Ocean, Road, and Trail
A Year-Long Family Travel Adventure
Frequently-Asked Questions

Before the Trip

1) How did you decide when to go and where to travel?

2) What about work and school?

3) How did you prepare?
Frequently-Asked Questions

1) What were your favorite places and activities?

2) A year is a long time – did you have any disasters?

3) How much did it cost?
<table>
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<th>Many Shorter Family Adventures</th>
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Many Shorter Family Adventures

- Alaska
- Argentina
- Australia
- Belize
- Canada
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- French Polynesia
- Guatemala
- Norway
- Peru
- Seychelles
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Tonga
- Travel-Year
  - Larger scale activities
  - More flexibility
  - Major family time
- New Zealand
When to Go

When the kids turned $10\frac{1}{2}$ and 12 years old

- Before the teenage years
- Before the school-actually-matters years
- After the high-maintenance years
When to Go

When the kids turned $10\frac{1}{2}$ and 12 years old

- Before the teenage years
- Before the actually-matters years
- After the high-maintenance years

Excellent choice
Where to Travel
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
Final 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
An Adventure in Four Parts

1) Summer/Fall ’07 - Greece to Morocco via Italy, Alps, and TBD
   Trains, planes, ferries, rental cars, legs

2) Winter ’07/’08 - Chile and Argentina
   Rented motorhome + mountain bikes

3) Spring ’08 - Andaman Sea and Southeast Asia
   Rented sailboat; planes, boats, buses, train

4) Summer ’08 - John Muir Trail (California Sierras)
   Legs

With a month at home between each part
Faculty jobs enabled a year off (without pay)

- Worked (and got paid) during months back
- Email with graduate students, professional duties
- Upon return, picked up where we left off

Only in academia can one pull this off so easily
School principals remarkably understanding and reasonable

• Structured schooling (math) during drives and sailing
• Plenty of reading, some writing
• Frequent unstructured educational opportunities
• Touched base with real school during months back
School principals remarkably understanding and reasonable

- Structured schooling (math) during drives and sailing
- Plenty of reading, some writing
- Frequent unstructured educational opportunities
- Touched base with real school during months back

Final verdict: no harm done
Preparation

1) Six years of abstract discussion
   Plans 1.0 – 4.1

2) One year of serious planning
   Weekly “meetings”

3) One month of intense preparation
   Before each of the four parts!
Reservations, confirmations, equipment, clothing, food, school materials, computers, communication, backpacks, duffel bags, house & work stuff, ...

- Each part was different
- We’re experienced and organized travelers, but this was a new scope altogether
A Long Weekend? How About a Whole Year?

By CAREN OSTEN GERSZBERG

WHEN Peter and Jill Feuerstein sit around the dinner table with their teenage children, discussion about a remote village in China, India or Zimbabwe. But unlike many people personal connection with these places. In June 2002, they embarked on a yearlong jour

tow.
But Some Unique Aspects

Periodic visits home, very useful for:

• Travel regrouping
• Keeping in touch with work and school
• Ditto for kids’ music, sports, friends
• Ease of ultimate re-entry
But Some Unique Aspects

Some free-form touring, but centered on a number of planned “grand adventures”

Ocean, Road, and Trail
But Some Unique Aspects

Flashpackers

[Wikipedia] “tech-savvy adventurers who often prefer to travel with a cell phone, digital camera, iPod, and a laptop”

(They forgot GPS, wireless router, piano keyboard, satellite phone, underwater camera, …)
But Some Unique Aspects

Not writing a book
But Some Unique Aspects

Not writing a book
Though we did write extensive online “travelogs”
Timeline

Free-Form Touring
Grand Adventure
Home

Mt. Blanc Circuit
High Atlas Trek
Chile/Argentina By Camper
Andaman Sea Sailing & Scuba
John Muir Trail

Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4
Part 1: Europe and Morocco
Mont Blanc Circuit

- Two weeks, three countries
- 105-mile loop from Chamonix, France
- 30,000’ elevation gain (+ loss)
- Comfortable mountain huts
- One rest day at halfway point (Courmayeur, Italy)
Mont Blanc Circuit
High Atlas Trek

- Nine days, including highest peak in North Africa (Jbel Toubkal, 13,750')
- Guide, cook, "muleteers" (& mules)
- A few villages enroute
Part 2: South America

