

AGING IN ATLANTA

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JOIN US AS WE EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY BEYOND 55

HEALTH

Is 80 really the new 60? Let's see...

Milestone not so daunting if you look at who else is there.

By Jane E. Brody

c.2021 The New York Times

When a 50ish woman at my Y learned that I was about to turn 80, she exclaimed, “80 is the new 60, and you set a great example for the rest of us!”

At least, I'm in good company:

■ Dr. Anthony Fauci, national infectious disease guru, is five months my senior, sharp as a tack even under withering political fire.

■ Nancy Pelosi, 81-year-old Speaker of the House, also stands up well against fierce opposition.

■ Anthony Hopkins, 83, Oscar winner for “The Silence of the Lambs” and a frequent nominee, won again this year for “The Father.”

■ Morgan Freeman, also 83, acts with a voice of distinction bested only by his formidable talent. He has four upcoming movies and a TV series.

■ Bernie Sanders, former presidential hopeful who will be 80 in September, remains a force to be reckoned with in the U.S. Senate.

■ Paul Simon, a month younger than Sen. Sanders, has won 12 Grammys as a singer and songwriter in a now six-decade career. He recently sold his songwriting catalog to Sony for around \$250 million.

The list goes on. As my late husband, who didn't make it to that milestone, would have said, “80 – not a record, but not a bad average.”

Indeed, many have done far better. Every day I read or hear about folks in their 90s who are still remarkably active and productive. The indefatigable architect Frank Gehry is 92. His latest project is a spectacular development in downtown Los Angeles. When asked if he'd consider retiring, he told The New York Times, “What would I do? I enjoy this stuff.”

That to me is the secret of a happy, vibrant old age: Strive to do what you love for as long as you can do it. If the vicissitudes of life or infirmities of age preclude a preferred activity, modify it or substitute another. I can no longer safely skate, ski or play tennis, but I can still bike, hike and swim. I consider daily physical activity to be as important as eating and sleeping. I accept no excuses.

And, as you can see, I still write, although it often takes me longer than it used to. In my job as a health columnist, I'm paid to be continually educated and inspired by the research and interviews I do for my weekly column. They keep my brain and spirit alive. And when a word or its spelling eludes me, there's Google and my editors to fill in the gaps.

The cohort of Americans who have lived for eight or more decades

Brody continued on S3

How the pandemic has shaped our 2021 summer travel plans

Ready to take off



While some older adults have kept their travel local or based in the U.S., some are eager to return to global vacations. ADOBE STOCK

By Kiersten Willis | kiersten.willis@coxinc.com

When the coronavirus pandemic led to a shutdown in March 2020, plans to take a cruise or visit another continent were put on hold. Now, with vaccinations on the rise among older adults, vacations are back on the table. More than 1,800,000 Georgians 55 and older have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, the state Department of Public Health reported. Over 760,000 adults ages 55-64 have had at least one dose, and 100% of adults ages 75-84 – over 380,000 – have had at least one dose. Being vaccinated has led many in metro Atlanta to make travel a priority.

Mary Pat Matheson, The Anna & Hays Mershon president and CEO at Atlanta Botanical Garden, is one person who is ready to travel since getting the vaccine.

A donor community called Circles members annually takes a national and international trip. Most guests are between their late 50s to late 70s but trips have included guests in their 30s and late 80s. In 2020, the group traveled to South America before worldwide pandemic shutdowns. No international trip is planned for 2021. Instead, the group will focus on U.S. trips. One is a flight to Pennsylvania's Longwood Gardens in Brandywine Valley in June. There, they'll enjoy dinner and a tour of the botanical garden.

“I canceled at least 10 trips professionally and personally. We just shut it all off, right? A

year and a half with no travels,” Matheson told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Among them was a visit to Portland, Oregon for a conference and other professional trips to England and Vietnam. Personally, she and her husband, Bri, 68, were set to go on a two-week trip to Maine, but it was also canceled.

In April, Matheson splurged on a first-class flight to New Orleans. It was her first trip since the coronavirus pandemic. “It was so much fun. The city has really reopened,” she said. “New Orleans was really careful about masks.”

Matheson said she “never felt nervous,” during her trip. “Of course, we're all vaccinated. Vaccination equals freedom.”

“I'm ready to reenter my life as

Travel continued on S3



Buckhead's Lori and Reg Griffin visited Jekyll Island for the first time since the mid-1990s. COURTESY

‘We actually had a lot of clients who did nothing at all without the vaccine. Once the vaccines became available, the older they got, the more they were willing to call (and book a trip).’

Martha Gaughen, an owner and vice president of sales at the travel firm Brownell

COOKING

Orzo, zucchini, feta, dill make fast, flavorful salad in grilling season

Al fresco dining with a side of socializing, please.

By Ann Maloney

Washington Post

Sometimes you come across a little cooking technique that sets off a bell: ding, ding, ding.

I found this one as I was looking for ideas for what to do with leftover orzo, but it would work with any quick-cooking pasta shape.

For this pasta salad, you put a pot of water on for the orzo and while waiting for it to

Orzo continued on S2



Grilled Chicken With Zucchini Pasta Salad is light but zesty summer fare. Try the versatile recipe with a combination of herbs instead of just dill. Trade in Parmesan for the feta cheese. Or swap the chicken for beef, or grilled eggplant for a vegetarian twist.

LAURA CHASE DE FORMIGNY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

AGING IN ATLANTA

Orzo

continued from S1

boil, coarsely shred the zucchini and gather the dill and feta. As soon as the orzo is al dente, you drain it in a colander and immediately add the shredded vegetable to the hot-from-the-pot pasta so that it “cooks” – or more accurately wilts.

Scoop that combination into a serving bowl, toss with your choice of cheese and herbs, and you’ve got a delicious main course or a perfect side in about 20 minutes.

To create a complementary side to one of

my favorite spice rubs for grilled chicken – oregano, chile powder and smoked paprika spice – I added the crumbled feta and fresh dill, but you can be creative. Consider grated Parmesan with basil and chives, as the original recipe called for, or any herby combination.

On weeknights if I’m craving grilled foods, I sometimes rely on quick-cooking chicken cutlets and my stovetop grill pan for a faster result, but keep this side dish in mind as you fire up the grill. It would make a great addition to a potluck, too, if you’re starting to venture out a bit more.

