

PARENT'S GUIDE

Coco Travels to Alabama

By Tia Hargrove • Book 1 of the Coco Travels Series

Ages 3–8 • A Family Reading Companion • Free to Share

Welcome, Families!

Thank you for reading *Coco Travels to Alabama* with your child. This guide is designed to help you get the most out of every page — before, during, and after reading. You don't need to be a teacher to use it. Everything here is simple, conversational, and built for the real moments families share: bedtime, car rides, breakfast tables, and lazy weekend afternoons.

Coco Travels to Alabama is the first book in the *Coco Travels* series, a planned 50-state adventure that will take Coco — and your child — from Alabama all the way to Wyoming, one state at a time. Alabama is where the journey begins. We are so glad you are here for it.

About the Book

Coco Brown is a bright, curious young girl whose mother, Mommy Shonda, is a flight attendant. When Mommy announces she is flying to Alabama — "down where it's sunny and warm" — Coco springs into action. She asks Daddy Kyrie to take her to the library, checks out a book about Alabama using her own library card, and that night asks Daddy to read it with her at bedtime in her room.

As Daddy reads about Alabama's facts, landmarks, and people, Coco's eyelids grow heavy. She drifts off to sleep — and dreams herself right there. As Captain Coco, she pilots her own airplane, trains like an astronaut at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, walks through the beautiful Bellingrath Gardens in Theodore, and swims with bottlenose dolphins at Orange Beach. Along the way she meets three of Alabama's most remarkable people: Rosa Parks, Jesse Owens, and Nat King Cole.

She wakes to Mommy's kiss and a gift of Alabama stickers for her blue sticker book and green suitcase — already wondering where she will go next. There are so many places to go!

Meet the Brown Family

One of the things that makes *Coco Travels* special is the family at its heart. Here's who your child will meet:

Coco Brown — Our hero. Curious, joyful, and full of wonder. She loves school, the library, and dreaming about the world beyond her backyard. She wants to be a pilot when she grows up.

Grandma Brown — The heart of the household. She makes delicious waffles, walks Coco to the bus stop, and keeps everything running with quiet warmth.

Mommy Shonda — A flight attendant who helps passengers stay safe and brings them snacks and drinks. She wears a special blue uniform and always brings Coco something from wherever she flies.

Daddy Kyrie — Patient, present, and loving. He takes Coco to the library, reads with her at bedtime, and makes her feel safe enough to dream big.

Semaj — Coco's little brother. He is always nearby, watching his big sister with wide eyes and a big smile.

The Librarian — A friendly recurring presence who already knows Coco by name. She models the joy of reading and the value of a library card.

Before You Read Together

A few minutes of conversation before opening the book can make a big difference in how much your child connects with the story. Try one or two of these:

Conversation Starters

- "Have you ever wondered what it would be like to travel somewhere far away? If you could go anywhere, where would you go?"
- "Do you know where Alabama is? Let's find it on a map together before we start reading."
- "Coco's mom has a really cool job. What do you think a flight attendant does?"
- "What do you think will happen when Coco falls asleep? Let's find out!"

Find Alabama Together

Before reading, pull up a map on your phone or find a paper map and locate Alabama with your child. Ask:

- Is Alabama north or south of where we live?
- What states touch Alabama? (Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Florida)
- "Alabama is near the ocean — can you find the Gulf of Mexico?"

This simple map moment plants the seed for everything Coco discovers in the book.

While You Read: Talking Points by Page

You don't need to pause on every page — follow your child's energy. But these moments are worth a brief conversation if your child is engaged:

The Breakfast Table (Pages 3–8)

- "Look at everyone at the table! Can you name everyone in Coco's family?"
- "Mommy is wearing her special blue uniform. What does a flight attendant do to help people on airplanes?"

- "Coco spreads out her arms and pretends to be an airplane. Can you show me how you would fly?"
- "Alabama is 'down where it's sunny and warm.' Does that give you a clue about where it is?"

The Library Visit (Pages 9–16)

- "Daddy says 'Let's buckle up for safety.' Do we always buckle up too? Why is that important?"
- "Coco has her own library card! Do you have one? Would you like to get one?"
- "The library puts books about places in the 900s section. Isn't it cool that every book has its own address?"
- "The librarian already knows Coco's name. That means Coco visits a lot! How often do we visit the library?"

Bedtime Reading (Pages 17–20)

- "Look at Coco's room — there's a globe on the dresser and airplanes drawn on the wall. What does that tell us about what Coco loves?"
- "Daddy is reading to Coco at bedtime in her room, just like we're reading together right now!"
- "Alabama's state bird is the yellowhammer. Its flower is the camellia. Which one would you most want to see in real life?"
- "Coco's eyelids are getting heavy. Have you ever fallen asleep while someone was reading to you?"

Captain Coco's Dream (Pages 21–27)

- "Captain Coco tells her passengers to buckle their seatbelts! Even in her dream, safety comes first."
- "Coco visits three places in Alabama. Which one would YOU most want to visit — the Space & Rocket Center, the Bellingrath Gardens, or Orange Beach?"
- "She meets Rosa Parks, Jesse Owens, and Nat King Cole. Have you heard of any of them before?"
- "All three of these people were born in Alabama. Isn't it amazing that one state gave the world all three of them?"

The Morning After (Pages 28–31)

- "Mommy is back! What did she bring Coco?"

