

A Mother, a Daughter and an Adventure in New York City

The trip we planned was not the trip we got, but traveling again with my 80+ year-old mother was better than I expected it to be

By [Marcea Cazal](#) | October 6, 2023 | [Travel and Adventures](#)

Time with my mom hasn't always been as fun as some of the travel adventures we've experienced. As a teen, I ached to be left alone while she struggled with having a headstrong daughter who wanted freedom. My college years were often confusing and a bit troubled for me, and we butted heads, especially about how long it took me to finish.



Marcea Cazal and her mom during their New York City trip | Credit: Courtesy of Marcea Cazal

But as I moved into my mid-20s and permanently moved out of my parents' house, spending time with my mom became a comfort from bad jobs and adult responsibility. And it became clear that taking a trip with just the two of us might be fun.

The tone was set for spending time with someone who would help nurture my travel bug and become my most frequent travel partner

Our first was for her [60th](#) birthday. I was 25, and we decided to meet up for a long weekend in New Orleans. I honestly had no idea what to expect from my mom, who I always thought of as being a bit straitlaced. That is until we passed one of the clubs on Bourbon Street that had scantily dressed women in the photos. As my embarrassment seeped in about having my mom see these images, she must have noticed and said, "Oh, grow up!"

Instead of being angry, I remember thinking, "That's my mom? Cool!" And so the tone was set for spending time with someone who would help nurture my travel bug and become my most frequent travel partner for many years.

An Adventure Close to Home

Over the years, our adventures would take us to Bonaire (an island in the southern Caribbean), Orlando, Washington, D.C. and Havana, Cuba. But the place we've visited too many times to count is New York City.

As native New Yorkers, we love the city. But while I'm New York-born, I've spent most of my life in the South. Outside of the 25 years she lived in Florida because of my father's job, my mom has lived the rest of her 80-plus years in New York, all less than 75 miles from Manhattan.

Currently living in the family home where she grew up, she's only a 45-minute train ride into the city. So it's been a tradition for us, when I'm visiting, to go into the city for the day and head back to her house.

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Realizing my mother wasn't invincible was a reality check, but her grace in adapting to her limitations was a valuable lesson for me

But times change, and so have our adventures. After breaking an ankle several years ago, my mother walks much slower and uses a cane. And while still quick-witted (maybe too much, according to some people), she has had some health issues. Which made me realize that, eventually, our travels would cease.



Marcea and her mom during her mother's 60th birthday trip to New Orleans. | Credit: Courtesy of Marcea Cazel

Making Our Plans

We needed one "last hurrah" trip in case we never got the chance again. My mom has always dreamed of taking a river cruise through France or taking the sightseeing train through the Canadian Rockies. Both sounded wonderful but not something I could swing for several reasons. When I saw that Lionel Richie was performing at Madison Square Garden, I knew what we had to do — a mother/daughter weekend in New York City.

Believe it or not, in all the years my mom has lived so close to the city, she's never spent the night there. Is there any need to when you can head home after a night at the theater? Yes, there are plenty of reasons. And many of those reasons were to relive some of our memories together.

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With help from my brothers, as a Mother's Day present, we purchased tickets to the concert, booked a stay at the Algonquin Hotel and planned our adventures.

The trip started on a sour note when I woke up at 5 a.m. to leave for the airport to discover my flight was delayed three hours, which would cause me to miss my connection and get into Westchester, New York late.

After getting quite nervous that we'd lose a whole night together, my travel instincts kicked in. I headed to the airport while on the phone with the airline's customer service department to change my flight. Able to alter my flight and now land at LaGuardia Airport, I called my mom and asked her to hop on the train and meet me at the hotel.

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This is where I note that I almost asked her if she wanted me to meet her at Grand Central Station and walk with her to the hotel, which was about 15 minutes away. But knowing my mom, who would have told me that she used to take that walk twice daily while working at British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) airlines in her early 20s and knew her way better than I did, I didn't.

Playing Tourists

Getting to the hotel and feeling a little more relaxed, I got settled and waited for my mom. When she arrived, we got her bags situated and went to the Top of the Rock and the Empire State Building to catch the sunset.

One mistake I often make, because my mom is very self-sufficient and lives alone, is thinking that we can still take the same pace as we used to. Unfortunately, she got very winded because of that walk from the train, and we had to stop a lot. My impatient self wanted to get frustrated, until I remembered we were there to have a good time together.

We eventually made it to both locations that night, stopped in a diner for dinner and then headed back to the hotel for a drink in the bar, where my mom told me some great stories about enjoying drinks at the previous Algonquin Hotel bar after work at the airline. We had some good laughs.

The next day, we were supposed to go to The Guggenheim Museum, where neither of us had been. But after the night before, I decided we could wing it before heading to the concert. This worked perfectly, as a local market took up at least ten blocks of 6th Avenue. My mom loves a good market, so we explored, chatted and enjoyed each other's company. We needed that relaxing day, although we didn't realize it then.

Lionel a No-Show, But We Pivoted

I've seen Lionel Richie in concert twice and always told my mom how fantastic he was, which is the reason why my brothers and I got her a ticket to his New York City concert. Making our way to the Garden after enjoying a glass of wine at the hotel, we settled into our seats.

We waited an hour after the concert was supposed to start to find out that Lionel had yet to make it out of Boston from the previous night's concert and there would be no show that night. Stunned, we made our way out of the arena, coming up with many reasons he wouldn't make it there. So, we headed back to our hotel for more wine.

This trip to New York City at this stage in our lives was an

On Sunday morning, we awoke to get breakfast and discovered that 6th Avenue was again blocked off because of the Dominican Day Parade. Besides the concert 'incident' (in the words of one of my mom's friends, we were considering it 'an adventure'),



Jamaica, 1973 | Credit: Courtesy of Marcea Cazell

**adventure I'll
cherish.**

our weekend in NYC was turning out perfectly. My father was from the Caribbean, and my mom loves dancing and music (me too!).

A Better Trip Than Expected

We planned to take the Circle Line Cruise around Manhattan and hoped the parade was still taking place when we returned. The Circle Line held memories for us, as did many of our adventures that weekend, because my mom has a photo of two of my siblings on it in the early 1980s with the World Trade Center towers in the background.

This time, we enjoyed learning about some of the history of the boroughs and enjoyed the weather. And on our way home, hours later, the parade was still happening. It took us forever to get across the street. Still, at this point, we realized going with the flow fit us better and were just headed home anyway, so we enjoyed everyone having a great time.

Did this trip turn out how I expected? No, because it turned out better than I expected. My mom may have slowed down, and I should have asked her about her limitations beforehand. But we also discovered that we love being together, talking, reminiscing and laughing, and that being in your mid-80s doesn't mean you need to stop traveling.

It may not have been an exotic trip to the French Riviera. Still, this trip to New York City at this stage in our lives was an adventure I'll cherish. I hope to have plenty of adult travels with my daughter one day, as long as she's not surprised by some of my stories about hanging out in New Orleans with her Nana.



Marcea Cazell is a freelance travel writer who loves writing about culturally immersive travel. Whether finding murals or attending festivals, learning more about local life is always on her to-do list. A contributor to publications such as TripSavvy, Tinybeans and Hop Culture Magazine, she's been traveling her entire life, with her first international trip taking place before her 1st birthday. When not writing or traveling, she enjoys kayaking, hiking in the state parks and relaxing at one of the craft breweries in her area. [Read More](#)

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