

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

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# playground

Lifestyle for the New York Mom

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Our Best Options  
for Ordering In

Red-Carpet Foods

What Celebs  
are Feeding  
their Kids

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Makes Three

Co-parenting  
in New York City

Model, Supermodel, Entrepreneur, Activist

# Liya Kebede

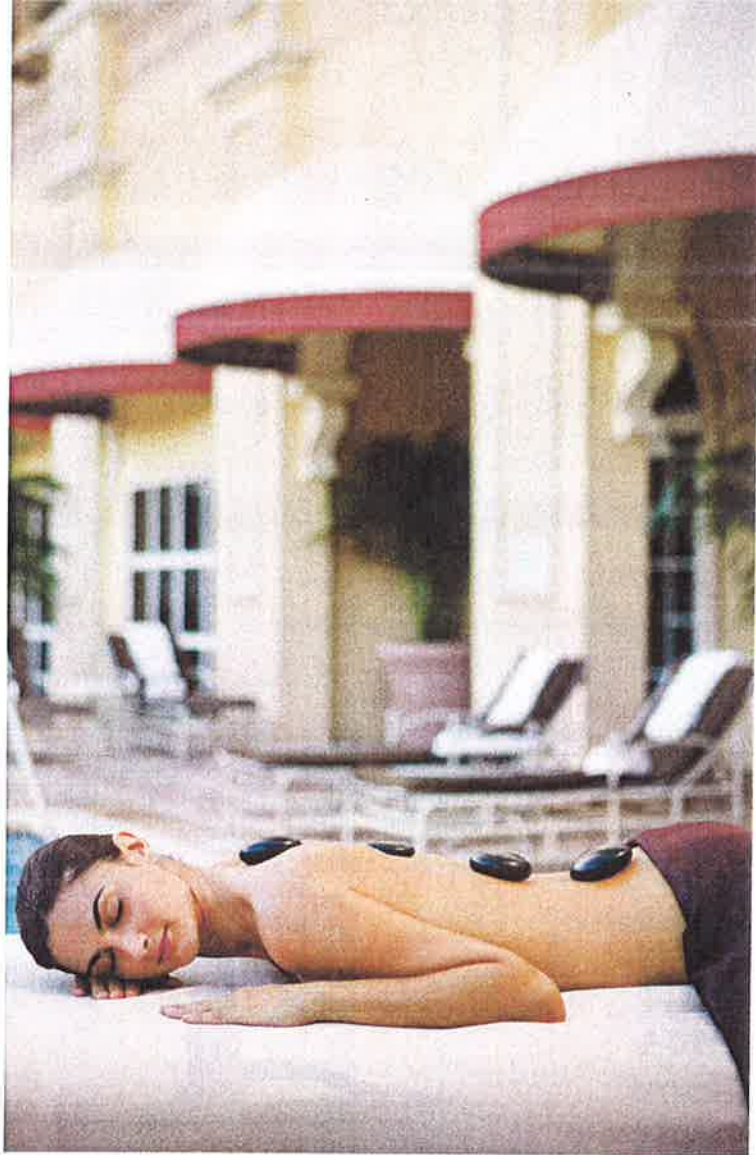


A vibrant tropical beach scene. In the foreground, a hammock is strung between two palm trees on the left. To the right, a set of lounge chairs with red cushions is arranged on a grassy area. In the middle ground, a sandy beach is dotted with several red umbrellas and more lounge chairs. The ocean is a clear blue, and the sky is bright. The overall atmosphere is relaxed and vacation-oriented.

# On the Road

Packing up and taking the kids  
somewhere new

BY RACHEL FELDER



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here's nothing better than escaping New York for a spring break family vacation ... unless you're going on the same old annual trip that's gradually evolved from a much-anticipated journey into a dull rut of a holiday. But with tight school schedules and limited vacation time to juggle, you can't be blamed for sticking with a location and

a hotel that's reliable and familiar.

"There's a desire for some parents to stay with something they know," observes Kimberly Wilson Wetty, a travel agent at Valerie Wilson Travel in New York. "Change is sometimes uncomfortable, especially with little children, so people very much go to the tried and true, where they know what to expect, and don't venture away from that."

But spending a couple weeks every March at the same hotel in South Beach or Aruba means you're missing out on the invigorating buzz of discovering somewhere new. And if you haven't booked a trip yet and are thinking of getting away in a few weeks, off-the-beaten-track destinations are often much less crowded than the more obvious spots, so there's still availability at many properties and even

some great deals to boot.

Cancún and the Mayan Riviera, for example, are very popular with repeat guests. But if you love it there, it's worth visiting somewhere else in Mexico this year. If you have the type of kids (like many of us) who get bored easily, a great alternative is Mexico City, which has the warm weather and delicious food you'd expect in Cancún with much, much more stimulation for your little travelers (and you, too). Many Mexico City hotels have pools and luxurious spas, if that's how you like to unwind on vacation, but there's also so much more right there to keep everyone entertained: world-class museums, ancient pyramids (in nearby Teotihuacan) and colorful markets with enough gross-out foods—like dried grasshoppers and sizzling tripe tacos—to keep the kids telling their friends about the trip for weeks to come.

There's no shortage of comfortable ho-



Qualia Resort and Spa, Miami.