

Chapter 1 : Father's Day in Napa, 80th Birthday Casino Style and Fudge in Truckee | Let's Make Mud

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Dad had steak and eggs, and I heard great things about their fried chicken and waffles, so I decided to settle on that. Dad enjoyed his meal, but my fried chicken tasted like baked frozen chicken nuggets! Super disappointed, but the waffles made up for it. The portions were HUGE and the waitress attended to our every need. I would go back. They all loved it, and I made it to Costco to pick up a skirt steak. The three of us took turns sitting by Dad who was in heaven playing the slot machines. We ate at the fairly priced Manzanita Restaurant on site and we were happy about their selection and large portions. The four of us stayed one night, my brother sleeping in a room w my dad and Sue and I in an adjoining room. Dad loved gambling at his favorite casino and was happy to spend his 80th birthday with his kids. What a way to turn 80! Dad was thrilled and was happy to have his daughter Julie join us for lunch. All four of his kids were there to enjoy time with dad. My brother Rick dropped our exhausted Dad off back at the Yountville Veterans Home, and had to head home to his wife and three year old. The rest of us Sue, Julie and I drove 3. We stopped for dinner at Bar and Grill where we relaxed with cocktails and enjoyed salads and burgers for dinner. Truckee is a fun place to shop, dine and wander in and around the many art galleries. From the left my sister Sue, me and sister Julie taking a quick selfie along the Truckee River. They were to die for! They sell gorgeous yarns for knitting, painting supplies and dozens of books to inspire you to get busy with your hands. My favorite pastry is found here too. We also walked into Sweets Handmade Candies store and enjoyed watching a guy make fudge. And their toffee looked amazing too. But I will be back to Truckee in the next two weeks to celebrate my birthday. Stay tuned! Are you celebrating any milestone birthdays or going anywhere special this summer? If so, we would all love to hear about them in the comments below. And feel free to follow my blog by subscribing. I would love to share more of my food and travel experiences with you as well as some of my favorite recipes.

Chapter 2 : Losing Your Hero – Mudpies and Lemonade

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But first, we had to spend time at the coolest place around the SHED. Not only do they offer workshops such as the one coming up from Apiarist Michael Thiele on honeybees, or a cheese tasting class by expert Janet Fletcher, but they offer so much more. The SHED sells beautiful pottery to serve your elegant gourmet dishes on, rose geranium, lavender oatmeal and coffee mint scented soaps that would be the perfect hostess gift. In addition to all these fine goods, Saturday brunch was happening, so we got a few snapshots of their menu items. I was impressed with their fresh herbs like lemon balm, purslane, dill, parsley, squash blossoms, sunflower greens, nasturtium, borage, and marigold most of which I grow in my own garden. The absinthe is distilled with non-GMO corn, russian river water, anise seed, star anise, fennel, wormwood, coriander, ginger, lemon peel, tarragon, peppermint, lemongrass and eucalyptus. They add fresh lime, fresh mint, simple syrup and ice to the absinthe and it was super refreshing. Joshua let me peek around the corner and photograph his dried herb and spice collection at Young and Yonder. He had shelves of glass jars full of botanicals like angelica root, sarsaparilla, dried pluots, cedar berries, dried bing cherries and figs, holy basil, honeysuckle flowers, California poppy seeds, lemon balm, rose hips, calendula and more. Besides, these herbaceous gins, vodkas, and bourbons would make great gifts. Of course, I had to get a few bakery items at Costeaux Bakery for us to nibble on in the car on the way home. My husband was excited to purchase two new trees from the Urban Tree Farm in Windsor and we had limited time before they closed. We learned that Molly had just come home from the hospital after having heart rhythm complications. Taking the time to visit our relatives is something my husband and I take pride in. Especially since we lost one of my aunts recently. So if you find yourself looking for something fun to do, and your not too far from the California wine country, go hang out in Healdsburg. We barely scratched the surface and had so much more territory to explore. If you need more proof, check out my last trip to Healdsburg with my niece Michelle. It was a barrel of a good time drinking and eating our way through town. If you would like to receive more of my blogs on travel and food please sign up. You will get an email notifying you when I post next. I will also be sharing many of my recipes with you. Thanks for stopping by.

