

Spanning the Globe

The Big Un-Adventure

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Boy, when Kevin and I decide to travel, even our un-adventures turn out adventurous! Today was the big day, the day we were meant to go back to Africa. We loaded up all our bags, car seats, babies, baby bags, and carry-on's into the car and headed to the airport. As we were pulling into the airport, Kevin got a text message from the airline that our 2:27 PM departure was delayed for an hour due to weather issues. An hour is not bad but that left us with only a 35 minute layover in Washington, D.C. With two kids and carry-on's. We decided to talk to counter agent about getting us assistant at the gate to get us there on time.



When we walked into the airport we were greeted with a great surprise! Our friends the Dodd's had joined us to assist and we were so grateful! Levi helped load all our bags up while Erin and the kids played with Adah.

While checking-in, we discovered that our plane was delayed an additional hour due to weather, meaning, we would not make our connecting flight at all. The United Airlines ticketing agent felt bad for our situation and figured out a way to help. He got us transferred to US Airways for a flight to Pennsylvania and then to Brussels.

So we moved all our bags down the airport and went to check-in. There we discovered that only the first bag was free, and with additional bags for each person the cost was more. After getting checked in, we went back to United to see what to do about the additional charges. Once that was taken care of, we loaded our persons up, said our tearful goodbye's, and headed for security.



Security went as usual. Packing, removing articles, getting hands wiped down, chasing Adah down, getting bags singled out due to medications, chasing Adah down, finding shoes, chasing Adah down, and loading bags, after chasing Adah down. We grabbed some food and sat down for our short wait. While waiting we heard the announcement that all flights to Pennsylvania were being delayed, both in and out. So even though we were delayed, it wasn't by that much. The time went quickly, we loaded the plane with no problems and began to back away from the gate. Unfortunately the dreaded announcement came..."Ladies and Gentlemen, we are experiencing some technical issues and will be heading back to the terminal." Not only were there problems with the plane, the delayed flights to Pennsylvania were being pushed another hour and a half.



Poor Adah lost it. She wanted to ride the airplane. She cried at the window looking at the airplane, while we tried to determine what our next options were. The next part was a blur of ticketing agents, phone calls back and forth, research, calls to our HQ, calls to their HQ, and all this while we were on our phones looking for connections. During this time, we had a hungry baby, a poopy diaper, an Adah who thought I was another person and ran screaming after them shouting "MOMMY!" in a panic, a meltdown or two, watching our luggage being loaded on another plane while we were in the terminal trying to find a new plane, a few tears (not saying who did that), getting our luggage held back for later, and an overtired screaming baby.

We tried every flight combination we could think of. Through Paris on Air France, through Istanbul on Turkish via London Heathrow, Johannesburg on South African Airways, but to no avail. The end result? The exact same original flight from Knoxville-Washington, D.C.-Brussels-Kinshasa, at the exact same time, tomorrow. Whew!



Overall, we were very thankful for kind and patient agents who worked hard to get us on flights (or tried to) and got us refunded on our original luggage as well as a little upgrade on our first leg tomorrow. We were very grateful for having many hands to make a light load this morning and the distraction. We are blessed. And tired. But mostly blessed.