

Outer Banks Vacation: Going Home is Bittersweet

Description

The day had come, we were going home after our week long family vacation in Corolla, NC. You know that bittersweet feeling of finally returning home where you can get back into the normal routine of things? *Bitter*, because vacation is over, but *sweet* because you™re happy to be in the comfort of your home again.

Unless you totally despise home. In that case, the end of vacation is probably all bitter. For us, we were ready to get back to [focus on our daughter getting over her staph infection](#). It wasn™t worse, but not better either. On the bright side, she was in good spirits as we woke her up at the break of dawn to cram into our Chrysler Town & Country rental.

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Uncle Paul, Aunt Tammy, and G-Ma were told by a local business owner that the traffic gets backed up worse than someone on a low fiber diet and we should leave before 6 am. We were planning on getting

a little more sleep and leaving around 9 am, but didnâ€™t want to challenge the localâ€™s advice.

At just past four in the morning, we started our day loading the van, cleaning around the beach house, and double checking, then triple checking to make sure we didnâ€™t forget anything. Once all was said and done, the family stood outside to say goodbye. Paul, Tammy, Grandma, Aaron, and Noah were driving North back to Pennsylvania, and G-Ma, Kelley, Avery, and I were heading South back to Texas. Aunt Tammy snuck in some goodbye snuggles with Avery who was not quite 100 percent awake.



These two spent quality bonding time together during the trip. Avery even learned surfer speak from Tammy, sheâ€™s been saying â€œHang ten, dude.â€• since we left. My brother Preston and I bid our farewells to cousins Aaron and Noah next.



G-Ma posed with her little brother, aka Uncle Paul, for the last pic before climbing in the van.



No clue why I don't have a picture of us with Grandma, but never fear, we gave her lots of love too. We were already behind on leaving before tourist traffic had us sitting forever, so we waved goodbye to our beach house and started the journey to the airport.



Sand Piper treated us well, but just ask [Dorothy, she knows there's no place like home](#). A few pit stops later and we were in Newport News to eat at Whole Foods Market just [as we did on our way in](#).

Everyone made use of the omelette and waffle bar in Whole Foods except me. I had cooked enough awesome local tuna from the night before and expected to chow down on the perfectly cooked, fork tender fish fillet. But fate had other plans; I left the damn thing in the fridge wrapped in foil! Ask anyone, I wasted a good thirty minutes brooding over this unfortunate blip in my memory. Silver lining, Paul and Tammy had packed it and hopefully enjoyed every savory bite.

This time, we had a couple hours to hang around since our flight didnâ€™t depart until 7:05 pm. Yeah, waking up before 5 am for a 7 pm flight is way down on my list of cool things in life. Good thing the shopping center had a small playground.

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Just playing outside at @wholefoods in #newportnews before we head to the airport. #Vacation is over, but the fun never ends! #playground #travel #kids #parenting

A photo posted by RC Liley (@going_dad) on Jun 18, 2016 at 8:44am PDT

Avery spent a good hour with non-stop play on the enlarged animals as G-Ma, Preston, and Going Mom visited the surrounding shops. Luckily, G-Ma didn't show up with *another* giant pink dolphin.

The cook at Whole Foods had given me a leftover waffle that I said I wanted to give one of the homeless guys walking around the parking lot, so that's how I spent most of my time before heading to the airport.

Side story: we saw the homeless guy the first day we came in and got worked up when he approached us, cigarette in hand, and asked for money. Uncle Preston really wanted to give him a mouthful, but we never got the chance. No giant waffle for the homeless smoker I guess. We got over it pretty fast.

The trip to the airport only took an hour, and turning in our beloved rental van was easy. This left us with close to four hours of hanging at the Richmond Airport. Sure, plenty of people have to wait much longer, but this is my story, so I'll whine anyway. And four hours with a toddler feels a lot longer!

For whatever reason, security check found my bag to be of interest which led to me getting searched, full body style. This helped pass some of the time, and luckily they never found whatever they thought they found so I was allowed to pass go...but I never collected \$200. Instead, Avery and I searched for our own money around the airport.



We never found \$200, but we did find two pennies. Hey, itâ€™s two of something, right? One was from G-Ma though. I think Avery figured it out.



For snacking, I unwrapped a giant cucumber I bought at the local farmerâ€™s market and proceeded to share with Avery. Good thing weâ€™re both [Nuttzo Fanatics!](#)

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A photo posted by RC Liley (@going_dad) on Jun 18, 2016 at 1:47pm PDT

Donâ€™t knock it till you try it. NuttZo + anything is almost guaranteed to be delicious! To make things awkward, an old lady who was working as bartender approached me and asked where I learned to eat a cucumber like that. How do answer a question like that?! My wife just shook her head in shame. Sorry, Kelley.

The time had finally arrived to board our flight for the last part of our journey back home. With all of us in our seats, including Pinky the Dolphin with Avery, we were on our way to DFW.



Throughout the day-long adventure, Avery had done surprisingly well at keeping it together. I wouldâ€™ve lost money if we bet on how long until she broke down. It wasnâ€™t until we walked in the door to our home at close to 11 pm that she finally let the lack of sleep set in. Not helping things was coming home to more potty (pee and poop) stains from our cat all around the house. Kelley frantically dealt with an upset toddler as she cleaned each mess one by one and I prepared a quick meal for everyone.

Stress levels remained high, but it was nice to be home. We all cleaned up, got Avery in her bed, and sat in front of the TV to pass out to HGTV. Wow, what a trip! Vacation was over, but there was more to be done now that we were home, including get rid of Averyâ€™s staph and my looming shoulder surgery.

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