

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2017

RV-tripping Spain:
Coastal
campgrounds,
classy caravans

31



People cool off in a swimming pool in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. The summer heat wave is forecast to continue and expand over more of the country, with people being warned to protect themselves from the sun. — AFP

Boogie Woogie, Baby!: Dutch infants take a shine to Mondrian

Ever wondered which artist is most preferred by babies? If it's up to the organizers of a tour for parents with small children in the Netherlands on Tuesday, the works of abstract artist Piet Mondrian win hands down. Eight babies and their parents were chosen from a group of 400 hopefuls to exclusively view Mondrian's paintings at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, which houses the world's largest Mondrian collection. The babies, ranging from four months to one-and-a-half-years-old, and their parents were allowed an early morning stroll through the museum unhindered by the usual crowds, the organizer said.

"From four months onwards, babies can see colors and contrast and for this purpose, Mondrian's works are the most ideal," said Brigitte Timmermans of Kunstfanaatjes ("Little Art Fanatics").

Mondrian, who shortened his name from Mondriaan in later years, is best known for his canvas "Victory Boogie Woogie", considered one of the most important works of the 20th century. The babies also showed a particular preference for the 1944 painting, because of its bright and contrasting colours



A woman carries a baby though the first Baby Museum Tour at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. — AFP photos

of mainly blue, red and yellow, Timmermans said. "We find that the babies are able to focus really well on the 'Victory'. They were fascinated by it and to see this was something quite special."

Even without being able to talk, it was clear

from their responses that they also appreciated Mondrian's other works, she said. "The parents—who are often a bit hamstrung having to look after a small baby—also enjoyed the day out," Timmermans added.

Although the pilot project, called "Boogie



A man carries a baby though the first Baby Museum Tour.

Woogie, Baby!", is believed to be a first for the Netherlands, the idea of taking infants to view art has already been implemented in Belgium, Germany and the United States, she said.

A second excursion is planned to a museum in the southern city of Dordrecht in a

few months, she said. This year marks the centenary of the founding of De Stijl ("The Style"), the Dutch art movement of which Mondrian was a part, known for its bold horizontal and vertical lines encasing blocks of primary colors. — AFP

COOL, CREATIVE AND EASY-TO-CARE-FOR LUNCHBOXES

A fun part of back-to-school shopping is the search for the perfect lunch container. Should it be square with a zip, with space for lots of tasty items? A smart little purse-like affair? A sack? And what about the pattern? When you're going to be spending every lunch hour with it, it's important to get it right. This fall, there are lots of new designs for students old and young, with thoughtful details and add-ons meant to make lunchtime pleasant and palatable.

Form and function

Karen Cicero, contributing editor at Parents magazine, reminds parents and caregivers to keep kids' ages and grade levels in mind when shopping for lunchboxes. "If you have a preschooler or kindergartener, you'll want a box that's easy to open and close," she says. "For middle schoolers, you want to make sure it's large enough to hold their lunch, an ice pack, and snacks they'll need for after-school practices."

Also consider how easy the box is to clean, and whether it hooks on your child's backpack, "which is a good feature so it doesn't get lost or separated," Cicero said. Many lunch-kit collections can be coordinated with backpacks, water bottles, and hot or cold insulated containers.



This photo shows glow-in-the-dark dinos that make for a fun lunch box from Pottery Barn Kids.

Bento boxes

Bento boxes are big among elementary and middle school kids, says Cicero. Popular for years in Asia, bento boxes are made of plastic or steel fitted with various-size compartments. That separation keeps foods from becoming a pile of crumbs or mush. And with just one container to wash and re-use, there's often less waste.

No more zippered baggies, plastic wrap or foil to pollute the environment. There are built-in bento containers in many of this season's lunchboxes. Or Bento's colorful, leak-proof bento containers come in several varieties, including an insulated bowl with a silicone-lined snap lid and its own fork and spoon.

Ditch the disposables

Other environmentally friendly options include Russbe's sturdy, gusseted reusable bags, which come in a bunch of designs and sizes. All have leak-resistant double-lock closures; they're alternatives to plastic bags. Cicero also likes Packit: The whole bag is lined with a gel material, so you can freeze it the night before and food stays chilled all day. There's a peppy buffalo check, and a tie-dye pattern in the collection. "Our school has a zero-waste policy, so

we try to pack most food in a thermos or containers. Snap lids are easiest for the kids to open," says Toronto mom Amy Tse.

Kristy Lucenti of Brooklyn, Ontario, says her young son picked out a PBKids' car-themed lunchbox that matches his backpack. "I found a set of Rubbermaid containers that fit nicely in his lunch bag," she says. "His school is strict on zero waste, so the containers are very convenient." She puts morning and afternoon snacks in the smaller containers and his lunch in the big one.

Trending topics

"What's new is that you'll see a lot of girls with traditional boy designs," says Cicero. "Gender-neutral options include geometric patterns, stars and animals." Unicorns are trending strongly with girls, she says. Zazzle.com has a nice variety; a lot feature rainbows, too. Target has the Skip Hop Zoo unicorn-shaped bag, and Gymboree offers a unicorn-printed box that clips to a matching backpack.

Other popular patterns?

Cute cats and fun food

Pottery Barn Kids has a lunch sack shaped like a kitten's face; it wouldn't look out of place on a 20-something's office desk. Photo-printed lunch boxes and bags stand out from the crowd; some are even 3-D. For younger kids, dinosaur, galaxy, mermaid and camouflage patterns in glow-in-the-dark inks

This photo shows bows and polka dots that jazz up a pretty Emily & Meritt lunch bag from Pottery Barn Kids. — AP photos



This photo shows a Emily & Meritt Neon Roses lunch sack from Pottery Barn Teen that combines fashion forward trends in a stylish lunch tote that would appeal to any age.



are popular. Cicero also mentions quintessential favorites like superheroes and sports themes. Nike has lunch-size versions of its classic duffel bag.

Crocodile Creek has designs with jungle, robot and backyard animal themes. And Hanna Andersson offers soft lunchboxes in whimsical designs including a galaxy and spaceship, fluttery butterflies, race cars, and smiling suns with



This photo shows steel bento boxes.

rainbows. For older boys, consider video-game references like Minecraft or Halo 5 lunchboxes. Licensed characters are perennial lunchbox favorites. This year, a Wonder Woman lunchbox picks up on the movie's popularity. And the front of a Star Wars Chewbacca lunchbox is covered in washable fake fur.

Fashion forward

Allison Spampinato, senior vice president for product development at Pottery Barn Kids and PBTeen, is betting on a few stylish designs: "Our Emily & Meritt gear features neon pink and oversize florals, bringing two trends together," she says. Other graphic standouts in that collection: a chic, black-zipped lunch sack with the word MEOW in white type, and a bold, black-and-white-banded sack. There's also a shibori motif. Larger-scale gingham and polka dots, and icons like sailboats, bows and hearts are a fresh take on preppy. — AP