

AUGUST 2024

# Piece Of Mind

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## DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

### *Our Family's Grand Canyon Adventure*

August is Family Fun Month, and as I pondered how best to celebrate, I drew on my happiest childhood memories as inspiration. Certain experiences immediately rose to the surface, namely, our family road trips visiting our Nation's wonders. What stands out most about these trips is that they weren't extravagant. We'd pack up our Aerostar minivan and hit the road, visiting places like Yellowstone, Redwood National Park, and Mount Rushmore.

There were no cell phones back then. We used paper maps and relied on games like "I Spy" to keep us entertained. We toured different national parks, spending countless hours outdoors and exploring our country's natural treasures. My dad passed away when I was 18, but I had enough time with him for these core memories to take shape. We shared so much joy and laughter on those trips, and I was in awe at every destination. Our country is full of beauty. Now that he's gone, I often reflect on those memories and how they made me feel in sync with nature and my family. With a family of my own, I strive to pass on those same values and create similar memories for my kids. So, for Family Fun Month, I wanted to pack up the car and head to one of the most memorable locations from my childhood — the Grand Canyon.

As my fiancé, Marc, and I planned the trip, I had a nagging fear. Would our kids — Noa (10), Ben (12), and Vanessa (14) — appreciate this kind of adventure, or would it be a bust? While they are great kids, and we try to limit electronics, they are still definitely products of their generation. What can I say, they love electronics.

I was concerned they might miss out on appreciating the beauty and nature of the journey. The Grand Canyon isn't a destination with extra attractions like arcades or movie theaters to occupy the kids once the "outdoorsy" activities are done. It's all about immersing in nature, exploring museums, hiking, and soaking up some of the world's most breathtaking sights. With the kids in tow, all I could do was hope the kids would enjoy the experience as much as I did as a child, despite my no-electronics rule.

We played games as a family and stopped at a few interesting places (like the London Bridge). We first arrived in Williams, and the next day, we took the train into the Grand Canyon. When you exit the train depot toward the rim, you can't see the Grand Canyon until you get up the stairs. All my fears were obliterated as we huffed our way to the top and walked to the rim. All

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# NEW END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS

## Aquamation and Human Composting

When we assist clients with planning for end-of-life decisions in an Advance Health Care Directive, we present the two most common and traditional options — burial or cremation — and we ask which they prefer. It's a personal decision, and our clients have different reasons for preferring one over the other. However, more clients are now inquiring about alternatives due to the high costs of burial (which can exceed \$15,000) and the environmental impact of both burial and cremation.

Cremation requires the use of fossil fuels and produces carbon dioxide emissions, while burial involves chemicals to embalm the body, which can leak into the soil, and the use of non-biodegradable coffins.

Consequently, new options are developing for those that don't prefer either of the traditional options. These options purport to be both cost-friendly and gentler on the environment. Aquamation, also known as water cremation or alkaline hydrolysis, is now legal and available in California. This water-based process reduces the remains to dust or ash without burning, thus eliminating toxic emissions. The body is placed in a pressurized metal cylinder containing water and a powerful alkali,

such as potassium hydroxide. This solution is heated to approximately 200-300 degrees F, and the body remains immersed for three to four hours. The cost of aquamation ranges from about \$3,000 to \$9,000, depending on the facility and additional services elected.

Another emerging alternative is human composting, formally known as natural organic reduction. This process transforms the body into nutrient-dense soil, which can then be used to fertilize plants or grow a tree. Human composting costs between \$5,000 and \$7,000, which is comparable to the price of cremation. Human composting will be authorized by law in California starting January 2027. However, this option is currently offered in other states, and many families choose to ship the bodies to these states to utilize this eco-friendly alternative (although this adds to the expense).

Remember, the choice is entirely yours—no option is inherently best. It all depends on your personal preferences and wishes. The best thing you can do is discuss your wishes with your Advance Health Care agent to ensure they understand them and keep them updated if your wishes evolve.

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three of the kids let out an audible gasp. Eyes wide, mouths gaping open, looks of complete awe, I could tell they "got it." It was so much more beautiful than they could have anticipated, and my eyes welled with liquid pride.

They thought the Grand Canyon was "so cool," and I could barely pull them away from the rim even when it was time to head over to the restaurant for our dinner reservation. After dinner, we took a sunset tour and sat on the ledge, watching the sunset for an hour and a half, completely unplugged. After snapping a few photos, the kids put their phones away on their own. There was no complaining; they were genuinely content soaking up the beauty without any signs of boredom.

It was amazing to see how much they truly embraced and genuinely enjoyed the beauty

of the Grand Canyon. Being a kid today is different from when I was growing up, and it warms my heart to know they could share the same appreciation. This trip offered a unique kind of fun without electronics or a set-in-stone agenda. It was all about connecting with nature, exploring history, and being present with each other — a family tradition that I was proud to pass down.

There's something to be said about putting everything else aside and truly being present in the moment. Sometimes, you have to train your brain to slow down and focus on the beauty in front of you. As we stood at the rim as a family, taking in the view, we were surrounded by many other tourists coming and going. One of the kids spotted a goat standing on the edge of a ledge jetting out over the canyon for about a half hour, just taking in the view. But here's the thing — not one of the people passing by the spot where

we sat noticed the goat until we pointed it out to be sure they saw it. It was a proud parent moment for me — I reveled in how neat it was that my kids were present in the moment and catching things that others were missing as they stopped, took a photo, and moved on.

