

Link to actual blog post: <http://www.bumkneetraveler.com/traveling-smarter-those-were-the-days-but-then-again-so-are-these/>

TRAVELING SMARTER: Those were the days....but then again---so are these.

You know, it really is impossible to forget all those great adventures of the backpacking, Eurailing, youth hostel, and various other extreme budget globe-trotting of the 70s. Most of you know vaguely or well what I'm talking about. At the very least you know a few members of the "peace and love" generation who went looking for themselves by means of a self-induced travel bug.

Freedom. The sky was the limit. Right on!

I admit my 'affliction' may have gone a little further than most on the travel front —wanderlusting my school-teacher summer holidays right through the 70s and 80s and well into the 90s. After all, what was wrong with a challenge of seeing how many places a person could squeeze out of limited time and money?

And so I followed the 'Boomers' before me--and blazed a few trails of my own while I was at it...

From staring down the real Mona Lisa to contemplating things eternal in the Taj Mahal and at Mount Sinai of Moses and the Ten Commandments fame...

From kayaking class 5 rapids on the Shotover River in New Zealand, to cycling through Berber villages in Morocco's Atlas Mountains.

From camping the length of the Alaska Highway to three ocean crossings' worth of hoisting and dropping square-rigger sails en route to "Down Under."

I wanted to see it all, and savor the details of all the moments and memories. I even worked overseas for most of 6 years to see if that was the 'quality' travel experience I was seeking. All things are possible, right?

Well, enough were...to make it all worthwhile. Not many regrets--that's for sure, though a few still send a shiver down my spine...

Like the time I was left behind on the second morning of an organized camping tour in a small village in Nepal---and only caught up with the bus when I managed to explain in a desperate game of charades with a taxi driver, that I needed to find an orange and blue open truck headed for an elephant sanctuary...

And the time I chose an economical but fool-hearty lodging option. It was at 1 a.m., between 'connecting' busses when I was solo-traveling through northern Greece with the hope of reaching southern Serbia. For starters, it involved a moped ride to a remote suburb in the hills of Thessalonika—where, fortunately, my lodging host responded to my sheer exhaustion with pity rather than any dishonorable intentions. Don't think I ever told my mother about that one...

Which reminds me of another midnight to 5 a.m. layover between busses. I got to sleep sitting up with a whole busload of strangers, against the wall of a locked bus terminal in Chetumal, Mexico at the Belize border....and itchy all over from sand-flea bites.

But usually, the shortcomings of extended travel were less dramatic—minor unpleasanties and inconveniences. Like some of the sheets in bargain hostels that you preferred to sleep fully clothed in, or train toilets that weren't functioning when you most needed them, or no room at the inn—or any of the inns—when you couldn't walk another step.

But... it was all a learning experience---and part of my evolution as a life-long traveler. And you know what?

I'm convinced that the trips ahead will be as rich and rewarding as those of the past—likely even more so. Really.

Hindsight—and maturity—have refined my definition of a quality travel experience. I now know I want to leave the safety concerns, and organizing, and stress to someone else, and yet have the freedom to choose a pace and activity level appropriate for the whims and physical challenges of myself and my travel companions.

I'm still walking, jogging, cycling, kayaking and sailing...but when I travel, I want to pick and choose when and how much—and especially be able to just 'stop and smell the roses' as the spirit moves me—roses I've left 'unscented' in the past.

Mostly though, my travel time is too precious to waste on avoidable realities of logistics, language barriers, physical and social demands, and all the other unforeseen details the devil hides out in that can take a lot of time, patience, energy, and enjoyment out of touristic travel experiences.

If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it RIGHT!

From what I see, Bum Knee has thought this all through and has nailed it....offering settings and activities and paces that maximize travel enjoyment. All I can say is...

Totally rad....and outtasight!

[Below is an interrupted 'false start' that I aborted, but have saved for potential use to replace other bits in the draft above]

Been traveling for quite a few decades—when I can or the spirit moves me. Seems there still so much to see and do—even in places I'd already 'eurailed', bussed or ferried to in the globe-trotting, wanderlusting, budget backpacking days of my twenties, thirties, and forties. Don't get

me wrong—the adventures were great, but there were a lot of roses left ‘unsniffed’—roses that got lost in the chaos and logistics of I’ve finally figured out how to really enjoy. It’s all about Lots of roses I didn’t—or couldn’t or wouldn’t have-- taken the time to smell the first time around