GRILLED CHICKEN WITH ZUCCHINI PASTA SALAD

35 minutes | 4 servings

The first thing to do here is shred the zucchini, because the tender raw vegetable will be folded into hot-from-the-pot orzo and allowed to wilt. We added a bit of crumbled feta and fresh dill, but consider grated Parmesan and fresh parsley, basil or chives, or an herby combination. This pasta dish is great on its own. It also complements grilled food, such as beef, chicken or eggplant. We rubbed chicken cutlets with a smoky spice paste and cooked them in a stovetop grill pan for a quick, light and summery supper.

If you can’t find chicken cutlets, buy two chicken breasts and use a sharp knife to cut each breast half through the equator to butterfly them. Slice through so the meat eventually opens like a book. Separate the two halves. Trim and discard any visible fat.

Make ahead: The pasta salad is best freshly made, but it can be made up to 1 day ahead.
Storage notes: Leftovers can be refrigerated, separately, in airtight containers for up to 3 days.
Notes: If time allows, remove the chicken from the refrigerator about 20 minutes before cooking to take the chill off the meat, which will ensure more even cooking. To cut waste, don’t toss the dill stems. Mince them and toss them into the pasta with the fronds.

INGREDIENTS FOR THE ORZO

8 ounces whole wheat or regular orzo

1 large zucchini (about 12 ounces), coarsely shredded, about 3 cups

1 large lemon, zested and juiced

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt, plus more as needed

½ teaspoon finely ground black pepper, plus more as needed

¾ cup crumbled feta (about 4 ounces)

¼ cup fresh dill fronds, lightly chopped, plus more for serving

FOR THE CHICKEN

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar

1 ½ teaspoons paprika, preferably smoked

1 teaspoon light or dark brown sugar

½ teaspoon ground chipotle chile powder

½ teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Greek

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt

½ teaspoon garlic powder

Pinch finely ground black pepper (optional)

4 chicken cutlets (about 1 pound total), see headnote

Make the orzo: In a large pot over high heat, bring a quart of water to a boil, add the orzo and cook according to the package directions until al dente, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain into a colander, then add the zucchini and toss together. Let sit for 1 minute.

Transfer the zucchini and orzo mixture to a large bowl, and toss with the lemon zest and juice, oil, salt and pepper and let cool, about 10 minutes. Add the feta and dill and toss to combine. Taste, and season with more salt and/or pepper as needed. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

While the pasta is cooling, grill the chicken: If using a well-seasoned grill pan, place it over medium-high heat until a few drops of water sizzle and quickly evaporate, about 3 minutes. If using a grill, oil the grates well. If using a gas grill, preheat it to medium-high, about 450 degrees. If using a charcoal grill, light the charcoal in a chimney; when the briquettes are mostly white and ashy, and distribute them under the cooking area for direct heat. For a medium-hot fire, you should be able to hold your hand about 6 inches above the coals for about 4 or 5 seconds. This recipe may take about 15 to 20 minutes longer if using a charcoal grill.

In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, paprika, brown sugar, chipotle, oregano, salt, garlic powder and pepper until combined.

Pat the chicken dry and then rub the spice mixture all over. Add the chicken to the grill. If using a stovetop grill pan, reduce the heat to medium 1 minute after adding the cutlets. Grill, undisturbed, for about 5 minutes. Then flip, and grill until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part registers 160 degrees, about 5 minutes.

Serve the chicken atop or beside the orzo, with fresh dill fronds sprinkled on top, if desired.

Nutrition | Calories: 501; Total Fat: 18 g; Saturated Fat: 6 g; Cholesterol: 98 mg; Sodium: 746 mg; Carbohydrates: 49 g; Dietary Fiber: 7 g; Sugar: 4 g; Protein: 37 g.

Pasta salad adapted from Good Housekeeping. Spice rub adapted from Eating Well magazine.



Finely chopped dill can be mixed into the salad for added flavor. MODERN SPROUT

ASK THE EXPERT SHANNON PAWLEY

Estate planning tips to get you started

Remember, you're never too young to have a will

Lawyer Shannon Pawley, the managing partner at The Estate & Asset Protection Law Firm, sat down virtually with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Editor Kevin Riley, at the Aging in Atlanta event, where they discussed getting started with estate planning. Here are some of the highlights of their conversation.

On financial power of attorney...

The most basic estate planning document that everyone should start with is a financial power of attorney. Having a financial power of attorney is extremely important because it allows you to appoint a person who can legally handle your financial and contractual affairs if you become incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform these tasks on your own. It gives your agent the ability not only to do basic stuff like access your bank accounts, but also to enter into – and get out of – contracts on your behalf.

On health care power of attorney...

A health care power of attorney with medical



All of us hope that if we're ever unable to make our own health care decisions that they'll be made by someone who understands and respects our wishes.

directive is really important. All of us hope that if we're ever unable to make our own health care decisions that they'll be made by someone who understands and respects our wishes. But just because you're close to your children doesn't mean that they have legal entitlement to be actively involved in your health

ABOUT OUR EXPERT

Shannon Pawley is the Managing Partner at The Estate & Asset Protection Law Firm.

During her legal career, Shannon has represented the full spectrum of clients from international blue chip companies to single parents. After 10+ years serving as a Vice President for National Law Firm, Shannon welcomed the opportunity to return to her estate planning roots. At her current firm, Shannon is able to focus on her passion to help her clients age with dignity, grace, and independence throughout their lives while assisting the client to create their post-life legacy through asset preservation.

The Estate & Asset Protection Law Firm was established to serve the legal needs of senior citizens when their health care needs increase. The Firm focuses its entire practice on Asset Protection and Estate Planning matters, which encompasses the areas of Medicaid Planning, VA Benefits Planning, Special Needs Planning, and Estate Planning. Shannon Pawley has grown her law practice through her personable nature and good management skills.

care decisions or your health care treatment plans. In some case, even your spouse might not have immediate decision-making powers.

A medical directive allows you to declare not only the person you trust to be your healthcare advocate, but also your exact wishes when it comes to end-of-life medical treatment plans like artificial life support.

On the importance of having a will...

You're never too young

to have a will! If you're 18 or older, you should think about what you'd want done in the event of your death. Even if you don't have that many assets, your estate could still end up in probate court – such as in the event your estate pursues legal action due to an accident or wrongful death, for example.

