



BE SWAYED

A Weekend *in a Hammock*

I HATE TO SAY IT WAS PERFECT, BECAUSE I'M SURE IT WASN'T...

MY FAMILY SPENT the weekend in a hammock. There were other parts, too, but basically we were suspended in the air on a web of cord.

It was awesome.



Hammocks are usually vacation-worthy, hanging from palm trees on beaches far from real life. We never had one when I grew up, probably because of all the snow. I've considered buying one over the past few years but we don't have a good spot to hang one.

Then I helped a friend clean up a rental property. The renters had absconded, leaving a horrible mess behind. And a hammock stand, with a perfectly serviceable hammock swinging on top.

"Is this yours?" I asked my friend. I'd never seen it before, but maybe I had missed something.

"No. Do you want it?"

My eyes lit up with glee.

After two loads of trash and branches and weird plastic blocks getting a ride to the dump, my husband went back to pick up the hammock.

Two days later, after realizing how easy it was to assemble and disassemble, we headed out to the desert. Hiking, campfire, stargazing—the whole reason we live in the Southwest.

Before it got dark, the husband set up the hammock 10 or 20 feet away from the fire pit. It looked funny to have a bit of furniture in the middle of nowhere, nothing but scrub brush and ocotillo cactus with arms like Medusa.

I hate to say it was perfect, because I'm sure it wasn't. Yet with a fire to one side, a chill in the air, and a boy under each

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« *Cosmic Family*
Apak Studio

arm, I watched the stars. We snuggled, we shouted for shooting stars. We speculated about satellites and planes and alien life.

Things got a little heavy when I switched out and my husband got in with the kids. Then they talked universe expansion and galaxies and black holes and how the sun will kill us all in a billion years. That sort of thing stresses me out, but the males in my family eat it up. So I stared at the flames and moved just a little further away from the serious talk behind me.

I wondered if the hammock would be like so many other things—fleetingly great, then shoved to the back of the garage. So far, we're all still in love. I've caught people out there in the desert reading in the sunshine, or napping, even coloring in chalk nearby.

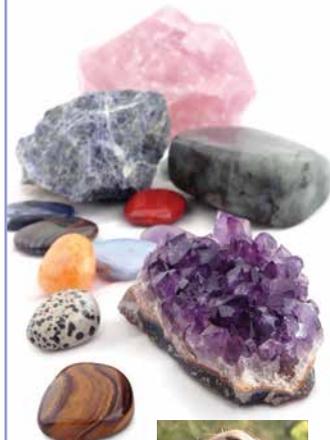
There's something about hanging in a hammock that makes it pretty hard to stress about things. If I want to yell, I've got to sit up. I can't see the tasks that need to be done around my house when lying horizontally.

Looking up is something we don't spend enough time doing. Whether we gaze at stars, imagine what clouds look like, or simply gaze into the blue, there's a peace that comes along. The hammock makes me slow down and notice.

When it gets a bit chilly, I've got the perfect hammock blanket, one we sit on at the beach or the park for random picnics. It's sturdy in the wash, super-soft from decades of use. And big enough to cover at least three people comfortably.

Our terrier hates the hammock—he's not so comfortable without feeling a solid surface beneath him. For the two-legged part of our family, though, that suspension is part of the magic. Carefully climb in, breathe deep, and just let go. It seems to work on six-year-olds and 43-year-olds alike.

—ELIANA OSBORN



Hibiscus Moon, CCM, RM, CE Provider



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