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Table of Contents »

HOME | DESTINATIONS | PHOTOGRAPHY | BLOG | COLUMNS | SPECIALS | DRIVES OF A LIFETIME | QUIZ | GEOTOURISM | INDEX | SUBSCRIBE

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Traveling With Mom



PAGE [2] OF 3

« PREV | NEXT »

Africa With My Mother

By Jenn Blatty, Photo Intern

Christmas and New Year's in Africa: a trip very typical of my mother to conjure up, and beyond exciting for a 15-year-old girl.

The last leg of our adventure was a drive from Kenya to Tanzania, where we would spend New Year's Eve in the Ngorongoro Crater. As customary, we pulled over at the border for immigration, and immediately the locals crowded the van to an overwhelming point, begging for money, clothing, food, or anything we could offer. Mom instructed me to wait with my younger niece and brother while she pushed her way to the patrol shack with our passports in hand.

What I witnessed on her return is now a mental picture of my mother, forever frozen in time. With a huge smile on her face, surrounded by other smiling Africans trying to help her, she balanced a zoo of hand-carved wooden safari animals in her arms, trying not to drop them as she stumbled into the car. And then I noticed: She was no longer wearing her jacket, hat, or the shirt tied around her waist, and her shoes were gone. Her white socks caked with mud, she sat there sorting through the animals as if nothing was wrong. When we asked her about it, she just laughed and said, "I couldn't give any money because I left it in here. They pointed to my shoes. Why not, I can get new ones? And look what they gave me, they're for you all. Aren't they cute!?"

That's my mom.

Rappahannock River Adventure

By Susan O'Keefe, Associate Editor

One summer we packed up our three kids and headed to the Tides Inn in historic Irvington, Virginia, on the Rappahannock River. From croquet on a bluff overlooking Carters Creek to the swimming pool with plenty of water floats, the Tides fully welcomes kids, even misbehaving ones (take my word for it, breakfast

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one morning turned into a nightmare, and a waiter averted disaster with palm-sized pinball games).

Do-it-yourself crab nets are provided on the dock (this entertained my active five-year-old for hours), or you can head out on the water in a variety of boats and complimentary canoes. We piled in one of the blue-canopied Duffy motorboats and toiled around the river pointing out grand summer homes with sweeping lawns and old boathouses, while the kids waved to passing boaters.

We ventured out one afternoon to pick up a \$6 crab net (for our dedicated crabber who insisted on his own) at Eubanks & Son Hardware store (much more fun to forage through than Home Depot) in Kilmarnock where we stopped for barbecued ribs and pulled-pork sandwiches at Smokin Joe's. But mostly, we floated in the pool at the inn and hung around the dock talking to boaters. After dinner, we sat on the small beach while the kids danced around and doodled in the sand waiting to see the first star in the night sky . . . summer vacation indeed!

PAGE [2] OF 3

« [PREV](#) | [NEXT](#) »

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