- "Look at the last picture — Coco is already dreaming about where she'll go next. I can see New York, Hawaii, and Texas in her thought bubble. Where do you think Coco should go next?"
- "There are so many places to go! If you were Coco, where would you travel for Book 2?"

After You Read: Fun Activities at Home

Start Your Own Sticker Book or Travel Journal

Coco keeps a blue sticker book and decorates her green suitcase with stickers from every place Mommy visits. Your child can start their own version:

- Find a small notebook and declare it your child's Travel Journal or State Sticker Book.
- Add an Alabama page together — draw or print a picture of a camellia, a yellowhammer, or a dolphin.
- As you read each new Coco Travels book, add a page for that state.

By Book 50, your child will have a hand-made record of all 50 states — built one adventure at a time.

Visit Your Local Library

Coco's library visit is one of the warmest scenes in the book. It's a perfect springboard for a real-life library trip:

- If your child doesn't have a library card, get one together — most libraries issue cards free to children.
- Find the 900s section (Geography) and look for books about Alabama or other states together.
- Let your child check out a book with their own card, just like Coco.

"The library is one of Coco's favorite places to go." It can be one of yours too.

Find Alabama on a Map

- Print a blank map of the United States and ask your child to color Alabama.
- Mark the places Coco visited: Huntsville, Theodore, Orange Beach, Tuskegee, Oakville, and Montgomery.
- Ask: "Which of these would you most want to visit? How would we get there from our home?"

Dream Big: What Do You Want to Be?

Coco sees Mommy's career and immediately imagines her own future as a pilot. Use that moment to spark a conversation with your child:

- "If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?"
- "What is one thing you could practice or learn right now to get a little closer to that dream?"
- "Mommy helps keep people safe on airplanes. Who helps keep us safe every day?"

Safety Habits

The book models two safety moments: Daddy saying "Let's buckle up for safety" on the drive to the library, and Captain Coco reminding passengers to buckle their seatbelts before landing. Use these as natural reinforcement:

- Make "buckle up" a family phrase every time you get in the car.
- Ask: "Why does Captain Coco remind her passengers to buckle up even in a dream?"

The Alabama Heroes Coco Meets

Coco meets three of Alabama's most remarkable people in her dream. Here is a little more about each one — in case your child asks questions:

Rosa Parks (1913–2005) — Born in Tuskegee, Alabama

Rosa Parks was a civil rights activist who became famous for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus in 1955. Her courage helped spark the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the broader civil rights movement that changed America. She is often called "the mother of the civil rights movement."

To say to your child: "Rosa Parks was very brave. She stood up for what was right even when it was scary. Can you think of a time you stood up for something that was right?"

Jesse Owens (1913–1980) — Born in Oakville, Alabama

Jesse Owens was a track and field athlete who won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games — one of the greatest individual performances in Olympic history. He represented America and made everybody proud.

To say to your child: "Jesse Owens practiced running every single day. What is something you love to practice? What could you get really, really good at if you worked at it every day?"

Nat King Cole (1919–1965) — Born in Montgomery, Alabama

Nat King Cole was a jazz pianist and singer whose smooth, warm voice made him one of the most beloved performers in American history. He was the first African American to host a national television variety show in the United States.

To say to your child: "Nat King Cole shared his talent with the whole world through music and television. What talent do YOU have that you love to share with people?"

Alabama Facts Your Child Learned

Coco learns these facts from the book she reads with Daddy. Use them as a quick quiz or a dinner table conversation:

State nickname: The Yellowhammer State	State bird: The yellowhammer
State abbreviation: AL	State flower: The camellia
State capital: Montgomery	State tree: The southern longleaf pine
Three largest cities: Huntsville, Birmingham, and Montgomery	Statehood date: December 14, 1819
Region: The Southeast	Order of statehood: The 22nd state
Time zone: Central	

What This Book Teaches Beyond the Story

Curiosity is a superpower

Coco doesn't wait to be taught about Alabama. She asks, seeks, reads, and discovers. Every time you encourage your child's questions — even when you don't know the answer — you are nurturing the same spirit that drives Coco's adventures.

Libraries are magical places

The library visit is one of the warmest scenes in the book — Daddy and Coco, hand in hand, using the Dewey Decimal System to find a book about somewhere Mommy is going. The message is quiet but powerful: when you want to know something, you go find a book.

Family makes everything better

Every part of Coco's adventure is rooted in family. Mommy inspires the curiosity. Daddy enables it. Grandma keeps the home warm. Even Coco's dream is fueled by the love of the people around her. The book celebrates the ordinary magic of a family that shows up for each other.

Every place has a story worth knowing

Alabama is Coco's first stop — but the series is designed to make every state feel equally extraordinary. The underlying message for your child: no matter where you come from, your home has a story worth telling. And the whole world is full of stories worth discovering.

What's Next: The Coco Travels Series

Coco Travels to Alabama is just the beginning. The Coco Travels series is planned as a 50-book alphabetical adventure — one book for every state in America, from Alabama all the way to Wyoming.

As your child follows Coco from state to state, they will build geography literacy, discover American history, and develop a genuine sense of wonder about the world around them — one bedtime story at a time.

Book 1: Coco Travels to Alabama ✓ You are here!

Book 2: Coco Travels to Alaska — Coming Soon

Book 3: Coco Travels to Arizona — Forthcoming

Book 4: Coco Travels to Arkansas — Forthcoming... and on through all 50 states!

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