

Tuck Takes Off

Fitness, nutrition, travel and a little inspiration



The view from Killmanjaro and beyond

■ Montauk Surfing Spectacular Posted by: **Stephanie Tuck** | August 20, 2011



I've been having a great summer and no small part of that has been surfing in Montauk, Long Island. What can I say - cliches abide: catch a wave and I absolutely feel like I'm sitting on top of the world. But beyond that Leo DiCaprio-esque element, the rest of the ritual is also seriously cool: zipping up the superhero wetsuit, the graceful paddling, the hours bobbing in the ocean, the way the water catches and cradles you when you leap from your board (well, that last one can be wishful thinking.) For some reason, Liev Schreiber and I are on the same surf schedule. We've ended up in the third parking lot at Ditch Plains at the same time for three mornings now, and we chit

chat about the wave quality as we squint our eyes and look out to sea and pretend we're not scared as we slather on sunblock (best surfing sunblock is Headhunter- does... not...come...off) and suit up for a session, one rad athlete to another. As I said, coooool.

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I am no Kelly Slater. I am rather a newbie, though I have surfed a number of times. I surf, alas, maybe a week a year, so my experience is rather like Groundhog's Day: Instead of moving forward, I learn the same advanced beginner/bottom basement intermediate skills again and again (not complaining! – you need to practice to get better, like most things in life.) I LOVE the surf camp programs I've done in Costa Rica – my favorite is Del Mar Surf Camp, run by my friend Maria Del Mar (her real name, by the way!) – and until recently, the warm cookie cutter-perfect waves of Jaco and Mal Pais had been my only experience. It's easy to feel like a mermaid with a jet pack in those conditions. I didn't know if I could replicate the experience elsewhere...

Enter Montauk. Even with colder and darker water, it is a DELIGHT. I know the waves can get quite big there, but I have been lucky and found that the waves are small and kind lately, just like I like 'em. Hell, I'm not proud. They are just fine for me... and my buddy Liev 😊

Part of my happiness out there on the Montauk waves stems from finding great teachers. I stumbled upon Corey's Wave surf school, and have now surfed with Corey himself and also John Angulovitch. They combine fabulous instruction with a lot of care and focus. This is important as feeling safe is 90% of the game – if you're tense and not relaxed not only will you not have much fun but your stance will be stiff instead of fluid. Surfing is about letting go, not tightening up. Breathing. Smiling. Panic – and it does creep up – will only hinder you, so the calm and confident presence of these guys is priceless for me.

There's a leap between being able to get up on the board and being able to cut and turn and line up with peak of the waves...and this dog, baby, is finally learning some new tricks! Woo hooooo! A guy in the water said to me last week, "I'm just beginning but clearly you've done this before," and I wanted to hug him. I want to shed the training wheels and take off with friends sans instructor by the end of the summer, but I am not there yet. Here's another lesson from surfing – love where you are. No matter what your level is, it's a thrill. Words can't really do it justice...all I can say is jump in.



Work dem abs! Surfing is the ultimate core workout. Okay, will exhale now...



That mellow (HAPPY) post-surf glow...me and John from CoreysWave.

Corey's Wave lessons are 1 1/2 hours and they provide a surfboard and wetsuit. Prices are \$150 for private lessons and \$100 per person if two people share. (Expensive, true, but the experience is so unique and special. Nice rationalization, no?) I find sharing is great – one person paddles back out while the other catches a wave in to shore, so there is more than enough action to go around. Corey's folks matched me with a surfer my level and we had a blast. So if you're a newbie or someone who has already gotten her toes wet, like me, go for it! And let me know – always looking for surf buddies. xxxoo One more thing: Click here for my pick of the cutest rash guards and surfer shorts. Love love love.

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