

## 'There's No Place Like Home, There's No Place Like Home' women family holiday travel humor humor humor

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### **Body**

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Well, we tried it again. Spring break on the road-Washington, D.C. - our nation's capitol-home of present and past, great and not-so-great, presidents. Also home of brothers, brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, and cousins. I think nearly everyone in the United States decided to make the same trip as we did last week. They got on the road about the same time, and we all traveled the Yellow Brick Road or Route 66 to Alexandria. We were strangers in a strange land, heading for Oz.

Although we had planned this trip mostly to visit some friends and relatives, we decided to stay in motels just to make things easier for everyone. Most of our relatives work and go to school, and we didn't want to be a bother. Next time, we'll just be a bother. We were armed with a booklet listing motels and their prices, and really all we thought we wanted was a room with a bed and bath. bath. bath.

The first place that was recommended had a bed, bath, microwave, coffeepot with a packet of coffee, refrigerator, hair dryer, ironing board with iron, a safe, and 104 channels on the television. We loved it. The next morning the continental breakfast featured everything except eggs. The king thought it was a little high considering we weren't at the beach, and just needed a place to stay, so the next night we stayed at a motel that was about \$ 12 less. Believe me - you pay for the \$ 12 less. No microwave, no fridge, no hair dryer, no coffee pot, and certainly no safe. People staying here don't have any valuables to store. Also, the TV had only FOUR channels. It was almost the worst \$ 12 we ever saved. The next morning the only continental breakfast we got was a cup of coffee. The kids were pretty disillusioned - no ironing board - not that they would use it. We spent the \$ 12 we saved at McDonalds.

However, the worst was yet to come. Thinking people find the place they really like and either make reservations for the next night or check in after 2 p.m., and have a place to stay later that night. No one has ever accused us of thinking. We decided to visit friends in Columbia, Maryland. I thought we would stay until about 7 p.m., but the lady of the house had to work until 10, and wanted us to wait on her. Finally, we returned to Alexandria at 1 a.m. and started looking for a motel room. Our friends had offered us a room, but because they work, we felt like we were intruding. Sometimes we're just too polite for our own good. We, of course, returned to our favorite motel - NO VACANCY. Then we hopskotchd up and down the highway. Every place was full-remember that group of tourists who left the same time we did? They had our rooms. Anyway, we were by now desperate. We passed one place because the front desk looked nearly non-existent. At least they had one. Finally, we pulled into a place that I think looked better in the dark. The guy didn't stand behind a desk, he was sitting on an old couch. He kept the door locked and talked to the King through a small opening. He dealt only in cash, and a lot of it. This place cost almost as much as the first one. The kids were whimpering or maybe that was me. Remember that song from the '70s- "Third Rate Romance, Low Rent Rendezvous?" I think we were there. We went in, and stood around in a daze. We weren't in Kansas anymore. It looked like no one had changed anything since about 1934. Depression Era. I was depressed. Pull yourself together, I said to myself, it's not that bad. The furniture is just garage sale castoffs, but not

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that bad. Then I looked at the beds. The spreads were all ripped and kind of dirty- looking. The sheets and pillowcases were old, but I think they were clean. "Do you think we could get our money back?" I asked the King. Then I remembered seeing the guy grab our money and run. Carly had already pulled the spread down, and hopped in. WHAT DO YOU D

O AT 2 a.m.? Personally, I wanted to sleep in the car in front of our niece's house. I didn't want to awaken her; just borrow her driveway for a few hours. I looked at the bathroom, and quickly decided I could shower later at the niece's. We were pretty well stuck here all because we were just too polite. Anyway, the King said we would stay until 7 a.m. when we could call his niece, and go to her house and sleep on her couches. I did not put on pajamas. I pushed the spread away from me. "**NO** ONE USE THAT SPREAD!" "But Mommy, I'm cold," Carly whined. I put a sweatshirt on her, and ordered her not to take off her jeans or socks. I was disappointed that we didn't have something to cover our hair. I lay down very gingerly, so as not to awaken any bed bugs or creatures that might be occupying the premises. Remember, I'm polite. I looked at the chain lock, and the wimp lock on the doorknob. I was sleeping in my jeans and pulled my jacket over my head. Although I didn't have any red shoes I clicked the heels of my running shoes and whispered to myself, "There's **no place like home**; there's **no place like home**." It was the longest four hours I ever spent. At dawn we wanted out of there. We sat at the edge of the bed until 6:45 when we thought we his niece would be up. We were still being polite. Of course, the phone didn't work. People sneaking around don't call people or take calls. At 7 we ran out the door. The door beside of us opened at the same moment. Out walked a tousled female about 17. Behind her ran an older man. YUCK! Then behind him walked the mother. OOPS! They looked as shell-shocked as we did. I think they were getting out with the light, too.

Needless to say, when his niece insisted we stay with her the last night we were there we all got down and kissed her feet. It was great, she had a coffee pot, microwave, full fridge, hair dryer, ironing board with iron, and 104 channels on her TV set. Gee, maybe there really is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

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## Classification

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