“The Motorhome Diaries”
Part 2: South America

“The Motorhome Diaries”
Bolivia
Pucón (Chile) & Bariloche (Argentina)
Cochamo
Part 3: Southeast Asia

By Sea

By Land
Part 3(a): By Sea
A week in Phuket, Thailand
• Kids: scuba certifications
• Adults: intense preparations for sailboat journey
The Boat

[Images of people on and around a boat, including views of the ocean and a map of the world.]
Andaman Islands
Mergui Archipelago (Myanmar)
Part 3: Southeast Asia
Part 3(b): By Land
Part 3(b): By Land
Part 4: The John Muir Trail

- Yosemite Valley to summit of Mt. Whitney
- 240 miles, 11 high passes
- No huts, guide, cook, mules, ...
- 34 days on trail + 2 rest days in Mammoth Lakes
- 5 resupply points
Preparations

- **Equipment**: weight paramount
- **Food**: weight, volume, shelf life, variety
- **Resupply packages**: per-day food, fuel, toiletries, batteries, books, ...
On the Trail

Walked 7-8 miles/day instead of typical 10-12
  + In camp by 3pm each day
  + Far fewer physical (and psychological?) problems than many hikers
    – More food (= more resupplies)
    – More long-term endurance
On the Trail
The Grand Finale

Kids now 11½ and 13
(Adults haven’t aged a bit)
Frequently-Asked Questions

1) What were your favorite places and activities?

2) A year is a long time – did you have any disasters?

3) How much did it cost?
# Favorite Places

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<th>Part 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Chamonix, France</td>
<td>Pucón, Chile</td>
<td>Luang Prabang, Laos</td>
<td>Lyell Canyon</td>
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<td>Tim</td>
<td>Impossible to make comparisons</td>
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<td>Alex</td>
<td>Alps</td>
<td>Southern Andes (C &amp; A)</td>
<td>Andaman Sea</td>
<td>Evolution Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Dolomites, Mt Blanc Circuit, Morocco</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Andaman Sea</td>
<td>Mt Whitney Summit</td>
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That’s easy

• Scuba diving, sailing
• Trekking, day-hikes
• Meeting people
• Eating
• Photographing, blogging
• Paragliding, horse-riding, rafting, kayaking
• Crystal, fossil, and shell collecting
• Ruins, museums, souvenir shopping, general sight-seeing
Minor problems only

Smashed finger, adolescent-knees, motorbike crash (minor), traveler’s tummy (rare), a few colds, ...

Kids when asked to relate travel adventures:
“We haven’t had any. Nothing really bad has happened.”
Disasters

Many just-miss natural disasters

Sierras fires

Chile earthquake

Chile volcano eruption

Greece fires

China earthquake

Myanmar typhoon
Costs

Previous round-the-world travel-year family:

“Can’t be done comfortably & safely for less than $30,000/person” (all inclusive)

We spent $33,000/person

• Plummeting dollar
• Sailboat rental, scuba, Andamans & Myanmar fees
• Hotels & guesthouses, not hostels

(Good thing we had the John Muir Trail)
Previous round-the-world travel-year family:

“Can’t be done comfortably & safely for less than $30,000/person (all inclusive)

We spent:

• Plummeting dollar
• Sailboat rental, Andaman Islands & Myanmar fees
• Hotels & guesthouses, not hostels

(Surprise post-trip 30% discount)

(Good thing we had the John Muir Trail)
Previous round-the-world travel-year family:

“Can’t be done comfortably & safely for less than $30,000/person (all inclusive)

We spent:

• Plummetin
• Sailboat rental, Andamans & Myanmar fees
• Hotels & guesthouses; not hostels

(Good thing we had the John Muir Trail)

Staying at home is expensive too
Hotels and Food

Most expensive hotels
Florence & Venice

Cheapest hotels
Luang Namtha, Laos ($7.50,double)
Sapa, Vietnam ($9.00,double)

Favorite hotels
Web-bargain upscale “aparthotels” in Barcelona and Bangkok

Best (economical) food
Greece, Morocco, Southeast Asia
Two Last Questions

1) Any regrets?  None
2) Would you do it again?  You Bet
Search “aiken [widom] year off”