GO! Smell the flowers®
One journey, many discoveries...

Tricia's Travelling adventures

I've always loved travelling, & have travelled fairly extensively (& pretty adventurously) in Europe, Asia, Africa & New Zealand ever since my student days in the mid 70s. But it was answering the question "what would you do if you had only 6 months to live?" a few years ago, that really accelerated my travelling adventures, & my 'go smell the flowers' mentality.

My instant reaction to the question was that I'd (i) travel the world, & (ii) spend lots of time with family & close friends...especially Sian, my young daughter.

So to celebrate my 50th birthday in April 2006, I decided to take a 3 month break from work (for the first time since I started work in 1978), & travel ½ the way round the world with Sian, who was 8 at the time. My 82 year old mum, Kathleen also joined us for the first 3 weeks of the trip, as she'd wanted to visit the Canadian Rockies for 30 years.

Some things are easier said than done of course, & a 3-month world trip doesn't just happen! But I've always believed that if you want to do something badly enough, then you'll find a way to do it. I'm a single mum, & I work for myself as a Management Coach in Dubai, where I've lived as an expat since 1993. So as I'm very much my own boss, taking the time off wasn't a problem...the only downside to that is that I don't get paid when I don't work! So the two main things I needed to work out were where we wanted to go, & how to comfortably pay for it, so it left all my other financial plans for the future intact!

It's a good job I'm a planner really, because it did take a lot of planning to end up with a trip that worked for an 8-year old, a 50 year old & also an active 82-year old! We'd worked out some things in advance that we definitely wanted to incorporate into the trip, & those guidelines really helped us narrow down the options of where to go & when...otherwise it could all become too overwhelming.

We'd decided to focus on three main things…

1. 'wow' physical scenery, especially coastlines...& that worked like a dream

2. access to lots of different animals (for Sian)... & we saw bears, orca whales, huskies, dolphins, dogs, lions, elephants, zebras, wilderbeest, giraffe, monkeys, snakes, birds, fish & countless others

using as many different forms of transport as possible...everything from planes of different sizes (including a 4-seater one), buses, sleeper trains, a speedboat, ferries, cable cars, a ski-lift, canoes, kayaks, a trolley bus, helicopters, horses, bikes, campervans, boogie boards, hire cars etc...& that was all great fun, & added huge variety to the trip.

The whole holiday was a great success, & it ended up a fabulous series of mini adventures one after the other. We…

- toured the Canadian Rockies & were awed by their sheer vastness & beauty
- spent a marvelous windblown week on Vancouver Island
- traveled right the way down the west coast of the USA from Seattle to San Diego
- toured & camped in the breathtaking US Canyonlands
- spent a week kayaking round the islands in Croatia (my personal favourite)
- explored a stretch of the stunning south coast of Ireland
- went on safari in the lesser known parts of Tanzania
- ended up with a glorious few days in a thatched bungalow on the beach in Zanzibar

Highlights for me were too many to mention, but I loved the sheer beauty & scale of the places we visited. Sian's

absolute highlight was spending a morning with 155 'sled' huskies in Canada...that was total Paradise for her,

Tricia & Sian in California – June 2006

& she hugged & played with each one!

It was very nice to get back home, but I really could have kept on travelling. So it's confirmed my view that what I want to do in 10 years is to have houses in two separate countries (one in England or South Wales, & one on a beach somewhere warm), & use them as a base to travel. Until then I'll keep on travelling until I find where I want to end up living...so far, Zanzibar looked pretty good!

Would I do it again – certainly. It was a fantastic way to celebrate being 50, & I particularly loved experiencing all those amazing places with Sian & mum. I loved mum's comment as we put her on the plane home at San Fransisco...she said that although she wasn't planning to 'pop off' just yet, she wanted me to know that if she did die now, she'd die happy! Isn't that what travelling is all about?

PS. Even though we travelled light this time, next time I'd travel with ½ the luggage.

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