

Travelling with your kids... and your parents

By Kathy Buckworth



I recently took a trip overseas with my parents, something I **a)** hadn't done for 20 years, and **b)** had never attempted to do while in the company of my *own* children. (For the record, I'm not totally insane; I only took one of the four kids. I'm just partially unbalanced; I chose my two-year-old.) It immediately became apparent that I hadn't spent the appropriate amount of time **a)** reminding my parents of what travelling with a young child is like, or **b)** preparing myself for taking on the role of child and parent at the same time. Here's what I learned:

1. Seven hours on a flight with a good book, free wine, crappy meals, more free wine, and movies, is not a long time for an adult. It's an eternity for a child.
2. An eternity for an adult is apparently the 10 minutes that your grandson spends kicking the back of your seat.

3. Some things have to be explained over and over, whether you're talking to a two-year-old (*No, there are no Timbits in England*) or a 65-year-old (*Yes, we really do need a car seat for him, even though all of "us kids" were just fine without one*)
4. Travelling in a car for six hours after a seven-hour flight tends to bring out the unpleasant side of a small child. (*Yes, I'm sure "us kids" used to entertain ourselves - probably because we could leap about the vehicle, unhindered by car seats.*)
5. Tiny, quiet English tea rooms rarely serve chicken nuggets and/or ketchup... or have room to change a toddler's ripe diaper in their lovely little "powder rooms".
6. Tiny, quiet English tea rooms seem even tinier and quieter when a Grandfather announces, "I hope you can find us a table far away from everyone else just in case this little fellow explodes."

(You've never seen 80-year-olds choke down their watercress sandwiches so fast.)

7. While in the tearoom, prepare to answer loudly-asked questions like, "Didn't you think of toilet training him before the trip?" (Thought about it. Thought about the extra clothes I'd have to pack and the many stops we all would be required to make, and dismissed the thought immediately.)
8. Some grandparent discipline tactics (*If you won't stop crying while you're sitting with Mommy, you're going to have to sit with Granddad*) have a way of escalating an already alarming tantrum situation.

9. Travelling with a two-year-old can be a good excuse for going to bed early and escaping to a quiet bedroom to read *Thomas the Tank Engine*. Over and over and over.

My eldest child is 13. I'm already planning the first mother, daughter, grandchild trip, where I will naturally be the perfect travelling companion... provided that the wine is still free and I'm sitting behind them.

About the author: Kathy Buckworth is the author of "The Secret Life of SuperMom and SuperMom: A Celebration of All You Do," books easily read on any child-free transatlantic flights. www.kathybuckworth.com

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