

When I was growing up going on a road trip was a great and fun adventure with my mom and dad. They would schedule a week off, pack up the car with me and two siblings and we would take off. Mom would have a cooler packed with goodies so we could have picnics at the wayside rest areas. We would never be told the final destination; I think part of the reason was because mom and dad would not know for sure where we were going to go until we got there.

No matter where the roads lead us we would stay at a Howard Johnson hotel. There were always other choices that they could have picked, but my parents preferred to stay at Howard Johnson hotels. The accommodations were always clean, reasonably priced, and catered to families. Usually a Howard Johnson hotel has a restaurant attached to it. My dad would do all of the driving so once we stopped for the night he did not want to have to get us all back in the car to find a place to eat. My mom and dad would talk to the hotel clerks as well as the people in the restaurants to find out about the area we were staying in and if there were any local attractions that we should take in. There were times when we found all sorts of fun things to do as a result of the clerks recommendations.

For me a Howard Johnson hotel is synonyms with family. They are not fancy or exotic, but they are clean and at the time I was a child they were the largest chain of hotels in the nation. You did not have to feel that you were risky booking a hotel that would not be family friendly or that would be over priced. We did not have a great deal of money to spend on vacations, but that did not stop us from having fun. Mom and dad had a way of locating attractions that were inexpensive and fun. We spent time in parks and beach areas along the way. My parents always knew that after being in the car for several hours at a time we needed to have an opportunity to run around to burn up energy. We also played the travel games to keep us busy during the journey. We all also learned to enjoy the natural surroundings we saw as we drove along. I am trying to organize this kind of trip for my children. I want them to have the great memories of traveling together like I have of my childhood.