



"When you look at your life, the greatest happinesses are family happinesses." ~Joyce Brothers



WildWood by-the-sea:

Nostalgia & Recipes

Wildwood Crest and the Hawaii Kai

Wildwood Crest and the Hawaii Kai is an excerpt from her new book "Wildwood-By-The-Sea: Nostalgia and Recipes"

The Jersey shore, the beach, and the waves beckoned our young family for our summer vacation in 1974. The kids were the right age to enjoy the beach: Michael was 10 years old and Leanne was 6. We knew of the beautiful beach in Wildwood Crest and heard about the Hawaii Kai from cousins Herb and Stephanie Cohen who knew Larry Hand, the owner of the Hawaii Kai at that time. We made a reservation, packed up our Chevy station wagon, and tossed the kids in the way back with the luggage (this was before seat belts), and drove to the shore.

We got off the Garden State Parkway onto Rio Grande. Just over the George Redding Bridge to the right was Urie's, a good seafood restaurant on the water. Next, on the left, we noticed C. R. Fannies, a bar and strip club at the corner of Susquehanna and Rio Grande! What an introduction to the town. Before it was C. R. Fannies, it was a more respectable Wolf's Saloon owned by May Wolf. It has since been demolished to make way for the second half of the Marina Bay condos or another project.

Continuing along Rio Grande, we noticed the Tom Cat, a restaurant begun by Tommy Taylor, originally a gas station at 440 Rio Grande. The Tom Cat opened about 11 p.m. and it was open all night and closed in the morning, around 7a.m. Growing up in the Wildwoods, the place to go for a snack after a movie or a dance was the Tom Cat, an important part of the teen years.

Once we arrived at the Hawaii Kai, we unpacked and walked to the beach. The kids enjoyed jumping the waves, making large holes to bury each other in the sand, looking for shells, digging for sand crabs, and building sand castles. We found time to rent bikes near the Boardwalk and had a few early morning rides.

The motel had a small pool and Michael dove into the water head first for the first time while we were there. Leanne took her chance on sliding down the huge slide into the water. And she jumped into the pool from the diving board.

One day Michael and Sy went deep sea fishing on the Holiday boat party boat. They caught a few fish and cleaned and cooked them in the motel room. We had a kitchenette that we stocked with juice, milk, and

dry cereal for quick breakfasts. We did have breakfast at Uncle Lou's once after renting bikes, a memorable breakfast spot. We ate another morning breakfast at the Saratoga Inn Coffee Shop across the street.

We always ate dinner out. The Captain's Table was a great place to take kids for dinner, with the view of the ocean and a magician who stopped by the tables with children to perform tricks or make balloon dogs. We also ate at the nearby Sand Castle and enjoyed a quick dinner at Mack's Pizza on the Boardwalk. One night we enjoyed the great food and antiques at Zaberer's in North Wildwood.

In the evening after dinner, we went back to the Boardwalk and walked, played arcade games, enjoyed the rides on the piers, and ate an ice cream cone, some fudge, or salt water taffy. It was a fun and carefree time.

East Chicken Curry

Here is an easy kitchenette recipe that only needs a bag of salad to complete the meal. Quick or instant rice can be used instead of bulgur.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and chopped
- 1/3 cup golden raisins
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup light bulgur
- 2 cups water
- Chopped peanuts
- Toasted coconut



Heat the olive oil in a skillet. Add the chicken and cook until golden brown on both sides, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the chicken to a plate.

Add the onions to the same pan and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the curry powder and heat for a minute. Then add the chicken back into the pan with the apples, raisins, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil, lower heat, cover and cook for 10 to 12 minutes.

Prepare bulgur by bring the water to a boil in a saucepan. Add the bulgur, turn off the heat, stir and cover the pan.

To serve, add about 2/3 cup bulgur onto a plate. Cover with a serving of chicken and then some of the apple, raisin sauce. Top with peanuts and toasted coconut. Yield: 4 servings



Leanne on diving board at Hawaii Kai



Sy Hirsch at Blake's Dock



Michael and Leanne in front of Holiday Boat and ticket stub

< 1970~ Michael and Leanne sharing a bike



Wildwood by-the-sea 1974~ Mom (Anita Hirsch, author), Leanne and Michael in ocean