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Things to Think About!



By Brandan Atkin



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10 Lessons Learned on Vacation Or, "The Family Traveling Circus" Rides Again by Linda Jorgensen

Last month I wrote about preparing for "The Dreaded Family Vacation". One would have thought by doing the research and reminiscing about vacations past I would have learned my lesson. Or at least paid closer attention. It would appear I am a slow learner and need reminding.

In July we took our annual family summer trip. While this year's trip was a bit different (we choose to spend a week at a high mountain fish camp rather than in the South West) I thought the same principles used on our last few trips would apply. Apparently not so. In our quest for a little family togetherness and wilderness adventure we forgot a few things.

After dutifully packing up everything but the kitchen sink, or so I thought, purchasing our fishing licenses and dozens of worms we all piled in the van ready for our road trip to fish camp. Little did we know the lessons we had in store for us.

Lesson #1

Upchuck buckets are not just for after same day surgery and occasional bouts of 'flu. They come in mighty handy when driving over twisting, turning high mountain roads. Provided you have one in the car. Carry extra liners. Or be prepared to pull over to the side of the road, if there is one, the second you receive notice of an imminent eruption. Is it just me, or have some of our mountain roads gotten narrower lately? It seems that pullouts are few and far between making it necessary to pull off into very narrow emergency lanes over looking deep river ravines. It is also handy to know the locations of any carwashes along your route. Just in case someone "misses" while looking for a quick turn out on those narrow roads.

Lesson #2

You will forget the item you need the most. Pack this first. And double the supply you'll need for the week you will be gone. Trust me, it will be a near tragedy!

Lesson #3

Know the location of the closest grocery store. A 120 mile round trip to pick up forgotten nighttime incontinence supplies is not just an average jaunt around the corner. A drive back down those twisting, turning mountain roads is enough to make even the driver carsick.

Lesson #4

Call the store first to see if they even carry what you need. Cell phones often do NOT work in high mountains. Find a pay phone. Yes, there are a few antique varieties in some of the more remote areas of our country. Carry change. You may just find yourself traveling another 60 miles, round trip from the grocers, to the nearest large Big Box store after finding out the grocer doesn't carry what you need. Making your "quick trip to the store" a total of 180 miles and an arm and a leg for a tank of gas. Purchased at the nearest out-of-the-way gas station. Which is also another 60 mile round trip from fish camp. In the OTHER direction.

Lesson #5

Make sure there are laundry facilities at fish camp. If there are, be certain to have double the supply of quarters to feed the laundry machines. After all, the nearest bank is next to the nearest Big Box store, 180 miles round trip from the fish camp. The camp owner does stock up but quarters are highly prized at fish camp as he only goes to the bank once a week. "It's a huner't and eighty miles round trip, don't ya know". Be prepared to bring your own.

Lesson #6

Carry plenty of tissues. Be prepared for a crying fest after your daily fish catch and before your evening meal. After all, you're eating "Swimmer" for dinner. Try explaining the food chain to your developmentally delayed child. Be sure to start with the shark. Make sure you have plenty of antacids to last everyone for the week. Indigestion will be a sure thing.

Lesson #7

Carry extra life preservers in the fishing boat. After your chat with your developmentally delayed child about the food chain you'll then be trying to explain why sharks do NOT inhabit high mountain lakes at fish camps. Ensure your 16-year-old son didn't just happen to bring a copy

of JAWS, or any other water related monster movie, on DVD along with him. Go for a very long walk, or better yet, take a drive to the local grocers, with a short stop again for gas, with your developmentally delayed child while the above note 16-year-old is watching his movie.

Lesson #8

Pack earplugs or be prepared to try sleeping in the van. An entire family of 4 crammed into a "spacious motel room complete with kitchenette and wheelchair accessible bathroom. Sleeps six comfortably" will create a lot of racket once the snoring begins. Bathrooms echo, even with the door closed. It would be one thing if you could get them all to synchronize, but trust me, that won't happen either.

Lesson #9

Plan for extra activities. I can guarantee your developmentally delayed child will NOT be getting back in the boat once she hears about the huge mackinaw with the, "BIG teeth, just like Jaws, don't ya know", that inhabit the lake. Be sure you aren't anywhere near the fish camp office when the one angler to catch "one of them there elusive Big Macs" just happens to bring the one, and only one, caught during the entire summer season in to the office for an official trophy weigh in.

Lesson #10

Upon your return home call your family in the South West immediately and plan a time for your next summer family misadventure. In the desert. Away from the water and any possible JAWS sightings.

It may also be helpful to schedule an entirely separate get away for Mom after the Family Misadventures at Fish Camp. After all, she's been the one doing most of the driving.

If you would like further information regarding this wheelchair accessible Very Family Friendly Fish Camp in the Southern Uintah Mountains contact SNRPs Intrepid CEO at Contact Us, www.snrproject.com.