Although there's no point in fighting the times, it's important to occasionally disconnect from our devices to connect with the people and beauty around us. Sometimes, there is so much that we miss while deeply connected with technology and the hustle and bustle of daily life. During this trip of a lifetime, once we allowed ourselves to let go and disconnect, we found ourselves connecting more deeply as a family and with the breathtaking surroundings we were exploring.

*-Jennifer Knight*



# BACK TO SCHOOL

## Tips for a Successful First Day of Class

With summer break tragically ending (as it does, sadly, every year), it is time to get back in the groove and prepare for the new school year. If you want to help your kids get over the first-day jitters and start out strong, employ these tips to make their first day back at class so successful that others will want to study it.

### Getting a Head Start

According to research by the Center for Economic Security and Opportunity, students lose as much as 25%–30% of the knowledge they accumulated the previous school year over summer break. Reading and math skills are particularly affected and see the highest regression rate. And the higher the grade level, the more students are likely to forget. The best way to combat this summer slump is to keep learning. Reading books and practicing arithmetic at least three times a week will help kids maintain what they have previously worked so hard to learn.

### Shopping Spree

Students also want to come to school prepared! Shopping for school supplies is a great way to get everything they need for the year ahead, including a snazzy new outfit for the first day, notebooks, organizers, and favorite brands of pens and pencils. It's also important to write names in notebooks to make them easier to identify if they end up in the lost and found!

### Mental Map

No one likes getting lost. Whether returning to the same school as last year or heading into a new environment, finding one's way can be daunting. If your kids arrive at school early, they can figure out where each class is and plot a path beforehand. Getting a feel for where they need to go throughout the day can be a great way to help them feel more prepared and comfortable. Many schools also have physical maps, which can be a great resource to store in a backpack if they ever feel lost.

## Sudoku

5			6			1		
6		2	9					
				8			3	
4			5				8	
2	3			9			5	4
	5				8			7
	4			3				
					9	7		1
		7			6			5

Solution on Pg. 4



## LIME CHICKEN WITH CORN AND POBLANO SALAD

Inspired by Purewow.com

### Ingredients

#### Chicken

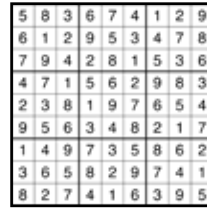
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp black pepper
- Zest of 1 lime
- 8 chicken thighs

#### Corn and poblano salad

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 poblano peppers, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 14-oz can of corn
- 4 scallions, minced
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- Salt and pepper

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a large oven-proof skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
3. In a bowl, whisk flour, spices, and lime zest. Dredge chicken in the mix to coat.
4. Add chicken, skin-side down, to skillet, then place skillet in the oven for 30–35 minutes.
5. In a medium skillet, heat olive oil and add poblanos. Sauté 4–5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for another minute.
6. In a bowl, add poblano mix, corn, scallions, lime juice, and cilantro, toss and serve with the chicken.



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*The information provided in this newsletter does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all content contained herein is for general informational purposes only.*

## Jet-Set to Paradise **DISCOVER 2024'S TOP TROPICAL GETAWAYS**

Palm-fringed beaches, crystal-clear waters, and intimate jungle views — if you're ready to fly off to a tropical paradise in 2024, this year's trend is small beach resorts and private retreats. If you want to book a tropical trip, you should check out these destinations that travel experts can't stop talking about. Grab your sunscreen and a sense of adventure because these three destinations are sailing atop the charts!

### Costa Rica

There's a reason Travel + Leisure named Costa Rica the best destination in 2024. Known worldwide for its lush rainforests, beautiful beaches, and unique biodiversity, this peaceful nation is a haven for nature lovers. You can explore the jungle and view native animals by visiting one of the country's volcanoes, nature preserves, or the

Térraba-Sierpe Wetland, Costa Rica's largest mangrove swamps. If you want the most luxurious experience possible, the Nayara Tented Camp is one of the newest hot spots for a glamping trip. The resort is made up of private tents at a spot with incredible views and offers five-star amenities.

### Panama

If you want a mix of old-world charm and modern splendor, Panama has established itself as one of the "it" destinations for travelers. This country offers a little bit of everything, from rainforests and beaches to vibrant cities. Whether you want to stroll down the historic neighborhood of Casco Viejo and marvel at the architecture or visit one of its museums, Panama gives guests a mix of activities and chances to spoil themselves.

### Saint Kitts

The island of Saint Kitts is a nature-lover's paradise in the West Indies. With rainforests, mountains, and serene shores, you can explore by land or relax on the beach. Catch a glimpse of elusive green vervet monkeys at Mount Liamuiga or step back in time by visiting the Brimstone Hill National Fortress. Snorkeling and golf are popular pastimes in this growing hot spot of the Caribbean.

As you plan for your next great tropical escape, set sail for one of 2024's hottest destinations. Whether you want to traverse nature or lounge on immaculate beaches all day, your seaside oasis awaits you!

