

Jekyll Island as a New Family of Four

When travel restrictions were first put in place in Georgia, I was 36 weeks pregnant with my second child. I had no intention of going anywhere for the foreseeable future. Our biggest priorities were being close to the hospital before the birth and then close to home afterwards, keeping our immuno-compromised newborn as safe as possible. As our baby grew and restrictions became a little more lax, we embarked on the first of what would become many beach trips to Jekyll Island. Jekyll Island was about an hour and a half away from us; known for its private beaches and historic district of preserved millionaire cottages. The island had been a stomping ground for the ultrarich and still retained a certain facade of opulence and inaccessibility. Our little family didn't mind paying the \$8 access fee to ensure a little privacy.

Jekyll Island was fairly close to home, making it easier to venture out as a new family of four. We were able to spend most of our time outside, which felt safer to us. We enjoyed evenings on the beach, hikes to look for shark teeth, and - my toddlers' personal favorite - running into groups of gulls along the shore to watch them scatter. Finding food and bathroom access was a little challenging, as many restaurants were not offering dine-in services. We often ordered food online, picked it up at the restaurant entrance, and had a picnic outside or all squished into the back of our Ford Explorer. We put a mask on our 2-year-old daughter to go to the bathroom inside. Having the freedom to move around outside, eat delicious tacos on the beach, and still encounter very few people was bliss. We ended up going back to Jekyll Island quite a few times throughout the summer and into the fall, as it became an escape of sorts for us. A small return to normalcy when so much was out of control.

In late fall of 2020, we moved to North Carolina. Moving despite pandemic restrictions was a challenge in itself, but I don't look back on that time with nearly the same fondness as I remember our days of seashells, tacos, and sunburn on Jekyll Island.