The Aiken/Widom Family
Year Off
**Original Plan**

2000 (Emily age 3, Tim 5)

Decided when kids turned 10 and 12 we’d take a year off and sail around the world

Soon learned 6 years is more typical for a circumnavigation 😞
Plan 2.0

Sail around the South Pacific instead
Plan 3.0

- Sail around the South Pacific
- and Hike across the Alps
- and Drive up and down South America
Plan 3.1

- Sail around the South Pacific
- Hike across the Alps
- Drive up and down Chile and Argentina
Plan 3.2

- Sail around the South Pacific
- Trek in the Alps; visit Greece and Morocco
- Drive up and down Chile and Argentina
Plan 3.3

• Sail around the South Pacific
• Trek in the Alps; visit Greece and Morocco and Italy, maybe Spain (Paris and London?)
• Drive up and down Chile and Argentina
Plan 4.0

• Sail around the South Pacific

• Trek in the Alps; visit Greece and Morocco and Italy, maybe Spain (Paris and London?)

• Drive up and down Chile and Argentina

• Hike the John Muir Trail (Emily’s idea)
Plan 4.1

- Sail and travel around Southeast Asia
- Trek in the Alps; visit Greece and Morocco and Italy, maybe Spain (Paris and London?)
- Drive up and down Chile and Argentina
- Hike the John Muir Trail
Current Plan

- Sail and travel around Southeast Asia
- Trek in the Alps; visit Greece and Morocco and Italy, maybe Spain (Paris and London?)
- Drive up and down Chile and Argentina
- Hike the John Muir Trail
Lots of “Practice” Trips with Kids

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An Adventure in Four Parts

1. Greece to Morocco via Italy, Alps, and ??
   Backpacks and public transportation

2. Chile and Argentina
   Rented motorhome and mountain bikes

3. Southeast Asia
   Rented sailboat
   Backpacks and public transportation

4. John Muir Trail (California Sierras)
   Backpacks and legs
An Adventure in Four Parts

1. Greece to Morocco via Italy, Alps, and ??
   *Mid-June to end of September*

2. Chile and Argentina
   *November to mid-January*

3. Southeast Asia
   *Mid-February to end of May*

4. John Muir Trail (California Sierras)
   *July to mid-August*
Part 1
Part 1: What’s Planned (and Not)

- June 19-25: Athens, ferry, Tinos Island (6 nights planned out of 100+)
- General shape after that
- Due in Morocco September 1
Tour du Mont Blanc

10-14 day relatively strenuous trek

But easy overnights in huts and villages

Purported to be one of the world’s great walks
Morocco

High Atlas Trek

Camel Safari
Part 2

Fly to Buenos Aires
Pick up motorhome, buy mountain bikes
Return 10 weeks later

“The Motorhome Diaries”
Part 3

Part 3(b): Two months on a sailboat
Part 3

Part 3(b): Two months on a sailboat
The Boat
Parts 3(a) and 3(c)

3(a): A week in Phuket, Thailand
- Kids scuba certification
- Boat preparation and provisioning

3(c): The only significant truly unplanned part of the trip (5 weeks)
Part 3(c)
Part 4: The John Muir Trail

- Yosemite Valley to summit of Mt. Whitney
- 210 miles (+12 more to the parking lot)
- No road crossings
- Small portion of 2650-mile *Pacific Crest Trail*, from Canada to Mexico
How Will the Kids Do?

... just fine, as long as we don’t push too hard
Route
Reprovisioning

1. Tuolomne Meadows
2. Mammoth Lakes
3. Muir Trail Ranch
4. Burro via Kearsarge Pass
Preparation

• Travel planning
• Equipment
• Home logistics
• Kids school
• Work

⇒ Major undertaking!
Travel Planning

😊 Experts at planning complex two-week trips to exotic destinations

😊 Approach definitely doesn’t scale
Equipment

- Huge variety of activities
- Duration of trip is motivation to optimize gear and clothing
- Volume and weight important for some parts
- ... and absolutely critical for JMT
- Computers and communication
House, Cars, Yard, Pool, ...

Thanks, Hector
School

School principals remarkably understanding and reasonable

➡ Lightweight home-schooling with several “electives”

So far, it looks like ages 10 and 12 were a good choice back in 2000
Work

No it’s not a sabbatical!

Nor fully disengaged

- Email availability
- Regular reappearances

Only in academia can one pull this off ...
Search “aiken year off”