



When the simplest way is the best way

Familientreffen finden immer öfter an Urlaubsorten statt. So können alle diese Zeit genießen. Die Familie unserer Autorin schwimmt gegen den Strom und macht es wie früher. **medium US**

It's summertime, and the living is easy. But if you have been chosen to organize a family reunion, those words from a Gershwin song might seem like wishful thinking.

Until the middle of the 20th century, most extended families lived in the same town, or at least the same state. In those days, a reunion was an afternoon event, a picnic in Aunt Betty's backyard. Everyone brought huge bowls of their favorite food, and the table was covered with the same dishes every year: potato salad, tossed salad, green-bean salad, macaroni salad and baked beans. While the ladies set out the food and condiments, the men were busy grilling hot dogs

plane or car. And then there are the meals and entertainment, which could not be more different from the food at picnics and such simple games as softball. In fact, the tendency is toward gourmet dinners and golf trips.

It's not just the expense that can be a problem. Long before the reunion starts, it all has to be organized. Choosing a date when everyone can come can be the most difficult task of all.

Once the question of "when" has been settled, the next question is "what": cruise, ranch, beach or mountains. In fact, although I love the idea of getting all the brothers, sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews together regularly, just thinking about the process of doing it has always stopped me in my tracks. It seems that the only time we are able to get the entire family together is for weddings and funerals. Because the dates and locations for those occasions are set in stone, there's no room for decision by committee. Maybe that's the key.

This summer, no one in the family is getting married, and we aren't expecting any deaths; but we have decided to have a simple old-time reunion. We're going home to Mom's house. The rooms are free, and meals will be good old-fashioned home cooking, with all of us taking turns in the kitchen.

It will be like a miniature United Nations. My kids grew up in Germany. My brother's wife and children are Puerto Rican. My niece is married to a Venezuelan, and my brother-in-law is from Scotland. My younger son's girlfriend is from Turkey, and my older son's stepdaughter is from China. We're spread over four generations, from 15 months to 85 years in age, and we're praying for good weather so we can spend most of the time outside.

We'll bring out huge bowls of potato salad and baked beans to serve with the hot dogs and hamburgers. We'll set up the old badminton net and tell ghost stories around the campfire as we toast marshmallows. We'll put up tents in the backyard and fight over who has to sleep in the house and who gets to sleep under the stars. I'm choosing the backyard so I can get into my comfortable flannel sleeping bag and pretend I'm 12 years old again.



"Today's family reunions are much more complex, since family members live all over the country"

and hamburgers. After the meal came dessert: several kinds of pies, cakes and brownies; and, of course, there was always watermelon. The kids kept busy playing softball, badminton or tug-of-war.

Today's reunions are much more complex. With family members living all over the country, an afternoon picnic is no longer an option. Many families now meet at holiday resorts. Apart from the hotel costs, there's also the cost of getting there, either by

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| <u>backyard</u> [ˌbækˈjɑːrd] US | Garten hinterm Haus |
| <u>brother-in-law</u> [ˈbrʌðə ɪn ˌlɔː] | Schwager |
| <u>brownies</u> [ˈbraʊniːz] | Schokoschnitten |
| <u>condiment</u> [ˈkɑːndɪmənt] | Pickles, (Würz)Soße, Gewürze |
| <u>cruise</u> [kruːz] | Kreuzfahrt |
| <u>family reunion</u> [ˌfæmli riːˈjuːnjən] | Familientreffen |
| <u>funeral</u> [ˈfjuːnərəl] | Beerdigung |
| <u>resort</u> [rɪˈzɔːrt] | Urlaubsort |
| <u>set in stone</u> [ˌset ɪn ˈstəʊn] | unverrückbar |
| <u>stepdaughter</u> [ˈstep.dɔːtɜː] | Stieftochter |
| <u>take turns</u> [teɪk ˈtɜːnz] | sich abwechseln |
| <u>tossed salad</u> [ˌtɔːst ˈsæləd] | angemachter Rohkostsalat |
| <u>tracks: stop sb. in his/her ~</u> [træks] | jmdn. so erschrecken, dass er/sie mit etw. aufhört |
| <u>tug-of-war</u> [ˌtʌg əv ˈwɔːr] | Tauziehen |
| <u>wishful thinking</u> [ˌwɪʃfəl ˈθɪŋkɪŋ] | Wunschdenken |