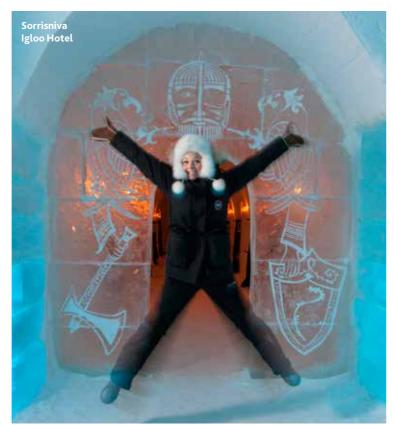
**ACTIVE WEEKENDS WITH KIDS** Keep the children entertained (while perhaps discovering a new talent), learning Italian cuisine, bushcraft skills or surfing in the Atlantic

KIDS COOKING INVENICE Surely well ahead in a ranking of most child-pleasing global cuisines, Italian food wins early fans with its pizza and pasta dishes, but junior masterchefs can broaden their range with a class at Cooking Vacations Venice (£175pp, min two people, accompanied children under 10 are half price; cooking-vacations.com). Menus vary by season, but always feature fresh produce bought from the Rialto Market by friendly local cook Sara. Her lessons are fun but subtly educational, schooling small groups on how to create dishes from scratch – from handmade ravioli stuffed with fresh spinach and ricotta, to Venetian-style tiramisù.

- ARRIVE Fly direct to Venice's closest airport, Marco Polo, from UK cities including Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Manchester and Newcastle (from £69; monarch.com).
- STAY Ivy-covered Hotel Flora in Sestiere di San Marco is very welcoming to families, providing pushchairs and complimentary kids' meal (from £155 for a room with one double and two singles; hotelflora.it).





SNOWY NORWAY From husky sledding

across the pristine snowscapes of north Norway to an igloo sleepover, Discover the World's four-night Alta Winter Adventure will have children feeling like they've woken up in the pages of Philip Pullman's Northern Lights. And there's a strong chance that the aurora borealis itself will make an appearance – the town of Alta, where you'll be based, is famed for its consistently good sightings. A particular hot spot is the Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel, its location 12 miles out of town ensuring the darkest of dark skies. And, if the lights don't show up, the novelty of sleeping in a house constructed entirely from ice should offset any disappointment. Husky sledding safaris are extra (from £104 per adult, £52 per child), but well worth stumping for. • STAY (Dec-Apr; from £940 per

adult, and £685 per child, including

flights; discover-the-world.co.uk).

BEGINNERS' BARCELONA Those who fondly

remember cava and jamón-focused weekends in the city pre-parenthood, rejoice: Barcelona is also a very welcoming place for families. All ages will enjoy the high-octane play on offer at Bosc Urbà, an adventure park arranged by age-specific zones: from complex climbing frames with nets and suspension bridges, to zip wires and bungee jumping for teenage adrenaline junkies (from £8; barcelonaboscurba.com). Afterwards, pick up supplies – cava and jamón non-negotiable – at Mercat de Santa Caterina (mercatsantacaterina.com) for a sunset picnic at handsomely landscaped Parc de la Ciutadella. ● ARRIVE BA, easyJet, Monarch,

Ryanair and Vueling fly to Barcelona's El Prat airport from various UK airports (from £67; vueling.com).

• STAY Splendom Suites offers 2-bed apartments with kitchens (from £90; splendomsuitesbarcelona.com).





**BUSHCRAFT** IN SUSSEX

Wannabe survivalists should look no further than this two-night course in the woodlands of East Sussex. Founded in 1983 by Ray Mears, Woodlore School of Wilderness Bushcraft has instructors that teach outdoor skills and help visitors reconnect with the natural environment. The two-night Family Bushcraft course (£225 per person, over-eights only; raymears.com) sees parents and children camp together while learning how to build a shelter, track animals such as deer, and recognise useful plants and trees. Evenings are spent swapping stories around a roaring campfire, or creeping among oaks and elms trying to spot some of the abundant nocturnal wildlife,

including badgers and owls. ARRIVE Woodlore is on the A265, less than half a mile from Etchingham station – trains run from London Charing Cross (from £26.10; southeasternrailway.co.uk).



• LEARN TO SURF IN DEVON Croyde Beach is a proper British bit of seaside: one of the finest beaches in Devon. It's also the county's surf capital, its reputation for good waves making it an ideal place for youngsters to try their hand at boarding. Surf South West offers expert instruction (Mar-Nov only; Saturday course includes a full day of lessons plus lunch, £94pp; surfsouthwest.com). Warm up afterwards with a pub lunch at The Thatch (thethatchcroyde.com), where there are board games behind the bar.

• ARRIVE Croyde is 45 mins from the M5 motorway via the A361. The nearest train station is 10 miles away in Barnstaple (from £37 from London; gwr.com).

• STAY Many of the 120 rooms at resort-style Saunton Sands have sea views, and there's an indoor pool (from £300 for a two-room suite; sauntonsands.co.uk). @

78 Lonely Planet Traveller February 2016 February 2016 Lonely Planet Traveller 79