Further, everyone should have a say as to where their stuff goes, so that they can ensure that they're providing for their loved ones however they're able.

FOOD AND DRINK

In praise of mint, a refreshing herb that peeps up many a drink

Now is an ideal time to get your mint on – a glass, that is.

Florence Fabricant

c. 2021 The New York Times

Mint has a great deal to say. This persistent perennial contributes refreshing coolness to food and drink, often with a bitter-sweet edge and sometimes spiked with notes of pepper.

It's not subtle like some herbs, and makes its presence known in everything from cocktails to candy, regardless of whether the context is savory or sweet. Frankly, it's hard to overdo its use. Mint is also easy to grow in a window box or garden, allowing for leaves to always be on hand, especially come spring.

There are various kinds

of mint, but the default option is spearmint, which is less aggressive on the palate than peppermint. If you purchase cut mint at a produce counter or farmers market, just be sure it has a good aroma. As for dried mint on the spice rack, it's often used in Persian cooking, but it's a ghost of the fresh kind.

Mint is a wonderful flavor to enrich warm-weather coolers. Among the best drinks on the cocktail menu at Cheeca Lodge, a resort in the Florida Keys, is a nojito, an alcohol-free mojito that's so tart-sweet and fragrant you might not miss the rum. Mint also stars in Moroccan-style tea, usually served sugared and hot but also delicious iced, and can add a cool dimension to smoothies.

Refreshment is on the way.



A nojito, an alcohol-free mojito, at the Cheeca Lodge resort in the Florida Keys, features a sprig of mint, which contributes refreshing coolness to food and drink, often with a bittersweet edge and notes of pepper. NYT

CUCUMBER-MINT AVOCADO SMOOTHIE

Time: 10 minutes
Yield: 1 to 2 servings

½ cup spearmint leaves, packed
1 cup chopped, peeled and seeded cucumber (about one regular cucumber)
8 ounces pineapple juice
1 ripe but firm Hass avocado, pitted, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon ground white pepper
Pinch of salt

Place mint, cucumber and pineapple juice in a blender and blend until smooth. Add avocado and blend again. Add lemon juice, pepper and salt. Blend briefly. To use a food processor instead of a blender, first turn on the machine and force the mint down the feed tube. Scrape the sides of the bowl, add the remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Pour into 1 or more glasses and serve.

ICED MOROCCAN-STYLE MINT TEA

Time: 20 minutes plus 1 hour chilling Yield: 4 servings

1 tablespoon Chinese full-leaf green tea, preferably gunpowder
½ cup spearmint leaves, packed, plus sprigs for garnish
¼ cup honey, or more to taste

Brew tea with 3 cups water in a teapot with a strainer, allowing it to steep 10 minutes.

Place mint in a small bowl. Add 1 cup boiling water, and muddle the mint. Set aside to steep 5 minutes. Stir in honey. Strain into a 6-cup pitcher.

Slowly pour brewed tea into the pitcher, holding the teapot at least a foot above the pitcher — this is the essential Moroccan technique to aerate the tea. Taste tea for sweetness and adjust the amount of honey if needed. Refrigerate at least 1 hour.

Pour tea into ice-filled glasses, garnish with mint and serve.

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GRACIA LAM/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brody

continued from S1

is rising steadily and projected to grow faster than the cohort of youngsters under 18 for at least the next 40 years. In fact, as more of us in the late decades of life continue to thrive, morbidity and mortality were rising among middle-aged men and women even before the pandemic. The average newborn today is not expected to make it to 80, thanks largely to poor diet and exercise and rising obesity.

Assuming most people would opt for a long and fulfilling life, nature permitting, what does this take? What accounts for the growing number of octogenarians and beyond who are accomplished and still accomplishing?

Many clues have emerged during my decades of reporting on health. I've already alluded to the importance of regular physical activity, which supports a healthy brain and body. Assuming you don't smoke, which was my husband's undoing, nature will usually take pretty good care of you for about half a century. Thereafter, it's up to you.

Without regular exercise, you can expect to experience a loss of muscle strength and endurance, coordination and balance, flexibility and mobility, bone strength and cardiovascular and respiratory function. In other words, a sedentary lifestyle is a recipe for chronic disease and decline.

Abandon all excuses, as Todd Balf did after he became partially paralyzed following spinal surgery for cancer. Though he had long shunned being immersed in water, with a physical therapist as coach, he finally took the plunge and discovered that swimming back and

Exercise and nutrition are not enough. Studies suggest that motivation, attitude and perspective are equally important to a long, healthy and fulfilling life.

forth in a pool buoyed both his body and soul.

Of course, like any machine, to maintain peak levels of activity the human body requires quality fuel. Growing up, most of us who are now 80 and beyond were largely spared the plethora of ultra-processed foods that now line the shelves of every grocery. My father, the family food shopper, was a big fan of oatmeal and shredded wheat, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Eating out was an occasional treat (and for me, still is). Most meals were prepared and eaten family style at home. Fast foods? Maybe a hot dog when we biked miles to Coney Island or celebrated my birthday at a Brooklyn Dodgers game. I was in my early 20s when McDonald's ballyhooed that it had just sold 600,000 burgers! (The company stopped counting in 1994, after it hit 99 billion burgers served.)

But exercise and nutrition are not enough. Studies suggest that motivation, attitude and perspective are equally important to a long, healthy and fulfilling life. I was still in high school when my mother died of cancer at age 49, and her premature loss became a lesson for me to live each day as if it's my last with a keen eye on the future in case it's not.

I entered college with plans to become a biochemist and discover lifesaving clues to cancer. But I found working in a laboratory boring and isolating, and in my junior year realized my true love was learning what others discovered and communicating that information to the

public. So I married biochemistry with journalism, pursued a fulfilling career in science writing focused on personal and public health and, like a horse with blinders, never looked back.

My advice to students: Try to combine your passion with your talent and you'll have the best shot at a rich and rewarding career. I also recommend choosing a supportive life partner who's willing to share the mundane tasks of daily life and step up for extra duty when needed.

Having been raised to save, all my life I've shopped sales and bargains and parlayed the monetary rewards into scholarships for deserving students and fabulous nature, hiking and cycling trips for me, family and friends.

