



It's been cold and rainy for days, and the kids are ready to go, go, go. Before boredom leads to trouble, whisk them away to a great indoor adventure for bonding time, excitement and lots of laughs.

Action-Packed Amusement

Winter sports, beaches and rock climbing aren't just for the outdoors anymore. When unpredictable weather isn't a factor, you can focus on having fun.

Ski Centers - Forget gale-force winds, icy runs and poor visibility; Europe has more than 20 indoor ski centers touting optimal slope conditions. Equipment rentals and lessons are available, and many have additional activities when the kids need a new challenge. Locate a center near you at www.tripomatic.com/trip/All-the-Indoor-Ski-Slopes-in-Europe and visit these top spots.

Alpincenter, Bottrop, Germany - Navigate the longest indoor ski run in the world. For après-ski, challenge the kids to a paintballing showdown and conquer your fears in the sky diving wind tunnel.

SnowWorld, Landgraaf, Netherlands - Barrel down the only indoor slope certified for FIS World Cup competitions and shred the obstacles in the snowboarding park at one of the world's largest indoor ski resorts.

Chill Factor, Manchester, England - Try new ways down the slopes, from sledging to zorbing, and instigate sibling rivalry with ski racing lessons.

Water Worlds - Longing for those precious few warm, sunny days of summer? Europe's indoor water parks and spas may be just what your family needs. For a listing of water parks, visit www.tripomatic.com/trip/10-Best-Indoor-Water-Parks-in-Europe but be sure to make a splash at these top-rated indoor water resorts.

Sandcastle Waterpark, Blackpool, England - Jettison across the park on the world's longest indoor water coaster and make a splash on nearly a dozen slides.

Acquaworld, Concorezzo, Italy - Eight serpentine slides will keep the kids busy while you rejuvenate in the whirlpools and salt baths.

Tropical Islands, Krausnik, Germany - Swim in azure waters, tour the rainforest and camp on the beach at this tropical oasis recognized as the world's largest indoor waterpark.

Therme Erding, Erding, Germany - Sign the little ones up for the Galaxy Kids Club and relax in the thermal pools of Europe's largest spa.

More Indoor Thrills - Wear out rambunctious youngsters with a few hours at an indoor playground. Boost your children's confidence as they reach for the top at a rock climbing center, or burn rubber on a go-kart track.

Not Another Boring Museum

Europe has countless museums to excite and delight your kiddos; they'll never grumble about a day at the museum again. Children's museums cater to their learning styles and interaction levels, but "grown-up" science and technology museums also provide endless kid-friendly exhibits and activities.

Book a Dino Snores sleep-over at **London's Natural History Museum** to find out if Dippy - the dino

skeleton that stole the show in "A Night at the Museum" - comes to life. At the **Verkehrshaus** in Lucerne, Switzerland, pilot planes and conduct trains on various simulators; unravel the mysteries of the universe in the planetarium; and star in a news cast at the Media-Factory.

With some imagination and the trusty internet, you'll find plenty of other, sometimes unconventional, museums your family will enjoy. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Toy Museums - Your kids will grin from ear to ear at immense collections of their favorite comics, dolls, model trains and teddy bears.

Chocolate Factories and Museums - Delight in a real-life Willy Wonka experience; the sweetest part is the chocolate tasting.

Torture Museums - Older kids will realize that being grounded isn't so unfair (not recommended for the little ones).

Wax Museums - Children will be star-struck by their favorite celebrities. Your role will be that of paparazzi, so bring the camera.

Beyond the Red Curtain

Don't miss the unique British pantomime this holiday season. The boisterous, interactive theatrical performances are entertaining for all ages. Animated children may also thrive during an acting workshop, and on a backstage tour, discover what lies behind the red curtain.

Some marionette theaters offer productions that children will enjoy; look for those performing fairy tales or offering children's programs, such as theaters in Salzburg, Prague and Amsterdam. At Prague's National Marionette Theatre, you can even make your own marionettes and showcase your skills.

May this oh-too-short list be just the beginning of your indoor fun this winter. Start planning now and brainstorm with your kids; who knows what adventures they'll dream up. ■

