



The Post Christmas Holiday Holiday

By Kat, Ciao Bella Travel's Home Correspondent

February 08

People tell you to keep a journal when travelling. I never did. Well, I've tried to, but I soon gave up after wondering who on earth would find my shopping list of breakfasts, lunches and dinners, buses caught, and sights ticked off – interesting.

But I think I missed the point. Maybe it's about taking the time to describe and to help develop your own powers of observation and description. It certainly can't be about debating the philosophical questions of life. Strangely enough, I find my most profound thoughts and ideas don't generally strike me when I'm happy, light-hearted and on holidays! As a rule, for me the big answers come to me in the shower, and I'm sure I'm not alone in that. In fact, sometimes I wonder what effect water saving and the four minute shower has had on solving world hunger and finding the cure for cancer.

During the Christmas break though, I did ponder some of the philosophical questions. Mainly about why a Christmas break spent on holidays with my family seems such a good idea in August when the booking is made, but by the time December 25 rolls around, I find myself wondering what I was thinking when I agreed to book a big house so we could all stay together!

Like hordes of disappointed holidaymakers, I spent the time on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. And like hordes of disappointed holidaymakers, I returned to work in January feeling more than a little cheated out of my annual holiday.

We booked a massive five-bedroom holiday house next to the beach. It was large enough to contain me, my partner, my sister, her husband, their three kids, my parents AND my slightly crazy uncle, on a sunshine fuelled, surfing summer holiday. But let me tell you, those walls got closer and closer every day as mother nature racked up three weeks straight of rain.

The kind of Christmas holiday homes by the beach that don't require one's arm and leg to be surgically removed on check out definitely do not have all of the comforts of home. The grey vinyl couch has seen hundreds of butts rest upon it, the pillows have been drooled on by many sleeping mouths before mine, the dishwasher has badly washed thousands of plates over the years, there is no stereo, or DVD player or even a single sharp knife. Essentially,

Ciao Bella

T R A V E L

you're spending your holidays in a very public place, which is kitted out with someone else's left over furniture. Now that's all fine when the sun is shining outside and you're only there long enough to slather on some sunscreen before your next beach expedition. But spend three weeks on a rainy holiday with three generations of family under the one roof and no mod cons and well, we were lucky to get out of there alive.

So I've delayed gratification for long enough, and last week I persuaded a good girlfriend to fly from interstate for a weekend away with me to make up for my feelings of resentment at the rainy Christmas holiday weather (which, to add insult to injury, you can't complain about because the thought police will come and get you for bemoaning the drought-breaking rains). So we're taking a mini holiday. Husband (hers) and boyfriend (mine) to be left at home. We love them, but if they're there, we're concerned for their welfare, not ours and the weekend mini-holiday isn't so much of a holiday when you spend it making sure someone else is comfortable, amused and relaxed. I don't begrudge it – I just recognise that this habit of mine is a difficult one to break, so until I master it, I'll have to holiday alone occasionally. Sometimes the husband or partner gets a little jealous at being left at home – I don't understand why. I think they must have all been fed propaganda as teens showing that girls on sleepovers spend the night pillow fighting in their underwear!

Not that I'm ruling that out, to be truthful we haven't yet decided what we'll do or where we'll go, all I know is I collect my friend from the airport at 5pm on Friday afternoon and we'll be hightailing it off somewhere where we'll try not to mind about the vinyl couch or the lack of sharp knife, but hell, we'll just make sure we take our own wine glasses. And let's just hope the sun is shining.

I'll let you know what fun we make of it!

Ciao Bella!

Kat Cutler

Local Knowledge: Next time you're visiting Queensland's Sunshine Coast, check out Ba Vigo Restaurant at Cotton Tree. The modern Spanish Restaurant is stylish with a great menu. I love the 'back to the sixties' molded plastic chairs!