Chapter 3 : Mud pies – Mud Pies

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

Mud pies Why mud pies? This is not an easy answer. I grew up the baby of a five person family. We grew up in suburb of Chicago. Dad was a tool and die worker for Ford Motor company and my mom was a stay at home mom. I lived just on the other side so i always thought I was good part adjacent. Foreshadow a future blog about my feeling of feeling less than. Back to mud pies, we were having some party in our suburban backyard. My dad worked the night shift at Ford. Insert picture of my red-headed, pale, father after being awakened. He would storm out and you knew you were dead when you heard the curio cabinet shake from the power of his stomps. He, wearing fluorescent yellow ear plugs and tighty whitey underwear, would turn red in the face as he scolded you. Image burned into my head. I always swore I would never marry a man who wore tighty whitey underwear. That was a deal breaker! Now that Dad was up, he was trying to put up a volleyball net. No, not fun because tired, angry Pat was not to be messed with. My sister, Hollie and her friend Beth were playing with the volleyball while Scott and my dad were putting up the net. Not kidding, my Dad leaped up with volleyball pole in hand and starts chasing Hollie. Not in the fun-Dad chasing his child around. This was not a montage of slow motion sprinklers going off and baby pools being stepped in. This was holy shit Dad might kill my sister by shoving the pole through her body. Hollie is screaming an apology. Beth was laughing until she saw the red-monster holding a sharp pole lunge at my mom. I sat there on my swingset being paralyzed in fear. I think I blacked out a little. Fast forward to party time. Their eldest, Charlotte was born with 2 months of me. She also had a little sister Gina and another younger still, Sally. I only remember being with Charlotte and Gina. As the men were grilling and drinking beer, we were playing in the backyard happily. You know the way the grass gets under a swing set? The grass dies this was LONG before mulch or sports courts and there are dirt stripes where your feet drag. So somewhere along the party, Charlotte and I bore of swinging. We probably wanted to get away from her younger sisters. Anyhoo, Charlotte and I find said pot and decide to make outdoor soup. You know the recipe, dirt, grass, hose water, sticks, rocks, torn up leaves, random berries, etc. Soup making fun over, Charlotte or I decide we need to get rid of the muddy evidence. So, we go along the side of the house and you guessed it, we made it into balls and threw the balls at my light-colored brick house. Somehow, I swear my dad had bionic hearing, my father is standing behind me holding me up to eye level so I can see the damage I had done. We were middle class through and through. I could see my white, sheer, Sear curtains blowing in the air and party noises from outside. There was a spanking. He had fire in his eyes. I just wanted to Black out again and wake up when everyone had gone home. When my dad had calmed down and realize it was only 1 ball of mud on the side of his house. In walks Mom, Elayne. She would probably pick me up and wipe away my tears. Jittery and scared, I would walk back outside past all the guests, past my father, and back to the kid area where we would swing the rest of the night, never speaking of the mud pie incident. How is the title of a blog? What kind of a blog is this? Well let me tell you. So many parts of that story to pick apart. So many lessons learned. So, this is a part of me that you might not know. Some of you do. I want to tell you how I got to be the 46 year old wife, mother, daughter, sibling, friend, cancer-patient that I am today. I can trace so much of it to that damn mud pie. Insert Evil doctor Stage 4 colo-rectal cancer diagnosis Surgery on my my butt, cervix, reproductive parts including part of my vagina my friend Kate hates that word Recovery Metastasis Life in my 14 day cycle But that is all I have for today. I had chemo today and my head hurts. Insert how I found Mike. Insert Kate kettle bell story that one is always good for a laugh. Insert Michael Insert Piper – she has too many stories to list! Insert blueberry picking, scuba diving, helicopter ride–and many, many more!

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