Have I any regrets? I regret taking French instead of Spanish in high school and I keep trying to learn the latter, a far more practical language, on my own. I regret that I never learned to speed-read; whether for work or leisure, I read slowly, as if everything in print is a complex scientific text. Although I'd visited all seven continents before I turned 50, I never got to see the orangutans in their native Borneo or the gorillas in Rwanda. But I'm content now to see them up close on public television.

If and when I finally retire, I'd like to work as a volunteer with young children. They lighten my step, warm my heart and enrich my soul. Their joie de vivre and innate curiosity foster hope that the world of the future will be a better one.

Travel

continued from S1

it used to be," she said. She's not alone, either.

David Anderson, 63, of Lawrenceville said that now that he and his wife, Amy, 59, are fully vaccinated they don't hesitate to travel.

"The crazy thing is we traveled back in March. Actually went to Hawaii. My only daughter got married. She planned it for over a year," he said. "It was a different kind of travel. We probably wouldn't have made that trip if it wasn't for our daughter getting married."

It was the only flight he made in the past year and a half, and the retired Delta Air Lines aircraft maintenance technician said he and Amy are ready to keep traveling.

"We're both eager to go. The travel restrictions really are not holding us up," he said. "We probably will travel sometime this summer."

But not everyone is waiting for summer's official start to get away.

Reg Griffin, 58, said he and his wife, Lori Griffin 51, recently returned from a road trip celebrating her birthday and their anniversary in Jekyll Island.

"First time back there since the mid-'90s and we were both very impressed," said Reg, who is the Chief Communications Officer of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

"It had a 30A feel to it, staying at the Westin Jekyll Island," he added, likening the Buckhead couple's accommodations to the Florida highway. "Discovered Driftwood Beach. Amazing."

It was the first and only trip the couple has taken since being fully vaccinated. They rented a cabin outside Blue Ridge for a short family vacation in January. Usually,

the Griffins take a vacation every other year, typically spending that time visiting family in Missouri or Arkansas. They also usually visit Florida's Mexico Beach.

"We were determined to not let the pandemic stop us from doing something so we went to Mexico Beach in August 2020 and stayed in a condo," he said. "This is a pretty isolated area that was ground zero for Hurricane Michael in 2018, so they are still rebuilding... but it is beautiful and somewhat isolated. At that point, most restaurants were doing mainly take out, but there were a few with open dining rooms and limited use of masks."

Griffin said they were very comfortable traveling and stopped at a few rest stops along the way and also had some meals. Additionally, they discovered that masks "get less popular the farther out from metro areas you go," Griffin said. During their trip to Jekyll Island, people used masks indoors and engaged in social distancing at their hotel.

"We noticed that most hotel restaurants were serving on-site guests only, but that worked fine for us since the Westin Jekyll Island has a great restaurant," Griffin said. He stated the beach allows for social distancing to happen more easily, making it "great for a pandemic."

While some Georgians have kept their travel local or based in the U.S., some are eager to return to global vacations.

Lisa Chambers, 60, said she and her husband, Benson Chambers, 63, are going on what she says is a long-awaited Holy Land cruise on Norwegian Cruise Lines. The Canton residents will visit Greece, Cypress, Turkey and Israel at the end of the summer.

"Since we were married in 2010 there has been

the Great Recession and a pandemic," the retired technical writer said.

Still, not everyone has been able to book global trips.

Martha Gaughen, an owner and vice president of sales at the travel firm Brownell, said one of her clients called in hopes of booking a trip around the world this year. However, Gaughen said she was "devastated" when he was advised to put it off until 2022.

"We actually had a lot of clients who did nothing at all without the vaccine," she said. "Once the vaccines became available, the older they got, the more they were willing to call (and book a trip)."

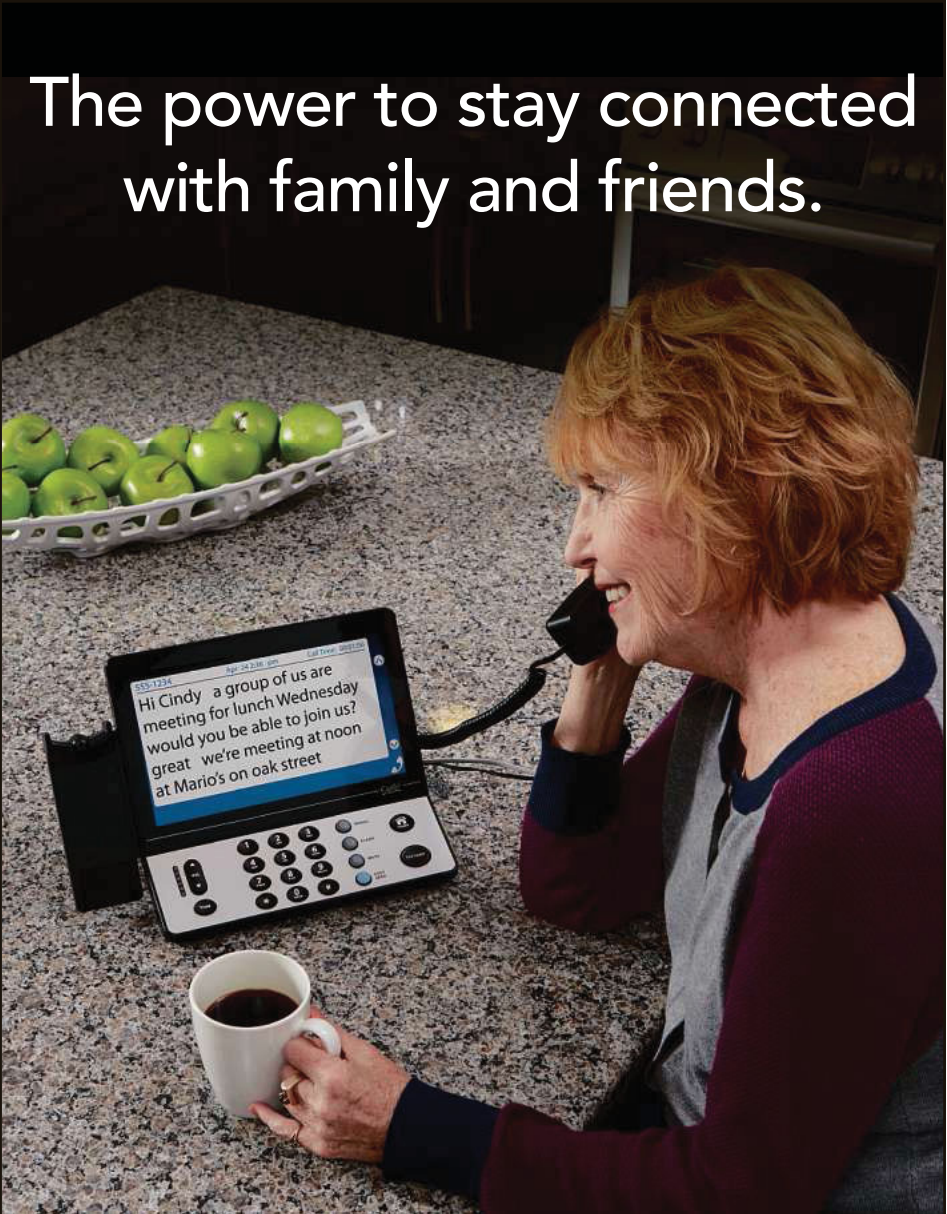
Gaughen said one-fourth to half of her client list has called to book trips for 2021. According to her, July is the worst month to book. Guest ranches and places in the Western U.S. are completely booked, and Gaughen said villas, small and self-contained spaces, resorts and national parks where guests can go glamping are in demand.

