

Small Town, Big World: Wait For It

By Britt Bensen Steele

Two weeks ago I returned from ten days in Havana, Cuba. One word? Grateful.

If you are like me, and don't know much more about Cuba other than having heard of a "cuban cigar" and something called the "Cuban Missile Crisis," the country is fascinating, musically rich, and very colorful. The waters surrounding Cuba are turquoise and clear. The cars are reminiscent of the 1950s with hand-fashioned renovations, lawn chairs overlaying the worn springs of bench seats, and parts from all sorts of models rendering each vehicle magnificently unique and surprisingly functional.

The people are quiet and curious. Most Cubans aren't much familiar with Americans and each time we were asked about our country of origin, and we replied "U.S.A.," eyes grew big, while disbelief, confusion and hope flooded their faces.

An incomplete history lesson: US and Cuba stopped talking in the 60s and in the early 90s Cuba pretty much stopped talking to the rest of the world. Cubans learned how to survive without hearing aid batteries, toilet seats, ibuprofen, milk, and car parts. They learned how to remove the motor from a dryer and use it to power a bicycle pulling a trailer to transport rice. And, they found that music and dance were ways in which to rise above all difficulties: for within the bars of one salsa, mambo or samba, freedom was everywhere.



View from our table waiting...
waiting..... waiting....
for our lunch.

Although I was in Cuba as a student, part of a small group invited by the Cuban Yoga Association to meet the "father" of Yoga, and to share knowledge related specifically to my trade, we did touristy things like eat in restaurants and stay in Cuban hotels.

I learned quickly that a favorite response to most any question I asked was, a very kind version of, "uhhh... Laydee... you must wait." Once, five hours after arriving in Havana, still without luggage, we heard those words. Then, when our taxi broke down around the corner from our point of departure, we were told, "I called to see... and... you must wait." And then that time when I got locked out of my bedroom at 1 am., I heard, "Laydee... you must wait."

I, like you, am American. And Americans don't like to wait. We want to do what we want when we want. We want to set the speed on the road. We want to eat when we're hungry, go to the store when the urge strikes, and pop a Tylenol when a headache comes on.

Although I didn't have any tissue when I came down with a cold in Cuba, I did get a big dose of gratitude. And, although I couldn't much eat the fresh vegetables when most in our group got food poisoning, I got a big dose of gratitude for my delicious lunch of food-borne-illness-free Pringles and a Coke.

Nothing like traveling 3,000 miles from home to realize how good you've really got it. Guess I just had to wait for it.

Where Do You Read The Voice?



Dana Hyde enjoyed the amazing weather, and the Voice, in Carlsbad, CA while spending time with her new grandbabies Huck Evan and Hadley Jo Risko.

Scheuerman Awarded Eagle Scout



William Scheuerman received his Eagle Scout at a Court of Honor ceremony on Sunday, February 28, 2016 at the Vernonia LDS Church.

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