

# Covid Didn't Get Us Down. It Got Us Out.

---

By Are We There Yet



We started out like many families during the Covid lockdown. We baked, we cooked, the kids made forts. We had arts-and-crafts days and exercise days. We transformed the living room into a gym, until we got bored with “going to the gym”, then transformed it again into an even bigger fort, and slept in it.

School was still going on, and our version of online homeschooling stumbled along badly, with schedules posted all over the kitchen of what to do and when. We struggled over three people using the same computer for school and work, struggled over trying to figure out constantly changing video conferencing systems with teachers who tried hard, but were just as confused as we were.

I started to get tired of the lists and schedules. My inbox and ears were bombarded with “things to do during lockdown”, balanced only by news that just got worse every day. Except that this was not balance. This was hell. There were a million options and “solutions” to staying at home, coming at me in a never-ending wave until I was drowning in an ocean of lists. And every day, the lists grew.

# Covid Didn't Get Us Down. It Got Us Out.

---

How to bake more, cook more, study more and work more. How to stay calm but get re-energized, all while doing more with your kids and somehow also more for yourself. Soon it felt like we had simply traded in our old obligations for new ones. If we weren't making homemade everything and finding the meaning of life through our newly-perfected yoga poses in our living room, we had failed Covid.

What had started off as fun was now horrible. We lost our tempers, snapped at each other, calmed down, tried some more, and snapped again. The novelty had worn off – squeezing in activities between hours of staring at screens with endless links to click wasn't working anymore.

And then lockdown loosened. We were allowed outside. I chucked the lists and we left the house.

It was wonderful. For almost four months, we barely stayed indoors, disconnected from everything except nature. We did things we had never done before. We went camping, just the three of us. We built bonfires. We biked in the woods and tried fat bikes for the first time. We got a cheap inflatable raft and goofed around in a lake, far from the city. And sometimes, we did nothing at all. Sometimes we just walked, looking at the trees and smelling fresh earth, instead of sewage and dust from broken concrete. Colours came from flowers, not graffiti, and the only noise was birds, not construction. We walked for hours, once even hiking 26 km in the forest, far up north. I wouldn't do that one again – too many black flies, and a little too sweaty for me – but we did it. And when we were home, the kids biked. All day, every day, going as far as they could as long as they could, logging over 400 km on their rusty old city bikes.

We got bitten by clouds of horseflies, slept in a leaky tent, drenched by rainstorms, and melted in heatwaves. It was the most peaceful time of our lives.

# Covid Didn't Get Us Down. It Got Us Out.

---

I kept my eye out on the world from time to time. I'd have a quick read of the headlines, and then delete everything from my inbox. It felt fantastic starting my day by hitting delete.

School has started again, and although we were very anxious about going back, it has been, surprisingly, great. Or maybe it shouldn't have been that surprising. My kids started school more grounded and peaceful than they have ever been. They have a deeper understanding of themselves and each other, and we have a stronger family dynamic.

I don't know how long school will last. We may have another lockdown. But even if we do, we have learned to disconnect from technology, and connect to ourselves. Simply getting outside was the greatest adventure of all.

- END -



**Are We There Yet**