"I have never in my life had so many people call and ask for a beach house, on a beach in Florida," she said, adding that they're unavailable for the summer.

Airbnb reported in Georgia alone, there was an 80% increase in summer trip searches on their website by U.S. guests ages 60 and older in March, compared to February.

Above all else, older adults wanting to travel this summer should pack their patience.

"Travel is making a swift comeback, and a lot of people haven't hit the road in well over a year. So be patient with the person at security who, perhaps, forgot to empty their water bottle," said Melanie Lieberman, senior travel editor at travel website The Points Guy.



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AGING IN ATLANTA

POST-PANDEMIC LIFE

For the best result, ease into socializing

Packed schedule could distract from what matters.

Ashley Abramson
c. 2021 The New York Times

When Mayor Bill de Blasio announced New York’s summer reopening, Daniel Roque-Coplin and his girlfriend saw a chance to rekindle their relationship after a year spent on the couch watching Netflix. But soon, the promise of a summer visiting bars, restaurants and museums they had frequented pre-pandemic felt more overwhelming than exciting.

While planning their summer, they began to understand that a packed schedule would distract from what they really wanted: to grow closer as a couple.

“We talked one night and realized how much fun we were having spending time together without an agenda,” Roque-Coplin said. Ultimately, they decided to keep the summer low-key.

As restrictions roll back, you may also be tempted to plan all the getaways, gatherings and activities you missed during the pandemic. But before filling up your calendar, take a moment to slow down and carve out some open, unstructured time to rejuvenate and prepare yourself for post-pandemic life.

Slowing your roll is good for your brain

Downtime is an important part of learning. One 2012 study found that periods of mental rest, in which participants weren’t focused on a task, allowed the mind to wander, often to reflect on past experiences and to envision the future. Such breaks, the authors suggested, give the mind a chance to process what it has learned, work through unresolved tension and reorient toward internal reflection.

Just like children in school, adults need a lit-

tle recess, especially after more than a year of hard mental work. Amishi Jha, director of contemplative neuroscience at the University of Miami and author of the forthcoming book “Peak Mind,” said managing constantly changing pandemic safety measures alongside the demands of everyday life can take a major toll on people’s cognitive resources.

Jha said cognitive functions like working memory and attention can decline under higher demands, similar to how a computer slows down when too many internet tabs are open. And resuming your busy, normal life when the pandemic is still ongoing compounds the burden.

“The pandemic’s uncertainty kept the mind on a short leash,” Jha said. “Giving yourself unstructured time is like letting the leash loose and letting yourself roam and explore.”

The result of that free-range time? You’ll not only stave off mental and physical exhaustion; you’ll also be able to think more critically and creatively when you do reenter, and make decisions that better align with your values, according to Emiliana Simon-Thomas, science director at Greater Good Science Center, based at the University of California, Berkeley.

“If you don’t have that fallow ground in your life, you’re less able to discover creative solutions or innovative solutions to challenges you face,” Simon-Thomas said. “Being constantly scheduled, you’re just not able to dwell on the realm of possibility.”

Resist the urge to overcorrect

After more than a year on the sidelines, you might feel some pressure to make up for lost time. Maybe you feel behind in your career, or you missed chances to meet a significant other or for your chil-

dren to advance in sports.

According to Natalie Dattilo, a psychologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and instructor at Harvard Medical School, that natural urge to overcorrect can promote impulsive decisions like booking a vacation you’re not mentally ready for or signing your kids up for activities that will drain them.

“Resist the urge to overdo it simply for the sake of doing something, especially if that something is going to exhaust you and keep you from your goals long-term,” she said.

Pausing to rejuvenate isn’t lazy; in fact, it’s actually the opposite.

“When you slow your roll, you’re not avoiding or procrastinating,” said Deborah Serani, a clinical psychologist and professor at Adelphi University. “You’re doing really important off-task work so you can come back and resume life in a better way.”

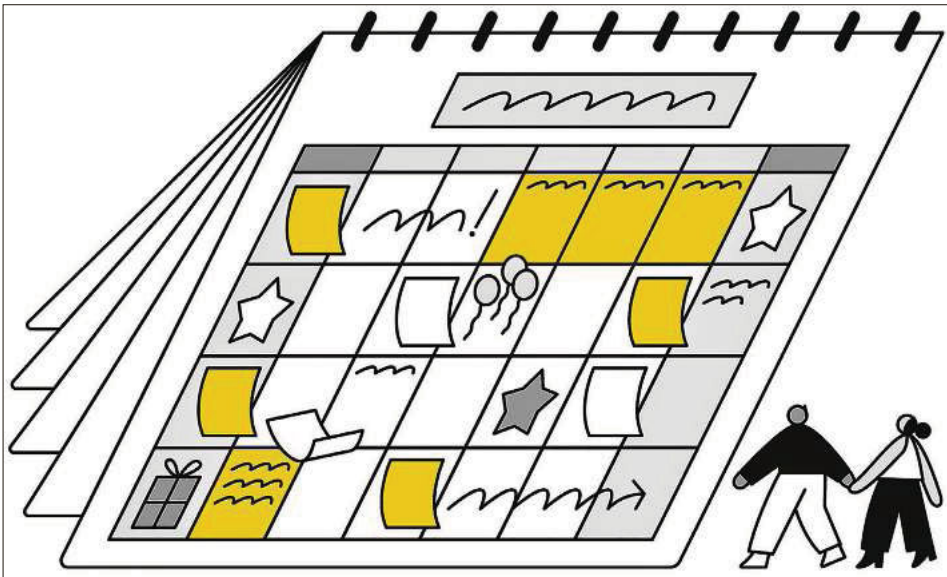
Choose the right type of break

Not all breaks are created equal. According to Ali Mattu, a California-based clinical psychologist and psychology communicator, the effectiveness of a break depends on the type of work you’ve been doing; restorative breaks usually complement a person’s unique stressors.

