winds through a pine-forested canyon. The trip includes inflatable kayaks as well as oar rafts, he notes, so that older adults and children "can choose the level of adventure that's comfortable for them." Hiking and fishing are options on the four- and five-day tours.

In contrast, the Green River in Utah cuts through red rock walls and Dinosaur National Monument. The park contains one of the world's largest concentrations of fossilized remains encased in river rock, Mr. Markle says.

TIME AND MONEY: Family trips range in price from less than \$200 per person daily to more than \$300. Tours last four to six days, on average. Family discounts of as much as 15% are available.



WHAT: A "safari and travel" company. Designs custom tours in Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Americas. "We match our clients to specific properties," says Sandy Cunningham, co-president. Started in 1972.

FAMILY TRAVEL: Family trips "have been a huge trend for us in the past five years," Ms. Cunningham says. "We've always had families, but now it's entire families -- 26 or 30 people.

"Grandparents tell us: 'I want to enjoy my grandchildren while I'm able.' And a trip is a great way of bringing generations together."

SAMPLE TRIPS: Safaris in Africa are among the company's most popular trips, with accommodations in privately owned camps, lodges and retreats. A 12-day tour in Botswana, for instance, moves from the edge of the Kalahari Desert, through Chobe National Park (celebrated for its elephant herds) and ends at Victoria Falls. Tours of Australia, Ms. Cunningham says, are notable for the wildlife encountered: emus, wallabies, kangaroos, sea lions and dolphins, among other animals.

More recently, the company has added a cruise on the Nile River, and a trip by yacht (which sleeps 16) through the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador.

"We try not to mimic trips," Ms. Cunningham says. "Each tour is slightly different so that each family has its own experience."

TIME AND MONEY: Trips average about two weeks in length. Prices range from about \$350 per person daily to as much \$1,000, depending on accommodations.

--Mr. Ruffenach is a reporter and editor for *The Wall Street Journal* in Atlanta and the editor of *Encore*. He can be reached at encore@wsj.com.

To read the complete interview between *The Wall Street Journal* and Classic Journeys, [click here](#). For more information on Classic Journeys' family-friendly tours in more than a dozen destinations worldwide, please call 1-800-200-3887 or visit www.ClassicJourneys.com/family.