

My Greatest Memories of Family Vacations

By Katherine Gallagher

I remember many vacations I had with my family. I travelled from Florida to California and visited England and Ireland to see my British grandparents.

While I have not been able to go back to these places to visit as an adult, the memories I have from those vacations will always be with me.

What I remember the most was the excitement and happiness I felt when my parents told me we were going on vacation. Even better was if they told me where. I enjoyed visiting California and Florida the best. I spent a year in California for Grade 7 so my parents could visit family and determine if living in the states was something we wanted permanently. Not only was the school environment different and in some ways improved compared to Canadian schools. For example, we could walk outside when transferring between classes since most classes were in different buildings or portables. We got to eat lunch outside and our lockers were outside. I always felt such great excitement when school was over because I knew we might have a trip planned for the beach or pool.

My experience living in California varies from most family vacations, and for me, it was like a vacation because it was so different from what I was used to in Canada.

I have met many other autistics who prefer vacations involving water such as a pool, beach, or lake. Many of us find being in the water soothing but we may also really enjoy swimming. During these family vacations, I agreed with what my parents wanted to do because I knew their decisions made sense. If I wanted to spend all day on the beach or pool or whatever that might not be the best thing if we had just arrived and needed to settle in. Most times we would all negotiate what was best for everyone. All of us were free to take breaks and go back to the hotel room or condo if we wanted to. There was no patrolling anyone. But we had to let each other know what we were up to. Looking back I realize I was given a lot more independence by my family members than how people would act today. All I can say is that if you are a parent of an autistic, your desire to go on vacation should outweigh any worries that you have about how your autistic will cope with a new experience. Most of the time we like to be independent or take the lead but if you don't give us an opportunity then you will never know. My family's safety plan was for everyone to memorize a special word and say it if we felt we were in danger. Although I never remember having to use the emergency word in any instance. It is hard to plan vacations now because of covid, but if an opportunity arises then take the chance.

About the Author

I created this [Website](#) to express my unique autism perceptions. I share my insights and resources here as a person with lived experience. I encourage you to read my [About Me](#) and [Portfolio](#) pages. Or the [What is Autism](#) page for a more in-depth definition.

Autism is very unique and complex. Each person experiences autism differently. My opinions and information are expressions about myself and my experiences.

Perception means the ability to see things. It is the ability to become aware of something through the senses. Autism has given me a unique reality and open mind. I believe it is important for others to have their own unique perceptions as individuals on the autism spectrum.

Visit Katherine's Website at <https://spectrumexpressions.news.blog/>