If you’ve been taking care of your family, for example, you might benefit from a child-free outdoor dinner with your partner or a solo hike. If you work with your hands, then enjoy some time reading a novel or doing a crossword.

“Taking effective time to refresh takes a little bit of reflection and experimentation,” Mattu said. “Think about the kind of work you’ve been overwhelmed by and what type of break would complement it.”

Keep in mind, too, that downtime doesn’t



As restrictions roll back, before filling up your calendar, take a moment to slow down and carve out some open, unstructured time to rejuvenate and prepare yourself for post-pandemic life. ROSE WONG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

always mean doing nothing; research suggests that even though they require focus, routine activities can enhance your brain’s ability to integrate information and solve problems. In a 2006 study, researchers asked college students to rank their preferences on a group of hypothetical cars, based on specific attributes. Surprisingly, the group distracted by anagrams did better on the test than ones who focused fully for four minutes.

The key is to do activities you already know how to do – gardening, cooking, biking, whatever you like – rather than trying to learn something new. And most important, instead of making specific plans, create time you can fill as you go.

Go off-screen

As relaxing as scrolling through social media might feel, it’s actually a great way to zap your mental resources. A 2017 study suggested that even having your phone in the same room can use up valuable mental resources because you have to resist the temptation to pick it up and look at it. (Not surprisingly, the researchers found that the problem was worse in people with higher smartphone dependence.)

If your goal is to rejuvenate, Simon-Thomas suggested putting your device somewhere you can’t see it or hear it for a designated period of time each day.

Spend time outside

A day at the beach or a walk through the forest can reduce stress, but such activities can also replenish your brain and aid in learning. In the book “The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective,” environmental psychologists Rachel and Stephen Kaplan describe how being outside can restore cognitive resources depleted by everyday activities.

Going outside is a change of scenery and can unplug you from normal demands and routines. Serani said using your senses to notice the smell of a flower or the sound of a babbling stream also roots you in the moment, which can increase cognitive resources like working memory and attention.

According to Simon-Thomas, being outdoors can also promote awe – and that humbling feeling of being connected to something bigger than yourself can increase your satisfaction with your own life.

To that end, spend time in outdoor environments that inspire amazement. If you don’t have a mountain range or ocean nearby, then go outside at sunrise or sunset.

While focused attention zaps mental resources, Kaplan’s research suggests that “automatic attention” – or attention that occurs without effort, paid to something fascinating – allows your brain to rest.

Ease back in

At some point, you’ll start filling up your calendar. When you’re ready, dip your toes in before going full throttle.

“If you recently healed from an injury, you wouldn’t sign up for a half-marathon,” Jha said. “You’d take a walk around your block and see how you feel, then work your way up.”

Talk about your kids’ soccer league and what it’ll be like before signing up, then drive by the fields a few times before the first practice. Plan a weekend trip nearby before booking a full week away in another part of the country.

And check in with your stress levels and emotions each step you take. Mattu suggested weekly check-ins where you ask yourself what went well, what didn’t go well and how you can try things differently the next week.

Slow, deliberate reentry will also allow you to apply the lessons you learned during the pandemic. Maybe you realized you actually don’t love hosting family gatherings for every holiday or that family time is more valuable to you than cramming more work into your life. Use that information to choose things that will make you happy and cut out parts that don’t.

“In barreling forward on autopilot, it’s hard to see what really matters to you and what you do and don’t want in your life,” Simon-Thomas said.

FAMILY

Multigenerational living rises during the pandemic

To care for aging parents or to get help with child care.

By Michele Lerner
Washington Post

Like many families who experienced the severe disruption of the coronavirus pandemic, Janice and Don Markell made a major life change by asking Janice’s mother to live with them, accelerating their plan for an eventual move to Florida.

“We were living in Montvale, New Jersey, and my mother was in assisted living nearby, but she wasn’t able to leave, and we couldn’t visit her,” says Janice, 61. “Our son has lived in Lakewood Ranch near Sarasota for a few years, and we planned to move there eventually ourselves.”

The solution for the family is a newly built home in the Lake Club section of Lakewood Ranch designed specifically for multigenerational living.

“It was very important for my mom to have her own space and privacy yet be with the family, too,” Janice says. Edna, 91, has a wing with a living room, bedroom and bathroom as well as direct access to a lanai and to the kitchen. Janice’s husband, Don, 74, is a real estate broker in



From left, Bobby, Ashley, Felicia, Abby, Karen and Dave Wilson at a lake in Mallory Park at Lakewood Ranch, Fla. The Wilsons are having two homes built on adjacent lots. PHOTOS BY SAUL MARTINEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New Jersey who plans to get his license in Florida. Spencer, their 26-year-old son, has his own wing in the house with a sitting room, bedroom and private bathroom.

“We didn’t expect to do this so quickly, but we felt that the pandemic restrictions would last a long time, and we wanted to be together as a family,” Janice says. The family spent \$1.7 million on their new home after selling their home and the home of Janice’s mother in New Jersey, which had been empty while she was in

assisted living.

Lakewood Ranch appealed to them because it’s a multigenerational community specifically designed for a healthy lifestyle and activities for every age group.

“We didn’t want to be in an active-adult community,” Janice says. “My mom said she was happy to move to Florida except she didn’t want to be around ‘old people’ even though she’s 91. We love being in a mixed-age community with lots of young families around.”

The upheaval created

by the coronavirus pandemic led to an increase in the number of homes purchased for multigenerational households, which rose to 15% between April and June 2020, according to the National Association of Realtors. That represents the highest percentage of multigenerational homes since NAR began tracking the trend in 2012 after the Great Recession and was up from 11% between July 2019 and March 2020.

Multigenerational households include adults bringing their parents to



An aerial view from a drone of the Lakehouse Cove community in Lakewood Ranch. The homes in Lakewood Ranch range from villas and condos priced from the upper \$200,000s to single-family homes priced from the \$300,000s to more than \$3 million.

live with them for caregiving purposes or to help with child care. In addition, multigenerational households can include adult children living with their parents for cost savings or because they prefer to share a home. During the pandemic, NAR researchers found the top reason to purchase a multigenerational home was for aging parents to move into the home. Before the pandemic, multigenerational home purchasers were evenly split between those with adult children moving back home and aging parents. Lakewood Ranch, one of the largest planned communities in the country with 50 square miles of property, has

been the best-selling multigenerational community in the country for nine years, according to RCLCO, a real estate consulting firm. The community has more than 41,000 residents; a hospital; schools; a main street with theaters, shops and restaurants; a farmers market; sports complex; the Sarasota Polo Club; three town centers; five neighborhood shopping centers; and more than 120 miles of trails.

The planned community has 32 villages, with 40% of the land in the older villages designated as open space. Newer villages have 60% of their land designated for open space including parks and trails.

AGING IN ATLANTA



Sleep in architect-designed accommodations like a real 1968 Sikorsky Sea King Pelican HH3F Coast Guard helicopter at the luxury resort, Winvian, in Morris, Connecticut. ANASTASIA "SASHA" MILLS HEALY/TNS

TRAVEL TRENDING WITH KATHY WITT

Find the weird, fun in your hometown

These guidebooks make staycations adventurous.

By Kathy Witt
Tribune News Service

Shrunken heads. A nudist resort. George McFly's footprints. If June is enticing you outdoors for warm-weather adventures just this side of the strange and unusual, look no further than your own backyard. St. Louis-based publisher Reedy Press makes it fun to have a staycation at home, treasure hunting for all variety of weird, wonderful and obscure sights and sensations - some hidden in plain view - with its series of Secret guidebooks. (Full disclosure: This writer is the author of "Secret Cincinnati.") Here are some of the latest titles in the series, with authors sharing their insights about the truly bizarre in their backyards.

Secret Connecticut
Author Anastasia "Sasha" Mills Healy shows the lengths "Secret" authors go to in their quest for the story through an excursion to the Thimble Islands. "I felt like I was in a spy movie, standing alone at the end of a dock, off season, with no one around, looking out into the horizon, waiting for a contact I had never met to whisk me away to a secluded island," she said. "I should have been wearing a fedora and trench coat and talking into my sleeve!"

The contact, a Thimble Islands homeowner, graciously spent the afternoon with Healy, touring her through his two homes, sharing information and answering questions. "He dropped me back on the dock several hours later," she said. "No debriefing required."

The weird: The family-friendly, 360-acre Solair Recreation League is a nudist resort in Woodstock, Connecticut, with a private lake with beach, plus pool, tennis courts and hiking trails and accommodations including cabins, RV and tent sites.

The wonderful: Sleep in architect-designed accommodations like a real 1968 Sikorsky Sea King Pelican HH3F Coast Guard helicopter at the luxury resort, Winvian, in Morris, Connecticut. "As if that weren't unusual enough, the back of the helicopter includes a TV, couch and fridge, so you can grab a cold one, put up your feet and watch the news in your own private helicopter next to your bed and Jacuzzi tub," said Healy.

The obscure: At little-known Enders Island, the grounds of a spiritual retreat are open to the public, and programs

- from the sacred history of the bagpipes to silent retreats - and private rooms or dormitory-like accommodations are available for overnight guests.

Secret Omaha
Ryan Roenfeld's book is one of the newest titles in the "Secret" series, released last month.

The weird: The W. Dale Clark Library in downtown Omaha holds more than 500,000 volumes and one scalp - that of William Thompson, who lost it in an 1867 fight with the Cheyenne. "You can't check it out," said Roenfeld. "But can make a reservation to have a look."

The wonderful: The intersection at North 24th and Lake Streets in Omaha is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An intersection? "It was the subject of a song by Mississippi bluesman, Big Joe Williams."

The obscure: In 1866, Civil War soldier and Irish revolutionary General John O'Neill invaded Canada with more than 1,000 Fenians (Irish Republican Brotherhood) to encourage the cause of Irish independence. His grave and memorial dedicated in 1911 by Eamon de Valera, president of the Irish Republic, is in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Secret Reno
Author Janice Oberding and her husband, Bill, got lost in Lone Mountain Cemetery looking for the grave of Mark Twain's niece, Jennie Clemens. When a herd of deer suddenly appeared, Oberding felt certain they were there to help. "We like to think they took pity on us and tried to show us the way," she said.

The weird: Who doesn't like a shrunken head? Find one in the collection of curiosities (taxidermy animals, fertility statues) at the Wilbur D. May Museum at Reno's Rancho San Rafael Regional Park.

The wonderful: It was writer and humorist Mark Twain who, in 1863, named Steamboat Hot Springs for its resemblance to a steamboat. "When not causing trouble in Virginia City, he loved to slip away and soothe his jangled nerves here," said Oberding.

The obscure: The artist who sculpted the four presidential faces at Mount Rushmore is connected to Omaha. "Sculptor Gutzon Borglum created a statue of John Mackay in 1908," said Oberding. "Mackay was one of the four so-called Bonanza kings who derived their wealth from silver mining in nearby Virginia City."

Find it at the quad on the University Nevada Reno Campus.

TRAVEL PLANNING

You will need to pack patience, flexibility in uncertain times

COVID-19-induced obstacles are now part of itinerary.

Julie Besonen
c. 2021 The New York Times

Tammy Barbie's first family trip since the onset of the pandemic began with a strategic error. Rushing to get to the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport for a flight to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, the former flight attendant didn't have time to pack food for herself, her mother, her husband and their three daughters. Certainly they could purchase something, she assumed, to ward away anyone's hunger pains. But the family found next to nothing open at the airport, and on board, only meager bags of bottled water, almonds and cookies were doled out for the roughly four-hour journey. The hungry 7-year-old, Barbie's youngest daughter, had a meltdown.

"I understand that the less you have to eat and drink, the less you're going to take off your mask," said Barbie, 48, from St. Paul. "There's the long flight, then you've got to clear customs and travel to the hotel, and my little one was really starving, having a hard time. I should have known better."

Lesson learned. Barbie made sure everyone was fed before the family got on their return flight to Minnesota.

Travel is picking up, no doubt. But we are navigating a new world where planning for the unpredictable, more than ever, is part of the itinerary. Quandaries are prompting travelers to make adjustments, from being overpacked with snacks to paying bribes, and to dive deep into the dual reservoirs of patience and flexibility. Travel agents, hotels and other industry operators, building on what worked last year and recalling what failed, have also become wiser to coronavirus-induced obstacles and opportunities, prioritizing outdoor activities, coping with reduced capacity and promoting alternative, less congested retreats.

Even for seasoned travelers, this year will be a test run.
Nico de Soto, 42, a French bartender and bar owner, is no sightseeing novice, having visited 98 countries. In Tanzania, in February, he found himself next to people yelling in protest at a coronavirus testing site near the Zanzibar airport. Certain travelers, de Soto included, were not going to be allowed out of Tanzania for a few days, it seemed: They had been told they tested positive. De Soto stayed calm even though he was convinced his result was fake and what was happening was a shakedown: Four months earlier he had recovered from COVID-19 and one month before his trip, blood work showed he was rich with antibodies. But he realized no amount of arguing would work.



Nico de Soto, a chef and business owner, had to pay a bribe so he could be allowed to travel out of Zanzibar during a recent vacation. GEORGE ETHEREDGE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

"When you travel to different countries, you have to play by all the rules and regulations," said de Soto, who is based in Dubai. He tacked on three more nights to his 10-day vacation since the United Arab Emirates would not allow him back into the country without a negative test result. On his 14th day, when he again tried to leave Tanzania, he was told he still tested positive. That is, unless he handed over \$80. De Soto's driver spoke up, saying he had overheard the same man charge a Russian \$50. A deal for \$50 was struck and de Soto got his negative result. Aside from carrying spare cash, de Soto had another takeaway from traveling during a pandemic: "You need to be very flexible."

Bumpy, but not impassable, roads ahead
The paroxysms of lockdowns and other tightened restrictions around the world presented obstacles to All Roads North, a Venice, California-based travel business specializing in custom-designed road trips. The company has detoured from a fairly even split between planning international and domestic routes for their clients to almost 100% domestic.

"We've had to change the way we operate in a number of different ways," said Sam Highley, the company's founder. "People want to avoid major cities and hotels with long corridors, make fewer stops, see the layout for dining at hotels that might impact their ability to social distance, stay in stand-alone cabins, cottages, ranches or private homes out in nature." Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons are booked for the summer, Highley said, so he is steering people toward less obvious places in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. The local guides he partners with have also learned to adjust. Naturalists will meet clients at the trailhead rather than riding together in a vehicle. A fishing guide who used to accompany guests into a shop to get flies and a license now arranges it all in advance to minimize touch points. Boundless Journeys, a nature-driven travel operator based in Stowe, Vermont, shrank group sizes from 16 to 12 and added extra vans, with windows rolled down, to space out passengers. The company has seen more people gravitating toward out-of-the-way destinations like Washington state's San Juan Islands, reached by ferry from Seattle and offering an agenda of hiking, sea kayaking and whale watching. "What we learned is we want to make sure all of the pieces or enough of the pieces are functioning in place to allow for a great experience," Matt Holmes, the company's founder, said. Still, after rescheduling hundreds of

clients' trips last year for this year, he is already seeing people postpone international July trips until the fall, expressing concern about surges in cases around the world and conflicting rules and regulations.

Counseling patience
Jemica Archer, who owns the travel agency TruBlue Travels, in Jacksonville, Florida, lost almost all of her revenue in 2020 because of canceled destination weddings and honeymoons. On a personal level, she gave up vacations to Spain and Ghana. Archer is fully vaccinated and leaving soon for the Sun Palace in Cancun, an all-inclusive resort that recently underwent a \$40 million overhaul. "It's only operating at 60% capacity, so I'm going now while it's quiet. I like it quiet," she said. Most of Archer's clients are expressing interest in sandy destinations rather than urban. Lately, she has been sending them to Beach House, an all-inclusive, 21-suite resort in Turks and Caicos. Rooms have assigned areas on the beach to curb crowding. Patience is a quality she has learned to underscore, erring on the side of over-communicating to prepare people for last-minute changes, including curfews, after clients came back from Jamaica disappointed that they couldn't visit reggae and dance clubs. "I have to manage their expectations," Archer said. "Americans like to rush, but we have to learn to relax." And perhaps slow down as people try to get back up to pre-pandemic speed. Last year, from mid-March to mid-July, Melissa Goodwin, the founder of Girl Gotta Hike, suspended her woman-oriented day hikes and multiday backpacking trips through New York's Hudson Valley, Catskills and Adirondacks. When the business restarted, she and other participants wrongly assumed they could pick up where they left off. Instead, participants got winded much sooner going uphill, and sometimes Goodwin had to shoulder their gear. Fostering a sense of encouragement and camaraderie helped. "After spending so long inside," Goodwin said, "we should aim to have patience with ourselves and each other."



Jemica Archer is a travel agent in Jacksonville, Fla. Archer, who owns the travel agency TruBlue Travels, lost almost all of her revenue in 2020 because of the pandemic. This year, she says she has to manage her clients' expectations. AGNES LOPEZ/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JOHN & JANIN CARE

If “adventure” were a gene, John Petrick surely passed it on to his daughter, Janin. Together, they’ve experienced their share of shenanigans (including getting caught in an Alaskan avalanche). But one thing they never expected to have in common was a rare heart condition.

For years, John has managed his diagnoses of atrial fibrillation, (AFib), ventricular tachycardia (VT), and recently, congestive heart failure. The complexities of his heart call for highly specialized, tailored care – which he has at Wellstar through an entire team of cardiac experts. Then in 2019, a medical scare revealed Janin also has VT – and “coincidence” wasn’t in the cards. Through cardiac genetic testing at Wellstar, John and Janin discovered they share the exact same abnormality affecting the rhythm of their hearts.

Now the father-daughter duo embarks on yet another adventure – the journey of heart health. Only, this time, they are joined by Wellstar.

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